

**First Presbyterian Church of Houston  
Session Agenda – March 21, 2017  
5:30 PM LC 181**

<b>Devotional and Opening Prayer (5:30 PM)</b> We will be discussing Chapters 4 and 5 of “The Pursuit of God- The Human Thirst for the Divine” by A. W. Tozer	Cindy Cook	45 min.
<b>Omnibus Resolution</b>	Jim Birchfield	5 min.
Approve Minutes of the February Session Meeting		
Approve Membership Reports		
Additional Consent Motions (listed in packet)		
 <b>Committee/Task Force Reports and Recommendations</b>		
Operations Committee	Chris Champion	10 min.
Worship Committee	Randy Wilson	5 min.
Congregational Life Committee	Jon Crantz	5 min.
<b>Beautiful Orthodoxy</b>	Mark Galli	90 min
 <b>Pastor’s Report</b>		20 min.
Shepherding Elders	Bill Heston	
ECO Ordination Procedures	Bill Heston	
<b>Clerk’s Report</b>	Bill Gutermuth	5 min.
 <b>Old Business</b>		
Mission Innovation Committee Proposal	Jim Birchfield	10 min.
 <b>New Business</b>	Jim Birchfield	30 min
 <b>Prayer and Praise</b>	Jim Birchfield	10 min.
 <b>Communion and Doxology</b>		5 min.
 <b>Motion to Adjourn</b>		

**Important Dates:**

March Session Meeting

March 21, 2017

April Prayer Gathering

April 2, 2017

April AC Meeting

April 11, 2017

Maundy Thursday

April 13, 2017

Good Friday

April 14, 2017

Easter

April 16, 2017

April Session Meeting

April 18, 2017

State of the City

April 21-22, 2017

May Prayer Gathering

May 7, 2017

May AC Meeting

May 9, 2017

May Session Meeting

May 16, 2017

## Consent Motions

Permanent Funds Request approval from Session on the following:

- Request from Africa Renewal University for \$20,000 for sports facility.
- Request from CrossWalk Center for \$15,000 for start-up re-entry hub.
- Request from Forge for Families for \$20,000 for parking lot restriping, surveillance and playground cover.
- Request from Houston Graduate School of Theology for \$10,000 for IT/web site upgrade.
- Request from Outreach Foundation for \$15,000 for Bibles for Neur-speaking South Sudanese Presbyterians in refugee camps in Ethiopia. (This grant will satisfy a 2017 Quarterly Legal Settlement payment of \$15,000.)
- Request from Palestinian Bible Society for \$25,000 for family community Bible Center Jenin, West Bank.
- Request from Treasure in Clay for \$20,000 to construct hall and chapel (Uganda)

## Reports

### Permanent Funds

Monday, March 6, 2017

Members: Martha Barnes, Susan Pokorny Egolf, Sharon Henry, Becca Herbold, Gracie McClure, Susan Miclette (Interim Chair), John Rhem and Carol Shimp. Staff: Bill Heston (Nancy Purcell for administrative support)

#### Discussion and action taken

- PFM Team minutes of February 6, 2017 (sent to Operations Committee) approved. Motion: John Rhem and second by Martha Barnes.
- The committee discussed and recommends to Operations & Session the following action for Permanent Endowed Funds/Spend Rate:
  - a) All existing Endowed Funds (excluding the Carter Fund) be invested in the TPF Balanced Fund,
  - b) Six months of the annual spend rate, calculated as of June 1, 2017, based on the most recently available statement of fund balances, be invested in the TPF Cash Fund,
  - c) The spend rate for the June 1, 2017 – May 31, 2018 fiscal year will be 4.0%, subject to the availability of the funds, and
  - d) Maintain the current investment strategy of the Mary Carter Fund and allow the investment in US Treasuries and Bonds to mature until the balance of the fund is over the corpus (\$778,061.83). When the investments are generating an earning off the corpus grant requests that fit the parameters established for the Mary Carter Fund will be considered. Motion: Susan Egolf and second by Martha Barnes.
- Reviewed the 2016-2017 Commitment/Disbursement Excel sheet for available funds.
- Thirteen grants and two seminary scholarship requests were reviewed.

