



**SALT &
LIGHT**

A Report
to the
Board
of
Deacons

First Baptist Church
Oshawa

November 2016

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"You are the
salt of the
earth...
You are the
light of the
world."
Matthew 5:13,
14

Preamble

In the winter of 2016, First Baptist Church, Oshawa was in need of preachers for pulpit supply. I was asked to take a few Sundays. Those few Sundays turned into a few more and then I suggested to the Board of Deacons that the church could benefit from a consistent preaching voice and that the Board might be helped by a Transitional Coach to help them and the congregation prepare for the next phase in the life of First Baptist, Oshawa.

I took on that role. In addition to attempting to understand yesterday and today, I also worked with the Board in preparing to lead the congregation through a process which would attempt to discover God's leading for tomorrow. In other words, how would First Baptist get from where it is to where we believe God wants us to be? That congregational meeting took place on Saturday, November 12, 2016 and this report is an attempt to summarize the opinions and questions and commitments expressed at that meeting and also to suggest the steps that need to be taken in the coming twelve months.

The overall theme of this report is **Salt and Light**. Again and again I have heard variations of this theme expressed during the time I have spent with the people of First Baptist, Oshawa and this was apparent also on November 12. The people of this church strongly believe in being witnesses to the love of God in the world. They are not satisfied to simply look inward and care for themselves; they want to know how they themselves can be used by God and how their building at 812 Hortop Street can be a resource for ministry in their neighbourhood and in the city of Oshawa.

My prayer is that these suggestions are in harmony with the will and purposes of God for First Baptist, Oshawa and will help to guide the congregation in faithfully moving forward in 2017.

“You shall love
the Lord your
God with all
your heart,
and with all
your soul, and
with all your
mind... You
shall love your
neighbour as
yourself. On
these two
commandment
s hang all the
law and the
prophets.”
Matthew 22:37-
40

Building On Your Strengths

First Baptist Church Oshawa is ready for renewal. That is the primary conclusion I make after having worked with the Board of Deacons in preparation for and in leading the November 12 meeting to plan for the future. The meeting was well attended—more than half our usual Sunday attendance. The discussion was animated but not contentious. A wide variety of opinions were expressed and accepted.

Here are my preliminary conclusions—

- the congregation has confidence in the leadership of the Board of Deacons; therefore the Board needs to keep the congregation well-informed of progress that is being made, but the Board needs to get on with the job of leading.
- the congregation is not ready to investigate ending the ministry of First Baptist Church, Oshawa and closing the building.
- there is support for doing **both** of these things: continuing the worship ministry of the current congregation with its “relaxed formality” and investigating every possibility for “planting” another congregation using the 812 Hortop location; **please note** that this support is for doing both of these things, I do not see much, if any, support for transitioning the current congregation to a contemporary worship style.
- the congregation is convinced that the building at 812 Hortop Street is its primary resource, therefore the people believe there should be a concerted effort to discover “partners” in ministry and service to the community, such as Canadian Baptists of Ontario and Quebec (CBOQ), health and wellness agencies and social service agencies.
- First Baptist Church Oshawa needs to find effective ways of telling the community who they are, what they are and where they are; there are some people (not many perhaps, but some) in every community who are seeking a congregation that offers well-prepared and well-presented traditional worship; that describes Sunday morning at FBC Oshawa.

Jesus Christ
is the same
yesterday and
today and
forever.
Hebrews 13:8

Now is the time for action. I have divided these recommendations according to my sense of their priority—three month, six month and twelve months.

