

General Council of Elders' Vision Update

January 29 and February 5, 2017

On behalf of the pastors and General Council of Elders (GCE), I want to talk about some areas of our 2017 Vision: last week I shared our Pulpit Vision, and Next Generation Vision. Today I'll present our Facilities & Finances Vision, and our Mission Vision.

Pulpit Vision

- We believe the message of Micah fit our church and nation this fall.
- We are excited about Colossians. We believe it reminds us of the centrality of Christ and that it is visionary as it speaks to our church's mission with clarity. We will study Colossians through May 2017.
- Flowing out of Pastors' retreat, assuming we don't have a Sr. Pastor by then, we sense the next series will be "We Believe". Each week this summer we will focus on a different foundational belief and summarize the big picture from the Scriptures beginning in June.
- We will continue with the teaching team until we find our next senior pastor. We're making the Sunday morning rotation smaller and are working hard at speaking with a unified voice. The teaching team meets weekly, so all are involved in upcoming messages.
- If we've heard it once, we've heard it a million times...Is it going to take 4.5 years like last time? Let me tell you, we can find a pastor very quickly, but it is up to God how long He takes to send His man. Part of it hinges on our being where He wants us as a church right now. Each pastor here now is God-called and God-sent. We believe God has us covered until He sends a Senior Pastor.
- It has been five months since Brother Wayne passed. During that time the elders have had conversations with some of the recommended candidates. As we shared a few weeks ago, we have formed a pastor search team headed by Bobby Dalrymple that now meets weekly. They have met with the GCE and currently are focused on refining what we are looking for and how to network for potential candidates. If you have recommendations, we have created a direct link to the team: pastorsearch@woodlandpark.org and will give regular updates in the weeks and months ahead. All team updates will be available on our website.

Next Generation Vision

We have sensed God calling us to a value shift/change of mindset with our 20 somethings. This demographic of our body is being prayed for and discussed regularly at Pastor meetings and Elder meetings. Here is what we see so far...

We believe that a healthy college/young adult ministry is built on the foundation of a healthy children's ministry and a healthy student ministry. With that in mind, let me update you on these two key areas:

- Strengthening Children's ministry
 - Carl Willis has served two years in his role as Children's & Family Pastor; we believe this area has become stable and healthier under his leadership.
 - New deacon candidates to be affirmed for Children's ministry are Darrin Church, Matt Hauber, and Daniel Roberts
 - Moving forward, we want to focus on a growing family ministry.

- Strengthening Student ministry
 - Justin Wilson has been here less than a year, but we believe we are making great strides in Student Ministry. He's leading the leaders and is well loved by the students.
 - Beginning this school year, we created a 6th grade transition year. Sunday mornings haven't changed; they were already separate as a grade, but Sunday and Wednesday nights we have given them their own identity. This is being led well by Mickey and Kristen Hammel and Chris and Mary Anna Coleman.
 - Tyler Patty has just been hired as Student Ministry Worship Intern. Knowing he is headed to the mission field, he will have an equipping focus on preparing future worship leaders and working himself out of a job.

- Seeing what's next, we believe building a healthier college/young adult ministry flows out of a healthy Children's Ministry and Student Ministry.
 - Until we hire a College/Young Adult pastor, we have aligned this ministry area under Student Pastor Justin Wilson to provide coaching and directional input. We want to establish a strong connection between the two ministries.
 - We want to pursue a College/Young (C/YA) adult pastor and have budgeted for it. Obviously, a Senior pastor is our first priority. We are giving opportunity to the Pastor Search team as they do their job to also field and refer potential candidates they encounter that they believe might be a better fit for C/YA pastor.
 - In the meantime, we just hired Nathan Daugherty as a part-time College intern. This paid position will free him to devote more time to the college ministry.
 - We have allocated significant budget for this area, and expect it will grow more in next couple of years.
 - We are prioritizing giving our 20-somethings more of a stake in defining our future. We intentionally placed a college student on our Pastor Search Team (Bailey Martin). We will instruct all our ministry councils to be intentional about including some young adults; this will be their church before you know it, and we want to give them more ownership.
 - We are intentionally hiring younger staff (Tiffany Askew, Justin Wilson, Jordan Santos, Audrey Owens, Tyler Patty, and Nathan Daugherty) and are listening to their perspectives.
 - We want to evaluate existing ministries as to how we can specifically target next generation involvement.
 - We are working on a database so older folks who want to be available for mentoring can sign up to be available, and 20-somethings who want a mentor can sign up to be connected with someone.