- 1) Holly Hall grant approved (Gracie McClure did not vote). Motion by Becca Herbold and second by Sharon Henry.
- 2) Crossroads at Park Place was tabled. Eleven other grants were approved.
- 3) Seminary scholarship for Andrew Hebert (Fuller Theological Seminary summer session) approved.
- 4) Seminary scholarship for Megan Day Stidham (B. H. Carroll Theological Institute for five sessions of classes beginning in August) approved. Motion by Susan Egolf and second by Martha Barnes (2-4). **See grant and seminary scholarship tables below.**

#### Grants Requested

Africa Renewal University	Soccer stadium seating, basketball, netball courts	\$100,000	Grant - \$20,000	Benevolence-Other
CanCare	Client matching system called Salesforce CRM	\$10,000	Grant - \$5,000	Benevolence-Other
Crossroads at Park Place	Web site design, food, misc. items	\$20,000	Tabled	
CrossWalk Center	Start-up - Re-entry hub	\$20,000	Grant - \$15,000	Benevolence-Other
Freedom Place	Refurbish therapist offices	\$12,317	Grant - \$4,000	Bruyere \$2,654: Bene-Other \$1,346

Forge for Families	Restripe parking lot, surveillance and playground cover	\$20,000	Grant - \$20,000	Bonner \$19,240: Benevolence-Other \$760
Holly Hall	Makeover for Healthcare unit on campus	\$15,000	Grant - \$9,000	Benevolence-Other \$9,000
Houston Graduate School of Theology	IT, web site upgrade, classroom equipment	\$75,000	Grant - \$10,000	Benevolence-Other \$10,000
Outreach Foundation	Bible for Neur-speaking South Sudanese Presbyterians in refugee camps in Ethiopia	\$20,000	Grant - \$15,000	Benevolence-Other
Palestinian Bible Society	Family community Bible Center Jenin, West Bank	\$50,000	Grant - \$25,000	Benevolence-Other \$25,000
Plant with Purpose	Construct 25 cisterns Oaxaca & Chiapas Mexico	\$25,000	Grant - \$8,000	Benevolence-Other
Search Homeless Services	2 <sup>nd</sup> location (1 iPad, 1 laptop, 4 desktop computers)	\$5,000	Grant - \$5,000	Benevolence-Other
Treasure in Clay	Construct conference hall & chapel (Uganda)	\$78,072	Grant - \$20,000	Bonner

#### Seminary Scholarship Requests

Andrew Hebert	Fuller Theological Seminary	Req \$2,750	Grant - \$1,965**	Benevolence –Other \$265
Megan Day Stidham	B.H.Carroll Theological Institute	Req \$2,950	Grant - \$2,110**	Benevolence-Other \$210

\*\*Andrew Hebert's grant is being funded by \$1,700 unused Bentsen plus Benevolence-Other \$265 granted 3-6-17. Megan Stidham's grant is being funded by \$1,728 unused King, \$172 unused Benevolence-Other plus Benevolence-Other \$210 granted 3-6-17.

**Consent Motions for Session (\$10,000 or more)**

- Request from Africa Renewal University for \$20,000 for sports facility.
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Next Meeting, Monday, April 17 - email  
Susan Miclette, interim chair

**Operations**

Thursday, March 9, 2017

**Members present:** Chris Champion, Matt Malinsky, Debbie Hannah, Susan Miclette, Debbie Thompson, , Chris Herbold and Mark Strange.

**Members absent:** Chris Hill and Russ Schulze

**Staff present:** Jennifer Boubel, Scott Reamer, Stephen Burns and Jonathan Ramsey.

- I. **Call to Order and Prayer** - Chris Champion called the meeting to order at 6:45AM and Mark Strange opened with a prayer.
- II. **Facilities Ministry Report** – Debbie Hannah and Scott Reamer provided updates on various matters including bleacher renovations in the Grand Hall, electric work and One Pinedale renovations.
- III. **Finance Report and other Finance and Accounting Matters**
  - A. An overview of the February 2017 Financial Packet was given by Stephen Burns. Highlights of the financial report included:

**1. Current Year (CY) Comparison to Budget and Prior Year (PY) for February:**

	CY		PY	Budget	PY
	Actual	Budget	Actual	Var	Var
Income	\$ 459	\$ 540	\$ 383	\$ (81)	\$ 76
Expenses	(518)	(652)	(657)	134	139
Surplus/(Deficit)	\$ (59)	\$ (112)	\$ (274)	\$ 53	\$ 215

**2. Current Year (CY) Comparison to Budget and Prior Year (PY) for Year-To-Date February (June 2016 – February 2017):**

	CY		PY	Budget	PY
	Actual	Budget	Actual	Var	Var
Income	\$6,088	\$5,693	\$6,066	\$ 395	\$ 22
Expenses	(5,647)	(5,741)	(5,979)	94	332
Surplus/(Deficit)	\$ 441	\$ (48)	\$ 87	\$ 489	\$ 354

**3. Liquidity/Cash Balance** - The general fund cash balance was \$2.8 million as of February 28, 2017. Of that balance approximately \$1.9 million has been previously designated resulting in an unrestricted general fund cash balance of \$0.9 million. In addition, the Capital Fund Cash balance is \$0.4 million.