November and December, 2016; January, 2017

- i. Contact The Rev. Dr. Dallas Friesen at CBOQ to begin, as soon as possible, discussions regarding the ways in which First Baptist Church Oshawa might partner with the CBOQ in pursuing a ministry of continuing worship and pastoral care with the current congregation **and** planting/partnering with a new congregation also using 812 Hortop Street as its church home.
- ii. Recommend to the congregation (as per the FBC Oshawa constitution) a Pastoral Search Committee to establish the criteria and job description for a pastoral search; the Board of Deacons should also discover what input Dr. Friesen may wish to have in regard to this search, as per the partnership outlined in i. above.
- iii. Invite the congregation to pray for the vitality and renewal of the congregation according to a monthly schedule of Biblical prayers; please see page 9.
- iv. Adopt a “theme verse” for 2017. One suggestion is Hebrews 13:8. If chosen this verse would need to be placed in front of the congregation in creative ways that emphasized it is Jesus the Messiah who is the same Lord, the same Saviour, the same Master, but the ways to proclaim the good news about Jesus must speak to our community and city.
- v. Enhance the web presence of www.fbcoshawa.org; almost everyone you are trying to reach is on-line. Ideally, the web site should create a “virtual” visit to Sunday morning at FBC Oshawa for anyone who is interested in the congregation; in other words, “try before you buy.”

Recommendations

I call upon
you, O LORD;
come quickly
to me; give ear
to my voice
when I call to
you.
Psalm 141:1

Recommendations

March, April, May, 2017

- i. The Pastoral Search process is underway with the goal of having a pastor in place by August 1, 2017.
- ii. Investigate the possibility of conducting a community focus group:
 - a. Seek the help of Dr. Friesen or one of his colleagues or a person suggested by him to devise the questions and conduct the focus group;
 - b. carefully select six members of the congregation, asking them to recruit a friend or relative who is not currently an active participant in any Christian congregation to attend a ninety-minute event which will include dessert and coffee and a series of questions about what a church could offer that would interest them;
 - c. the closer these people live to 812 Hortop Street the better;
 - d. the idea is to create a better awareness of what spiritual needs exist within the community.
- iii. Contract with someone familiar with Oshawa and the Durham region and, preferably someone with multiple contacts in the city and region to investigate what agencies, organizations, school boards, hospitals, seniors' homes, etc. are open to discussing possible partnerships with First Baptist Church Oshawa in serving the community. (My recommendation is to make this contract for two days per week for six weeks at a rate of \$150 per day.) Make it clear that a detailed report of this person's findings is expected to be submitted at the end of the contract. You may also wish to indicate that the contract may be renewed for another six weeks should the church wish further investigations to be carried out.

God doesn't come and go. God lasts.

He's Creator of all you
 can see or imagine.
 He doesn't get tired out,
 doesn't pause to catch
 his breath.
 And he knows
 everything, inside and
 out.
 He energizes those who
 get tired,
 gives fresh strength
 to dropouts.
 For even young people
 tire and drop out,
 young folk in their
 prime stumble and fall.
 But those who wait upon
 God get fresh strength.
 They spread their
 wings and soar like
 eagles,
 They run and don't get
 tired,
 they walk and don't lag
 behind.

Isaiah 40:28-31,
 The Message

- iv. Investigate the potential for partnering with Jeff Packer and Associates for a large-scale community event. Here's an example: would Jeff

be interested in partnering with the church to present an event that introduces those in co-parenting situations to the Cooperative and Positive Parenting process? The idea behind this recommendation is "nothing ventured—nothing gained." You may find Jeff and his agency are not interested in any large-scale events; you may find it hard to generate interest in the community, or you may succeed! But you will never know unless you try.

- v. Engage in manageable community outreach around 812 Hortop Street.
 - a. Good Friday is April 14 and Easter is April 16. If memory serves, in 2017 it is FBCO's turn to host the Community Good Friday Worship. Therefore develop a dignified, eye-catching invitation for the Palm Sunday Choir Concert, and Good Friday and Easter Worship. (Am I right in thinking that a daughter and son-in-law of Antoinette and Trevor Sealy have experience in the graphics field? If so they might be persuaded to help with this item.)
 - b. Recruit Antoinette Sealy and five more people to canvas, in pairs, the immediate neighbourhood around the church to hand out the invitation for Holy Week worship services and to tell of plans for the community garden.
 - c. Investigate establishing, in the spring of 2017, a Community Garden. I would suggest the following steps be taken:
 - i. recruit two interested individuals to research what steps would need to be taken; (ideally one of these people would be a competent gardener from the community)
 - ii. ask Wendy Moss-Newman to investigate if there would be any interest at Queen Elizabeth School in having student involvement in such a garden;

