

Conversation with Session Series

Topic: Follow-Up to Annual Meeting Goals Presented for 2017

Date: February 26, 2017

Present:

Elders: Patric Donaghue, Wendy Hurley, Jim Shoots, Marianne Chiafery, and John Thomassen

Congregation Participation: 10 Congregants

We started by listing the current set of 2017 Goals on the chalk board, and then opened the conversation to any questions or comments from attendees. The following topics were discussed:

Sanctuary Beautification

The first topic, “making the Sanctuary a little more ‘Sanctuary-Like’”, grew into a fairly lengthy and productive discussion about possible enhancements to the Sanctuary in order to make it more attractive and inviting. Several ideas and suggestions were discussed, including:

- Choir Risers – removing some to reduce their footprint, especially with our currently smaller choir; moving them off to one side so they are less of a main focus; re-painting the choir risers a more attractive color and/or covering them with carpeting; working to make the choir monitor speakers less obtrusive, and generally hide the “electronics” better
- Paint one wall – the wall behind the choir risers – an accent color
- Remove curtain behind the choir risers
- Replace the cross behind the choir risers with a “more organic” – wooden – one, perhaps with trim around it. The trim ***could*** mirror the peaked architecture of our building. Gordy volunteered to make something, if that is what we decide. It was also pointed out that we might be able to use the old wooden cross that used to hang in Westminster Hall. In addition, it was suggested that we use special lighting on the cross.
- It was suggested that one congregation member be consulted for that person’s ideas and talent in this area.
- Add decorative suspended panels which would both reduce echo and make the space seem cozier. Along the same line, we also talked about window drapes, fabric wall hangings, and wall mounted acoustic panels.

Next, we talked about funding for the Sanctuary improvements. It was mentioned that we have Designated Funds that might be available, and the Fraser Fund was briefly discussed, noting that improvements to the Sanctuary might be a valid use for a portion of the funds under the terms of the bequest.

Action Item: The Women’s Group, and in particular Beverly Benoit and Sherry Thomassen, will contact interested parties, and work together with B&G, and Worship, and present three proposals to Session: one costing zero dollars; a mid-range one, costing a little money; and an expanded wish list costing more money.

Playground

The second topic was about constructing a playground. Concerns were voiced about insurance and the potential need to increase our liability coverage. It was mentioned that the insurance issue had been previously researched by a former Session member and the conclusion was that there was not an issue.

Concerns were also raised about local building codes. It was suggested that when we get input on both of these concerns and that we get things in writing.

Action Item: Gregg Miller will talk to Tom Voorhees about any Mendon Building Code requirements for playgrounds, and get the specific references to the applicable code (if any).

Action Item: Jim Shoots will get further details on our insurance, and our insurance company's position on a playground, including any written documentation he can obtain.

Hands-On Missions Projects

A very brief discussion took place, during which several of the hands-on Mission Projects with which we had recently or currently undertaken were mentioned, including: Habitat for Humanity, The Spaghetti Dinner, Cameron Ministries, and the Military Care Packages.

Fund Raising For Church

This subject was also briefly touched on, with a Strawberry Social and Chicken Barbeque being touched on. There was a brief mention of the church's tradition of NOT using fund-raisers to contribute to our own budget but to benefit missions' projects.

Meditation Area

A short discussion took place on the possibility of building a Meditation Area somewhere on the church property. This would be a quiet, secluded area, with benches, and perhaps a gazebo, perhaps flowers and/or shrubs, where people could go to sit and pray.

Action Item: Gordy agreed to spearhead this investigation and provide three proposals: one costing zero dollars; one costing a few dollars; and one full-blown proposal, costing more.

Yearly Church Calendar

A proposal was made to have an attractive church calendar showing all the major activities of the church for an entire year ahead for planning purposes. It was suggested this be displayed in a prominent location such as the Welcome Area. It was also suggested that it include space for people to sign up to head up these events, thus tying into the Congregational Involvement List. It was also suggested that Session prioritize the list of congregational tasks, ranking as highest priority the activities we want to make sure happen during the year.

Action Item: Since Jim Shoots is already working on the Congregational Involvement List, he will spearhead the calendar effort as well.