



Family Gathering Minutes

March 19, 2021

Welcome / Invocation

Jason Pamblanco

Call to Order / Covenant

Ray Dagenhart

- Ray Dagenhart opened our meeting with the reading of the Church Covenant.

Minutes (vote)

Ray Dagenhart

- Ray called for a vote to accept the Minutes of the last Family Gathering. Vote passed.

Treasurer's Report

Rick McKay

- Rick McKay gave the Treasurer's Report for Kim Rice in her absence.
- In January and February, we are a little behind our goal due to a problem we had with Faithlife's Recurring Giving. Faithlife is working with us to correct this and reconcile things by the beginning of July. We expect that to come back up. Otherwise, no significant issues.
- The roof project has started using the funding we received from insurance for hail and wind damage.
- Soon we'll be starting on the youth outdoor patio. It was delayed a bit due to supplies taking longer to acquire relating to COVID.
- Dianne Shellhammer has been stepping away from work right now to help her husband, Steve, through his medical condition. Please continue to pray for them. Jen Acker and Gayle Kokolios are stepping in to fill in for Dianne.

Elders' Report

Allen Acker

- Pastor Allen shared that receiving and releasing members is one of our most important exercises for various reasons. We have many new members to vote in, which is good news, and a number of folks to release.

- **Request to Receive New Members (vote on each)**
 - **Grace Harris by baptism**
 - Grace was baptized recently and is a sweet girl. She is one of our youth and an all-around great sister in Christ. She also works in the sound booth.
 - **Motion carried to accept Grace into membership.**
 - **Joy Rivera by letter**
 - The Rivera family is a wonderful family. Joy is a lot of fun in the choir. Joy grew up in an Air Force family and trusted Christ in 3rd grade and was baptized.
 - **Motion carried to accept Joy into membership.**
 - **Carlton Rivera by letter**
 - Carlton is a great guy, came to Christ at age 6 and was baptized. He is active in our youth group.
 - **Motion carried to accept Carlton into membership.**
 - **Jose “Joe” Rivera by baptism**
 - Joe was baptized here just a few months ago. He has a rich background. He was raised/grew up Catholic and then went to the Methodist Church. He recently “landed” with us Baptists. He had never been immersed, so was baptized here.
 - **Motion carried to accept Joe into membership.**

***Whitmer Family.** This is one of the many privileges of serving in this church, particularly for a longer period of time. We get to see families who are in the military who cycle back around. The Whitmers were with us previously and have returned to the area.*

- **Duane Whitmer rejoining by statement**
 - Duane grew up in church and was baptized in 1992.
- **Jen Whitmer rejoining by statement**
 - Jen grew up going to church and was saved and baptized at age 12 at First Baptist in Jacksonville.
- **Samuel Whitmer by statement**
 - At age 7 Samuel received Christ and was baptized soon after.
- **Caroline Whitmer by statement**
 - At age 7, Caroline received Christ and was baptized soon after.
- **Will Whitmer by statement**
 - At age 8, Will received Christ and was baptized soon after.
- **Ella Whitmer by statement**

- Ella accepted Christ at age 7 and was baptized at the same time as Will. Ella shared her sweet testimony with Allen.

- **Motion carried to accept Duane, Jen, Samuel, Caroline, Will, and Ella into membership.**

- **Request to Release from Membership (vote on each).** Regarding the release of members, we always begin with a series of contacts over a period of time. We send a letter 6-8 weeks in advance letting them know the church is considering taking this particular step (this is true for the Care List as well). The letter includes an invitation to be in contact with the elders if we've misunderstood and to be present at this meeting. Many times, it is because the individual no longer lives in the local area. The elders follow those contacts for at least a year and try to make recommendations of local churches in their area. Mark Dooley oftentimes gives us information to help with that. We make connections across the denomination with sources we trust.

- **Jenny Williamson Bowen.** Jenny was married last June and lives in Annapolis area. The reason for her release is simply because she is no longer living in this area and was informed in December of this pending release.

- **Motion carried.**

- **Madison Day.** Madison is Shawn and Susan Day's daughter. She went to Penn State and hasn't returned to the local area. She was informed of this intent via letter in December.

- **Motion carried.**

- **Matt and Roxanne Dooley.** They've been on our Care List for a full year (March of last year). They are still living in the area. Initially, they told us they wanted a fresh start in a new church, and we parted well and on good terms. However, as far as we know, they have not established themselves in a new church, which is out of step with the covenant that we adhere to as members. In less than a heartbeat we would have both of them back, and if not here at LBC, we pray they'll resume with a new church family.

