

Transition Committee Report

November 1, 2017

Vote to form the Transition Committee

At a special called business meeting of Bethel Baptist Church on July 9, 2017, the church elected the following members to a Transition Committee: Helen Samples, Wes Provine, Charley Crabtree, Connie Somers, Gabe Scott, Erin Nixon, Joey Schmidt, and alternate Riley Least. Mr. Least was unable to attend the numerous meetings and resigned due to other commitments.

The Purpose of the Transition Committee:

“This committee exists for the purpose of making the recommendation to the church to unify our Sunday morning services and making recommendations to the church as to what they believe will help make this transition to a unified service a success.”

Job Description of the Transition Committee:

This committee was tasked with interviewing all major age groups within our church, the staff, the various music groups that participate in the worship services of the church, and individual members in order to hear different viewpoints about the transition and how to make it a success. It was not the job of this committee to decide the songs, instruments, or worship style that would be used in the worship service.

The Work of the Transition Committee

The transition team met for the first time on July 16, 2017 and elected Joey Schmidt as the Chairman and Wes Provine as the Vice-Chair. Erin Nixon was elected Secretary and agreed to record the minutes. The Transition Team split into two teams in order to more efficiently visit each Sunday School class.

On July 30, 2017, the transition team began to meet with various small groups including nineteen adult Sunday school classes, the children Sunday School teachers, youth Sunday school classes and their teachers, college, young adults, middle-aged adults, the entire staff, various musicians, the audio-visual workers, senior pot-luck goers, men’s prayer breakfast attendees, and various others who chose to meet with the transition team.

Numerous members contacted the Transition Committee with their ideas on how to conduct one, two or even three worship services. However, the directive of the Church in the establishment of the Transition Committee was to find a way to have one worship service.

Results and Findings of the Transition Committee

Some of the input on how to make the transition a success included the following:

1. Start Sunday school and the worship service earlier. One service allows us more flexibility in the timing of the worship service and Sunday School.
2. Fix the acoustical, electrical and lighting problems in the main sanctuary.
3. Incorporate the youth into the worship service and into the welcome centers.
4. Make sure that the young people feel welcome by changing the atmosphere of the service to be less formal.
5. Keep the service flowing so that minds won't wander.
6. Incorporate the Contemporary Band into the worship service.
7. Put hymn numbers on the screen along with the lyrics of the song.
8. Encourage small group Sunday school classes to interact to get to know each other better (i.e. have a youth Sunday School class meet with a senior adult class once a quarter).
9. Make the welcome centers a little less intimidating (i.e. have a coffee bar instead of a big desk).
10. Continue to seek unity after the transition through a reconciliation process. Ideas that would help facilitate this include: Multi-generational service projects (individuals or Sunday School classes), Sunday School interaction between classes of different age groups (visiting or having a class together), Serving with Pre-School, Children's, Youth, or College programs, Multi-generational Home Groups, Sunday School class fellowships with a class of a different age group, and an Adopt-a-College-Student program.

Expressions of support for the single service transition included:

1. We should follow the Pastor's direction.
2. Families should be together.
3. Multiple services and locations can be confusing for new members with children or youth.
4. Mentoring between youth and adults would improve if all were in one worship service.
5. Parents feel more comfortable when children are in the same building.
6. Everyone being under one roof for a single service is a good concept.

Expressions of dissent for the single service transition included:

1. Taking away the early service eliminates the ability for extended session workers to be a part of a Sunday morning service.
2. The contemporary service is the best way to reach the lost and the unchurched who might be intimidated by a traditional church building.
3. A choice between contemporary and traditional music should be offered to address the wide range of worship desires.
4. The 8:15 service should be kept so that people can be leave by 10:30 A.M.
5. Those who attend the Annex feel like they will be losing more than those who attend the other services.
6. We will lose members who are upset about these proposed changes.
7. Our church will “outgrow” the current facility if there is one service.
8. Two services would be best, combining the 8:15 service and the blended 10:45 service into a more traditional service, with a later contemporary service, all in the main building.
9. The root cause of our “disunity” will not be solved by putting everyone into one room.
10. If we don’t offer a worship style that fits people’s needs, then they will go somewhere else. A single service will alienate some Bethel members no matter what the service looks like.

A. Current Timing and Duration of Services

Bethel Baptist currently has three worship services and one time for Sunday School. The Pastor preaches at the 8:15 and 10:45 services in the main building, and Brian, the Music Minister, leads the music. Each Sunday approximately 80-100 people attend the 8:15 worship service. About 250-300 people attend the 10:45 main service.

