

**Dear Faith Community Church,**

Your Board of Elders desires to inform you of our recent activities and request your prayer for us as we collectively pursue our Spirit-led mission of making more and better disciples of Jesus Christ. Below is a summary of our March activities. If you desire to learn more about a given subject, please don't hesitate to contact a pastor or elder. Thank you for your interest and desire as we seek to help thousands more experience Jesus in a gospel inspired life.

**March 14, 2023:** This regularly scheduled elder meeting was cancelled due to multiple conflicts associated with Spring breaks.

**March 28, 2023:** This elder meeting was our first quarterly 'all-Elder meeting' pursuant to the recent constitutional revisions. Elders delegated to specific FCC ministries are not obligated to attend the bi-monthly elder meetings join these meetings that primarily focus on a specific topic. The topic for this meeting was complementarianism and its meaning at FCC. Specifically, a draft elder statement from 2018 served as a starting point. (Note: The Elder statement is intended to clarify FCC's complementarian stance, not change it.)

Pre-work for the meeting included reviewing books by Kathy Keller and Michael Bird which address the topic and relevant scriptures from differing perspectives. The elders were updated on the important and practical relevance of the matter. Various recent discussions involving FCC attendees were provided as examples. The elder discussion also included insights about how each elder viewed different hypothetical scenarios based upon their present understanding of scripture. Certain key passages will be further studied, reviewed, and discussed at our next quarterly all elder meeting as the elders seek unity in understanding.

**Other Updates:** Other matters were also briefly updated and included:

*April Special Saturday Elder Meeting Date:* A fifth special Saturday morning elder meeting focused on the topic of growth that is presently being experienced at FCC was set for April 15th.

*Letter to the Board of Elders concerning a local home school co-op request:* Per the February update report, a member sent the elders a letter with concerns about the board's approach to the co-op's use of FCC facilities. Similar concerns were raised by others in conversations with elders. Subsequently, a letter was sent to FCC members and regular attenders who participate in or teach at the local home school co-op. It explained the elders reasons for the decisions they communicated to the co-op's board. Additionally, times were provided for letter recipients to meet with three of the elders for further discussions. Four families attended, including the letter's author. The elders were informed that the letter was helpful and that the meetings improved understanding on both sides. In the future, it was agreed that the elders would be more proactive in keeping this group of attendees informed about the matter. The subject letter is now considered closed.

*Uganda Missions Trip:* The elders were informed about Pastor Larry's most recent trip to Uganda. The trip is focused on continued efforts to build up and train local church leaders and church planters. 41 people from 3 countries and nine different people groups are participating in this cohort. Additionally, the Ugandan leaders who were previously trained, will provide a substantial part of the instruction so that they are fully equipped to conduct the training on their own.

*Delegate Elder Updates:* Updates from delegated elders regarding efforts to form a diaconate, efforts in support of next generation ministry, and efforts in support of marriage ministry and missional community were provided.

**Prayer:** The elders prayed for our church and its many and various needs.

**Special Saturday Elder Meeting: March 28<sup>th</sup>, 2023:** A fourth special Saturday morning elder meeting was held to focus on the topic of growth occurring at FCC. As noted in the previous monthly reports (which should be read to enable context), the elders continue to review our auditorium attendance growth, Sunday AM children attendance growth, and Wednesday PM youth attendance growth. Our rate of growth in all basic areas of our ministry is higher than what preceded 2019 and the pandemic. This portends the possibility of 'overcrowding' in the near future. Various 'pinch points' are being reviewed and discussed with the intention of addressing the opportunity to enhance and enable continued growth.

Following the February special meeting, a survey of a representative subset of our attendees assessed their likelihood attending services at various times. (Presently about 60% of our Sunday morning attendees attend the 9AM service and 40% attend the 11AM service.) The survey results suggested that reasonably small changes in the service times could enable a better balance of attendance between the early and later services. The survey results also showed that very few of our attendees (<10%) are interested in a Saturday evening service. Some additional survey work is planned to focus on some further and important specifics.

The elders were also updated on the recent attendance growth numbers that included all of February and some of March. Our year-over-year in-person attendance growth rate continues to be very high and could well be above last year's numbers at this point. Of note, the growth rate of our 11AM service is substantially higher than our 9AM service. In summary, our worship attendance figures suggest it's becoming more urgent to accommodate the growth we are seeing as the auditorium becomes more and more full.

The elders also reviewed the church planting discussions from the February meeting. A summary of the discussion was presented and concurred upon. The summary included key aspects of unity and areas where certain differences exist and need further discussion and alignment.

Most of this meeting focused on deciding between two options to accommodate, and enhance, FCC's ability to host the significantly increasing number of people who are attending FCC. The two options were building a balcony in the current auditorium or beginning a third service. (Please review the earlier reports for further context.) Costs for both approaches were reviewed and discussed. The costs included both financial costs as well as 'ministry costs' (diversion of staff from current efforts if a 3<sup>rd</sup> service was started). The discussion also included the survey results that suggested very few are immediately interested in a Saturday evening service.

The elders concluded that the 'building a balcony' option is wisest. We hope the project can occur in 2023. Church-wide communication and membership approval is required and represents the next significant task at hand. The elders also agreed that our children's ministry area needs to be expanded and enhanced in addition to increasing the auditorium's capacity with a balcony. (Again, please review earlier reports for context. In summary, more Sunday worship attendance increases the number children in Faith Kids and Faith Littles)

The elders next step is planning how to implement these decisions. Two elders were assigned this task and will report back to the board at our April meeting. It was also agreed that communication to the church and membership should begin after Easter. The elders request your prayers and patience as we plan our communications about this extremely important decision.

#### **How you can pray us:**

- For God's grace, healing, and presence for the Prince family.
- For God's grace and blessings upon our church and wisdom for our leaders.
- For Dan Clancy and his health as he continues as our leader for our next generation ministry.
- In thankfulness for the three men who are now serving as non-vocational elder apprentices -- that their apprenticeship would be effective.
- For God's guidance and wisdom as we contemplate how to best shepherd, via a diaconate structure, those who call FCC home. We earnestly desire to do this well while being a church of our size.
- In thankfulness to God for his continued and faithful provisions to FCC and his work in drawing many more in joining with us.
- For God's wisdom and leading as we look to broaden our marriage ministry.
- For God's wisdom and guidance as we move to a 'school year' budget cycle.
- For God's wisdom and guidance as we look to discern how FCC can best plan for, enhance, and accommodate the growth we are experiencing.
- For God's wisdom and guidance as we communicate our intention to build a balcony in our current auditorium and begin planning for enhanced youth space.
- For the unity of our body as we experience a number of changes that our present growth is bringing about.
- For our Uganda ministry, that God would grant safe travel and raise up local church leaders and planters to reach many in that region.

- For the local home school co-op that has regularly used FCC over the years and for their space needs.
- For God's wisdom, guidance, and unity for the elder board as we continue to contemplate and discern many matters of importance, including our continued discussions concerning complementarianism at FCC.

In Love and Peace,

Gregg Bennett – Chairman of the Elders on behalf of your Elder Board:

(Gregg Bennett, John Blum, Jim Duffy, Dan Fosterling, Steve Holsteen, Eric Lent, Tim Porter, Tim Prince, Pat Stream, Larry Szyman and Chris Willike)