

Questions and Comments from "Town Hall" meetings on July 9 and 10, 2017

Several questions and comments were raised by the congregation at open meetings in early July as part of the process of considering the Simplified Board model for Green Street. The responses to each question below are from the planning team, based on our understanding of the Simplified Board Model as of mid-August. Please note that the model is very flexible, and what it might look like for Green Street is still being developed. The congregation is encouraged to be part of the development process by talking with members of the planning team. The planning team includes Pastor Kristin White, Sue Pattershall, Henry Berry, Mary Saunders, Jim Jacobsen, and Lynn Kennard.

Q. Could Benevolence be a ministry team?

A. Yes. We get to decide as a congregation what ministry teams we want, and what they will do.

Q. Where does Adult Christian Education fit?

A. It would be a ministry team.

Q. How many treasurers will we have?

A. We don't know yet. There are different ways it could be set up. We have been talking with the current treasurers and auditor to decide what will work best for us.

Q. How does "staff" fit?

A. Paid staff would be accountable to the Simplified Board, acting in the same capacity as the SPPRC currently does. In addition, several positions currently held by members, such as auditor or treasurer, would be considered "unpaid staff" and would report directly to the Board. Specific details for these positions will be defined as we develop the model.

Q. The auditor must be independent.

A. Yes. This is true currently and will continue to be the case in any model we use.

Q. Won't there be other work to be done between Board meetings?

A. Yes. The Simplified Board will make decisions and ask for information. Appropriate individuals or small teams, not necessarily members of the Board, will be asked to do work between meetings to support the work of the Board. There will be fewer committee meetings, but much work will be done by smaller groups who report back to the Board.

Q. What happens to the 9 current Trustees?

A. There are three parts to this question. (1) The oversight of church assets and decision-making roles of the Trustees will be done by the Simplified Board. The Board will have several members who have served as Trustees and will bring their experience and gifts to the Board. Policy-level Trustee decisions will be made by the whole Board. (2) Some of the work that the Trustees currently do, such as maintenance work, would be done by ministry teams. (3) It will be important that the 9 people who currently serve as Trustees will continue serving the church in ways that make use of their gifts and interests, whether on the Board or on ministry teams.

Q. How do small groups or the pastor report to the Board?

A. There are several ways this might be done. Some aspects of the accountability structure will be decided by the congregation if we approve a new model. Some aspects of communication will be decided by the Board, depending on how they want to operate. In general, small groups (or ministry teams) will communicate regularly with the pastor, and the pastor will report to the

Board. The Board may wish to meet directly with certain groups from time to time, but not necessarily at every Board meeting.

Q. The Board should receive an information packet ahead of time.

A. This is a good suggestion, since some of the information that the Board will need will be gathered by people who might not be Board members. Deciding on the most reasonable practices for collecting and distributing information will be developed by the Board, its Chair, and the Pastor. Different leaders will have different management styles.

Q. Keys are communication, common vision, and common goals.

A. Definitely so! These are important aspects of living in community as a church, regardless of what leadership model we follow. The Simplified Board model is intended to allow the Board to focus more on broader issues such as vision and mission and delegate administrative and management tasks to staff and mission teams.

Q. How do we start new ministries?

A. The ultimate answer is that new ministries begin by responding to the Holy Spirit. The Simplified Board model encourages ministries to arise or to wane depending on the gifts, enthusiasm, and encouragement of congregation members. This happens through ministry teams, in consultation with the Pastor. The general process, which has not yet been decided, will be part of the proposal for a new model to be discussed by the congregation that will be decided by formal Church Conference.

Q. Will treasurers report to the Board regularly?

A. Yes. The Simplified Board will be responsible for the financial oversight now done by the Finance Committee, Trustees, and Church Council, and will request reports from treasurers on a regular basis. In addition, the Board may ask for treasurer's reports at other times as the Board desires, and treasurers are responsible for bringing financial issues to the attention of the Board when circumstances warrant.

Q. Who nominates people to serve on Nominations Committee?

A. The Nominations Committee will continue to exist, separate from the Simplified Board, and will nominate members to serve on Nominations. The Nominations Committee will be approved at the annual Church Conference as is done now.

Q. Can a retired pastor (John Webb, for instance) serve as a member of the Simplified Board?

A. We have asked the District Superintendent this question, and she says that it is allowed. Since the local church has significant flexibility in how their own Simplified Board model is set up, this is one of the decisions we can make. The specific makeup of the Board membership requires a balance of gifts and experience, and our current thinking is that we don't want to exclude qualified people from serving.

Q. Can treasurers, financial secretary, auditor, etc. be members of the Simplified Board?

A. As with the previous question, the general answer is yes. There may be certain circumstances, however, when certain board members would abstain from voting on specific issues. For example, the auditor could not vote on whether to accept treasurers' reports. We would work with the District Superintendent to insure that we are following church policies and sound practices.

Q. What is the job of the Board?

A. In general terms, the role of the Simplified Board is governance. It is a role focused on monitoring the effectiveness of the church in reaching its mission, to make disciples of Jesus

Christ. This can be a big shift from the traditional committee structure, where the Church Council and other committees are responsible for both governance and management. The Simplified Board would be responsible for overseeing faithful stewardship of all resources to serve mission, for guiding the church toward the future, and for aligning the activities of the church with its mission and vision. Operationally, some of these governance functions now being handled separately by Finance, Trustees, and SPPRC would be done by the Board. The Pastor would be responsible for leading. The staff (both paid and unpaid) would be responsible for managing, and the members would be responsible for ministering.

Q. If we vote to approve a Simplified Board model at our annual Church Conference in December, will names of the Board members also be presented for approval at that time?

A. It is possible that it could happen that way, but we have much work to do before we know how it will play out. The District Superintendent has encouraged us to work with a timeline to keep this process moving forward, but she has also told us to not to rush to a decision, and to take the time we need. The Nominations Committee is aware of the timeline and will work to support whatever leadership structure we decide to follow. If the church decides to follow a new model, there will need to be deliberate consideration of how to make the transition from the current committee system.

Q. Will there be rules about how soon you can come back on the Board once you have come off?

A. There is no requirement in the Book of Discipline about whether a person may serve consecutive terms on the Simplified Board. There are rules about specific positions, such as Current Expense Treasurer, SPPRC Chair, and several other positions, which we would follow. Otherwise, the issue of term limits is open to discussion as we develop the model. Most of the resources we have been using recommend members take at least one year off between terms on the Board.

Q. Is the Leadership Planning Retreat for just the Simplified Board members?

A. One of the books we have been using recommends a Leadership Planning Retreat for the board members early in the year. The purposes of such a retreat would be to allow the group to develop a working relationship, and to establish schedules and priorities for meetings through the year. So for these purposes, it would be important for all the board members to be present and for only the board members to be present. Possibly staff (paid and unpaid) might be invited for part of the retreat. The question seems to be asking for a retreat open to the whole congregation. Such a retreat might be similar to the "Discover the Possibilities" workshop we had a few years ago, to review the strengths, needs, and opportunities of our church. This is a wonderful idea, but it does not depend on whether we adopt a Simplified Board model.

Q. There should be a poster up to show our Organization and Ministries.

A. Another good idea. This also does not depend on what leadership model we decide to follow. If the question is specifically about the Simplified Board model, we do plan to provide detailed information about what the new model would look like. A chart or a poster would be a good way to show that visually.

Q. Ministries and contact people should be posted on the website.

A. Yes. Thank you. Keep these ideas coming!