

First Baptist Church Keller Deacon Meeting (Deacon Retreat)

May 6, 2023

Meeting was conducted on-campus at First Baptist Church Keller (FBCK) and via Zoom Meeting.

Staff Members in Attendance on-campus

Keith Sanders, Scott Knox, Mike Gonzales, Matt Perkinson, Andrew Young and Gregory Baines.

Deacons in Attendance

A total of 53 deacons signed in on-campus and on Zoom for the meeting.

Call to Order, Welcome Remarks

Chairman Matt Porter called the meeting to order, welcomed the deacons and staff, and thanked them for attending the meeting. Matt also opened the meeting in prayer.

Senior Pastor Keith Sanders:

Session #1:

1. God's Sovereign or "Secret" Will
 - a. It will Happen
 - b. Sometimes called his "decreed will"
 - c. He either causes or allows all things that come about: God is not an observer. He plays an active role in either causing or allowing something to happen. God is not surprised.
 - i. Ephesians 1:11
 - ii. Isaiah 46:9-10
2. God's Revealed Will
 - a. His will made known in the Bible: will of disposition
 - b. Preceptive will: in precept form in the Bible
 - c. It can be obeyed or disobeyed: Our mind is transformed through the Word
 - i. Roman 12:2
3. Individual or "personal" Will
 - a. God's unique plan for a person or church: We believe God has an individual will for each person. We need to discern and understand God's will for First Baptist Keller.
 - b. God's sovereign will – John 6:37 – That people be saved.
 - c. God's revealed will - Matthew 28:18-20 - That we share the Gospel, disciple, and bring people to Christ
4. God's individual will
 - a. How to Discern God's Will
 - i. Is it Biblical (prohibited or commanded) – does the Bible prohibit our plan or command us to a certain path?
 - ii. Will it glorify Christ?
 - iii. Do I have a desire to do it? A persistent desire that is in our hearts
 - iv. What others say about it? What to be cautious of and what to think about.
 - v. Is it wise? James 1:5

The Deacon body broke for prayer time for pastors, wisdom and discernment for the Lord's will for the church.

Session #2

Where have we been?

In 1993 Sunday School attendance was 583, In the 2010s topped out in the 1300s. Since then we have averaged 1242 till Covid in 2020. Highest attendance was 1531 in 2019.

The Bonsai Theory or 80% Rule: The Bonsai tree will grow to fill the pot in which it is planted. It will never grow larger than the container. Churches in the same way will grow to fill their available space. When the worship center space tops out at 80%, you won't continue to grow. Not only stop growing but begin to retract.

Visitors to the church view full as 65-70%. Long term members view the church full at 80%.

Current worship center capacity is 850 seats.

65% = $553 \times 2 = 1106$

70% = $595 \times 2 = 1190$

75% = $638 \times 2 = 1275$ (this was met in 2010)

80% = $680 \times 2 = 1360$ (this was met in 2011)

In 2011 church attendance was at 80% of capacity. Two obstacles were in place that defined why we did not build in the 2010's 1) we did not own the land and could not show a master plan of how to build and 2) we had total indebtedness of over \$8m; 3 times the annual budget.

We combined, refinanced, and renegotiated the loans to remove prepayment penalties. Then incorporated \$50k/month principal payments in the budget. When debt free was a reality, the Vision Team defined the 7 guiding principals of our church – one of which was stewardship. We would not entertain building until we were fully utilizing the current space. We are now there with HCA, international services and church membership. We have also taken care of the facilities thanks in large part to Scott Knox who has infused approximately \$500k in improvements as well as exterior beautification led by LeAnn Hale and many volunteers.

March 2020 the X-Factor of Covid struck and First Baptist Keller shut down. March 2020 church went online only. We returned to in-person in September 2020.

2020 Average Sunday school attendance: 882

2021 Average Sunday school attendance: 1004

2022 Average Sunday school attendance: 1066 (86% of pre-Covid)

February 2023 was over 1100 (90% of pre-Covid)

Where are we going?

Based on current growth rates – at a conservative rate of 3% growth, we will max out in 6-8 years at 1300.

Option 1: Allow this to happen. Do Nothing.

Option 2: Expand (capital campaign)

Other options:

- Wait and see
- Plant other churches
- Others?

Beginning the process with the Deacons to start praying and thinking about how to move forward.

Cost of building: approximate need for worship center and auxiliary meeting room space is 60,000 feet.

At current rates of \$350/ft, the total need is around \$30 million to meet these needs.

Short term solutions:

Currently maxing out at 11:00 service

1. Return to 3 services. No real desire to return to this as it divided families and did not necessarily attract members to all 3 services equally. So didn't provide growth overall.
2. Return to assigned overflow. Assign specific Sunday school classes to go to overflow on a quarterly basis. This was helpful prior to Covid but is not a long-term plan.

