

**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.

**April 9, 2023 Regular Elder Meeting:**

Updates

*Easter at FCC:* In total, including 250 children, nearly 2000 people celebrated Easter with FCC. Our in-person auditorium attendance increased more than 20% from last year and our children's programs grew more than 40%! The elders are extremely thankful for the increased numbers of people who are worshipping with us.

*Uganda Missions Trip:* Our Campus Pastor, Larry Szyman, returned from his recent pastor's training trip to Uganda. 41 pastors from 3 countries and 9 people groups participated in this new cohort! A significant number of pastors from South Sudan are part of this group. Much of the training is now being done by local pastors who recently completed the original training that took about 3 years (COVID impacted). The elders continue to be thankful and amazed at the impact this effort is enabling.

Meeting Topics

*Executive Director for Missional Communities:* The subject job description, which had already been reviewed by a number of elders, was presented, discussed, and approved. The elders approved the posting of this job (which was approved by the membership as part of our current annual budget). The candidate interviewing process was also reviewed and agreed upon.

*Operational Plan for enabling the auditorium balcony and furthering the youth wing design and costing:* A plan for the subject was presented and approved. Three teams, one focused upon designing and building, one focused on communications, and a third focused on a likely capital campaign were described. Leaders for each team were agreed upon and various team members were contemplated. An overall coordination team, involving the three team leaders, was also approved. These teams will regularly report progress at future elder meetings.

*By-Law Revisions:* The recently approved constitutional change to a new fiscal year, that better aligns with our ministry and school year, has cascading implications upon some of our current by-laws that establish the timing of certain FCC business meetings. Three revisions, each seemingly uncontroversial, were discussed and revisions approved. They will be sent to the membership in the coming weeks, discussed in a meeting forum, and be voted upon at a future business meeting.

*Quarterly Financial Review:* First quarter 2023 finances and attendance growth information were reviewed. Our in-person attendance continues to grow rapidly at a pace exceeding 20%. On-line viewership has declined, but substantially less than our in-person attendance has increased. Income for the first quarter increased at a rate that exceeded expectations. Expenses also exceed expectations but were still below budget. The higher costs were driven predominantly by much higher-than-expected snow removal charges resulting from the numerous and substantial snowfalls. The difference is not worrisome and is expected to be covered in the coming quarter.

*New Fiscal Year Budget Planning:* The majority of this meeting was focused upon this topic. As discussed in previous reports, FCC is moving to a July 1st – June 30<sup>th</sup> fiscal year budget cycle. Practically, this means our most recently approved annual budget cycle will only last 6 months. An updated budget proposal was submitted and discussed. Key parameters associated with expected fiscal year income and expenses were agreed upon. Additionally, important aspects of the capital budget were agreed upon. The plan will essentially be an incremental build from what was approved six months ago. Various open questions were identified and will be discussed at our next regular elder meeting to determine a final budget proposal. This will be presented to the congregation at the end of May to enable membership engagement and input. The elders thanked and recognized the hard work from our staff that goes into budget planning.

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

#### **April 25, 2023 Regular Elder Meeting:**

*New Fiscal Year Budget:* The majority of this meeting was focused upon this topic. As described above, FCC is moving to a July 1st – June 30<sup>th</sup> fiscal year budget cycle. A new fiscal year budget will be presented to our membership in May. The numerous budget line items were reviewed and agreed upon. Final revisions will be completed and prepared for membership input and review. The elders again thanked and recognized the hard work from our staff that goes into budget planning.

*Replacement Executive Pastor Search:* Our current Executive Pastor will be retiring in 2024. He will be missed! In alignment with our approved budget, the elders approved the engagement of a well-known search firm to do a national search on our behalf. (The job description will be reviewed and approved at a future meeting.)

#### **Updates:**

*Local Home School Co-op:* We were informed by the local home school co-op, whom we have been in discussions with concerning building use for the 2023/24 school year, that they have found another location and will not be needing FCC's services.

*Transitional Housing Pilot Ministry:* The elders were advised that the current occupant will likely be ending her transitional housing with us in the coming months.

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

The regular meeting was ended early to enable a continuation of our 'special meetings' concerning FCC's expansion needs. A summary is included in the discussion below.

**Special Saturday Elder Meeting: April 15<sup>th</sup> and continued on April 25<sup>th</sup>, 2023:** A fifth and sixth special elder meeting was held to focus on the topic of growth that is presently being experienced at FCC. *As noted in the previous monthly reports (which should be read to enable context)*, the elders continue to monitor our auditorium attendance growth, Sunday AM children attendance growth, and Wednesday PM youth attendance growth. We have equaled the highs of our pre-COVID average in-person attendance and are still growing! Moreover, in contrast to the period before the pandemic, we now host, on average, nearly 400 on-line attenders each Sunday. We've seen many on-line attenders migrate to in-person attendance. This points to the need to accommodate people from this group eventually joining us on campus. Additionally, the rate of growth in basically all areas of our ministry is higher than what preceded 2019. Consequently, we anticipate 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.

At our special March meeting, the elders concluded that the 'building a balcony option' was our wisest choice to best accommodate and encourage the in-person worship attendance growth we are experiencing. Additionally, we hoped the project could be completed in 2023. The special April meeting focused predominantly on the timing of the project. This discussion extended to our April 25<sup>th</sup> meeting as well and included a discussion about its relation to our vision and values. Ultimately, while the elders had visibility to the likely availability of a construction contractor for 2023, it was learned that architect availability is not possible to enable a 2023 project completion. Consequently, it was agreed that the building of a balcony should begin following the Spring 2024 ministry year and ideally be completed before the Fall 2024 ministry kick-off.

Another decision from the Special March Elder meeting was to begin planning for a dedicated youth wing to accommodate and enhance the substantial growth we are experiencing in the number of children attending our Sunday morning ministry. The cost of this project will be substantially more than the balcony project. Both, however, are related. (The number of children attending on a given Sunday morning correlates with the number of adults attending worship in the auditorium. Increasing the seating capacity in our auditorium will, therefore, require a corresponding increase in capacity for ministry to children.) The larger costs will likely require a generosity initiative (capital campaign) to help raise funds and minimize (or eliminate) possible future debt. These costs also have an impact upon future ministry at FCC.

It was agreed that our May Special Elder Meeting will focus upon the overall cost and ministry balance the elders are envisioning as we contemplate our expansion needs in totality and our mission and vision.

**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 leads our next generation ministry.
- Thanking God for the three men who are apprenticing to become non-vocational elders and asking that their apprenticeship will 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 large church.
- 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 discern how FCC can best plan for, enhance, and accommodate the growth we are experiencing.
- For God's wisdom and guidance as we plan to communicate our intention to build a balcony in our current auditorium and to begin planning for enhanced space for Next Generation ministry.
- For the unity of our body as we experience a number of changes that our present growth is bringing about.
- 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)