B. Discussion ensued regarding various aspects of the monthly financial packet including a report by Jennifer Boubel that the \$3 million Line of Credit with Bank of Texas had been renewed.

**IV. Stewardship Campaign** – Mark Strange provided an update on the campaign which will run from March 12<sup>th</sup> – April 9<sup>th</sup> (Palm Sunday) and will include weekly testimonials during service, a letter to the congregation and the ability to pledge directly on the website.

**V. Permanent Funds Report** – Susan Miclette provided an update on the recent ministry team meeting. See attached Permanent Fund Ministry Team minutes for additional details. The committee approved the following consent motions for session approval:

Consent Motions for Session (\$10,000 or more)

- Request from Africa Renewal University for \$20,000 for sports facility.
- Request from CrossWalk Center for \$15,000 for start-up re-entry hub.
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**VI. FY 2018 Budget Update** – Jennifer Boubel provided an update on the preliminary budget of \$7.9 million. Planning meetings are being held and a final proposed budget will be reviewed in the April Operations Committee meeting.

**VII. Presbyterian School Capital Campaign** – Chris Herbold provided an update to the committee regarding the Presbyterian School Capital Campaign and the request to Session for the church to participate in the campaign with a gift of \$2.5 million. The committee discussed various perceived pros and cons of participating in the school campaign above and beyond the previously agreed to land lease, which has an estimated fair value of \$3 - \$3.5 million. The committee determined that the appropriate role for the Operations Committee at this time would be to

assess potential funding options if the Session were to determine that a gift were appropriate. The church does not currently have undesignated resources available to fund a gift to the school capital campaign.

The meeting was closed in a prayer. All committee members and staff other than Chris Champion, Chris Herbold and Jennifer Boubel were excused. Jonathan Ramsey joined the meeting

#### I. Personnel

Jonathan presented a draft Church Planting Resident Role Description for discussion.

The personnel committee meeting was closed.

Respectfully submitted, Chris Herbold

## Equipping and Sending

February 12, 2017 – 12:30 p.m.

Attendees: Bill Heston (substitute for Andrew Stepp), Mary-Floye Federer, Catie Smith, Stephanie Justus, George Mallory (Session), Randy Schorre (Session)

Guest: Martha Lawler (Chair, MIT)

Absent: Andrew Stepp (sabbatical), Amy Rasplicka, Cindy Marion

The meeting was opened with a prayer.

Mary-Floye gave the committee an update on the State of the City conference. The dates have moved to Friday, April 21 – Saturday, April 22. The focus of the conference will be identifying key challenges facing the City of Houston from a Christian perspective. The theme for State of the City is “The Dangerous Act Of Loving Your Neighbor”. The Friday evening keynote speaker will be Mr. Jim Harrington. Saturday’s speakers include Principal Clayton Crook/Cullen Middle School, Leigh Kohler/Freedom Church Alliance, Sonja Gee/Main Street Ministries, Bill Henson/Lead Them Home, and Austin Hermann/Project Flourish.

Martha Lawler gave the E&S Committee an update on the January 14, 2017 Ministry Investment Team/MIT retreat. The original vision for the half-day retreat was to review and clarify FPC’s local mission strategy and outreach. The Global Missions strategy is more clearly defined and the desire was to discern if our local partners and engagement are where God is calling us to concentrate locally. After great discussion, prayer, helpful insight, sharing, and biblical reflection, it became clear that we have strong mission partners locally to come alongside. A challenge we face is engaging our members. What originally looked to be a discussion on our local missions strategy emerged to be a broader discipleship strategy, thus the request to report to Equipping and Sending.

The MIT retreat minutes include the following summary:

We must align our discipleship with our missions. FPC also needs to give mission partners like MSM and Nehemiah a better sense of what our expectations are of them and utilize those partnerships to help equip our congregation and learn from them. **Follow Up.** How can we get this movement underway? What resources do we need? This original aim of this MIT retreat was to discuss our local missions strategy, but it looks more like a *discipleship strategy*. This would require the entire Equipping & Sending team to join in the discussion. Discipleship guiding is essential to changing our lens of mission and re-inventing the way things are currently done.

We also need to identify and develop leaders at FPC. Each staff member has a responsibility to help people understand how to, and to which ministry they should use their gifts. Mission Innovation will start that effort. They are comprised of Evangelism, Church Planting, and MET. In 2015-2016, MIT spent considerable time reviewing and identifying critical criteria for individuals and ministries to apply for funding. We now need further discussion to create a plan to equip our congregation to serve the city. (The full MIT retreat minutes are available upon request.)

