

FAITH COMMUNITY CHURCH

112 High Street, Hampton, NH 03842



COMMUNITY MEETING MINUTES

February 21, 2023

7:00pm

Number of congregants in attendance: 24

Pastor Brian Abasciano

Pastor Kevin Kimball

Pastors Brian Abasciano and Kevin Kimball opened the meeting at 7:06pm with prayer. As a reminder, Pastor Brian provided an overview of the purpose of community meetings – to connect as a church family on matters that concern the church, to seek input from the church body, and to be open to God’s leading on church initiatives through community input and through prayer. He explained that the church operates on an eldership-ruled basis whereby the elders (pastors) make the final decisions on most matters; however, the Pastors believe that God works through the church body, thus they seek input from the body.

Agenda:

- Budget Update
- Giving/Spending Opportunities
- Eldership and Advisory Board
- Congregational Needs and Healing

• Budget Update

FCC Treasurer, Valerie Abasciano, reported a \$10,000 budget surplus that includes having spent \$27,000 on church maintenance (roof, windows, and numerous other projects). She noted other budget obligations (missions and utilities) have been met. At this time last year, savings were down \$6,000; however, this year they have increased. She attributed this to God’s provision in not only making up the \$6,000, but increasing an additional \$10,000 reflecting a total combined amount in checking and savings of \$126,000. She fielded questions on interest rates and noted monies are in a money market account due to not knowing what maintenance items would cost as they wanted to be able to access funds right away if needed; however, they welcome thoughts and suggestions on different funds that would generate interest. JP Pontbriand offered to look into other options.

Discussion ensued on budgeting practices and whether the church had an actual budget. Although the tracking of income and expenditures constitutes a budget, the church does not have an actual planning budget; however, this is something they would like to implement. The past and current practice has been to spend as what they believe is pleasing to the Lord; not in expectation of His replenishing the funds, but as a step of faith. The church has been blessed in seeing a pattern of a return on those steps of faith in God replenishing the money spent.

• Giving/Spending Opportunities

Pastor Brian presented the following spending opportunities as a step of faith for the year with reconsideration next year of most of them for whether to continue the additional spending. The church can approach these opportunities as money the church is willing to spend out of savings this year even if it all ends up being over budget. But very possibly, God will cover these funds and the church will be able to continue with it next year. Indeed, if income remains the same this year, it should all be covered.

- **A large gift to the Kimballs for their new mission. \$10,000? Plus, an additional \$100 a month for the coming year (to be reconsidered next year).**

It was noted Pastor Kevin (as an elder with decision-making authority) would not participate in making the final decision on this matter. Pastor Kevin provided an update on the funds required for his and Mo's upcoming mission trip to Central Asia noting they are moving closer to the required amount and are hopeful to meet the 75% mark by April. He testified to examples of how God is providing through his current support base as well as new supporters. Pastor Brian noted another option is to give less to the Kimballs if needed, as the church can be flexible to their needs.

- **Use the \$400 a month the Bloods were receiving to support the Noonans. Rafe Blood has indicated he will step back from YWAM at this time since Michele's passing.**

Pastor Brian noted the church currently does not provide financial support to the Noonans; however, he has inquired if the family's needs more financial support. Peter Noonan has indicated that if their business were breaking even, then their current level of support would be good. But since the business is currently struggling financially, they could use more support. Discussion ensued on not only supporting the Noonans on a monthly basis, but giving them a one-time gift of the monies due to the Bloods but not paid since Michele's passing (\$1,200 to date).

- **Raise Ian McNally's monthly support to the level of the other missionaries. (An additional \$150/month bringing his support to \$400/month).**

Pastor Brian noted Ian's monthly support is \$250 per month, which could be increased to match the other missionaries. Ian has expressed a desire to find a wife and that increasing his monthly support would help him to be able to support a wife.

- **Support Teen Challenge at \$300/month for the year to be reconsidered next year.**

Pastor Brian spoke to supporting Adult and Teen Challenge of NH noting the organization's recent visit to FCC and the work they are doing – very impactful work in the area which is based on Christian principles and teachings. He referenced the organization's high success rate in comparison to secular addiction centers. The \$300 figure is based on 10 supporters of \$30 per month as presented during the organization's visit. The church could commit to one year of support and reconsider for the following year.

