

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF ENDICOTT CONSULTATION REPORT

JUNE 13 – 16, 2019

STRENGTHS

1. Commitment to the Word of God: The decision to join ECO demonstrated a tenacious commitment, by the leaders and the congregation, to affirm the authority of the Word of God, for both beliefs and behaviors.
2. Financial Resources: The congregation is blessed with key financial reserves, due in part, to the generous giving of people while alive and as part of their legacy.
3. Long Tenured Pastors: Many expressed their deep appreciation of the ministry of co-pastors, Tim and Jan, through their consistent preaching of God's Word and their constant encouragement to obey Jesus Christ in fulfilling His mission for His Church.
4. Worship Leaders: Those responsible for worship at both services were praised for their excellence in leading their respective services well.
5. Joining the Digital World: The technical leadership enabling this relatively small congregation to join the digital world provides great hope for the future.

CONCERNS

1. The Failure to Make Many New Disciples for Jesus: The congregation is seeing few people becoming new disciples of Jesus (especially adults) on a consistent basis.
2. Not Mission/Vision Driven: The current mission and vision statements are not driving decisions made by the leaders with any regularity.
3. The Three Growth Ministries are Broken: The Worship Ministry, The Children's Ministry and The Connection of first/second time guests are not being led well to achieve a dynamic mission and vision.
4. A Ministry to Young People Needs to Be Established: The current youth initiatives are not effective for dealing with the up and coming students leaving the elementary grades.
5. An Ineffective Structure: The current organization of the leaders separates authority from responsibility and provides little accountability.

PRESCRIPTIONS

1. The Failure to Make Many New Disciples for Jesus:
On a Sunday in the Fall of 2019, the pastors will call the congregation to a united worship service to allow the congregation to seek forgiveness for failing to make new disciples for Jesus Christ. The pastors, staff and elders will offer prayers that day, asking God to forgive them individually and as a congregation collectively for failing to make disciples for Jesus Christ on a regular and consistent basis. The leaders will pray that God will give this congregation a passion for people apart from God and a compelling vision to do all they can to rectify this situation. Following this service of prayer, the

congregation will be divided into groups to prayer walk and prayer drive in our communities to pray for those apart from God. Then everyone will return to the church for a common meal and to share what God taught them as they prayed. After the meal, the pastors will lead the congregation in communion.

During the Summer of 2019, the pews will be removed, sold (if possible), and replaced with comfortable wide chairs that can be arranged in a variety of configurations. (Decisions will be made about how to prepare the floor so it is safe.) The purpose is two-fold: to increase the flexibility of the biggest space in the building and to be able to arrange seating in a way that creates a feeling of critical mass yet still allows for growth.

For 12 weeks during the Fall of 2019, we will have united worship services at 10:00 am. Each week during that time, the pastors will train for 30 minutes on “The Contagious Church” (four weeks) and then conduct the Alpha Course (eight weeks). After each 30-minute presentation, the congregation will divide into groups to discuss that which has been taught for 30 minutes. Fifteen minutes during each service will be committed to other elements of worship.

The Children’s Ministry for children through 5th grade will take place during these worship services; middle and senior high students will be part of the training in the sanctuary. Additional adults will be needed to provide enough teaching teams to allow teachers to take turns in children’s ministry and the training. The pastors will be ready to do a make-up training each Sunday for teachers after the united service.

Coinciding with these Sunday mornings, the pastors will teach on two books, Reimagining Evangelism and Evangelism Without Additives, on a given weekday evening for 12 weeks. All elders, staff, deacons, and all ministry and small group leaders will be expected to attend. Those missing will be expected to listen to the recorded teaching before the next session. All congregational attendees are invited to attend as well. Once this teaching is over, staff and elders will set their own individual goals for inviting people to church and for engaging in Gospel conversations during 2020.

In the Spring of 2020, the pastors will teach an Alpha event for the community. Staff and Session members will be expected to have at least three people each attend as their guests.

2. Not Mission/Vision Driven:

Should this report be accepted, the new mission statement of FPC:E will be: “FPC:E exists to honor God by making more disciples for Jesus Christ.” Once this is in place, the leadership will conduct a mission/ministry audit to bring each ministry of the congregation into line with the mission.

The pastors will appoint a leader(s) who will develop a team of people to adopt a local elementary school that FPC:E will serve for the next five years (minimum).