Catie gave a detailed update on the Young Adult Ministry:

- The Table is studying “Spiritual Disciplines” until Easter.
- The **Young Adult Retreat** is March 10-12th at Stoney Creek Ranch. We hope to have 50 or more young adults attend.
  - Pastor Will Browning from Charleston, SC is the speaker
  - Carrie Lelsz and Stacey Franklin will lead worship
- **Micah Missions Trip**: April 6-10th (this date is now locked)

Stephanie informed the committee that the removal of the bleachers in the Grand Hall will impact the 11:05 worship service on March 12<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup>. We also discussed progress towards having the FPC Staff and Leadership complete the APEST assessment tool. We also discussed the importance of being prepared to offer our congregation both useful tools to interpret the assessment results and meaningful guidance towards exercising our spiritual gifts.

Bill Heston led a discussion on a draft Discipleship Model. He has asked the Committee to send him comments and suggested additions. This model seeks to further define the two actions that we have designed our organization around – Sending and Equipping.

The meeting was closed in prayer and adjourned at 1:45.

## **Ministry Investment Team**

February 13, 2017

**Staff Present:** Mary-Floye Federer

**Staff Absent:** Amy Rasplicka

**Members Present:** Chris Herbold, Mary Knapp, Matt Offenbacher, and Martha Lawler

**Members Absent:** None

This meeting was called to order by Martha Lawler. Mary Knapp gave the devotional.

### **First Item of Business:**

Minutes from the November 9, 2016 meeting were approved.

### **Second Item of Business: Support Requests (2)**

The team discussed a request from Rev. John Eigege, SITI Houston/Square Inch, who is known as the Community Chaplain of the Third Ward. Rev. Eigege has been working in the Third Ward for three years networking with churches, businesses and other FPC ministry partners including Agape and The Forge. He holds monthly prayer meetings that Amy Rasplicka has attended. He requested \$2500 to help begin their



marketing campaign through Sketch Effect and \$2500 to be used to pay off the mortgage on property located at 3404 Reeves St. which is the future home of their leadership formation initiative. Upon motion and second, the team unanimously approved a gift the amount of \$2500 from the Community Projects Account 415/62016, with the offer to continue alongside his ministry in the future.

The team discussed FPC member and former Director of Local Mission, Stephanie (Drew) Berry's request for funding as she raises funds to be able to work full-time with Open Table. Open Table trains congregations and their members through the Open Table model to form communities to transform the vocational and life experiences of members into tools to help our Brothers and Sisters in poverty, in ways that allow our Brothers and Sisters to work through and create positive change in their lives. FPC hosted an Open Table group in 2010. Stephanie has offered and agreed to raise \$20-50K through personal funding requests, grants and churches. She requested \$10,000. Upon motion and second, the team unanimously agreed to fund \$10,000; \$5000 from the New Missionary Support Account 415/63990, and \$5000 from the General Mission Support Account 550/73150.

### **Third Item of Business: Director Update**

Mary-Floye Federer reported that the UNITE! gathering cost \$35,837, slightly over budget, but that the shortfall would be applied from money available on May 31, 2017 from unused budgeted funds.

State of the City - The Dangerous Act of Loving our Neighbors, is set April 21-22, 2017. Jim Herrington, Faith Walking, will be the keynote speaker Friday night. He will lay the groundwork from a more Christian perspective as to how we can love well and engage our members. Saturday's speakers include Leigh Kohler, Freedom Church Alliance, who will speak on human/sex trafficking; Clayton Crook, Cullen Middle School, education; Sonja Gee, Main Street Ministries will discuss their new program Family Hope; and Bill Henson, Lead Them Home, will speak of the generous orthodoxy and how as a church we can serve and help with teen suicide and other issues. The day conference concludes over lunch with Austin Herman rolling out Project Flourish.

Other events: 4 people from FPC will be attending the IJM Prayer Gathering – March 2-4, 2017; 8 people will attend the KDEC Mission Conference March 26-April 4, 2017; the trip to Uganda for the ARM conference and Partner meeting is set August 18-29, 2017.

### **Fourth Item of Business: MIT Retreat discussion**

Mary-Floye Federer and Martha Lawler attended the Equipping & Sending meeting on February 12, 2017 and shared a brief summary of the January 14, 2017 MIT Retreat. FPC is on a trek toward discipleship to better equip our members and serve our local partners. The APEST test was sent to leadership and staff and will be sent to the congregation later this month. All involved recognize this is a journey and will be working and watching closely over the next many months.