Other issues that limit growth:

- Parking: Currently 200 parking places short of parking at our facilities - 160 cars parked not in a FBCK parking space.
- Ethnic churches using facilities and parking on campus simultaneously. 150-180 attending on Sundays.
- HCA – no real impact on Sundays
- Live feed – 8:30 service is live. 250-300 views per week. 50 watching live on Sunday morning. Live feed has proven to be a very good evangelistic tool. We need to plan on people watching the live feed possibly beginning to attend. There has been some discussion whether the live feed enables people to not attend in person. We do not want to discontinue the live feed as it provides a service to church members as well as non-church members.

Giving trends:

Budget gifts have averaged a 3-4% increase annually since 2009. The 2023 proposed ministry plan is over \$6M which is approximately 4.5% increase over 2022. It is going to be challenging to meet this.

What has changed from 2010s:

- 1) Debt freedom (2018)
- 2) Land purchases
- 3) Improvements to current facilities are complete other than ongoing maintenance – we have completed most of the improvements required and will potentially save \$200k per year in maintenance costs.

What should we do? Pray! Join the staff in praying for a clear vision of God's will for FBCK.

Questions:

What if we wanted to build and we did not. Some churches build out of need, not out of speculation, with the hope that they will come and help pay it off. This has proven to be a mistake. We saw the need and wanted to build in 2010s and could not build. It would have put the church under too much stress. We chose to invest and use our current facilities and address with multiple services and put off building till debt free.

Adding a service on a different day? Adding services or different days ultimately requires a change in philosophy. It creates different churches within the church.

What does 60,000 feet get us capacity wise? 60,000 feet translates to about 1200-1400 seat capacity. If we build, we need to build big and make it expandable.

What is the possible timeline for building: The situation with the city is potentially better than it has been in the past, but just building a building of this magnitude would take 2 years after making it through all the permitting which will not be a short period of time. It will take several years for completion. If it is going to take years to complete, we need to start somewhere.

These churches that build and have to vacate, what happens to those buildings? These churches sale their buildings for pennies on the dollar and relocate to smaller, less grandiose buildings. To purchase another building and have a satellite campus or campuses, this would go against our philosophy of building and growing new autonomous churches. This would be a separate church, not a growth mechanism for FBC Keller.

How do demographics play into this discussion? Our demographics match that of Keller. However, we have a larger senior adult group. We want our church to look like a family. We want babies to grandparents within the church. We are also expanding in our racial demographic. Which is also a reflection of the demographic of Keller. The older demographic will help support a capitol campaign due to additional resources and increased generosity due to previous stewardship training.

How close is the City of Keller to maxing out their capacity. Keller is proposed to build out capacity at 50,000. We are currently at 47,000. The church make up though is inclusive of other communities in north Ft. Worth and west that continue to grow.

When do we need to decide: There is not a real timeline, but within the next year to 18 months we need to be in a position to make plans.

What percentage of membership is attending Sunday School? We have about 2100 members on roll. Church attendance and Sunday School attendance is about equal. We really don't have all people on campus on the same Sundays due to schedules, vacations, etc.

The Deacon body broke to pray for wisdom and guidance on building a consensus and agreement on how to move forward.

Session #3

Lawrence Duhon and the Missions team have assembled the Review of First Baptist Church of Keller Mission and Ministry. This is a full list of all of the ministries and missionaries we currently support. Use this as a reminder of all the ways God is using this body to reach and minister to our community and world. Use it as a prayer guide. One of the ministries we support is the New England Training and Sending Center (NETS) in Burlington, Vermont. Wes Pastor is the President of NETS and is in attendance.

Wes Pastor gave his testimony and provided the history and the mission of NETS. NETS serves to recruit men from seminaries, train them and then send them out to lead a new church plant in the New England states and Utah. NETS concentrates in the New England states (CT, MA, VT, NH, ME, RI, NY, and NJ).

Pastor Keith led a prayer for Wes Pastor and the mission of NETS.

Deacon Chairman's Discussion – Matt Porter:

April 2023 Deacon Meeting Minutes - Chairman Matt Porter received a motion from Jon Taylor and a second from Nate Davis to approve the April 2023 Deacon Meeting minutes. Passed unanimously.

Benevolence Fund Balances:

Deacon Benevolence = \$3,649

Deacon Widows Benevolence = \$8,328

Next meeting – July 9th (no June Meeting)

Prayer Requests – GH Cain:

Dan Trantham – Tonya travelling to northern Nigeria representing Wycliffe Bible translators

Doug Taylor – Sister, Gail has brain tumor. Surgery next week.

GH Cain – Sister, Gail has breast cancer

Jim White – Parkinson's symptoms and associated decisions for family

Closing Prayer by GH Cain

Respectfully submitted,

Guy Simpson, Vice-Chair Records