



January 21, 2018 | 5:00 pm

Church Sanctuary

Elder Council Members Present:

Jerry Dockery, James Buchanan, Mark Grigg, and Paul Harrell, Don Pennell, and David Seals

Elder Council Members Absent: None

Meeting Minutes

I. Opening

Don Pennell opened the meeting with a welcome to the Crabapple First Baptist Members. Don led in prayer and Greg Williams led the body in a song.

II. Crabapple FBC Vision/Mission/Values

Don Pennell stated that the Elder Council first began by identifying who we are, what we want to be, and how best to get there. Don presented the Vision/Mission/Values that the Elder Council had formulated through prayer and seeking God's direction.

Crabapple's Vision

We seek the spiritual transformation for Individuals, Families, Communities and Nations by
Knowing and Worshipping Jesus Christ

Crabapple's Mission

Knowing, Worshipping and Sharing Jesus Christ

Crabapple's Core Values

Totally Scriptural

Passionately Spiritual

Eternally Significant

Don walked the gathering through these key elements of who we seek to be and noted that moving forward, as we evaluate what and how we do things, we will use the standard of knowing, worshipping and sharing Jesus Christ. The things we do and say must lead others in one or more of these three categories.

Don then outlined how the Elder Council had divided the church into six strategic ministry areas:

- Preaching and Vision – Jerry Dockery
- Spiritual Formation & Deacon Oversight – David Seals
- Missions and Students – Mark Grigg
- Ministries – Paul Harrell
- Stewardship and Communication – Don Pennell
- Ministry Support – James Buchanan

Don then asked each elder to give a brief synopsis of his ministry oversight area:

Jerry Dockery

Jerry shared that his primary areas of responsibility are vision & preaching and that he is committed to developing:

- Quality time of weekly worship that is vibrant, authentic and theologically rich
- gatherings focused upon quality expository preaching of God's Word
- the public reading of God's word
- observance of the ordinances
- the reading of edifying documents ... church covenant, apostle's creed, responsive items
- the singing of hymns, spiritual songs that teach & enable meaningful worship of God
- prayer that is purposeful, spiritual and effective

David Seals

David shared about his primary area of responsibility – spiritual formation – and defined it as the process and practices by which a person may progress in their spiritual or religious life. He stated that, in the past, we have referred to this as discipleship training or simply Christian growth. David shared scripture in keeping with spiritual growth – 2 Timothy 2:15, Romans 12:2, and 2 Corinthians 3:18 and noted that these passages admonish the believer to grow spiritually.

David noted several ministry areas in which we are currently engaged that help to accomplish this necessary spiritual growth – Sunday School, Bible Studies, and Worship. David challenged the body by stating that spiritual growth is a process that calls us all to be active participants, constantly deepening our relationship with our Lord.

David also shared about his oversight of the deacons where he noted that the Deacons are an ordained office of the church. David stated that he will seek to support the deacon ministry as they fulfill their ministry to care for the physical needs of the body.

Mark Grigg

Mark shared about his area of ministry oversight - students and missions working primarily with Luke Folsom, Associate Pastor of Students and Missions. Mark noted that his role would be to provide support through prayer, counsel and involvement to ensure these important ministries are in alignment with our vision, mission and core values. Mark stated how blessed we are to have Luke Folsom at Crabapple and provide pastoral leadership for students and missions.

Mark said that the Student Ministry Team is made up of Paula Folsom, Lisa Thomason, Teri Creamer, Jacque Folsom, Andrea Brown, Craig Baughan, Shannon Baughan, Bud Long, Aaron Long, John David Brown, and Chris Smathers. Mark noted that the Student Ministry theme verse is

Colossians 2:6-7 and that the mission statement is: The Student Ministry of Crabapple First Baptist Church exists to see students receive Jesus Christ as Lord, and walk in Him, being rooted in the faith.