Matt Offenbacher closed the meeting in prayer.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:37 p.m.

## **Ministry Investment Team**

**February 13, 2017**

**Staff Present:** Mary-Floye Federer

**Staff Absent:** Amy Rasplicka

**Members Present:** Chris Herbold, Mary Knapp, Matt Offenbacher, and Martha Lawler

**Members Absent:** None

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Matt Offenbacher closed the meeting in prayer.

The meeting was adjourned at 12:37 p.m.

#### **Advisory Council Meeting Minutes March 14, 2017**

The meeting began at 7:35 a.m. In attendance: Jim Birchfield, Bill Heston, Bill Gutermuth, David Calkins, Cindy Cook, Chris Champion, and Susan Miclette.

Opening Prayer + Devotional was led by Bill Gutermuth on Mercy Hosea 6:6.

#### **DISCUSSION TOPICS**

**Finance + Budget:** Chris Champion reported that February giving was stronger than the same month in 2016. Expenses are where they need to be. Electrical is due to be repaired and Grand Hall bleachers are under construction.

Stewardship Campaign letters went out 3/13 to the congregation.

Budget is in its first draft.

**Presbyterian School Project:** Jim Birchfield reported that the lease terms are still open. This needs to be presented at the April session meeting for a vote at the May meeting. A meeting with the PS board and clerks is planned for 3/21.

**Succession Planning:** Jim reported preliminary information regarding pastoral and staff organization as we move forward.

**Technology/Website Follow Up:** Jennifer Boubel reported that a draft to session from Edet Okon and Matt Offenbacher is being worked on, including Fellowship 1, online giving, and podcasts. Pros and cons of podcasts were discussed by the group.

**Session Policy and Procedures Manual:** Bill Gutermuth recommended we wait to research and roll this out until the next session year.

#### **PASTOR'S REPORT**

**Attendance Update:** Jim distributed a handout with the past few years attendance flow. This was discussed and will be looked at in the coming months.

**Mark Galli:** The Editor in Chief of Christianity Today is scheduled to facilitate a discussion at the March session meeting in light of "the other".

**Shepherding Elders:** Bill Heston has been working with Jane Costello and Houghton Hutcheson on creating a “Lead Team” of non-session elders that will find meaningful work for a group of shepherding elders that is interested in using their giftings to serve FPC. A framework is being created to move forward with this.

**Soul Health Update:** Jim Birchfield reported that he will be in Egypt for the mission/prayer trip there at the end of March. He is also working with Fuller to encourage more leadership support for seasoned pastors.

**Mission Affinity Group:** Jim Birchfield has contacted MDPC and Grace Presbyterian to meet after Easter.

**ECO Ordination Process:** Bill Heston reviewed with AC the Pastor Ordination process as well as the Call process in ECO. These are slightly different than our previous parameters and we will discuss new areas as they present themselves.

#### CLERK’S REPORT

Bill Gutermuth reported that the Clerk’s Dinner is set for the last week in March. Committee reports that will be heard at the March session meeting are from the Worship Committee and Congregational Life.

Cindy Cook closed in prayer and the meeting was adjourned at 10:00 a.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Cindy Cook

Clerk, Class of 2019

#### THE ROLE OF SHEPHERDING ELDERS RECOMMENDATIONS

Jane Costello, Bill Heston, Houghton Hutcheson

2.9.17

- **Create a “Lead Team” of Non-Session Elders (currently referred to as “Shepherding Elders”) to be responsive to the Clerks and available to assist various ministry teams in recruiting volunteers to address needs of the church, i.e. – homebound communion, serve as recruiting captains for communion in each of the four services, be skilled in the APEST inventories, response team for emergency action, etc.**
- **Review the list in the church database of Non-Session Elders to create an accurate contact list**
- **Make a judgment on where those on the list may fall in the three categories the “Restructuring Task Force” identified:**
  - a) **Currently active in ministry**

- b) Those who would be willing to serve if asked
- c) Those not available to serve

**NOTE: This exercise is only for a reference to determine the number who may be available to serve where needed and not as formal designations.**

- Define “who is an elder” on this list. i.e. – are they only those ordained at FPC, or also those previously ordained from specific “Reformed” or “Presbyterian” denominations?
- Network with other ECO churches similar to FPC to learn what they are doing to engage non-session elders.
- Coordinate under the direction of the Clerks two gatherings of elders annually in order to inform them of the current work of session and energetically engage and enlist them in FPC ministry opportunities.