- **Motion carried.**

- **Matt and Natalie Driskill.** The Driskills moved to Connecticut in the summer of 2019, ironically a few months after joining, needing to move for work-related reasons. We contacted them, made recommendation of local churches in their area, and they are in the process of joining one of those churches (they were already attending before we contacted them). This is good news and is following our covenant. This is the way it is supposed to work. They also received a letter letting them know of this decision.

- The question was asked, does this have any bearing on them joining a new church? The answer was that if we are contacted by their new church, we will indicate that they were active members and in good standing when they left.

- **Motion carried for both.**

- **Jon and Dahlia Large.** This is another wonderful young couple, who moved to Alaska in 2018, not long after they joined (they are a military family). They were just starting to get their spiritual roots. We've reached out a number of times encouraging them to join a new church. We informed them of our intention to release them in December of last year.
 - **Motions carried for both.**
- **Steve and Kim Minnich.** Steve and Kim, particularly, have been on our Care List since March of last year. They are still local and recently through our Family Ministry Plan, contact was made with Steve. They are currently attending South Point due to their daughter's preferences. Steve and Kim would prefer to be back here, but to keep their daughter engaged, that's where they are for this season. We're taking this step because of the present situation, but would love to have them back. They haven't attended for over a year. South Point doesn't have church membership, so they won't be joining there.
- **Brianna Minnich** lives in Florida. We intended to release her a year ago in March and overlooked her with all that was going on with COVID. We are releasing her after already sending her a letter last February.
 - **All three motions carried for Steve, Kim, and Brianna Minnich.**
- **Rose Savoy.** Rose has been on our Care List for a few years now. She is a sweet woman who came to our church 15-16 years ago, and over the last few years drifted away despite efforts on our part to stay connected. This was partially because she was caring for her father near Indian Head, but we haven't seen her since fall of 2019. This is out of step with covenant. She is not attending LBC although she is now living back in Leonardtown. We sent a letter informing intent to release in January.
 - **Motion carried.**
- **Jean, Carolyn, Kathryn, Emma, and Zach Vezzosi.** The Vezzosi family moved to West Virginia a little over a year ago, and we have seen some of the kids over the past year. They live near Harper's Ferry, WV. When Allen spoke with Jean, they confirmed they're attending First Baptist in Charlestown. The reason for release is that they are not local, and it has been over a year. Allen spoke with Jean on phone and a letter was sent in January.
 - **All five were presented and motions carried.**
- **Homegoing**
 - **Danny Smith.** Allen encouraged everyone to keep Judee in your prayers and keep her on your phone and card list. Particularly pray for her son, Ben, who is a former member here and has been struggling since the loss of his father.
 - **Peggy Thompson.** A wonderful service was held here to honor Peggy.
 - **The Lord has called these two home to Himself.**
- **Review Current Care List and its Purpose (discussion)**

The Care List is not the “most wanted.” We have some concern for these members as far as they are starting to distance and lose connection. The elders have done their part and are asking you to do your part. Just a reminder of who is currently on our Care List:

- Rob Andrews.
 - *The elders had lunch with him recently and he is logging on regularly for church services.*
- Gary & Michelle Chappie
- Karson Harris.
 - *She is in and out of the area at college. We’ve had positive interactions with her, and there is hope.*
- Spencer Higgs
- Robert Moore
- Dell & Terry Tenney
- Nathan Tenney.
 - *Was recently added.*

Leadership Chart

Jason Pamblanco

- **Recommendations from Church Council**

- The ministry year is from July to June, so we decided to vote on leadership in March to allow for an off-ramp and on-ramp for positions. Where there are transitions in leadership, the outgoing person will exit in June and the new leader will begin in July.
- We have also consolidated things on our Leadership Chart so as not to have a third column for lay elders. We want to encourage our lay elders to primarily teach, preach, and shepherd.
- Sometimes you need to get a hold of someone in the office, and if something needs to get coordinated or done, you can always get a hold of Jason or Allen.
- Another thing of note, back in October Pastor Allen and Jason started talking about division of work with regard to youth. The senior pastor search committee had expressed to Jason that they recognized the need to look into a third staff person in the future for youth. Jason talked to Allen about dividing up the youth and children’s ministry and to begin the transition. Allen has served as defacto youth pastor since he came, but for years, his title has been Associate Pastor. Allen recognized that someone still needed to do youth ministries, so he continued to serve in that role. The recent transition (Pastor Jason overseeing youth) has freed Allen to devote more time to adult and children’s ministries. And we still think that need is there in that Jason wasn’t hired to be the Youth Pastor, but the Senior Pastor. We love our youth, and we want to serve them well. This explains where things lie right now. The orange areas on the chart explain where we’ll be going in the future with a new staff person.
- **Jason highlighted the changes on the chart:**
 - **AMT.** Kathy Dagenhart will be stepping away and another member is planning to step down in a year. The AMT is recommending Carey Robinson and Sheila

Matthews as two new at-large members. Both are very qualified and have agreed to join the team.

