

# FAITH COMMUNITY CHURCH

112 High Street, Hampton, NH 03842



## COMMUNITY MEETING MINUTES

June 11, 2024 – 6:30PM

Pastor Brian Abasciano

Number of congregants in attendance: 33

Pastor Brian Abasciano opened the meeting at 6:39 pm with prayer. He provided an overview of the purpose of community meeting – 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. With there being no plurality of Elders currently, the Advisory Board provides both advice and accountability to the Pastor.

### Agenda:

- Small Groups Debrief/ Summer Bible Study/Prayer
- Church Finances
- Pastor’s Compensation
- Missions and Other Giving
- Soup Kitchen Debrief
- Summer Cookouts
- Congregant Status – Comings and Goings
- Nursing Home
- Go Class
- Girls’ Home

### • Small Groups Debrief/Summer Bible Study/Prayer

Pastor Brian solicited input from the group on how the small groups Bible study went this past season. Comments included a request for a Durham/Newmarket small group and on how well the women’s study went. He then noted the summer Bible study and prayer sessions are currently underway and encouraged everyone to participate. He spoke of the importance of attending church prayer meetings (importance to faith, builds community, and encourages one another) and that there will be a more consistent plan to pray regularly for the church’s missionaries during small groups when we start them up again in the Fall.

The group then prayed over the summer Bible study/prayer sessions and small groups.

### • Church Finances

Valerie Abasciano and Anni Hemond presented the church finances. Valerie announced that Anni would be assuming the Treasurer responsibilities, and she would serve as assistant. She went on to say that the church has not done much in the way of budgeting in the past because we have typically spent what we take in. But since we have begun to take in a significant amount more than our expenses, we will develop an actual working budget this summer. Despite the lack of budgeting, God has been faithful to replenish or provide a surplus of net income whenever the church takes a step of faith in their giving. She gave the following report:

YEAR	NET INCOME
2021	-\$2,500
2022	+\$14,500
2023	+\$57,000
2024	Projected +\$48,000

She stated the church typically aims to give 30% to missions each year and that they wish to be completely transparent with the church finances, thus anyone is welcome to look at the accounts at any time. She noted the church also has a healthy savings/money market account. Pastor Brian reiterated God’s faithfulness in replacing moneys given in steps of faith and even if God had not replenished the money, the church would see those givings as an investment.

**• Pastor’s Compensation**

Head Deacon Paul Hemond presented the Advisory Board’s decision to increase the Pastor’s compensation package as follows noting there has been a change in their financial situation due to a decrease in the number of their dependents, which has affected their eligibility for Medicaid. The proposed changes to the compensation package would allow for the Abascianos to qualify for good, affordable health insurance on the Affordable Care Act (Obamacare) marketplace.

	CURRENT (2024)	PROPOSED (2025)
SALARY	\$36,000	\$46,000
HSA (Health Savings Account)	\$8,300	\$9,300
RETIREMENT	\$3,000	\$7,000
SOCIAL SECURITY OFFSET	\$2,754	\$3,220
TOTAL	\$50,054.00	\$65,520

He noted that the Pastor’s household runs a deficit each month (Pastor Brian shared that this will result in a loss of \$8,000 from the Abascianos’ savings this year), that Valerie has considered outside employment to supplement their income, and that the Pastor is responsible for both the employee and employer portion of the social security tax per IRS rules for churches. Based on Salary.com data, churches in the region, typical of the size of FCC, pay their Pastors a salary of \$82,000 per year not including benefits. He then opened the floor to questions and comments.

Comments/discussion included statements about the value of Valerie’s contribution to the church and possibly compensating her, the need to keep within a specific threshold for insurance qualification, the taxes paid by the Abascianos including tax based on the value and use of the parsonage, the importance of the retirement compensation as the Abascianos do not have equity in the parsonage, that the retirement contributions will not count towards salary, that as an independent church and unlike denominational churches, they must obtain their own health insurance, and that the Abascianos have solicited the advice of an accountant and a financial planner with respect to compensation, thresholds, and retirement funds (\$19,200 cap per year), and that the

church incorporated a few years ago, which led to Pastor Brian becoming an employee of the church rather than a self-employed contractor, and that the incorporation of the church and Pastor Brian's employment status contributed to initiation of the changes to the salary plan.

Paul clarified that the proposed salary changes have already been approved by the Advisory Board and, unless the Board receives feedback from the congregation otherwise, will go into effect fully for 2025 with implementation of as much of the increases as Pastor Brian deems appropriate in 2024.

### • Missions and Other Giving

Pastor Brian reported that the church gave a significant amount to missionaries and others last year as a step of faith, noting God's faithfulness - \$30,000 in giving and a net increase of \$57,000. Considerations for giving this year include:

- Adult/Teen Challenge (\$3600 per year/\$300 per month) – A new giving opportunity last year which covers the sponsorship of 10 men per month.
- Katy Abasciano/CRU (\$100 per month) – This year Katy is seeking support from August to December.
- Joel Pontbriand/CRU (\$100 per month) – Joel will serve as an intern in the Middle East this year with potential for long term missions.

Angela Lee/CRU – Angela will complete her outreach this Summer and will not be continuing with a second year of Cru internship, and so will not need continued support.