**Restructuring Task Force – FPC 10.13.15**  
***The Role of Shepherding Elders***  
***Elder Study Team Report***  
**RTF report underlined**  
**Costello/Heston/Hutcheson comments included**

The RTF did not anticipate addressing the role of Shepherding Elders to the extent it did. It has become apparent, however, that the original goals contained in Vision 2013 for Shepherding Elders have not been achieved, and the view of Shepherding Elders as a group currently ranges from their being under or ill-utilized to being of negligible value. This is important to the Session as Shepherding Elders were supposed to relieve active elders of much of the “tactical” aspects of committee service and other functions to permit the Session to focus on those things that only the Session can do.

It is estimated that approximately 350 FPC members meet the definitional requirements of Shepherding Elder. These individuals fall into three general groups.

The first group is comprised of those elders who have identified ministry roles for themselves that they would fulfill with or without any designation or title of any type. It is simply in their DNA to serve.

The second group, which is perhaps the largest, consists of elders who would consider serving in a specific capacity if asked, but rarely are asked and typically do not seek to expand proactively beyond their current regular ministry involvement.

The third group has little or no interest in being involved.

Part of the challenge is that there has been no organized effort made to inquire of the eligible population whether and to what extent they want to serve, in what capacities they want to serve and with what level of commitment. Moreover, there is no infrastructure or leadership within the group of Shepherding Elders with the means to mobilize them when needed, leaving Session members unable to solicit any meaningful support from the group. Finally, there is evidence that what was originally intended to be a

service organization, with the attendant level of commitment normally associated with service, has morphed into a “participate if convenient or interesting” opportunity for some.

**HOUGHTON HUTCHESON:**

The number of SE’s, stated as approximately 350 in the document, needs to be verified and the list vetted, perhaps divided into the three categories referred to in the document. This could be accomplished by giving the most recent list to several SE’s and staff members who are engaged actively in the church. I suspect many of those listed are no longer involved at First Pres. Many others are quite elderly and possibly infirm and would be categorized in the third group, but would not lose any standing and would continue to be honored and recognized for their past service.

The RTF recommends the following regarding the role of Shepherding Elders:

1. Form a new parallel organization with a new name while retaining the current Shepherding Elder program and criteria for membership.

**BILL HESTON:**

The current qualifications are that they be current members of FPC, having been ordained an Elder in a Presbyterian Church but not currently serving on Session. These are “Non-Session Elders.”

**JANE COSTELLO:**

We do not need a parallel organization – possibly consider changing the name (although I would keep the word Shepherd or Shepherding as part of the name). What is needed, which I will discuss more below, is some organized structure or a team who could coordinate with the clerks and various committee chairs to identify needs and solicit participation by Shepherding Elders to help meet those needs.

2. Offer participation in this new organization to every current and future Shepherding Elder with the understanding that this is first and foremost a service and support organization and membership within it implies an expectation of active participation in the life of FPC and support for the work of the Session.

**BILL HESTON:**

The RTF identified “three general groups:”

- Currently active in ministry – the reason they were identified to be an Elder was their interest and commitment to ministry, which they continued once they were off session
- Not currently active or under involved in a ministry but would be willing to be more active if they were asked.
- Not involved in serving in a ministry – either lack of ability due to stage of life issues, active in non-ministry activities or lack of interest

**BILL HESTON - Challenge:**

- Do we create a specific “Active Shepherding Elder” organization and then “Honorably Retired Elder” or “Inactive” or “Elder Emeritus” Categories?
- Do we aggressively approach non-session elders to get more involved in ministries in specific ways different from approaching other committed members who are under- utilized?
- Are there unique opportunities that “should” be filled by elders based on their ordination (i.e. organize communion for worship services, homebound communion, denominational relations, Zip Code elders who: care for members in need/build community within their area/serve as a welcoming presence for new members/initiate ministries with members in their neighborhood, etc.?)

- If there are distinct roles identified for non-session elders, a plan would be developed for enlisting; defining what commitment to these roles would be; developing an appropriate organizational structure for each area of service; designing how formal the oversight of the non-session elders would be. Perhaps the Clerk would assign the elder who would “chair” this team and be responsible to communicate to and from the session on the work of the non-session elders.

**HOUGHTON HUTCHESON:**

I see no need to divide this large, dysfunctional group into what would no doubt be two somewhat smaller, dysfunctional groups. Who will be responsible for separating the sheep from the goats? Would a person feel offended and stigmatized in some way by being shunted into an “inactive” status, when in fact they might be willing to serve the church in some capacity if asked?

Many of the service opportunities listed on page 2 (serving or organizing communion, Zip Code elders, care for members in need, supporting new member classes, etc.) can certainly be done by SE’s, but SE’s are not uniquely qualified, or even necessarily best qualified, to perform those services. I can think of many members who are not elders at all but who serve in important capacities or just by jumping in when they see a need. (We discussed Beverly Schorre as an example of this.) Let’s be careful not to isolate too many forms of service and other activities as “elder only.”

