

Pastor's Report

March 22, 2018

COMMENTS

I bring several items to the attention of the Session.

1. **Weekday School** – We continue to welcome, support, listen and educate (as to *our* unique “culture”) new leadership (Director, Assistant Director, Office Administrator) in our Weekday School. Having survived this transition during the school year (learning by experience and mistakes) recognizing many policies and procedures have never been systematized, documented according to current “best practice,” or updated, we now prepare for our summer program, especially with respect to *Summer Camp* for Preschool children and all-day School Age children.

In response to parent input, children in Preschool and School Age *Summer Camp* will not be required to register for the entire summer, but by week only (without a maximum or minimum requirement). All families, however, must pay a \$120 Registration Fee per child for the summer in order to participate for 1 week or the full 12 weeks of *Summer Camp*.

As for the make-up of the Weekday School Committee (inactive) with its previous duties appropriately delegated to other Session Committees (Personnel & Administration, Property, Stewardship & Finance), I would like to recommend the formation of a small *Weekday School Committee* to serve more in an advisory capacity consisting of no more than 3 to 5 members appointed/selected by the Coordinating & Planning Committee.

2. **Staff Compensation** – With gratitude for the generosity of the church for my revised Terms of Call and those of Associate Pastor Daria Ragan, as well as the long-overdue revision to the structure and make-up of the Weekday School administrative staff, I believe the Session's first action after debt retirement should be review and adjustment to the compensation of those staff members who have served us faithfully and tirelessly during our very lean years of construction, renovation and afterwards. The current Session may not be aware that for many years (in some cases up to 5 years consecutively during construction) no raises or cost of living adjustments were budgeted. This is especially true for our Office Administrator and Financial Administrator, as well as our Director of Christian Education (who served us for 12 years with no Assistant). Included in such a review should also be the compensation of our Building Superintendent hired June 16, 2014 for less compensation than intended.

3. **Music Ministries** – As with our Weekday School administrative staff, we continue to welcome, support, listen and educate (as to *our* “culture”) our new Director of Music Ministries, who is doing an excellent job and challenging us in many areas previously unaddressed (or unable to be addressed because of budgetary limitations). Specific changes that have occurred to date include: (1) modification (largely in-house) to the choir room and music office space; (2) discussion of renovation of the Sanctuary Choir Loft to address safety and choral direction limitations, and possibly include relocation of the sound system underneath the Balcony and/or in the Prayer Room adjacent to the Chancel Room; (3) new children's choir robes from Undesignated Memorial Funds; (4) funds allocated for additional guest instrumentalists during the year and especially on *Christmas Eve* [and perhaps *Easter* in the future]; (5) changes to the Worship order to increase visibility of the Sanctuary Choir [such as monthly communion]; (6) increased choral participation during weekly Worship services on a regular basis in terms of *Choral Responses* to create incentive for Sanctuary Choir members to attend Worship when not singing a specific anthem because of music provided by the Handbell, Childrens' and/or Youth Choirs; (7) utilization of volunteers as accompanists [Susan Bowen], guest organists [John Siler, Mary McFarland] and assistant directors [Margaret Wilkins, Ed Forsyth]; and (8) welcoming our previous director, Suzanne Fairbairn, to assist “when possible” as a volunteer on Wednesday mornings with Weekday School Chapel.

As we complete our first school year of new direction for our Music Ministries, and as a result of conversations with Dongho and elders involved with the Worship and Music Committees, a number of issues require the Session's input and guidance between now and early June:

- (1) approval of the Director of Music Ministries *Position Description* [as a formality only and as was done for the Weekday School Director, Assistant Director and Food Service Coordinator] in the format of all other *Position Descriptions* for inclusion in the Church's Manual of Operations;
- (2) discussion, development and consideration of approval of a Music Assistant *Position Description* as discussed by the Director of Music Ministries Search Committee during their search and recruitment, and put on hold until funds were available and appropriate support and approval given by the Session;
- (3) clarification of the relationship between our interwoven Music Ministry programs and Christian Education programs in terms of *Kids Central* and Weekday School as well as Middle School and High School *Youth Groups* as to participation guidelines and scheduling;
- (4) development of a plan to raise funds (or appropriation of funds from other areas), and then scheduling renovation to the Sanctuary Choir Loft;
- (5) development of a plan for regular oversight and maintenance of the Carillon and Organ (similar to the oversight currently provided for the Columbarium);
- (6) review of current Wedding and Funeral Policies clarifying necessary changes, especially in terms of communication, fees and honoraria.

4. **Extended Home Communion** – Our new Extended Home Communion procedure as introduced during the *Joint Meeting* of the Session and Board of Deacons this past Sunday promises to be a more effective way forward in maintaining contact with our Compassion List members and those with limited ability to attend Worship on a regular basis. If you were unable to attend the *Joint Meeting*, please speak to someone in attendance for clarification as to your duties and expectations as the Elder Leader of a visitation team.

5. **Prayers of the People** – With the expansion of the communion schedule during weekly Worship, please note that elders assigned to do the *Prayers of the People* on Communion Sundays will follow a structured format in keeping with the liturgy printed in the *Bulletin*. A copy of this format is now included in the attachments portion of each monthly STATED Session Meeting packet.

6. **STUDY Session Meetings** – I am becoming more and more aware of cataclysmic changes ongoing in our culture and world impacting the survival and growth of Christian Faith, and I am personally convicted by my failure to educate and train our leadership with respect to a faithful and deliberative response to these changes. For this reason, I have accepted the role as a *Mentor* to Southminster Presbyterian Church in Gastonia to guide their participation in a new program endorsed by our Presbytery – *PneuMatrix*. Central to this new program is study of Tod Bolsinger's book *Canoeing the Mountains: Christian Leadership in Uncharted Territory*. I encourage all elders to do what you can to adjust your schedules to make monthly STUDY Session Meetings a priority and to read this book ... recalling the definition of insanity: "*Doing what we've always done but expecting a different result.*"

7. **Vision Committee** – The approaching debt retirement from our Renovation/Construction project (2007-2011), and the complete absence of any dedicated Youth and Recreation space in our facilities, leads me to ask the Coordinating & Planning Committee to appoint a 7 member *Vision Committee* to convene no later than May for study and recommendations regarding this and other facility additions/improvements to our campus.

8. **Fellowship, Meals, Assimilation** – The Visitor-Inquirer-New Member Luncheon last Sunday was a great success leading to the possibility of our conducting monthly gatherings of this sort after Worship and opening them to the entire congregation. I am sure the Evangelism Committee welcomes the input from elders in this regard in helping to "know" and "assimilate" new members beyond our familiar friendship groups and multi-generational families.