

## **FIRST PREBYTERIAN CHURCH DOUGLASVILLE CONSULTATION REPORT**

**JUNE 10 – 14, 2020**

### **STRENGTHS**

1. Commitment to the Word of God: The commitment to join ECO as the denomination with which to affiliate, was just a continuation of, an over 50 year decision, by the congregation and its leaders, to preach and teach the Word of God.
2. The Pastor and the Leadership Community: The pastor and many who comprise the staff and session are viewed as leaders, who serve well, the Lord Jesus Christ first and then the congregation and community.
3. Serving the Community: The congregation maintains an excellent reputation in how it serves the local community in a myriad of ways. The congregation fulfills the Great Commandment with distinction in its ministries to the city and the county.
4. Giving: This congregation is generous in its commitments to the body in giving and in supporting ministries in the community and international missions. Even in this time of pandemic giving to the Body has remained steady.
5. Resources: God has blessed this congregation with an abundance of resources. Some of those resources include people, finances, little debt, facilities, and both visibility and accessibility.

### **CONCERNS**

1. Failure to Obey the Great Commission: The congregation, for a number of years has not been fulfilling the command to make disciples for Jesus Christ. While obeying the Great Commandment there have been very few people each year, especially adults, becoming new disciples of Jesus Christ.
2. There is No Vision: There is no clear picture of what the leaders and the congregation believe God wants FPC to accomplish in Douglas County.
3. Children and the Connection of Guests are Not Priorities: Two of the key ministries that enable congregations to grow in 2020 are not given priority in terms of personnel, funding and program structure.
4. A Multicultural Congregation: The leadership is not intentional in reaching a multicultural community. The congregation does not reflect its community.
5. Leadership Structure: The leadership structure does not marry authority, responsibility and accountability.

### **PRESCRIPTIONS**

1. Failure to Obey the Great Commission: The pastor and session will call the congregation to a combined Sunday worship service dedicated to asking for forgiveness and promising to repent of not obeying the Great Commission. Staff and session members will lead in prayers that ask forgiveness for the failure to obey both individually and

collectively our Lord's command. Those who pray will ask God to forgive and to help the congregation to change its behaviors. Prayers will be offered asking God to give the congregation and its leaders a compelling vision for reaching Douglas county. Following this service of prayer, the congregation will be divided up to prayer drive the community and then all will return for a common meal to share what God revealed to people as they prayed. This time of reflection will end with communion. This day will occur soon after students return to school (assuming they do) this Fall.

The staff and session will read the book *You Found Me* by Rick Richardson. They will discuss the findings and teachings in the book. After completing this study each staff and session member will find someone who is not a disciple of Jesus Christ to begin to BLESS them in order to seek to lead them to Jesus. The pastor will set up a process of accountability for each individual to continually share where they are in the process of BLESSING people. This will begin by August 15, 2020. By January of 2021 all classes, groups and Bible studies will not only go through the book, but people will be asked to select individuals who are not disciples to BLESS them and be placed in groups to share their on-going experiences.

In January the pastor will lead the congregation to begin a Mission/Ministry audit of every ministry in the congregation to determine how that ministry will fulfill the Great Commission. Those that do not demonstrate how such will occur regularly will be cancelled as ministries of the congregation. This audit will be completed by December 31, 2021.

2. There is No Vision: The pastor will form a small team of people to surround him as he seeks God's specific vision for the congregation. This team will pray with him weekly that God will give the pastor and his leaders a prophetic burden for key ministries to help reach the county. Part of this burden will be to help this congregation move from serving a Christendom culture that no longer exists to targeting and reaching a secular culture. Twice a month they will conduct prayer drives throughout the community. This team along with the pastor will read key books and visit county and city leaders to seek their input on places the congregation can serve repeatedly. The church will invite Pastor Mark Hanke to come to spend a Saturday and Sunday with leaders and the congregation to share what God is teaching him and his church about reaching their city. This whole process needs to begin late this summer and be completed by the end of the calendar year.
3. Children and the Connection of Guests are Not Priorities: In a secular culture the primary target the congregation needs to focus on in order to grow are people who are not yet disciples of Jesus Christ, rather than those already disciples (although such people are more than welcome). This means making the primary children's ministry

during the two later services on Sunday morning. Both services need to be done by noon. This new ministry needs to be so exciting that children go to school and brag about how great it is. Such emphasis means that children's Sunday school at 9:30 a.m. will no longer occur. Also, the upstairs of the Education building will be reconfigured for children, not adults. This children's ministry needs to follow the principles taught in the "Orange Curriculum". The children's minister needs to travel to at least three larger congregations that are doing such a ministry, when the gathering of children gets back to a more normal state.

A half-time person needs to be responsible for helping new people connect to the congregation. This person needs to read the book *Fusion*. The next step is to build a team that will help this individual implement the principles of assisting people in getting connected. Systems need to be in place to welcome first time guests and remain in contact with them from their first time on the parking lot until they become mobilized in ministry. Ushers and greeters for both later morning worship services are part of this team and need to be trained to welcome guests, as guests, and assist them as needed. This person and the team need to be in place no later than the beginning of 2021.

4. A Multicultural Congregation: The leadership of the congregation will begin to act intentionally to recruit people of color for leadership roles and as applicants for staff positions. The pastor and key leaders will visit other congregations that are multicultural to learn how they were able to become such. The pastor will visit with African-American leaders to ask what can be done to begin to reflect in the staff and eventually the session people from other races and ethnicities. The staff will attempt a variety of strategies in order to find the one that ensures other races and ethnicities are on the platform each week, particularly at the 10:45 a.m. and 11 a.m. worship services. In every staff and session meeting prayers should be offered to God asking for wisdom and his favor in making the goal of having the congregation reflect the community in the life of the congregation. This effort will start once this report is adopted by the session, should that be the case.
5. Leadership Structure: The staff and session will read through the book *Winning on Purpose*, that describes the structure ECO employs in the Synod and is recommending each ECO congregation adopt. In this structure a session of, no more than ten elders, govern the congregation, the pastor leads, the staff carries out the pastor's directives and equips the congregation for ministry and the congregation conducts the ministry of the church body. The pastor is accountable to the session for three to five church wide goals that enables the congregation to fulfill the vision. The staff are held accountable for individual goals, including goals related to fulfilling the Great Commission, developing leaders and seeing their ministries grow. The session holds the pastor accountable for the goals and set the policies that determine the conduct of the elders, pastors and staff

members. The purpose behind this model of governance is to marry authority with responsibility, while holding leaders accountable for achieving the vision, God has given to this congregation. This study will begin this Fall and the structure will be adopted before the selection of a new session.

The congregation of FPC will vote their opinion whether this report and its prescriptions should be accepted or rejected by Sunday July 12, 2020. The session will vote to accept or reject this report and its prescriptions by Sunday July 19, 2020. If accepted ECO will appoint a coach to walk alongside the congregation for 18 months. If rejected the process is over since the session will have spoken.

Submitted by,

Dr. Paul D. Borden

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