So if anyone is
in Christ, there
is a new
creation:
everything old
has passed
away; see,
everything has
become new!
So we are
ambassadors
for Christ,
since God is
making his
appeal through
us; we entreat
you on behalf of
Christ, be
reconciled to
God.

2 Corinthians 5:17, 20

Recommendations

September, October, November, 2017

- i. First Baptist has called and inducted its new pastor.
- ii. The Board of Deacons recruits, in consultation with Dr. Friesen, a small support team for the new pastor with the following items to be dealt with on a monthly basis:
 - a. is the job description understood; does it require any “tweaking”?
 - b. how are relationships with staff being nurtured?
 - c. is any intervention needed in these relationships?
 - d. how is the dual nature of the pastor’s role—ministry to current congregation/outreach to community—being explained to the congregation and visibly and consistently supported by the leadership?
- iii. Anniversary Sunday 2017 is planned as a celebration of the life of First Baptist Oshawa, highlighting every blessing God has given to the congregation over the past twelve months.
- iv. With the consultation of Dr. Friesen or his designate, the Board of Deacons and The Pastor plan an event or series of events to examine the progress made in implementing the recommendations of this report and to decide on the priorities for 2018.

The Prayer Calendar

December, 2016

An Advent Prayer: Mary's Praise to God

"My soul magnifies the Lord,
and my spirit rejoices in God my Saviour,
for he has looked with favour on the lowliness of his servant.
Surely, from now on all generations will call me blessed;
for the Mighty One has done great things for me,
and holy is his name.
His mercy is for those who fear him
from generation to generation.
He has shown strength with his arm;
he has scattered the proud in the thoughts of their hearts.
He has brought down the powerful from their thrones,
and lifted up the lowly;
he has filled the hungry with good things,
and sent the rich away empty.
He has helped his servant Israel,
in remembrance of his mercy,
according to the promise he made to our ancestors,
to Abraham and to his descendants for ever."

Luke 1:46-55, NRSV

January, 2017

A Prayer for First's Leaders

For this reason, since the day we heard it, we have not ceased praying for you and asking that you may be filled with the knowledge of God's will in all spiritual wisdom and understanding, so that you may lead lives worthy of the Lord, fully pleasing to him, as you bear fruit in every good work and as you grow in the knowledge of God. May you be made strong with all the strength that comes from his glorious power, and may you be prepared to endure everything with patience, while joyfully giving thanks to the Father, who has enabled you to share in the inheritance of the saints in the light.

Colossians 1:9-12, NRSV

February, 2017

A Prayer for Unity in the First Family: A Prayer of Jesus

"I'm praying not only for them
But also for those who will believe in me
Because of them and their witness about me.
The goal is for all of them to become one heart and mind—
Just as you, Father, are in me and I in you,
So they might be one heart and mind with us.
Then the world might believe that you, in fact, sent me.
The same glory you gave me, I gave them,
So they'll be as unified and together as we are—
I in them and you in me."

from John 17, The Message

March, 2017

A Individual Prayer of Confession for Lent

Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and put a new and right spirit within me.
Do not cast me away from your presence,
and do not take your holy spirit from me.
Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and sustain in me a willing spirit.

Psalm 51:10-12

April, 2017

A Prayer of Praise for Easter

O sing to the Lord a new song,
for he has done marvellous things.
His right hand and his holy arm
have gained him victory.
The Lord has made known his victory;
he has revealed his vindication in the sight of the nations.
He has remembered his steadfast love and faithfulness
to the house of Israel.
All the ends of the earth have seen
the victory of our God.

Psalm 98:1-3