- **Benevolence Ministry.** Warm has fallen under local missions in the past but will now be under Benevolence. Diane Wallace will still be coordinating.
- **First Impressions and Safety** will now be separate, where we had previously put them together.
- **Library.** We want to publicly thank Karen Osborne (and Adam) for all of their work in re-doing almost the entire Library. The Library was moved from the old MPR to the new Café/Library. We love adult Christian fiction, but we'll be giving more of those away and making the Library as useful as it can be, providing more commentaries and books for Christian growth.
- **Missions and Local Outreach.** The elders believe every ministry should have a local outreach under the elder's direction. For example, Adult Bible Fellowships coordinate outreach at the County Fair each year.
- **Streamlined.** You'll notice the new chart is more streamlined. If you're ministry is in Jason's column, contact Gayle Kokolios for support. If you're looking at Allen's column, you'll contact Jen Acker.
 - Jen and Gayle are being cross-trained and learning the same methods so that they can cover for each other when one is absent.
- **Children's Ministry.** Andrew Dowling is stepping away after 3 years as Deacon for Children's Ministries and brother Gregg Sleppy, who has done this before, is stepping in.
- **Young Adults.** You'll notice a new box for Young Adults. This is an area we recognize is an opportunity for growth, and Alex Kokolios has a passion for this ministry. With your approval, Alex will be leading this group on a weeknight at the church.
 - **Motion made to accept recommendations from the Council on the new Leadership Chart.**
 - **Motion carried.**

Approval of Messengers to the SBC

Jason Pamblanco

Each March we approve members to go the Southern Baptist Convention, which will be on June 15-16, 2021, in Nashville. Jason and Mark would like to go to represent our church and are inviting anyone interested (as many as 12). The following expressed interest in going:

- Jason Pamblanco
- Mark Dooley
- Mike Williamson
- Alex Kokolios
- Gayle Kokolios
- Dennis Guisewhite
- Patti Guisewhite

- Claire Menges

Motion made to send these messengers. Motion carried.

Motions from the Elders

Jason Pamblanco

Pastor Jason made the following motion on behalf of the elders:

- We move that the church commit to staying in one worship service and expand our Sanctuary's seating capacity to allow us room to grow in the short-term and to serve as a launching pad for a return to church planting as our long-term growth strategy. We ask the church to authorize the AMT to work with church staff to develop a prioritized list of projects, with cost estimates supported by solicited quotes, and a plan for paying for the projects. These plans will then be presented to the church for a decision at the June Family Gathering. In addition, we suggest that the AMT be authorized to create a designated fund to allow those able and interested to begin making contributions which will then be used toward the final project list in the order of priority the church approves in June.
 - **Pastor Jason was the first to comment in the motion for one worship service.** The elders have been praying about this concept since Jason arrived as Senior Pastor, and they became more earnest about it now that it would be a possibility to go to immediately when COVID reset things. We've had less attendance online and in-person since COVID. By God's grace we're still doing well, and the reduction in attendance is not nearly as bad as what other churches are experiencing. Some factors in our reduced numbers are the fact that we don't yet have nursery and some are still not comfortable with coming to a large church service. We see COVID and lessons learned, the challenges of loneliness, and the need for each other, and we recognize, practically speaking, that there are people in the other services you didn't know. The elders have been praying and working through this and are excited to be united together. The short-term plan is to take our maximum seating capacity from 325 to 400. This would involve moving the sound booth to the attic and getting a new sound board (which is already on our list). A quarter of the cost we'd be proposing is for the new sound system. We'll have an iPad-controllable board, which gains us 25 seats in back of the sanctuary. Next, we'll reduce the size of the stage. About 10 years ago, we increased the size of the stage. However, Jason said that as long as he is Senior Pastor, and the current elders are elders, they are committing to a one-service model, and part of that commitment is to increase the capacity of the sanctuary. The side seating next to the stage would be occupied by the choir on some Sundays. If for some reason we need to have a production or presentation, we can use a modular stage for that. But for "typical" use, we don't need a larger stage. Reduction of depth and width of the stage would give us two more big pews and 30 more chairs. In immediate term, if everyone comes back, we'd have 260 in attendance. But we want to create space believing we can grow beyond that to get back to pre-COVID numbers. Short-term, we want to create space for room for growth. As a long-term growth strategy, when that "container" becomes filled, we don't want to engage the pressure release valve of a second service. We want this to drive us to the growth strategy of this church, by planting another church like we did in the past

with Redeeming Grace Baptist Church. We want to follow the Great Commission. We don't want a large debt. These are the underlying DNA principles.

