

TO THE MEMBERS OF SOUTH ABBOTSFORD CHURCH

Events sometimes arise that cause us to step back and give consideration to where we are and what possible changes we should consider. Our attendance has been in decline since 2001 and yet our pastoral staffing level has continued the same. If we look at the full-time equivalent numbers, we have 9.4 pastors on our church staff and an average attendance of 750-800. At our peak attendance, our staffing ratio was 1 pastoral staff member for each 160 attendees and now it is 1 pastoral staff member for each 85 attendees. Somehow we need to address this as a congregation.

Historically, South Abbotsford Church has been known for fostering a culture of service...a commitment to every-person-involvement in some form of service. The times have changed and we have changed as well. It would seem apparent that we will need a renewed commitment to service...a new mobilization of people to assume responsibility for some of the areas that were once pastoral positions of service. How to get there will be challenging.

God has led us to ministries that represent the values that He has placed in us. The Spirit of God must now lead us to know how He would have us proceed. Part of our heritage is that we discern the will of God together. We need to pray that He would lead us to clear conclusions as to which of our ministry areas need pastoral oversight and which could be led by member-leaders. January 24th from 6:00 to 7:00 pm we will meet in the gym to seek God's guidance in prayer. We hope you will join us as we covenant together to listen for God's clear discernment.

February 1st and February 8th from 7:00 to 8:30 pm, we will offer you an opportunity to meet with members of the Council, in round-table discussions, seeking any discernment that God may be giving His people. We anticipate a large number of people wanting to be involved in these discussions in the gym, and we value the round-table format to allow for maximum dialogue with Council. Therefore we are suggesting that those with last names beginning with letters A-J would come February 1st and those with last names beginning with the letters K-Z would come February 8th. If the date designated to your letter does not fit please feel free to switch.

We are in a time of transition as a congregation yet God continues to be at work among us. Nehemiah was called by God to return to Jerusalem and re-build the walls of the city. He did not re-build the foundations...he built on them again. God is calling us back to our foundations...to listening prayer, to hope for the future, to a culture of service, to joy in the midst of challenges, to unity. At Jerusalem they saw the impossible happen...a whole city's wall re-built in 52 days by ordinary people. God, please do it again!

On behalf of council,

John Schroeder
Moderator