It was decided to apply Angela's \$100 per month to Katy and Joel, raising each to \$150/month, since Angela will not be returning to the mission field this year.

It was decided to give Adult and Teen Challenge \$3,600 again this year.

Pastor Brian noted that the church has a policy of normally giving a \$300 one-time support-gift to church members who go on a short-term mission.

Pastor Brian also shared that the church's policy is normally to only support missionaries raised up in the church or who have some sort of significant connection to the church. One member asked how Adult/Teen Challenge fits into that, and Pastor Brian clarified that this policy is for missionaries and does not apply to giving to local mission organizations or good works. Adult/Teen Challenge has done important, effective work in addressing NH's serious drug and addiction problems through Christ, and this is the type of thing that the church might give to without there having to be some sort of requirement for someone addressing such needs to have been connected to our church.

There was feedback that the church should be careful in its handling of finances to ensure that we can take care of maintenance and facility needs and projects and there was agreement that we would do so.

Assuming that the church would continue to see substantial net income above expenses in the coming years, Pastor Brian encouraged the church to think and pray about how God might want us to use that money (i.e., God's money). He also encouraged us to keep in mind that we might have some church members go into long term missions and that, if so, we would like to be able to add them to our long-term missionaries that we give substantial support to (we presently support all of our long-term missionaries at \$400/month). Joel Pontbriand

will likely be going to the mission field long term sometime after this year's mission internship. Hannah Abasciano is serving in YWAM on short term mission currently and may also consider long term missions.

Pastor Brian also mentioned some others who would like missionary support from us and who are less connected to our church but still have significant enough connection for us to consider them: Mike Rhodes (son to Jim and Barb Rhodes who considered FCC his summer church for a number of years) and Aidan and Kara Conant (connected to us as Hampton Falls Baptist Church members from when we had a close relationship with HFFBC, and from Kara's involvement in the Hampton Homeschool Group that Valerie Abasciano started and led for years, and in which many FCC families have been significantly involved over the years).

The church's long-term missionaries include Mary Haegeland, Barb Rhodes, the Noonans, the Walkers, Ian McNally, and the Kimballs.

The group prayed for all of the financial items discussed (the budget, the Pastor's compensation, and missions and other giving).

**• Soup Kitchen**

Pastor Brian opened the meeting to debriefing the most recent Soup Kitchen ministry season. It was noted that there were times when there was no milk to serve the kitchen patrons. Pastor Brian will inform the head of the program next season if there seems to be a need to. We might be able to get milk from the local St. Vincent de Paul Society food pantry, and we will look into that if there seems to be a need next season. Pastor Brian also noted a number of Soup Kitchen patrons who have been coming to church.

The group prayed over the Soup Kitchen ministry.

**• Summer Cookouts**

Pastor Brian noted the dates for Summer cookouts have been announced to the church. Valerie suggested that in the absence of the CRU Mission this summer, congregants may want to consider inviting family members and friends to the cookouts as a summer outreach. Unsaved family members and friends may be more inclined at first to attend a cookout versus church services. She noted Mo Kimball saying that people are now typically saved into a family.

Discussion then ensued on the possibility of the church doing our own evangelistic outreach at the beach this Summer.

**• Congregant Status – Comings and Goings**

Pastor Brian shared a list of congregants who have left the church recently (the Hallahans moved to Goffstown, the Boulangers wanted different theology, and Eugenia Fountain's schedule is not working with the timing of our service presently) as well as newcomers (Sam Scherbak, Chad and Katy Goss, Mike Todd's friend Scott, and Jacy and Brandon; Avery Lhowe plans to join us sometime in the future). He then encouraged the group to reach out to one another regularly, being careful not to be clicky but hospitable to one another. He noted there are newcomer cards/welcome information cards on the tithing table for distribution as needed.

**• Nursing Home**

Gary Kimball spoke about the importance of the nursing home ministry, citing James 1. Residents of the home are requesting the church come more than once a month; however, he has had some difficulty getting enough volunteers for the once-a-month service. Given his passion about this ministry, he will be establishing a second service per month and encouraged others to participate. The ministry consists of worship songs, a short sermon, and special sharing, that ends with praying and talking with the residents individually.

**• GO Class**

Gary stated the GO Class program is in need of more volunteers to enable a good rotation for teachers and assistants on an ongoing basis. The process to volunteer will include a criminal background check as this is church policy.

**• Girls' Home Ministry**

Pastor Brian stated the girls' home ministry is ongoing, meets once a month, and is open to more volunteers. He then announced that Sarah may be joining the team for that ministry.

Discussion then circled back to the finance agenda items whereby Pastor Brian stated the Adult/Teen Challenge, Katy and Joel's mission support has been decided. He reiterated that the Pastor's compensation has been approved by the Advisory Board but the church will hold off executing for two weeks to allow for congregant feedback in case the Advisory Board thinks reconsideration of the decision is called for. JP Pontbriand spoke to thinking that the pastor's compensation should be based on typical pay for a pastor rather than as little as he needs and that this would increase the Pastor's compensation further should the Advisory Board determine it be affordable in relation to other financial commitments. Paul responded they could possibly increase the retirement contribution without affecting the pastor's insurance negatively. It was also noted that church gifts to the Pastor are considered compensation; however, individual gifts are not.

The community meeting concluded with prayer, ending at 8:10pm.