

VCB Congregational Meeting 11/15/2015

Chairman Bruce Rhodes called the meeting to order. A quorum was present with 171 members signed in.

Bruce opened the meeting with prayer.

Minutes of the previous congregational meeting were accepted.

Election of Board Members and Officers

Nate Habeck explained the procedure in selecting the candidates for the ballot and listed the members of the nominating committee.

A vote was taken by paper ballot. After the vote was counted the following candidates were elected:

Elders: Randy Cobler, Dave Corning, Peter LeBlanc, Mark Sauer, Bruce Tincknell

Deacons: Jim Adkins, Bill Sheffer

Officers: David Cartwright-Treasurer, Ron Hirschhorn-Clerk

Financial Report – David Cartwright

Two handouts were available: The Income Statement for the Periods Ending June 30, 2015 and The Income Statement for the Periods Ending October 31, 2015

At the end of the fiscal year (June 30) we had a \$69,000 surplus. The deacon board set aside \$54,000 of that amount for special projects that are in progress.

Currently we are \$74,000 ahead of our budget. Giving is a little above budget. Our administration expense is down because we have two open staff positions. In addition some of the ministry expenses are down because of timing of expenses.

The audit of our books was completed and we were given an unqualified clean opinion. This means that you can trust the financial reporting of the church. Our financial controls are effective.

Stephen Ministry Commissioning – Julie Fischer

The Stephen ministry at VCB continues to grow. The Stephen ministers meet with care receivers that are going through a difficult time—this could be loss of a job, health issues, loss of a loved one, etc. Pamphlets and cards that explain the Stephen ministry can be found by the bulletin board that is around the corner from the sanctuary.

Joel Schwarz was commissioned as a new Stephen Leader. We now have five Stephen leaders in addition to our Stephen ministers.

Building Pledge Campaign Proposal – Bruce Rhodes

A description of the building project along with frequently asked questions is located on the church website under the Resources tab. The architect plans can be downloaded from the Church Member Pages (log in as church member).

In summary the building project would provide:

- 18,423 square feet additional space
- 21,845 square feet renovated
- New north entry and entry space
- New children's church area and youth room
- Renovation of existing lower classroom area
- New office entry and office area renovation

The benefits include:

- New and improved ministry spaces
- Additional interaction space before and after worship service
- Better security for the children's areas
- Better flow from the parking lot to the children's worship areas
- Improved office space for the church staff

At this time we only have estimates on the cost for the building. We don't know the amount of money available to do these improvements.

Step 1: Determine the funds available

Step 2: Decide on the initial, specific building/renovation project plan to propose to VCB membership for a vote.

Tonight we are asking for the approval to do a pledge campaign. Ballots were passed out and a vote was taken. Approval was given by 90% of the votes.

Senior Pastor Report – David Jones

Thanks for coming out on a Sunday evening. Special thanks to the men who were away at the Advance all weekend, and yet still came to the congregational meeting. Way to go, men!

In this report, I would like to give you a high-level overview of how we are doing as a church. Much of this is encouraging, although there are a few items of concern. At multiple points, I am going to mention prayer requests. Please write them down

and commit to praying for them, so that we can better accomplish the mission the Lord has entrusted to us.

Vital Signs

We have a mixed report here.

- *Attendance.* After four straight years of growth, this year our attendance is down 7 percent. The pastors and elders have begun discussing this, to discern what is happening. It is not one thing, but rather a combination of factors: (1) we are not getting the number of visitors we were getting between 2011 and 2014; (2) another wave of people have left VCB for the Bridge; (3) some members and regular attenders are not attending as frequently as before—there is some anecdotal evidence that some people are watching the sermon on the website rather than coming to church; and (4) we have had some relative newcomers leave the church, saying that they found it hard to plug in and build relationships. We are also evaluating my role and the rest of the staff to see if something we are doing (or not doing) could be contributing to this. We will continue to track our attendance and determine whether it is a blip or a trend. Numbers are not the end, but they can be an indicator of the relative spiritual health of a church.
- *Offerings.* Even though attendance has been down a bit, giving has been up. We are up about 7 percent over last year, and right where we need to be at this point in the fiscal year. Thank you for your faithful giving to the Lord's work.