Mark then reported that the Mission Team is comprised of Luke Folsom, John Dillard, Chris Smathers, Paula Folsom, Karen Diquollo, and Sandy Smathers, and that we are committed to the worldwide task of making disciples in our community, nation, and world. Mark stated that, during the past year, we have reaffirmed our mission vision, reviewed our strategies to ensure they support Crabapple FBC's mission to Know, Worship, and Share Jesus Christ, and that we are in the process of evaluating our current mission partners as well as considering new mission partners.

Mark concluded by noting that our mission ministry is designed to support Crabapple FBC's vision, which is "to see spiritual transformation of individuals, families, communities, and nations by knowing and worshiping Jesus Christ."

Paul Harrell

Paul began by explaining his ministry oversight area of Ministries, which include Preschool, both weekday and Sunday School, Children (Awana, Elements, VBS, and MOPS), Connections (Welcome Desk, Greeters, and ushers), Hospitality, Senior Adults and Recreation. Paul stated that these areas of ministry are vital to our church.

He noted that we have 135 students in 9 classes in our Weekday Preschool representing approximately 100 families. We have four teachers with more than 15 years of service and five of our teachers are Crabapple members.

In Awana, we minister to about 65 children each Wednesday night, with about 60% of those being non-Crabapple members. We have 26 volunteer leaders serving in this ministry, many of whom have served for more than 10 years.

Paul then noted that MOPS is a very exciting ministry of our church. We currently have about 32 moms being ministered to along with 46 preschool children who are learning Bible truth. About 60% of our MOPS moms are non-Crabapple members. He also noted that we have three elders serving in MOPS this year.

Our hospitality ministry is directed by Sandy Smathers and serves about 55 families each Wednesday night during the school year and has assisted with other ministry efforts including VBS, church picnics, ladies teas, Harvest of Thanks, Senior Adult/Christmas Dinner, and multiple training events. The hospitality ministry also works to decorate the church building at various times of the year and utilizes about 10 volunteers.

Paul noted that our recreation ministry is administered now by Brian Smith and currently hosts a youth basketball league with approximately 65 teams. Paul expressed his excitement over the ideas that Brian Smith has for expanding the recreation ministry to use our gym as an outreach tool into the community.

Our senior adult ministry is in a bit of a transition, but has been led by Tony Berkuta for several years. Tony has led the seniors by hosting luncheons and other special events like apple picking trips to north Georgia. Paul noted that we will be searching for a new Senior Adult Ministry Director over the first months of 2018.

Paul said that David Thraikill oversees the Connections Ministry which includes the Welcome Center, Greeters, and Ushers. These are, and continue to be, vital and important ministry efforts as we welcome and greet visitors to our campus during worship and other service opportunities at the church.

Paul conclude by stating that these and all our ministry efforts will be evaluated by their ability to teach our people to **KNOW, WORSHIP, AND SHARE** Jesus Christ.

James Buchanan

James Buchanan then highlighted his ministry oversight for Ministry Support which includes the areas of facility use and maintenance, grounds, transportation, safety and security, personnel, policies, and church calendar.

James told the congregation that the Ministry Support area currently has two functioning teams working to accomplish these purposes.

The Human Resources (HR) Team is comprised of Bill Phillips, Lori Sargent, Betty Clark, Beth Proctor, and Dan Wolfe. James said that the HR Team is currently revising the Personnel Manual, conducting a search for an administrative assistant, and assisting in filling two ministry volunteer leadership positions within the church.

The Property Management Team is made up of JC Pendrey, Amy Jo Robertson, Bud Branan, David Clark, Doris Doris, and Greg Williams. This team is overseeing the care and maintenance of the church building and grounds, our cemetery, and developing plans for facility use, long term maintenance, and safety.

James was excited about the progress both of these teams have made in a relatively short time and noted his desire to serve alongside these groups to assist other teams in their ministry efforts.