- **There are six essential things we're proposing:**
 - Move sound booth to attic
 - Replace sound system
 - Reduce stage size
 - Purchase chairs
 - Two new pews
 - New carpet (or patch carpet) in sanctuary
 - The ballpark cost for these six essentials is \$100,000. We'll have specific numbers in June, and we'll start a fund to donate to.
- **Some other things that came out of Council were "aesthetic" changes:**
 - Updating bathrooms
 - Facelift on front wall with stacked stone
 - In addition to replacing carpet in sanctuary, also replace in hallway and foyer
- We'll get quotes for all of these things and then ask "What things do you want to do?" This is what June's meeting (Family Gathering) will be all about.

Questions:

- The question was asked if we had considered expanding parking?
 - Jason answered that with the parking at WM Davis across the street and the grassy area of our own property, he thinks we can handle it.
- Matt Toombs asked to clarify that what we're voting on tonight is to go ahead with the "six essential things" and in June we'll vote on the "non-essential" things (see Pastor Allen's comment below which speaks to this).
- A concern was expressed about the difficulty with some of our seniors not being here and unable to express their concerns.
 - Jason responded that we have sent communication via email to all members and we held the town hall meeting, where some of our senior adults did attend, in addition to this setting.
 - Pastor Allen commented that that was a good observation, and it relates to Matt's question. To piggyback on what Jason said earlier, this proposal represents a strong conviction of the elders to have one service and the use of church planting as a growth strategy. What we're asking for tonight is asking the church's permission to pursue "Phase 1." The elder's conviction is to have one service, and tonight we are asking for a formal step to affirm heading toward one service. We're asking for permission to ask the AMT and church staff to pursue real dollar amounts for these proposals, and then the June meeting is really when we'll be making a final full commitment and committing dollars to what we're talking about tonight. Between tonight and June's family gathering there will be more opportunity to continue to solicit more feedback.
 - Pastor Jason further clarified, saying that we are already in one service and anyone and everyone can already come at 10:15 AM. We can stay that way without spending a

dime. The question really at hand is not knowing specifically how much modifications would cost and so we are requesting the go ahead for the AMT to get some cost estimates to bring to us in June.

- The question was asked, “What about ABF meeting space?” Before COVID we were concerned that we had no room to grow and were planning on having our Bible fellowships meet at two different times to accommodate the numbers.
 - Pastor Allen answered that with the use of the choir room, we’d have seven spaces to meet in, as well as the possibility of meeting at other times/spaces, both/and. For example, Alex Kokolios has mentioned that young adults like the idea of meeting at different times and places during the week.
- There was some discussion about pricing and funding and the conclusion was that we’d like to save that discussion for June after we have gotten some cost estimates.

Motions:

- **Jason asked to amend the motion by simply “striking” the line about designating a fund. The amended motion was made and carried.**
- Another recommendation was made to divide the “amended motion” into two:
 - 1—vote for one service.
 - 2—commitment to expand seating and allow the AMT to investigate the cost of the other proposals.
- After some discussion about the wisdom in splitting the motion into two separate motions, Jason withdrew the original motion and made a motion for the one service commitment.
- **Ray Dagenhart asked for a vote for a “one-service Sunday.”**
 - One “nay” vote and the rest “yay.” **Motion carried.**
- **Jason made a second motion to free the AMT to research the cost for the six essentials AND the nonessentials and to bring these cost estimates to the church for approval in June.**
 - Three “nay” and the rest “yay.” **Motion carried.**
- **Jason made a motion that the church authorize the AMT to investigate the feasibility of a third staff elder and bring us back a report by June’s Family Gathering.**
 - **Motion carried.**

Prayer Time

Jim Harris

Keeping You in the Loop

Jason Pamblanco

- 10:15 AM worship service will be outdoors from Easter Sunday, April 4 through June 13. We hope the outdoor service is a catalyst for coming back.
- ABFs will be starting up on April 11, several options, register online. Don’t miss out on those!

Concluding Prayer

Jason Pamblanco

Meeting adjourned at 9:00 PM.