There are a total of nineteen adult Sunday School classes at Bethel Baptist Church, as well as additional classes for the youth and children. Sunday School is scheduled to start at 9:30 a.m and ends at 10:30 a.m. All adult classes, including the College and the children’s classes, meet at the main building for Sunday School each Sunday morning. The youth Sunday School classes meet at the Annex. Nearly all Sunday School space is currently being utilized.

The Contemporary Service meets each Sunday morning in the Annex. The music is led by Brad Arnold and the Refuge Band. The music begins the service and lasts 20--25 minutes. Twice a month Pastor Matt preaches the sermon, and two times a month Kyle, the Youth Minister,

preaches the sermon. Each Sunday about 100 people attend the Contemporary Service. The Contemporary Service starts at 10:45 a.m. and ends about 11:45 a.m.

Each Sunday morning a total of between 430 and 500 people attend worship services at Bethel Baptist Church. The Sanctuary can comfortably fit between 600 and 650 people, maxing out at around 730. The Annex has the capacity to seat 500 but comfortably holds about 400 people. Bethel Baptist Church has a total of 392 parking spots at the Annex and Main Campus. The entrance to the Annex is approximately 209 yards from the entrance to the west entrance of the Main building.

B. Need to Upgrade Sound, Lighting, and Electrical Systems

Main Sanctuary

Bethel Baptist Church has not upgraded its sound, lighting and electrical system in at least 10 years. Currently, poor acoustics mean that some people have difficulty hearing the sermon, while others think that the music is too loud. Sound waves travel from the pulpit and stage differently to different sides of the church and from pew to pew.

The current sound board and electronics are too old and cannot adequately compensate for fundamental acoustical problems; they should be replaced by a smaller digital sound board that would allow programmable settings to be saved digitally. The musicians need in-ear devices to be used in place of stage monitors. These will cut down on the ambient sound in the room. Electrical plug-ins for musicians and the soundboard are outdated and need to be replaced immediately. These problems create overheating and feedback on the sound system. In addition, the carpeting on the stage should be replaced with an alternate hard surface such as a laminate floor.

Finally, the stage lighting currently creates too much heat and produces radio frequencies that interfere with the sound on the stage that goes through microphones. The high heat produced by the current lighting adds to energy costs and affects the temperature on the stage and in the sanctuary. The current lighting should be replaced with LED lighting, which produces little to no heat and will not create sound interference on the stage. LED lighting is expensive but will reduce electrical costs significantly.

Bethel has a special fund, The Phillips Trust Fund, that is designated to be used only for worship enhancement. The Transition Committee feels strongly that these funds should be used first to make the necessary changes to the sanctuary discussed above.

So Why Change to One Service? *Submitted by the Pastor*

The primary reason for this proposed transition is to help the church come together in unity. The Bible speaks of the importance of unity in the church body. Jesus prayed for it (John 17:22-23). Paul told the church at Rome that they were "one body in Christ and individually members of one another" (Rom 12:5). He encouraged the church at Ephesus to "be diligent to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace" (Eph 4:3). Paul also called the church at Philippi to be "united in one Spirit" (Phil 2:2), and he tells the church at Colossae "beyond all these things put on love, which is the perfect bond of unity" (Col 3:14). John 17:23 notes that the world will know that the Father sent the Son by means, partly, of the Christ-centered unity and oneness of His body. The call to unity is fleshed out by the numerous New Testament "one another" commands (e.g. Rom 12:10, 1 Cor 11:33, 12:25, Eph 4:32, Col 3:16).

How does this single service help us be unified? Does moving to a single service create unity? Unity is created by the Spirit and is maintained by the body. While simply moving everyone to a single meeting place does not create unity, purposely gathering as a single church body in worship can help us maintain the unity the Spirit provides by:

1. Allowing us to gather weekly as a church family to focus on loving God, loving people, making disciples. We have the room to do so currently.
2. Allowing for more interaction across generations.
3. Providing a weekly opportunity for us to love, greet, and know one another personally.
4. Providing a weekly opportunity for us to consider others as more important than ourselves.
5. Providing a weekly opportunity for encouragement across age groups.
6. Providing a weekly opportunity to increasingly be a picture of the worship of Christ that will resound through the ages in His presence from every tribe, tongue, nation, and even age group.

Is a single service the only way to maintain unity in a church? No, but I believe that in this season of life at Bethel it can be a very beneficial and helpful step for us in maintaining unity. Many have asked what we will do if we run out of room (80% threshold). Lack of space is indeed a legitimate reason for the creation of an additional worship service. However, currently we have 430-500 people attending Bethel each week, well below the 80% threshold of our auditorium which is approximately 600, leaving us room to grow.

For this season of life at Bethel, I believe that a single service would be a wonderful opportunity for us grow together and, consequently, grow on mission.