

## **Congregational Conversation #1**

### **March 12, 2017**

#### **Listening Circles Working Group Report – Pastor Jesse**

In November 2016 the session of West Side Presbyterian Church (WSPC) called for the formation of Listening Circles in order to assess the congregation's readiness to begin the Church Mission study and to ascertain the feelings and perceptions of the current life and ministry of WSPC to date. A team of three ruling elders, a member of the church staff, and the associate pastor were tasked by session to review the raw data recorded by the ruling elders and look for reoccurring themes in the responses. Each team member wrote a summary of their findings and included a paragraph or two about their own assessments garnered from the raw data. The report featured seven Key Findings, six Recommendations, and 4 Motions for Session Consideration. The [Listening Circles Report](#) can be viewed online. Session adopted the Summarized Results of Session Listening Circles with its recommendations and motions on March 7, 2017. At the Congregational Conversation Event held between the services on Sunday March 12, Pastor Jesse highlighted several of the items from the report:

1. Respondents felt that they would like to see much more communication with regards to all issues going on in the church. Respondents felt that there is insufficient communication with regards to the church's interim period and transition time.
2. Respondents expressed an ardent support for the continuation of WSPC's strong tradition of Biblical preaching and teaching and of Biblical orthodoxy.
3. Respondents voiced lingering and/or unresolved concerns clustering around denominational affiliation with the PC (USA), the Seattle Presbytery, the Fellowship Community, and staff turnover/changes.

#### **Fellowship Community Working Group Report - Ryan Avery**

Pastor Shari, Pastor Jesse, and Elders Nick Upton, Dave Pimblett, and Ryan Avery attended the Fellowship Community Gathering in Lakeland, Florida in February. There they met and worshiped with over 200 pastors and elders from churches around the country. We experienced outstanding preaching and heard amazing stories of what is happening at like-minded churches around the country. The five of us came away refreshed and encouraged by the tasks ahead of us and look forward to sharing much of what we learned in the coming months. The experience also reaffirmed our commitment to the Fellowship Community, and we look forward to strengthening bonds with other churches in the area, including forming a mission affinity group with John Knox PC and deepening our relationship with Bellevue Presbyterian and UPC, as both of those churches now have members on the current board of the Fellowship Community. We are also excited about the prospect of a west coast or regional gathering in the future and hope that many more from West Side might participate. Session has once more endorsed West Side's commitment to abide the core documents of the Fellowship Community: [The Essential Tenets](#), [Confessional Standards](#), [The Theology Project](#), and the [Fellowship Covenant for Presbyterian Congregations](#). These are posted on our [website](#). Hard copies were available at the meeting and additional copies may be picked up at the church office.

## **Road Map Working Group Report**

Elders on this team include: Jim Campbell, Nick Upton, Greg Hjort, Sue Neelson, Martha Carlson, Mark Koelling, and pastors Shari and Jesse.

Session has determined through the feedback of Listening Circles, and their own on-going discernment, that WSPC is ready to move into the next phase of seeking and calling a pastor. This group outlined the process to form a Pastor Nominating Committee including the criteria for serving, an estimated timeline, the process for selection, and the training for this ministry. Nominations for the PNC are to be submitted using provided paper and on-line forms. Additionally, the Church Mission Study Team will be formed soon and the plan is to include the members of the PNC in conducting the study. Finally, this group strongly encourages the congregation to participate in an upcoming congregational survey that will help inform the Church Mission Study.

[PNC Online Recommendation Form](#)

[Updated Road Map](#)

## **Spiritual Life Report - Kenny Kramer**

Recognizing West Side summer attendance is historically low, we recommends offering one worship in July, August and first Sunday in September. This will ease the burden on staff by streamlining worship planning and provide some cost savings. Even more compelling, we believe that combining for one service will bring the WS congregation together as one united body! Those present gave feedback on the best time for that service which turns out to be 9:30 am. Discipleship Department will now determine what time to hold summer Sunday school.

## **Stewardship and Finance Report - Jim Campbell**

WSPC-Finance Summary-March 12, 2017

We have **two primary sources of funds**:

1. **Funding Guide.** This includes the annual exercise we go through to establish our operating expenses for the year. Includes the costs for staffing, facilities, capital expenditures for the Building, per capita costs paid to Presbytery, program costs and missions-related support. We divide those costs into two primary categories – hard costs, those that are fixed in nature and we are committed to and soft costs, those that are more discretionary in nature and are funded if the dollars are available to do so.
2. **Designated Funds.** Those monies that have been contributed over several years in addition to the normal Funding Guide unified giving. Sources of these funds are memorial and estate gifts, special gifts earmarked for specific needs (e.g., Youth, Local Missions, Pastor Housing Loan, MOPS). A portion of these funds are set aside as a contingency should unexpected expenses arise or as an operating reserve should giving run short of our short-term cash needs. The expenditure of these funds requires Session's authorization. For example, given our commitment to the Fellowship, Session

recently authorized \$3,000 for travel expenses to send the group who discussed this earlier. As a side note, Dave, Nick & Ryan personally paid their own airfare.

### Year-to-Date Giving

Unified Giving this year is short of last year and the Funding Guide by \$8,000 and \$47,000, respectively. This level of giving is not adequate to cover WSPC hard costs, those amounts that are fixed or are committed to staff and individual missionaries. To date, the operating cash balance is \$12,000 lower than the beginning of the year. The number of households who are giving this year is down by 20 or 11% compared to last year. The total giving is down ~5%, hence the slight uptick in average giving per household (i.e., \$992 for Jan/Feb 2017). The number of Households ranged from 253 to 296, with 2015 & 2016 at the low end (i.e., 259 and 253, respectively).

### Annual 2017 Funding Guide Hard Costs - \$1,078,000