Don Pennell

Don presented his ministry oversight area of Stewardship and Communication. In the stewardship area, Don noted that this includes the financial affairs of the church and is focused in two main areas – operational and investments. Don then introduced the Finance Team: Hillary Burkett, Larry Loyed, Bobby Sweet, Tony Berkuta, and Sam Proctor. Don noted that we just recently completed our 2018 Operational Budget. He stated that the difference between this year and years in the past is that we have tried to do more forecasting. The Finance Team tried to look at it a little closer and this year's budget is only 1.1 million which is really close to what the church spent last year. Overall, the budget that was approved by the church constitutes a 4.5% decrease over the previous year. Don also said that the Finance Team is now looking very seriously at designated funds. The church has quite a bit of money in designated funds that have been given over the years that we need to take a look at. We need to be able to use these funds when that comes in to play. Don noted that the 2017 year end results will be available soon. When those numbers are available, Don said that the elders will make those numbers available to the church.

On the investment side, Don noted that there are two main areas. The church has been fortunate to be given a large sum of money for two areas, the building fund and also the scholarship fund. The building fund is currently a little over 1.4 million dollars. The scholarship fund is a little over \$900,000.00. The scholarship team is led by Lynn Flanagan. The members are Brian Smith, Erica Jones, Kathy Buchanan, Burma Parker, Bob Sheffield and J.C. Pendry. This team has been very busy because there is a lot to be done. They have recently revised their documents to be in alignment with the Bylaws. They have added new members and they are also asking for anybody that wants to be involved in this team to please let

them know. Don then stated that the purpose of the scholarship fund is to assist in providing funds for education and equipping of graduate level students for a lifetime work in ministry.

Finally, Don touched on the area of communication. Don stated that as a church, we have struggled some in the area of communication over the years. He stated that we are looking to do a better job at communication to the whole body of timely information. For example, Don announced that Luke Folsom and Chris Smathers have recently done a great job on updating the church website. Don suggested that all members go to the website to see the new layout and content improvements. Don stated that we intend to use the website in more and different ways in reaching out to the community and to our own body.

Mark Grigg then led the congregation through a celebration of some of the highlights of the things that were accomplished in 2017. Mark noted first and foremost that our bylaws were implemented and elders were constituted and are now functioning. He noted that the elders have been meeting on a regular basis and continue to work to lead our congregation in teaching, the scriptures, and faith.

Mark also noted the church website update and how much of an improvement it is. He thanked Chris Smathers and Luke Folsom for their efforts in this regard. He encourage the members to visit the site to see for themselves the great improvement (www.crabapplefbc.org)

Mark highlighted other accomplishments for the past year, including the Sunday School reorganization, new staff hires – Allison VanBeneden and Luke Folsom, the capital outlays for our parking lot improvements and HVAC repair, our continued efforts within the foreign mission field, community missions (MOPS, VBS, Operation Christmas Child, CrabappleFest, Picnics on the lawn), our Easter and Christmas celebrations with the Alpharetta Symphony, and seeing two pastors being called to senior pastors at sister churches in nearby states.

David Seals then led a prayer of thanksgiving for all that God had done through our church in the past year.

Paul Harrell then spoke about the upcoming year and the things that the Elders are exciting about on the near horizon. Paul reminded the church about the ongoing dialogue we are having with our nearby school neighbors as well as the Milton City government. He stated that these appeared to be doors that God was opening and we were excited about what God might have in store in light of the un-heard of nature of being asked into the schools. Paul also noted that ministry growth was an area that the elders wanted to focus on for 2018. We have a lot of good things going, but we want to expand the depth of the ministry efforts and involve more people. We want to grow our ministries, including Sunday School. Also, we are excited about a focus on our families, especially dads, and that was recently seen with emphasis like the New City Catechism which is intended to help families have family worship and spiritual conversations in the home.

Paul also spoke to the building plans that had been discussed early in 2017. He noted that those discussions were put on the back burner as we moved closer to constituting our elder council because the church realized that this effort really fell to the leadership of the elders. As the elders began to meet, they soon discovered that there were pressing issues like determining our vision and purpose that needed to be solidified prior to moving forward with discussion on the building changes. The elders really felt like we needed to get a good handle on who we are and where we want to go before engaging too deeply in conversations about the building. Paul assured the group that the topic had not been forgotten and

would be something that the elders take a fresh look at in 2018, and would provide updates as they were available.

The elder council then opened the floor to questions from the congregation.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS:

QUESTION:(Jen Smathers) I would just like to know where we are with looking for a Children's Minister.