The new vision statement will be: “A Heart for our Communities.” The pastors will lead the Session to set two faith goals to be reached by 2025, after input from the congregation. The first faith goal will be the number of people who will become brand new disciples through the life of FPC:E. The second faith goal will be the number of people FPC:E will touch at least once with the love of Jesus by the end of 2025. These faith goals will be in place by September 30, 2019.

3. The Three Growth Ministries are Broken:

Beginning the first Sunday in January 2020, the congregation will make the following changes in the worship schedule:

The 9:00 service will move to a start time between 9:30 - 10:00, TBD. Children will participate in worship with their families for the first 15 minutes of the service. They will then be excused to participate in a children’s event that is so exciting that children talk about it when they attend school during the week. It is to be based upon “Think Orange” or a similar curriculum.

In light of recent developments, the Session will seek the input of those who worship at the second service as they determine if/how a traditional/blended service can be offered after the completion of the united services in the Fall. This service will be offered for those who prefer that style, for those who serve in the children’s ministry to have an opportunity to worship, and for guests that people will invite.

The connection ministry will develop a connection strategy for first time guests that track them from the time they first drive into the parking lot until they themselves are reproducing believers. This ministry will be based upon the teachings in the book Fusion, by Nelson Searcy. The connection ministry will train greeters, hosts, etc., and develop a strategy of connection for the first year, starting **January 1 to Dec. 2020**. The connection ministry leader(s) will take the team to the ECO event in Cobleskill the weekend before Thanksgiving, **November 23-24, 2019** (cost \$500/church).

4. A Ministry to the Young People Needs to be Established:

There are currently very few young people in the upper grades of high school. These young people need to be mentored as is happening currently. However, there are a number of young people preparing to enter the youth program, which will provide a basis for establishing an excellent Youth Ministry. This opportunity cannot be squandered. Therefore, **by this Fall (2019)**, a Youth Ministry needs to be established that helps young men and women become leaders who are leading their peers in

becoming brand new disciples of Jesus. It is important that this ministry is resourced both financially and with people in the congregation who have a passion to see this ministry established and effective. The Session should consider putting some financial resources into hiring a part-time youth leader. "Think Orange" has a curriculum for middle and senior high students as well.

5. An Ineffective Structure: The pastors will lead the Session through the book Winning on Purpose, by John Kaiser, in **the Spring of 2020**. **Beginning in the fall of 2020**, the Session and staff will move to a staff-led model of ministry where the board governs, the pastors lead, the staff equips, and the congregation does ministry. The pastors will develop a staff to cover worship, preaching, children, youth, connection, technology, groups, buildings and grounds, finances and nursery school. Staff members, whether paid full-time, part-time or volunteers, will work for the pastors and set measurable goals in their ministry areas for which they will be held accountable. All staff members will be held accountable for evangelism, leadership development and growth goals. The staff will answer to the pastors. The collections of these goals will then be the pastors' goals, for which they will be held accountable to the Session. Most, if not all, of the committees will then disappear. The current Session will allow the staff to begin to function this way in September 2019, to provide a year of experience for this new model before everyone is held accountable. **In January 2021**, the by-laws will be changed to fit this new model since the number of elders will be reduced. In anticipation of changes in the number/function of the elders, the current elders and deacons in the Class of 2019 will be asked to consider continuing to serve during this transitional year. This structure is the way ECO national leadership (The Synod) is organized, and this is the structure ECO is recommending all congregations follow.

ON JUNE 30, 2019, THOSE WHO ATTEND WORSHIP REGULARLY AT FPC:E WILL HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO INDICATE WHETHER THEY PERSONALLY SUPPORT OR CANNOT SUPPORT THIS REPORT AND THE OUTLINED PRESCRIPTIONS. THE SESSION WILL VOTE TO ACCEPT OR REJECT THE REPORT AND ITS PRESCRIPTIONS ON JULY 10, 2019. IF ACCEPTED, ECO WILL PROVIDE A CONGREGATIONAL COACH TO WALK WITH THE PASTORS, SESSION, AND LEADERS FOR ONE YEAR. IF REJECTED, THIS PROCESS WILL END SINCE THE SESSION WILL HAVE SPOKEN.

Dr. Paul D. Borden
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