

## MINUTES OF THE CHURCH CONFERENCE

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH

RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA

October 25, 2023

### **Call to Order**

Dr. Chris Chapman led us in prayer. Moderator Dennis Ellis called the conference to order at 6:22 p.m.

### **Business**

Minutes of the September church conference were approved by a unanimous vote.

Changes to the church roll: Nancy Jo Fleming died Oct. 8, Andy Wilson died Oct. 12, and Peggy Frisbee died Oct. 25. Beginning membership was 1,312, ending membership was 1,309.

### **Standing Committee Reports**

#### *Stewardship Committee:*

Robert Ponton, who is leading the stewardship campaign, said that in his experience, the more we give, the more we receive. The congregation should realize that this is the congregation's campaign, not the stewardship committee's or the pastor's. He said it had been a pleasure to work with his fellow committee members: Jessica Helms, David Kelley, Jane Weathers, and Robin Willis. He said it had been a true team effort in conjunction with Chuck Underwood and Metro Productions, Chris Chapman, and Wayne Hager. Letters about the campaign and pledge cards will go out tomorrow, and Commitment Sunday will be Nov. 19. He urged all members to participate.

#### *Finance Committee:*

Chairman Sam Ewell reported that monthly revenues for August and September were the lowest of the year, with expenses exceeding revenue in September by \$31,500. During the first nine months of 2023, the church collected 68.22 percent of the budget, compared to 74.76 percent for the same period of 2022. The 2023 budget requires income of approximately \$132,000 per month, he said. August revenues were just over \$100,000 and September income totaled \$87,000. The encouraging news, Sam said, is that there are five Sundays in October, and giving through the first three weeks totaled more than \$100,000.

He reported that the Finance Committee approved third-quarter missions payments totaling \$23,064.

Sam presented a tentative 2024 budget of \$1,659,079, up 4 percent from the 2023 budget of \$1,585,497. The proposed budget includes all requested changes, with 3 percent pay increases for staff members and additional funding for anticipated cost increases for utilities, auditing fees, and security personnel, among other things. The final budget will be submitted to church conference after pledge cards are returned. In a letter he wrote for the church newsletter, Sam asked church members to consider their financial commitment to the church and to help fully subscribe the 2023 budget. Finance Committee member Renee Fulk presented highlights of the proposed increases for the 2024 budget.

Sam also reported that at the Oct. 16 meeting of the Finance Committee, representatives from First Citizens Wealth Management gave a presentation about First Baptist's investment portfolio. He said he was encouraged that overall, FBC's return on investments has been quite positive.

Sam then presented a motion from the Properties Committee to approve a quote from Envirocon to replace the building automation system control for the HVAC system at a cost of \$11,700. Replacement parts for the current system controller are no longer available, and Sam said it's "hanging by a thread." He

said the cost would be paid from the Capital Repair and Replacement Fund. The motion passed unanimously.

Sam then reported on the results of the recently completed 2018 audit, discussing delays and issues encountered, recommendations made by auditors, and plans for future reviews. He explained the difference between a review of financial statements and a full audit, and proposed engaging Williams Overman Pierce to review First Baptist's financial statements for the year ending December 31, 2023, at a projected cost of \$25,000. Finance is asking that \$12,500 of the cost for the review engagement - which is not as extensive as a full audit - be paid from the 2024 church budget and the remaining expenses be paid from carryover funds from previous years.

Sam also shared Finance Committee concerns about language in the church bylaws regarding annual audits. The committee proposes amending the bylaws to give greater flexibility in determining the manner for an annual review of the books and records of the church.

Dennis thanked Sam and Renee and requested motions to endorse the proposed budget and the plan for the review engagement, both of which were approved unanimously.

### **Announcements**

Dr. Chapman shared comments on recent events in the Middle East, saying the region should be a focus of prayer for all parties. He also shared that the ministerial staff are discussing options to provide time for liturgical prayer and educational offerings for the congregation, and encouraged everyone to share concerns, interests, and thoughts with staff.

Dr. Chapman offered a closing prayer, and the meeting adjourned at 7:10 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Church Clerk

*James E. Vogel, Jr.*