ANSWER: (Paul Harrell) That is something that we have talked about. We have got some monies budgeted for the second half of this year. This falls, in my opinion, that it is not something we had to address immediately, so we have put it on the back burner temporarily. As we start this new year, that is something that we will move to the forefront and talk about. Does that answer your question? We have not done much in that direction, just because of the other things we are working towards.

QUESTION: (Jen Smathers) Is it a high priority?

ANSWER: (David Seals) I think one of the things that is so important, is that now that we've got an organization of the elders and we can oversee the important ministries of the church, we need to be guided by our mission statement. So, any hiring we do, we will want to look at people and at positions that will meet the mission statement of our church. We will be looking at that very deeply and we will hire the right person at the right time that will help our church grow and help the ministries of our Lord to succeed in this community. So, yes, it is a pretty high priority. It's not like, tomorrow, but it's as close as we can make it, from my view.

CLARIFYING ANSWER: The elders have had discussions about a replacement for Scott Slaughter. Those discussions have been focused on the direction of our church and how this specific position would fit into what we want to be and do. The elders felt like it was very important to address the issue of vision and purpose before moving too quickly to hire a staff person since the vision and purpose of our church will be critical in guiding how we search and for whom we search. The elders are also monitoring our church's financial position and want to make sure that we are committed to and can support another staff position financially before we move forward with a search for a new pastor.

QUESTION: (Larry Loyed) You mentioned earlier the website. If you were an active participant prior to reorganizing it, would you still be an active participant now, so that you could just go in there?

ANSWER: (Don Pennell asked Chris Smathers to address) So right now where you had accounts before, that stuff has not been moved into the new website. The new website is more about accessibility to everybody, so for all the content that is out there, anybody can get to. So there in not the idea of accounts and pages like there was on the old site. We are actually working today to get the podcast moved over so you can subscribe to the podcast and have the updates come directly to your phone. So hopefully that will be fixed this week and then we will start to get the directory that was on the old site moved over and have some of those new features. But for now, it's just public content that is easily available to everybody.

QUESTION: (Brian Smith) Where does the ministry for our homebound members fall? Under who?

ANSWER: (Jerry Dockery) The deacons.

ANSWER: (David Seals) Having oversight of the deacons, I try to make most of their meetings and a big part of their meetings is spent discussing what they call their “care teams” where they address a lot of our homebound members. They do visits, and they have prayer time for them. They are earnestly trying to do a really good ministry in that area. And there are ways they talk about that they can improve, but for what I’ve observed, they are doing a pretty good job and very close to our homebound and those that need ministering to.

QUESTION: (Michele Williams) Years ago we had really strong Men’s Ministry and Women’s Ministry and in the last couple of years those have seemed to have faded away and maybe we have one activity a year. Is there any thought to bringing back something that’s more intergenerational in nature for our men or women to really strengthen that? I think it’s really needed personally.

ANSWER: (David Seals) Good question. I think that should be something we look at very seriously this year and do all that we can to promote it and sponsor it. That would fall under spiritual formation and I can recall, as you do Michele, that there were times when we had really good Men’s and Women’s Ministries here. And I guess the question would be, “Why not again”? Some of you may be called upon to help us lead in that area. But that is a good question and a good challenge.

CLARIFYING ANSWER: Men and women are invested in ministry throughout our church in many ways and in many places. These ministry opportunities are focused on providing ministry rather than having individuals receiving ministry. The elders feel this is a strong position to be in with respect to men’s and women’s ministry. We would like to move the culture of ministry in our church toward a grass-roots effort. We believe it is wise to encourage those whom God leads to start or serve in ministries to take ownership of those ministries. This builds strong ministries. The elders are certainly not opposed to a ministry effort that provides ministry to men and women, but like all ministry efforts, this requires strong leadership. The elders are interested in hearing from anyone who has an interest in leading men’s or women’s ministry. It is important to develop quality ministry rather than having a ministry simply for the sake of having it. We want to encourage our church to excel greatly at the ministries we undertake for the Kingdom of God.