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Facilities & Finances Vision

- Getting rid of debt is still our first priority for this area. We are grateful to tell you we made another extra payment of \$150,000 this past week. Our debt is now down to about \$1.25 million.
- We want to leverage all our facilities, property and finances to live out our calling to magnify Jesus Christ, mature His people, and make Him known. With that in mind...
- We believe by faith that we are ready to grow and have begun to plan. The Building team has been considering and pricing three options for the next step and have recommended a specific area to the GCE:
 - Opening up the hallway into the fellowship hall area near the maintenance room,
 - Putting in some additional classrooms

- Putting in a fellowship hall with moveable walls so it can be subdivided for multiple purposes including additional classrooms.
 - Creating some additional bathrooms and a small kitchen area to support serving catered meals.
- The GCE believes this is the next step, and the Building team is preparing estimates. We will not borrow for this, but are praying this direction. Which leads to...
- We want to seriously pursue the possibility of selling 26 peripheral acres that we aren't using which are located on the back of the property. We've had some conversations with interested parties, but we believe it is time to pull the trigger on listing this acreage with a commercial realtor. We would entertain interest in something residential (apartments or a retirement community) and would not sell unless the offer was enough to get debt free with funds left over toward our next step on the facilities. Wes Bowman and team are meeting and will vet potential agencies and move toward with a commercial listing. If we get a serious offer that meets our criteria, we will bring that to the body for discussion and affirmation.
 - We are entering into a partnership with Veritas school which will begin meeting in our facility this fall.
 - We're praying for God to show us ways we can make this property a community hub. For example, we would love to see us start hosting a weekly Farmer's market on the property.
 - All of this is from a heart desire to be the best stewards possible of the building, land, and finances the Lord has blessed us with.

Mission Vision

- Let us just say, there is a freshness to the upcoming mission conference with Charles Price – you don't want to miss it!! He is one of the premier mission voices today.
- We are excited about how God continues to provide us with sending opportunities with next generation WPBC missionaries: (Brian & **Ariel** Dicks – Hungary, Tyler & **Lara** Patty – Czech Republic, **Abby Woodfin** - NYC, **Allison Woodfin** - France, **Drew** & Ann Jennings – South America, **Rachel Williams** – California/Student Venture, **David**– Asia, **Tanner Ball** – Campus Outreach, **Ramsey Pruitt** - Germany, **Becca** – Undisclosed location, **Casey Willis** - Africa, Hunter - Asia, Colin & **Megan** Rogers - Columbia, **Chase** & Audrey Arndt - Africa). This is a tremendous blessing and opportunity, but also a tremendous responsibility.
- Currently we are redistributing mission dollars as older missionaries retire; we want to get debt behind us so we can expand our mission giving again.
- We continue to look for opportunities to partner within the community.
- Justin Wilson will connect with the new Bible in the Schools teacher at Tyner. We've begun to investigate the idea of loaning some of our land to schools for federally funded gardening programs
- We continue to pursue a greater relationship with Bess T Shepherd and want to pursue volunteer options such as after-school tutoring. Last Sunday during youth, WP presented the school with 100 sets of headphones paid for by youth fundraising.

We believe this is God's direction...Our hearts and agendas are on the altar before the Lord. The clarity is progressive as are the discussions. A new senior pastor will continue the refining of our vision, but we are seeking God and moving at the same time right now. We believe these things are worth investing in, and we thank you for what you are making possible.

The General Council of Elders