Any reference to an “expectation of service” should be avoided. This has entirely the wrong tone. It is an honor and privilege to serve, but it is not a requirement in order to be considered a Shepherding Elder.

Let’s not lose sight of the many SE’s in our church who are serving in the various para-church ministries that we support but whose service may not be evident within the walls of the church (e.g., Nehemiah Center, Main Street Ministries, WorkFaith Connection, Micah Project.)

**JANE COSTELLO:**

I agree with Houghton – I see nothing good that would be accomplished by naming more than one group, but I do see potential for hurt feelings. The greater goal here is to help SE’s live in to “once an elder always an elder.”

There are places in our church, other than serving communion, where Shepherding Elders should be regular helpers – new member classes and in mentoring roles for sure. This is not reserved exclusively for SE’s but we do need to be more proactive in recruiting SE’s in specific places where our church would be well served to have good participation from SE’s. So, rather than identifying specific opportunities reserved only for elders, I think it would be better to have more SE regular involvement in some places where they will be able to interact with members or potential members of our congregation. What a great thing it would be for our church if it was a regular thing that some of the leaders of a particular ministry are shepherding elders – some, but not all.

3. Identify interests, gifts and desired roles on the part of the members, along with technologically supported communication methodologies to align members’ service to their interests.

**BILL HESTON:**

The Equipping and Sending Committee is offering the APEST spiritual aptitude questionnaire for all of the church leaders and then all of the FPC membership. This could be explained and offered specifically to the Shepherding Elders to give momentum for this initiative.

**HOUGHTON HUTCHESON:**

In paragraph 3 at the bottom of page 2, there is a reference to “technologically supported communications methodologies.” This is a mouthful, but I think what it alludes to is the real problem – there is no existing, reliable, accurate channel of communication with this group of members. Getting a

reliable email address and phone number for each person is essential and could be accomplished as part of the vetting process in point 1 above. This effort would need to be integrated somehow into the move to the replacement system for Shelby.

**JANE COSTELLO:**

I see nothing wrong with asking Shepherding Elders to take the APEST questionnaire as a part of a roll out. I don't have a strong opinion about that either way, But do not see any downside.

4. Create an internal infrastructure within this group to permit Session members to access a single point of contact with this group (e.g., "I need six elders not currently serving on Session to attend the next Presbytery meeting...").

**BILL HESTON:**

As the model is developed and the distinctive role of a Shepherding Elder is formed it will be determined what support organization would be most effective such as specific "team" leaders (i.e. homebound communion, organize worship service communion servers, Zip Code Elder coordinators.) Perhaps the outgoing Clerk could designate one of the outgoing Elders to serve on the Shepherding Elder team to develop continuity.

**BILL HESTON:** in the opening remarks stated in the RTF document above, there is a reference to Session Elders (Ruling) to be relieved of committee duties. With the new structure developed by session, Ruling Elders are assigned to one of the five committees and the concerns mentioned above are no longer relevant.

**HOUGHTON HUTCHESON:**

The idea of appointing a leadership team of some kind is a good one. Be careful not to assume that Clerks of Session rotating off will be willing to jump right into this additional responsibility. I know that I was ready for a year off from everything.

**JANE COSTELLO:**

I actually think that a leadership team is the best way for this to be successful. This team could be in regular communication with the Clerks, the Pastors, Committee Chairs and Directors of various programs to see where needs exist. This team could also determine a way to communicate with SE's periodically with updates on some of the things going on at FPC. For example – How many SE's know much about the New Ministry Empowerment Team?

5. Identify ways for the Session to provide regular briefings and to communicate effectively and regularly with both Shepherding Elders and the new group.

**BILL HESTON:**

Offer an annual "State of the Church" dinner for Shepherding Elders prior to the annual meeting to:

- Introduce the new class of Elders and have them give their faith story.
- Have one of the "legacy" Elders tell of their faith story and what serving on session meant to them.
- Apprise them of significant decisions the Session has made
- Describe major challenges that are ahead.
- Celebrate highlights from the previous year of the amazing things God has done in the ministries that FPC has led and participated.



The challenge for the Session will be to find meaningful and regular roles for this group to fulfill in addition to their serving communion and attending Presbytery meetings. Suggestions include committee leadership and service, leadership identification, development and mentoring and new member socialization. Failing to challenge this group effectively will likely result in our having a second dysfunctional group of former Ruling Elders.