- **Pastor Brian becoming an employee of the church rather than a self-employed independent contractor.**

Pastor Brian spoke to concerns raised by church legal counsel when the church became incorporated about his longstanding self-employed status. Specifically, there is concern that the state might think he should be considered an employee rather than self-employed, though the matter is unclear. There are factors supporting

each status, though the state could impose a significant financial fine against the church if it were to assess Brian's status and conclude that he should be an employee but is not. To avoid possible penalties, the church may want to consider employing him outright. Discussion ensued on the church's tax-exempt status, on retirement contributions, establishing a health savings account for Brian and his family, legal challenges and indemnification, and speaking with a certified public accountant for more information. The group was favorable to doing whatever was best for both Pastor Brian and the church and seemed heavily in favor of making Brian an employee.

- **A raise for Pastor Brian. If so, probably not till the Fall. \$350/month?**

Pastor Brian spoke to the church's consideration of a raise for him as Pastor. He spoke of the ways he supplemented his income in the past; however, he is not teaching at Gordon-Conwell at this point, and does not want to teach seminary classes regularly, though he wishes to retain a position on faculty and perhaps teach occasionally. And although Val is doing some teaching now, this is not long term.

At this time, testimony was given by several individuals supporting the work and dedication to the church as modeled by Pastor Brian. Discussion ensued on making Pastor Brian an employee of the church as a priority, and working out a salary that would more closely reflect an appropriate compensation for the work and would better care for Pastor Brian and his family. Pastor Kevin and Mo Kimball expressed their desire to have the additional monthly support for them mentioned earlier used towards Pastor Brian's salary and/or expenses. By general consent, those present agreed Pastor Brian and family should be taken care of first before the other opportunities are decided on. However, it was noted that the \$400 per month that was being given to the Bloods is already part of the mission budget and is available to be used for missions (such as giving to Ian and/or the Noonans) without waiting to see how increased support for pastor Brian impacts the church budget. One congregant offered to increase his monthly giving by \$100, \$50 for Pastor Kevin's mission and \$50 to enable the church to bring Ian's support to \$400/month and the Noonans to \$300 when combined with use of the \$400 that is currently free in the missions budget. Most likely, as a start, Ian will be raised to \$400 a month and the Noonans will be given \$300 a month apart from consideration of how increased support for Pastor Brian will affect the church budget.

Pastor Kevin then read from 1 Thessalonians and noted that pastors of the world have become greedy; but Pastor Brian has brought glory to God with his work and love of the church free from greed.

More discussion ensued on designating the Blood's money, providing a one-time gift to the Kimballs, considering any other one-time gifts, doing all of these with the funds on hand as a step of faith, and creating a maintenance budget and a church budget. Pastor Brian indicated he would be open to a pay reduction in the future should it be needed. Discussion ended with all in agreement that an update on the employment status and the salary restrictions be given prior to moving forward.

The group then prayed over the church budget and the giving/spending opportunities mentioned.

• Eldership and Advisory Board

Noting Pastor Kevin will be leaving for long term missions this summer, Pastor Brian spoke to the church's constitution with regard to only having one pastor in service, which would activate the advisory board requirement. Although the remaining pastor will have sole decision-making authority, he will seriously weigh

the advice and counsel of the advisory board. Fielding numerous questions, he went on to explain that, in this case, the advisory board membership will include the two men currently training for eldership (Gary Kimball and Mike Provencher) and the two deacons (Paul Hemond and Cathy Belcher). The board will go into effect on or about June 18th, when Pastor Kevin steps down as an elder and leaves for the mission field. (If the church were to ever find itself without a pastor, then the advisory board would function as an elder board with the goal of securing a pastor as a top priority, although female members of the advisory board would have no decision-making authority as is consistent with biblical practice regarding women with respect to leadership in the church). The advisory board shall consist of at least three male members and be made up of at least the church's (willing) deacons. Women may serve on the board as long as the board is comprised of at least three men. Pastor Brian spoke to Gary and Mike's eldership training and how that makes them a natural choice for the advisory board. Once a new pastor is installed, the advisory board would no longer be needed. While the congregation does not normally vote, the installment of a new pastor would be voted on by the congregation as the congregation would need to acknowledge and submit to the new pastor's authority.

The group then prayed over the eldership and advisory board matter.

• **Congregational Needs and Healing**

Pastor Brian spoke to the issue of a number of concerns afflicting members of the church and their families (unknown illnesses, depression, hardships, cancer, anxiety, stress, mental health issues, chronic illness, anger and addiction) and asked for input on the church's best response. He offered holding a healing service where people would meet to worship God and ask for healing, and also providing visitation for those who are ill and cannot attend church. Discussion ensued on specific matters of concern, and in support of holding a healing service.

The group then prayed for God's direction on the church's response to these needs.

Pastor Brian updated on a couple of individuals who have indicated they are attending other churches closer to where they live.

The community meeting ended at 8:45pm.