

PDCPC LEADERSHIP MEETING

SATURDAY, AUGUST 22, 2020

Current Assessment – Next Steps

As reported in last week's Constant Contact Top 5, email to the congregation, on Saturday, August 22, your Elders, Trustees, Treasurer, Business Manager and Pastor met in Miller Hall for 5 hours. Trustee President, Bill Bramer, reviewed trends in our church over the last two decades, identifying key moments in the life of our church where momentum shifted. Certainly, one of those key moments was in 2015 when we joined a new denomination, The Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians, ECO. We saw a video where Pastor Doug was inviting those in the community to join us as we embarked with new enthusiasm for outreach for Christ. In 2017 we adopted a new Vision, identified as the "Vision Frame" with the mission of "Connecting with God, one another, and the world through Christ". Our Vision is to become a flourishing church "Obeying the Great Commission to Change Our Community". We all acknowledge this has been difficult. This year, January through March 15, before we were hit with the pandemic restrictions, we were beginning to slow our decline in membership while concurrently stabilizing operational expenses relative to income. We had accepted several new members into the congregation in the prior 12 months and had more adult and infant baptisms than in the prior 4 years combined. However, since March 15 our world, and the world for most churches in this country has changed dramatically. It has become increasingly difficult to reach out to those in need, both within our church and in the community at large. We have a deep sense of loss at not being able to continue in person all the relationships we cherish including worshiping and serving others together. We do not know what the future holds; how long these conditions will continue; when we will be able to freely and safely worship together or even when will we see the return of our winter residents?

Changing our working, worship and social habits by increasing use of digital technology to be compliant with Pandemic Health Directives has resulted in a significant drop in congregational giving. Treasurer Bruce Legawiec, CPA, reviewed our current financial status noting we are clearly in a very difficult position. On the bright side, most of the cost saving measures we have implemented are starting to take effect and the prospects are good that our government Payroll Protection Program Loan will be forgiven.

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Elder/Trustee, Emil Fischer led the next part of our meeting. He employed a technique of issuing post-it notes to each person to jot down one idea each on a separate note; as many as they wanted to write down that would reflect the things we are doing well. These were collected, read aloud and then put into “logical” groupings on a large white board. We were then given plenty of time to mingle, read the notes and each given a sheet with 8 dots. We put the dots on the specific notes we most agreed with. Then we counted up the dots for each category. Emil re-read aloud the specific notes that received the most dots. In order to establish priorities, the top 5 results of our “wins” were:

1. Academy – Opened for summer school June 10 and will be fully open for pre-school and a new elementary day care program on August 27.
2. Connecting Ministries (Deacons, Stephen Ministers, Grief Share etc.
3. Children and Youth Ministries for Families
4. Preaching/Teaching
5. Small groups – most small groups have continued via Zoom, even throughout the summer when they usually take a break

We then had a time of Scripture and Guided prayer led by Pastor Dave.

After this Emil Fischer again led the group in our “post-it” note system focusing on the areas where we thought there were concerns and opportunities for improvement. Again, each of us were given as many post-it notes as we wanted to write down one thought per page. Since this meeting was announced in advance, church leaders have received several emails, notes, and letters with suggestions and concerns that each leader had plenty of opportunity to review prior to Saturday. Most, if not all, of these suggestions and concerns were on the notes that were posted. Again, each note was read aloud, then posted in “logical” groupings on the board. Again, we were each given 8 dots to place on the individual notes we each felt were the most significant issues. The 5 categories that received the most dots were assigned at least two Elders who will chair small Task Force teams to pursue in depth each of these areas. Task Force teams are free to draw on anyone in our church community whom they believe can contribute as well as consider any input from others who may have pertinent information or specific recommendations. Participating church leaders not currently serving as Elders were invited to serve as members of the designated Task Forces. The initial recommendations by each Task Force will be presented at our September 22nd Session Meeting. The areas receiving the most votes were:

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1. Leadership – this was a broad category including such things as, “do not ignore the loss of members”; Pastor Dave needs help, he cannot do everything as a solo Pastor; and lack of focus on the great commission. Since this was the largest and most diverse grouping four Elders volunteered to chair this Task Force: Emil Fischer, Jeff Heusinkveld, Justin Pulsifer and Bob Jenson. Trustee Bill Bramer volunteered to serve on this Task Force.
2. We Care – The need to effectively consider and factor in senior, long-serving member participation in our congregational planning and programs was clearly noted. The two Elders volunteering to chair this Task Force are: Tim Scott and Anne Hansen. Additional leaders volunteering to serve on this Task Force included Justin Pulsifer and Bill Bramer.
3. Communications- Keeping the congregation timely informed on what is going on is an imperative. The two Elders who volunteered to chair this Task Force are: Roger Low and Brad Smith
4. Worship Service – The full range of traditional to contemporary worship services was noted for consideration. The two Elders volunteering to chair this Task Force are: Nancy Williams and Lindsay Miller. Trustee Tom Gray volunteered to serve on this Task Force.
5. Generations Together – concern for congregational togetherness from young families to seniors. The two Elders volunteering to chair this Task Force are Emil Fischer and Justin Pulsifer.

These were not the only categories, just the Top 5, meaning we will be giving our initial and primary focus to these categories first. Issues not included in the Top 5 are also going to be addressed. As recommendations are made and we develop plans to implement those recommendations, we will keep you informed. Please read the “Weekly Top 5” every week for the most up-to-date information about PDCPC and check out our web site, pdpresby.org, Facebook and Instagram for more fun and interesting information.

How can you help us?

- If you have some good suggestions or opportunities you believe we should be taking advantage of, please let the leaders of that Task Force know. If you need contact information just call 1 (760) 346-8195 or email the church office info@pdpresby.org.

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- If you are able to help in any of our ministry areas or would like to join a small Bible study or missions' group, please let Kathy Aposhian know.
- If you are able to give us additional financial support during this difficult time it would be a blessing in helping to support all of the ministries we are endeavoring to support, locally and outside the Valley.
- Pray with us and for us. There is nothing more powerful than the earnest prayers of God's people. Pray especially that God's Will Be Done!

May God Bless You,

Your Session