

## Notes from the Annual Meeting of Common Ground Covenant Church

August 9<sup>th</sup>, 2009

The meeting opened with a welcome and short discussion by Jim, current Chair of the Leadership Team. Current Leadership Team members were identified as himself (Jim Montgomery), Anne Reeve, and Bob McGraw. Pastor Tom Bowen was noted as an ex-officio member of the board. The need for new volunteers was addressed and invitation was given to the congregation to consider pursuing board membership.

Anne continued the meeting and discussed the major end items that had been purchased over the past year including the chairs, video screen, etc. She noted that much had been donated and that purchases made were not excessive.

Bob lead off the budget discussion that followed with a few comments designed to help members get a sense of where the church was and in what direction it needed to go. The church is not self-sustaining, he noted, and he then took a moment to highlight the sacrifices made by the Bowen family for the church and stressed the importance of the church paying its pastor a responsible living wage. He also mentioned that financial support from the Covenant was winding down and would be ending in the future.

Jim then moved into a discussion of property issues by letting the members know that, as the property currently housing the church has been sold, the church could be asked to vacate in as little as 10 days although a longer time period might be more likely. Jim summarized several building sites in the Meridian area. Each has its own unique character, advantages, and limitations. The Leadership Team is aggressively working on this issue and pledged to keep the congregation updated and involved. Finally, the Covenant may be able to lend financial support in the form of a matching donation for tenant improvements or a purchase loan. Emphasis was given to the members about ownership and responsibility for the churches budget.

Anne then reviewed the budget. She noted that the church had more of a financial cushion than before, but that it coincided with the start of the Covenant support as well as the rent decrease. Accordingly, the church is not making true progress in this area. A financial steward, Liz Hall, has been appointed and will allow for more of a separation of financial duties. Anne mentioned that she does have an off-site data back-up.

In reviewing the budget, Anne said that monthly giving averages \$7,000-\$8,000 and that the budget assumes a roughly \$40,000 annual increase. Tithing to the Evangelical Covenant Church of 10% was also reviewed and the breakdown of where that money actually went was discussed. With 6% going to the regional Pacific Northwest Conference and 4% going to the National Covenant office, in general the church's tithe has about 1/3 go to church planting, 1/3 go towards operational costs, and 1/3 for missionary support. Finally, the figures used for the rent could be variable depending on what happens with the building situation over the coming months.

After the ballots for congregational voting were distributed, Tom delivered his pastor's report. The report was distributed in writing and he highlighted several points from it. As to the church's financial situation, he said that mere survival was not the goal and that we had the means to meet our budget and do missions as well. He'd like to see 1/3-1/2 of the budget go to missionary and outreach causes. His vision is to see the church become a force in the Valley and contribute to the global church but that it should always be focused on proclaiming the word of God. He also mentioned that he was not interested in staying in a church that was in survival mode, but rather, one reaching out and growing.

He also wanted to see more leadership development with the younger generation taking a more active role. He'd like to see the church double or triple in attendance as the result of true evangelism and not merely the poaching of other church's members. He ended his remarks by asking newly received members and existing members to stand and commit to one another. Six newly received members were named: Tracey Auer , Ron Coleman, Liane Collins, Ben Peterson, Angela Peterson, & Catharine Dickson.

Becky Marquez continued the meeting by thanking all of the volunteers that make Treehouse run. She requested that more members volunteer to spread the load more evenly. She also introduced the new preschool coordinator, Angela Peterson.

Bob then addressed the youth program that he will be organizing, noting that there were a number of adults willing to work with the age group. Middle school and above will be split off into their own group and will likely meet in the office area, in the room next to the elementary classroom. His vision includes having these young adults serve – both in the body and outside of it. He also plans to use an on-line curriculum that will make class preparation easier for teachers.

Tom then moved into an overview of worship ministries, CMJ and small groups. He began with the worship ministry and remarked on the positive develop of that ministry under the leadership of Pete Davidson . He then mentioned that the A/V Team needs new members and thanked Becky Stewart for her oversight of this ministry. Lance Stewart's work in and enthusiasm for the CMJ ministry was also keeping that effort going strong. Small Groups were occurring in the church, but still loosely being coordinated in overall communication. Future development in Small Groups is still needed.

Members were then offered the opportunity to make comments. Tracey Auer spoke of her sense that God was calling the church to great things and that we, as a body, needed to rise to that call. With no one else responding to the opportunity for member comments. Jim closed the business meeting shortly thereafter and Tom led us by breaking bread and prayer at the Lord's table.