

**First United Methodist Church
Town Hall Meeting
June 8, 2021**

1. Nita Hyatt – Staff Changes

- a. Greg Smith – asked to be reassigned for personal reasons. We will be going forward without an Associate Pastor. We will move forward with the participation and help of the congregation.
- b. Aligning ministries and re-establishing committees. Asked Congregation to prayerfully consider helping to fill the void through volunteerism.

2. Jennifer Campbell – Youth

- a. We are without a permanent youth minister. Pastor Bobbie has advertised the position through multiple outlets and has spread the word through her network. She will continue to do so. Challenges are availability of qualified candidates in our area, our location (possibly not desirable), ability to pay a salary that would attract a qualified candidate and possibly inspire someone to move to our community for the job.
- b. The youth mission trips will move forward this summer – high school going to Youthworks in Alabama and Junior High will attend Big House in Bellville. Pastor Bobbie and youth parents have stepped up to lead the mission trips.
- c. Lark Rhodes is our interim youth leader for the summer. She is conducting youth activities on Sunday evenings and leading high school Sunday school.

3. Casey Henly – Band/Celebration Worship Leader

- a. Chris Engel provided music for Celebration service for 6 weeks.
- b. Maxwell Burgess – coming every other week from Houston. Volunteers are filling in on the other week.
- c. The search for a worship leader continues.

4. Howard Tomlinson - Facilities

- a. Activity Center – The AC was damaged extensively, claim has been filed; Howard has been dogged about following up with claim adjusters and with getting ServPro over here. ServPro still has dryers in the AC; took out everything in kitchen and have cleaned and stored everything. We are looking at probably 2022 before we're back in the Activity Center.
- b. Activity Center Kitchen Window – Howard has found a contractor to get the window resealed
- c. Roof Leaks over Activity Center Kitchen – adjusters can't find anything wrong with the roof. Engineer suggests we re-seal the roof.
- d. Roofing over sanctuary and classroom buildings – roofing contractor contacted us and said it's time for 5-year inspection. Roof has substantial hail damage and structural damage. Looking into repair options.

5. Tom Scanio – Worship Spaces

- a. Activity Center situation forced us to relocate contemporary worship.
- b. We're looking at moving celebration permanently to sanctuary to have one common place of worship. This will help unify the church. We have received a lot of feedback that the church feels divided.

- c. This would also allow us to pool our resources and develop a sanctuary for everyone. This would include more open space at the front that would facilitate accessibility. It would also include upgraded AV.
- d. We would also vision what the AC could be used for going forward

6. Dave Brodhead – Finances

- a. PPP - \$46,000 – we just exhausted the last of those funds. Because of the PPP, the church is currently \$33,000 in the black. If not for the PPP, the church would be \$12,000 in the red. Going forward, we will be running at a deficit.
- b. We saved money over quarantine because of decreased use of resources. We have saved \$29,500 on our budget lines during COVID.
- c. Backups: We have an Edward Jones account, properties that could be sold. We hope to not have to do that.

Audience Questions:

1. Kathy Campbell: Offered idea of how youth problem was addressed in another church she attended – Cuero – They did not have a youth group large enough so they joined with other denominations with smaller groups and ended up with a large youth group that worked together for the benefit of the kids.
2. Chris Rogers: What will we do in services when Sanctuary is under construction? The hope is that the AC will be done and we can use that in the interim.
3. What is going to become of the Associate Pastor’s parsonage? Lawns on the properties across the street look bad – what is being done about that?
 - a. Lawn – Glasco seems to not be keeping up. Need to revisit contract. Casey Henly volunteered to do that.
 - b. Parsonage – might be used as part of the package for a youth director or other staff member. Could use as rental property. We will consider all options.
4. Perry Ratcliff – He and Martha feel that church is more reverent or holy depending on the facility. They like the AC and don’t feel comfortable in the sanctuary. They feel that the AC was more lively and more conducive to fellowship.
5. Milton Tate – Enjoys the 8:00 service but realizes that the two traditional services are splitting the congregation. He likes the feeling of being with people like at the Town Hall where we’re all in one place at the same time. Asked that we consider combining the two traditional services.
6. Riley Macmanus – Wants to see focus on youth and children because that’s an effective way to grow the church. He and Carole liked the vibrancy of the church when we had a lot of youth and children participating. He does not care for the sanctuary and wants to go back to the AC. He feels the sanctuary doesn’t facilitate the spirit that they enjoyed about the Celebration service.
7. Sarah Chisholm – The children/youth do not enjoy the traditional service and liked having the breakfast in the Celebration service. They were more likely to come to the Celebration service in the Activity Center. She feels the Celebration service speaks largely to families and young people.
8. Unidentified Speaker - Reiterated that our doors are open to everyone and she believes we can all do this together and remain one church.
9. Aaron Campbell – We need to reconsider the move to the sanctuary based on the feedback from congregants tonight.

