

June 2018 Council of Elders Summary

Department leaders joined elders for dinner and a discussion centered on the book distributed to the congregation earlier in the month, *I Am A Church Member*. The book has been well received and is spurring conversations and reflections as hoped.

Josh Schwannecke opened with a devotion on joy, the second fruit of the Spirit from Galatians 5.

Five new people were approved for membership: Sage Heiss, Cory & Sarah Hendrickson, Alex & Michael Weller. They will be welcomed in worship on August 12.

Treasurer Marc Kole presented his report saying:

- Total unrestricted gifts ("general or operating fund") for the first five months is approximately \$509,000, or \$58,000 below budgeted levels. May receipts of \$103,000 were \$7,600 below budget for the month. May has historically been a highly variable month for unrestricted receipts, ranging from \$88,000 in 2014 to \$132,000 in 2016. This month's total is very similar to what was received in 2017. Current forecast of total unrestricted gift for 2018 shows a projected shortfall of approximately \$175,000 from the approved annual budget.
- Operating expenses are \$69,500 less than budget through the first five months, with a \$9,000 variance generated in May. The operating deficit of \$71,000 through May is slightly better than budget, but substantially worse than 2017 and 2016 YTD, and is being driven by the giving shortfall.
- Gifts restricted for the building project have totaled \$364,000 for the first five months, with \$61,000 received during May. Costs related to the building project of \$114,000 have mainly been for architectural and engineering services, plus \$18,000 for the NCP loan fee in May.
- Cash available for operating purposes stands at \$132,000 as of May 31, a decline of \$63,000 from the end of the year, and a decrease of \$26,000 from the end of April, primarily due to three payrolls during May. In May, the church sent \$547,500 to NCP for construction-related reserves, as required under our loan agreement.

Pastor Andrew presented the finance committee's response to the 2016 auditing committee report. The majority of the items identified in the report have led to changes, past or planned. Several recommendations were immaterial or not worth implementing after conducting a cost-benefit analysis. The elders directed the auditing committee to complete the 2017 work by late summer. This will allow the 2018 work to conclude in early 2019 for more timely reporting.

Mike Smith gave an update on the building project with regard to the communication plan, videos on Facebook, staff updates and selling some of the kitchen equipment. Work has begun on all three sections now: addition, offices/kitchen/lounge, and sanctuary roof. The interior and roof work is scheduled to be complete by September. The new section is scheduled to open in April. Chuck Hahn presented a summary of the reporting requirements for our loan with National Covenant Properties.

Suzanne Lieuwen and Brenda Veltman reported on Pastor Rob's sabbatical. They have not had contact with him since the last elder meeting. They believe all is going well and according to schedule. We are now halfway through the sabbatical; Pastor Rob returns on August 1. There are still opportunities to pray for him. Signup is available at: thornapple.org/sabbatical

After a discussion that included Patty Dekker (Nepali-speaking ministry coordinator), elders discerned that it is time to wind down the formal Nepali-speaking ministry programming. A timeline has been established and communication is already well underway with the relevant parties in the church. A letter to the congregation in July is forthcoming. Elders expressed their appreciation for Patty Dekker and her 6+ years of service in this ministry area.

Tammy Friesen gave an update on work being done around guns in church in conjunction with the safety and security team. The work group is now in the research stage and plans to contact several individuals and organizations.

Elders shared stories about organic outreach, people-to-people ministry and intergenerational ministry. Particular attention was given to recent guest preacher Kevin Butcher and how his words touched people. There was also a note of the value in people sharing about their real lives - grace of Christ, meaningful songs, etc.

Elders concluded with prayer.