

March 9, 2016

Dear friends,

As moderator of Central's Session, I want to keep you informed of the latest work that the Session is undertaking. We need your prayers, and we also want you to be encouraged by the work ongoing. After two years as your Interim Senior Pastor, I am humbled by how the Lord is granting us his grace and wisdom.

Signs of the Lord's grace are evident in so many areas of Central's ministry. We are welcoming new visitors to Central in increasing numbers each week, which is something we prayed about last year. We are in a financially healthy position as 2016 continues, which is something we prayed about last year. We are seeing fruitful gospel ministry efforts in Iraq, Tanzania, and right here in our own community. Again, something we prayed about last year. I trust you see the pattern of the Lord's kindness to hear our prayers, and to provide abundantly more than we could ask for. Let us remember to thank him! And let us continue to pray.

The Session is seeking the wisdom of the Lord on multiple topics this year, and I want you to be aware of them so that you can pray and stay connected. In addition to our "routine" ministry work, the Session has doubled its meetings per month in order to pursue the mind of the Lord Jesus on the following topics:

Role and Makeup of the Diaconate. As you know, the Session has been studying this topic for a number of months now. In **March of 2016**, we hope to bring clarity to this topic, and specifically the question of whether women should serve as deacons, and if so, what that might look like.

Position on Sexuality. The topic of sexuality in general, and homosexuality in particular, is one that is under increasing study across our denomination and the church in general. At Central, we want to seek the Lord's wisdom on what it looks like to honor and adhere to the truth of scripture while loving our homosexual brothers and sisters. We hope to bring clarity to this topic in **April of 2016**.

Improved Governance. Through multiple conduits of feedback, it is clear that the congregation, the Session and the staff all desire an improved form of church governance. By governance, we mean the way that we make decisions and define direction for the church. A key objective of improved governance is to empower our elders to be more active in ministry in their biblical role as shepherds, and less entangled in matters of administration. As we do this, we believe that the congregation and ultimately the community around us will become more fruitful in the gospel work. We hope to bring clarity to this topic by the end of **June, 2016**.

Facilities for Ministry. Most of you are aware that our master plan includes a new 25,000-square-foot addition that would provide much needed space for us to be a more welcoming and missional church. In addition, we have a thriving school with record enrollment that is also in need of facility improvement. We hope to determine if, when and how these two vital investments will be made by the end of **June, 2016**.

These are weighty matters, dear friends. We desire that the Lord's will be done in each of them. To that end, would you please commit to praying for us on a regular basis?

With great affection and appreciation for all of you,

*Bob*

Bob Hopper  
Interim Senior Pastor