10. Jody Tyson – A person’s church is where they find Jesus Christ and that’s sometimes different for different people. It’s great when a church provides different opportunities for people to find Christ. That’s the focus of our worship.
11. Kimberly Behrens – No matter where we decide to have the services, let’s find opportunities to come together for combined services. That’s a special opportunity that we should do more frequently.
12. Jennifer Campbell – General comment that our Children’s Minister is doing a great job and the
13. Why don’t we call or visit people who have left?
 - a. Pastor Bobbie has been contacting the people that she knows about. We are working on a better protocol for identifying and contacting people who have left.
 - b. Tom Scanio encouraged church members to inform the board/Pastor Bobbie when they know of someone who is sick/has left/is feeling uncomfortable about the church. We would appreciate input to help us do that job better. Jody is restarting the Care Ministries after COVID.
 - c. Nita Hyatt – We as congregants should also step up to help contacting people who are leaving/ill. The Board has met to address some of these issues.
14. Perry Ratcliff – let’s do something as a church now that COVID is over – pancake supper, etc.
15. Activity Center/Celebration Service – what will that look like going forward? Will there be breakfast? Band? Youth Program? – Already addressed by initial speakers.
16. Do we need two traditional services given our attendance? Congregation in attendance generally agrees that two services are not needed. Board will address.
17. Will Members have a voice in the suggested changes? Yes – that’s why we’re here tonight. And there are more town halls to come. Nine people can’t make all the decisions without input.
18. Member commented that the church website has the Board of Stewards minutes on the website.
19. Have we contacted members who have left to find out why? Asked and answered
20. Church’s financial situation is not good. Have we thought about selling real estate? We have thought about that but have a lot of other dollars in reserve that we would use before that. WE would not be able to get those properties back at the price we bought them for and if we sell we don’t have control over the use of those properties.
21. When will activity center be completed? Looking at 2022
22. Will celebration return to AC? We will continue to discuss based on feedback tonight.
23. Who is in charge of assembling the praise band for celebration? There is not one point person. We would like suggestions from congregants.
24. Do pastors run committee meetings or do committee chairs? Nita Hyatt (BOS President) runs board meetings. We are looking to restart several committees and will have committee chairs.
 - a. What committees are we looking at – missions, nominations, evangelism, worship, facilities, CDC
25. What is being done to attract and keep younger families? Children’s ministry is thriving, need to find youth director.
26. We would like to have a revival. We could sponsor a speaker. The Powells have offered to sponsor. A great idea.

27. Why do members not read the scripture anymore? Covid changes. That would be responsibility of worship committee. Now that we are back from covid we can share microphones, etc. and would like to establish a Worship Committee.
28. What ongoing support is being given to our long-term prayer list people? Prayer list is on the back of the bulletin. Personal contact or phone contact.
29. What is being done to reach inactive members, attract new members and attract families? Bible school is a great outreach for new families. Pastor Bobbie contacts members who have discontinued worship attendance.
30. Have we thought about hiring someone who is a part time associate pastor and part time youth? The thought has come up and can be discussed. Financial piece and availability of qualified people is a problem.
31. Why don't we have a mother's day out? We have the day school. Resources may be an issue. We can discuss this.
32. Should there be a survey to the members for suggestions to build membership? Multiple surveys were sent out via email. We are having issues with the accuracy of the email list.
33. A member stood up and stated they joined and were drawn in by the traditional service. They love it and have felt very welcomed.
34. Mold in Faith Builders on ceiling? Please address. Howard Tomlinson has addressed.
35. How do we get a new pastor? The process for getting a new pastor is to bring concerns to the BOS, the BOS does the annual clergy assessment and may also consult with the District Superintendent (who is on the cabinet). Appointments are made in the spring and the appointments for this year have been made. In the meantime, we hope that we all work together to do God's work.
36. Was Wanda Bess Invited to this meeting? She was invited and declined to come, but everything is being recorded.
37. What are the plans for building maintenance after the repairs are made? No specific plans, but will likely be a trustees-style committee.
38. Attendee suggested an emergency preparedness plan. Great idea.
39. Why are members being appointed to the BOS instead of being nominated. See notes from June 3. Howard is a volunteer who has not been voted on and therefore is a non-voting member. The organizing documents for the board of stewards calls for the pastor to fill vacant spots. To have a vote, they must be voted on by the church. Howard will be voted on at this year's Charge Conference.
40. Why did the board of stewards take so long to address the major issues leading to the decline of the church –
 - a. COVID slowed the addressing of many of these issues as we adapted to the changes.
 - b. We started meeting with the consultant in February – this person is a third party who helped us to align our ministries which will help us to address the issues. We have had many meetings. Process took about 6 weeks, we spent a month or two working through and coming up with a plan and this town hall meeting is the first result of this.
41. Is the preschool as it functions now benefitting the church
 - a. Preschool is financially supporting itself
 - b. Have discussed why the CDC is not drawing more members to the church.

- c. Children's minister talked about how we share space with the CDC and expressed desire to connect the CDC more closely with the church.
 - i. Beginning a children's choir in the fall
 - ii. Prayer partners for CDC children.