This combination of attendance being down and giving being up is an odd pairing; usually the former drives the latter. I spoke recently with a pastor friend of mine. Their church is comparable to ours in many ways, and they are experiencing the same phenomenon: their attendance is down 10 percent, but their giving is up 10 percent. Go figure.

Staff Searches

We have two openings on the staff right now.

- *Director of Community Life.* This position became open when we shifted Wes to children's ministry. He is still getting adjusted to his new role, but we are hearing reports from both children and parents that he is doing a great job. Please pray that we fill his old position soon. We have received many resumes, including some from within our body. Rod, Dana and I have been sifting through them, talking with prospective candidates. But there is no clear contender at this point. More discernment needed.

- *Downstairs Worship Leader.* We have also received many resumes for this position and have talked with several individuals. Joel Fisher guest led for us one weekend. We liked him, but after much deliberation decided to keep looking. Recently, we came in contact with an exciting prospect. His name is Matt Beckler. He is from the area, but has been away, serving as a worship leader in Seattle and Nashville. Matt is both gifted and experienced. He will be guest leading for us this coming weekend. This will allow us to get eyes and ears on him. If he seems like a good fit, we could bring him back in early December to interview with the elders and formally candidate.

Please pray that the Lord will fill these two openings with the people he has chosen. Both have a direct impact on the health of our body. Also, it will be good for Rod and me to have these searches off our plate, so we can devote that time to other important needs.

Vision

Having recently completed five years of service here at the church, I am sensing the need for a fresh vision. When I first arrived, I was full of energy and had fresh eyes. We formulated a five-year strategic plan, and then worked that plan. By God's grace, we are able to complete a significant chunk of it. The church got healthier and grew. But at the end of the five years, I was pretty tired.

So for the last few months, I have been going back to basics, starting with my own walk with the Lord. Having Rod take some things off my plate has been a blessing. Having the church planters around has been energizing. I have been systematically assessing the church, as well as my own life and ministry. It is not yet time to share what God is revealing; that will need to be shared with the elders first and then refined. But the process is underway. Hopefully, it will be ready for primetime next Summer.

One thing I can tell you now is that I am giving much thought to what it takes to reach the Millennial generation. I want to study that generation like a missionary studies the people group he is trying to reach. My prayer is that VCB will continue to be a healthy, vibrant, Gospel-preaching church fifty years from now. That will only happen if we learn how to make disciples of Millennials. Please pray that God would give us wisdom and guidance in this process.

Strategic Plan

Here is a quick assessment of our strategic plan.

- Evangelism is weak. I have not heard of any new adult believers for several months (praise the Lord for a couple of children who came to faith), nor have we had any baptisms. Pray that the Lord would give us boldness and make us fruitful in this area. Christmas in the Village is a great opportunity to

invite unchurched friends and family. [**Note:** *After the meeting, someone informed me that a woman recently came to faith in one of the Bible studies. Praise the Lord!*]

- Establishing community, once a strength, has taken a hit since Wes left the role. We have been handling the essential tasks by committee. We need to fill this position soon.
- Equipping continues to be a strength for our church.
- Empowering servants is also strong, with more than half of our body serving in some ministry inside or outside the walls of the church.

Building

I will not talk about the proposed capital campaign. That is a separate item on the agenda.

The deacons have approved a new sound system in the worship center. This will bring greater clarity and richness of sound, which should enhance our worship. Going to be installed sometime in the new year. We may need to move worship to the gym for a weekend or two. We also are getting a new screen and projector. These have already arrived and will be installed soon.

Week of Prayer

I revealed the level of participation in the services.

Did you find this exercise to be a blessing? Did the Lord reveal anything to you that you can share with us, that might bless the body?

