

*Copies to: Pastor Josh Andrews (e), Carol Blass (e), Sally Leidy (e), Clarissa Frail (e), Stephanie Steinke (e), Kristen Davis (e) Emily Sharp (e), Dale Brookman (e), Bruce Hodges (e), Missy Keller (e), Dean Casperson (e) Judy Steigleder (e), Secretary, Heather Long, Spencerville Office Manager*

**LEADERSHIP TEAM MEETING  
JULY 20, 2020.**

**Those Present:**

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Pastor Josh Andrews	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Stephanie Steinke	<input type="checkbox"/> Missy Keller
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Carol Blass	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Kristen Davis	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Bruce Hodges
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sally Leidy	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Emily Sharp	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dean Casperson
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Clarissa Frail	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Dale Brookman	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Judy Steigleder

District Superintendant. Barry Burns

Pastor Josh opened the meeting with prayer and proceeded to recap the previous meeting, held on July 13, 2020.

Rev. Barry Burns D.S. restated that receiving the monthly grant for a short period of time and readjusting the percentages with Spencerville Trinity was the best decision at this time. It would assist us in the short-term as we make the best long term decision. Discerning the future long term takes time and serious prayer and consideration.

Barry Burns stated that Pastor Josh has talked with Trinity and they are willing to negotiate as they do have some wiggle room without putting themselves in a financial bind.

Stephanie stated that if we would go to 50% it would save us \$7,000.00 a year and then if we get another grant from the conference, that would help. She stressed, at this moment we're actually not doing too bad because we received the PPP loan which helped to cover some of our payroll costs for the last couple of months. Then we received a small benefits grant from the conference, but we are not paying our apportionments. Stephanie said we are receiving about \$8,000.00 a month and that only covers half of our budget. We cannot continue in this fashion. Solving our financial shortfall is now critical.

With regard to any feedback from Pastor Josh's letter, Carol Blass responded by saying she had been contacted by an active member of the church saying they had no idea we were in a crisis situation. She reminded this person of the various times that both Pastor Bill and Pastor Josh and the Leadership have said from the pulpit, written material, and informational dinners concerning our financial status. We have not taken our responsibility seriously.

Barry responded by saying a part of what we are witnessing is the culmination of decades of the Christian Church moving to a consumer model rather than a discipleship model. It is more about what we want. We see it in the battle over music, face masks, whether to worship in person or on line. We need to look at how we can engage our community as it is, which is going to be a mixture of electronics, on line, in person, all of

those different things we would need to look at. We need to engage people on line as much as we engage people face to face. Too many times, we as the church, our motivation is either we need to get more people in the pews to pay the bills or we need to go back to where we try to create what we remember as the good old days. We can't go back to where the two churches merged. We have to recognize where our culture is and be able to speak in a language that our culture understands.

Sally looked at it from a financial aspect, and based on Stephanie's information that has been given to us, we have 88 giving units with a yearly budget of \$203,000.00. That comes out to \$2300.00 per year or \$44.00 per week. Looking at it from a different perspective, she believes this is all about us and our spiritual need to grow. What we are doing as a church in this community where we are. Turning her thoughts to Fresh Expressions, the idea is that we need to make disciples. To make disciples we must go to them.

Carol stated she was looking at an e-mail sent from Stephanie on July 8. In it were statistics from 2015-2019. There has been a steady decline with morning worship down by fifty, general funds decreased from \$238,000.00 to \$175,000.00, giving units 118 down to 73. We know that we survived the last year. We need to begin to look at where God is leading us individually and collectively. She is not willing to continue to work where we are just standing and not naming the elephants in the room. The elephants have now been named. Are we going to deal with them or are we going to go on limping along and hope everyone stays happy?

Many questions, comments and questions were heard over the next several minutes.

Barry Burns responded by asking what about if we try to buy some time if he could bring somebody in to do a process of these issues. This would be a discerning process for the Leadership Team. The team would be in study and prayer, listening to God's will for Westside as we move forward discussing the various ways moving forward. Is it time to consider selling the building? Is it time to consider dealing with some of the hard issues? He stated he had some ideas who to consider.

Carol thought it would be very helpful, but it is going to take a commitment to looking forward to resolving the spiritual and financial problems. Pastor Josh offers excellent spiritual leadership and we, the team and congregation, must have ears to hear and hearts open to the call God is putting on us collectively and individually.

Pastor Josh then asked Barry if he could bring in somebody, on his recommendation and this will probably be the last chance that we have.

Barry replied by saying he was not talking about a new program, but about discernment. No program will turn things around miraculously. What we have lost track of is how do we become a missional church. We need a person of discernment listening to what God's will is for Westside

Further comments, questions and answers were heard at this time.

Pastor Josh excused himself from the meeting in order to free people to speak freely with DS Barry Burns. Discussion continued on the idea of a discernment process. Rev. Burns will be inviting a clergy person gifted in discernment and able to assist us as to our spiritual health.

Discussion with Rev. Burns continued. It was agreed that we do not need a program, we need to pray, listen, talk, encourage, discern God's call for Westside Church and the ministry he would have us do. We do not want to continue being a "consumer congregation."

Barry said everything has to be on the table. He felt the discernment process, if it is timely and we do not doddle, it is a step that is needed. We need to get this started immediately.

It was moved and seconded that the discernment process be started immediately.

Barry stated he would work with Carol and Pastor Josh, meeting with the potential clergy who would work with the team.

There being no further discussion, the meeting was adjourned with Sally leading us in prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

*Judith Steigleder*

Secretary

(e-mailed 8-4-20)