QUESTION: (Michele Williams) I think because I teach the Women’s only class and that I was a child that went to church with my mom only, so I have a very tendered heart to women who are coming to worship alone. What are we doing with communication to reach my class in particular because a lot of those women don’t have husbands that come to church with them. They are not connected to any of the other classes. There are no deacons that come to our Sunday school class. So, when a lot of communication is given in Sunday school, almost every other class, other than the children’s has a deacon somewhere around them. We have none around us. So, our class is the last to know and even as a Sunday school teacher, I sometimes walk in and don’t know what is going on and that is a really bad place to be.

ANSWER: (Don Pennell) As far as communication goes, the communication we have been doing at this point has been very broad for the body at large, and we probably have not done a good job specifically to individual groups. So, what I would suggest is, that I would love to hear your input.

QUESTION: (Michele Williams) Have a deacon assigned to my class.

ANSWER: (Don Pennell) Have a deacon assigned to the ladies? We can do that.

QUESTION: (Michele Williams) Thank you.

QUESTION: (Dee Hartz) You could have a deacon's wife or a deacon couple to the ladies' class instead of having a man in there by himself.

ANSWER: (Don Pennell) That is a great idea.

QUESTION: (Bob Edwards) The building program that is kind of stalled right now, what is the approximate time frame for something to happen there on the building?

ANSWER: (Paul Harrell) That question is a difficult to answer. You know, based on what I said earlier, because we had gotten somewhat down the road and then decided to put the brakes on, honestly this group (the elder council) has not talked about it much, because of the foundation we are laying in so many other areas. So, when we start 2018 we will start those kind of conversations, but they will be new and they will be fresh. So, it is difficult to predict a timeline for that kind of effort. But we will certainly keep you guys informed about what we are doing.

CLARIFYING ANSWER: Much like the answer provided regarding the Children's minister position, the elders have had conversations regarding our building project, but have felt that the need to clearly define our vision and purpose prior to moving the ball forward on such a project. Now that the vision and purpose has been clearly defined, we can begin to see what needs there are from a building, campus, and facility standpoint to help us achieve that vision. We will keep the church advised as we move along on those discussions in 2018.

Don then asked Paul Harrell to pray for the men of the church.

Don then asked Mark Grigg to pray for the women of the church.

V. Close/ Dedication / Prayer

Jerry Dockery then presented the closing thoughts. Jerry outlined how we live in a nation of great blessing, but a nation and community not without serious problems:

- Our community is affluent
- Our community is diverse
- Our community is trying to be connected, but using superficial means to do so
- Our community is confident that it has everything or has access to everything
- Our community is more than a little materialistic
- Our community is blinded in many ways by possessions and experiences
- We dwell among much opulence and yet, in many ways we are tragically empty

Jerry noted that our own city government aspires to say that we have the "best quality life in Georgia". Jerry declared that our affluence with its education, neighborliness, arts, recreation, and wealth can easily fool the members of our community into thinking we do have the best quality life in Georgia. But Jerry noted that when we have everything, apart from Christ, we have nothing.

Jerry stated that our vision is to be a place where authentic life is infused into the community through the gospel of Jesus Christ. Jerry challenged the church to be a body of people where Christian love flourishes and is carried into the community. In order to do this, Jerry said that our church needs to be a place where:

- People are hungry to know the Lord deeply thru His word
- People are passionate to worship the Lord vibrantly in spirit and truth
- People are committed to share Christ boldly with all people

Jerry stated his firm belief that we can be this kind of church. Jerry concluded, "We have an incredible opportunity. Are we willing to do whatever God requires of us to seize it? I believe we are! I believe we are up to the challenge! I don't believe it will be easy, there will certainly be some disappointments & setbacks. But we stay the course ... together. In many ways, it looks quite daunting, even impossible. That's a great place to be because all things are possible with God! I am eager for Him to write His story through this church!"

Jerry then asked the church to all join hands and Jerry led in a closing prayer of commitment to our future.

The meeting concluded with a hymn, "Be Thou My Vision"

Minutes prepared by Paul Harrell