An example of what this newly constituted group might look like in part is being provided by the Ruling Elder Classes of 2014 and 2015, who regularly meet as a group for dinner, fellowship and prayer. It's a short step from there to a broader ongoing service role.

**HOUGHTON HUTCHESON:**

The idea of an annual or semi-annual dinner honoring the SE's and drawing them into closer community with the Session and the staff as well as each other is a good idea. I mentioned that you could have a small "ministry fair" at these dinners where representatives of various ministries are available to discuss ministry opportunities for SE's. Part of the problem may just be that they don't know where they are needed and where they would be welcomed.

With the church's move to ECO, someone should reach out to our new peer churches and ask how they have approached this population within their membership. Most of the churches that have gone to ECO are larger churches with, no doubt, many ordained elders not currently serving on Session. How do MDPC, Grace, Highland Park and others involve them in ministry?

**JANE COSTELLO:**

I think that a semi-annual gathering of SE's would be a great idea – time to celebrate what God is doing at FPC, time to hear from other SE's about how they have been involved in the lives of the congregation, time to connect with each other, to pray for the church, etc.

Again, I think the key to the success of this endeavor is having a leadership team with the time to coordinate and communicate. If this is done well, I could see SE's finding opportunities for service that will not require more of a time commitment than they can give, will give them personal interaction with small groups of people – most of all will help them continue to be involved in helping to shepherd the flock and to support the current ruling elders.

One final thought – as training begins for a new Elder class to be ordained and installed this spring – I would consider mentioning that one of their commitments is to continue to be involved in the life of our congregation (to the extent that they can) after their term has expired. They are agreeing to serve as a ruling Elder for three years and then as a Shepherding Elder.

## **ECO Pastors Ordination & Call Process**

### **1. ECO Pastor Ordination Process**

NOTE: Pastors and Associate Pastors are called by the congregation. (The process is defined by the Presbytery) and Assistant Pastors are called by the Session.

## The ECO Ordination Process

### PHASE ONE: Preparing for Ordination

- Join a discernment group
- Prepare written answers to the questions for discernment (p. 6)
- Actively participate in the life and mission of a congregation for at least six months
- Seek confirmation from pastors, elders, and peers
- Begin educational considerations
- Apply for Candidacy

### PHASE TWO: Candidacy – in correspondence with the Pastoral Ministry Ordination Team (PMOT):

- Continue active participation in the life and mission of a local congregation
- Obtain endorsement from pastors and Session
- Write
  - a Statement of Faith,
  - a philosophy of ministry and,
  - a confirmation of the ECO Essential Tenets
- Complete a psychological evaluation
- Join a Peer Review Group
- Complete a \* Master's degree
- Successfully complete the ECO Ordination Exams

### PHASE THREE: Ordination

- Be certified ready to receive a call by your home presbytery
- Receive a call to a congregation or validated ministry

### The sponsoring Congregation should:

- support the candidate financially
- continue to support the candidate spiritually
- encourage the candidate's growth in ministry
- review and give input to the candidate's current plan for growth

## 2. Assistant Pastor:

ECO Ordination Manual:

*"Assistant Pastor – Assistant pastors are called by the session or pastor/head of staff according to rule of the session."*

*"The session, acting as a pastor nominating committee, may propose to the congregation that an assistant pastor be called as an associate pastor."*

*"Assistant pastors are members of presbytery with voice and vote."*

*"The session hires the assistant pastor, and the assistant pastors serves at the discretion of the session."*

- This is a fully ordained position with the same roles and responsibilities as a Called Pastor or Associate. Note: however this position can be dismissed by the vote of session and a congregational vote is not required.

- The Assistant Pastor cannot serve as a member of session since the call is not by the congregation as required for session member.
- Since they are called by the church and not installed by the Presbytery there is room for Session to define roles and benefits. The 10% retirement contribution is not required.
- Regarding compensation an Assistant Pastor would receive all of the benefits that any other full-time employee would receive.  
(Session could do additional benefits to match called pastors: i.e. larger retirement, supplement for family health insurance, additional study leave, Sabbatical, etc. but this is not required)
- Assistant Pastors are eligible for the "housing allowance" designation and perhaps be self-employed. They can be treated as self-employed since the IRS makes no distinctions in the ordination standards.

### **3.Extraordinary Circumstances**

Special consideration by the PMOT can be given to:

- Those ordained in other denominations or who have not met all of the traditional requirements for ordination but demonstrate "vigorous standards to preserve the integrity of ordination within the Reformed Tradition."
- Those who have begun ordination in another denomination are encouraged to enter the ECO process.
- Validated Ministry which is a call to ministry other than as a pastor of a congregation, such as a university minister or hospital chaplain.