Church Planting

This week will be the twelfth week in the church planting residency. We have four church planters in residence: Mitch (Woodstock); Justin (West Dundee); Matt (Chicago); and Jonathan (Palatine). The guys are doing great. They are building their launch teams. Some people have already committed; others are kicking the tires. We have set a goal of each of them having fifteen committed adults by the end of the year. Please pray that God will show them favor to that end. We are praying for each of these churches to launch strong.

You are going to get a chance to hear from the church planters soon. They are all preaching Thanksgiving weekend (Nov 28-29)—one in each service. So if you have contemplating a missional move, this will be a great opportunity to hear one or more of them.

There will be other opportunities on Tues Dec 8 (morning) and Thurs afternoon Dec 10 (afternoon). The guys have been studying preaching for the past six weeks, and that week will be their final exam of sorts. Each of them will be preaching, and we are planning to have worship and everything. So if you have the ability to come during the day, would you please consider coming for one or more of their messages? More details to follow.

It has come to my attention that some folks in the congregation were concerned about doing four church plants and possibly a building campaign at the same time. They are worried about the potential drain on people and also giving. You need to know that these four church plants are a cooperative venture of eight EFCA churches in the area. We are combining our resources in the selection and training of candidates, in providing launch team members, preaching opportunities, and financial assistance. VCB has taken a leadership role in this process, but it is not all on us. So the four church planters are drawing from a wider group than Todd Berge did with the Bridge. We are unlikely to lose as many this time. So as far as the building project, etc., we should be fine.

The Bridge continues to do well. They are averaging around 170 people. Very much engaged in mission in their community. People are coming to faith. The church is excited.

End of Year Giving

We are going to highlight the building fund and the church plant fund. We could use about \$15K in our church plant fund. We would also make good use of money dedicated toward the building. Even if the capital campaign does not go forward, we still have between \$1.5 and 2 million in deferred maintenance that needs to be done. If we receive some gifts in our building fund, we can get a jump on some of that work. So, if God has blessed you, and you are looking to invest some capital before year-end, I would strongly urge you to give to one or both of these two funds. Thanks for your consideration.

Preaching

We have two more weeks in the Genesis series.

- *Isaiah and the Messiah* (Christmas).
- *The Sermon on the Mount* (Winter). This will carry us up to Easter.
- *Refocus: Hard Topics from a Biblical Perspective* (Spring). We have done this before, focusing on social issues. This time we will have an apologetics emphasis: the existence of God; the reliability of Scripture; miracles; the problem of evil; pluralism; the fate of those who have never heard.

Israel

We currently have 44 people signed up. Room for about ten more. Some of you have been on the fence; the time to make the decision is almost upon us.

Personal

- *Sabbatical.* The elders have kindly granted me a sabbatical next summer. So Helen and I are planning to stay in Israel for about a month after those on the tour return home. In addition to getting some rest and seeing more of the Land, I hope to get a fresh vision for VCB.
- *Doctorate.* I am happy to report that I finished my last doctoral seminar in June and have been granted the official status of ABD. I will be chipping away at a dissertation for the next couple of years on my spare time. 😊

Please pray for me, especially for my own walk with the Lord. Scottish preacher Robert Murray McCheyne once said, "The greatest need of my people is my own holiness." McCheyne was not being arrogant when he said this. He was realizing that he went off the rails, he would harm the church and possibly take some people with him. So please pray that I will abide in the vine and minister in the fullness of the Holy Spirit. I would also request prayer for wisdom to know what to do, and strength to be able to do it.

In conclusion, please know that I love the people of the Village Church of Barrington. The staff and I are working hard for the good of the body. We count it an honor to serve here. Let us know if there is some way that we can serve you.

Prayer List - Bruce Rhodes

The congregation is encouraged to pray for the following:

- The Building Campaign: church unity, clear communication, the leadership
- Village in Action
- Christmas in the Village
- The Bridge
- Elected leaders and the Staff
- Welcoming new comers

After a few minutes of silent prayer David Jones led a closing prayer. The meeting adjourned.