

May 12, 2013

Announcement: Chapel's Plans for Responding to Numeric Growth

In the last three years the Lord has chosen to bless the Chapel with growth in attendance. During this time our Sunday morning gatherings have grown from approximately 225-250 people to 325-350 people. With this growth has come new realities, one of them being the issue of space. Recently, the elders participated in a retreat to focus specifically on next steps for the Chapel with regard to current and future numeric growth.

Orienting our approach to these discussions was another decision made at a retreat about five years ago - in brief, we committed to becoming commissional as a church. A succinct phrase we used to sum up all that this meant was "maximum truth to maximum people." Embedded in this commitment was our determined intention to maintain the Chapel's distinctives - expositional preaching, Christ-focused exaltation, and intentional evangelism to neighborhoods and nations.

As we grow in numbers, there is the real potential that a tension will be introduced between "maximum truth" and "maximum people"... perhaps causing us to feel pressured to minimize one for the sake of maximizing the other. It is not a matter of one or the other, however. It is a matter of seeking wisdom from God to do all that he has called us to do and to do it in a manner that brings Him glory and His people good. If we allow a kind of "either - or" thinking to shape our actions, we will put ourselves at risk of unbiblical thinking and acting.

With these things in mind, the Elders have made the following provisional plan to maintain maximum truth to maximum people as we grow. This plan was introduced in flock meetings on Wednesday, May 1st, and we are repeating it now in the AM and PM services to make sure that all Chapel members and attenders are made aware of these potentially historic plans. By doing this, we hope to solicit your, wisdom, input, and feedback as we move forward. We also hope to begin preparing the Chapel for the possibility of significant change.

So first, let me tell you what we are not going to do. Many of you know that we have been considering a "two-service" model over the last year or so. After much discussion, we have decided to not go this direction as we felt it was not optimal at this time for maintaining our commitment to maximum truth for maximum people.

If not two services, then what? We are channeling our efforts in two directions as near-term options for addressing our space issues. With regards to this campus and our present space... we are planning on the following changes - I say planning because these plans are subject to change as we receive insight from ministry leaders, deacons, and others who serve in the ministries effected.

1. Parking: We are making the necessary inquiries to determine what it would take to expand our current parking
2. Nurseries: We are considering a larger room for at least one of the nurseries
3. Auditorium: We will likely be clearing out the mailboxes and tables from along the back walls and adding additional chairs. The mailboxes will be relocated to an area outside of the auditorium.

4. Overflow room: We will use the overflow room as a true “overflow” room to ensure that as many seats as possible in the auditorium are utilized. We are also reconsidering how best to maximize the effectiveness of our current flock-based approach.

All of these changes are focused on optimizing the use of our current space on this campus. We hope that this will bring some small degree of relief to the congestion while allowing us to be sure that the proclamation of truth can be heard by all who desire to hear.

With regards to expanding off-campus we are exploring two options simultaneously.

1. Relocation to a larger building. We are exploring the possibility of identifying a building in the current locale (within 3-5 miles of our current property) that is larger and could accommodate the needs of the Chapel. Concurrently, we are exploring the outlook for selling our current property.

2. Strategically develop a second campus. We are also exploring locations where the present ministry of the Chapel could be replicated. By the word “strategic,” we mean strategic for gospel witness. Therefore, we will focus on identifying venues that are easily accessible to a large number of Chapel families *but* where no like-minded gospel witness currently exists.

We have tasked Pastors Russ and Tim Nixon with gathering the necessary data to make informed decisions on both of these off-campus options.

With this said, we need to make one clarification as different messages went out to different flocks. While the off-campus options just mentioned are our primary focus presently, they do not necessarily preclude the exploration of other options such as expanding our current campus by adding more space to this building.

This is a lot of information to take in and undoubtedly will lead to many questions. We want to strongly encourage you to approach your flock elder with your questions. He will be happy to do his best to answer them. Just be prepared - the *best* answer may often be, "I don't know!" In any case, we invite your feedback and observations. The more informed the eldership is in this process, the more likely it is we will have the necessary data to make wise decisions. So please work on this with us.

As of 11:00 AM today, this announcement will be posted on the website so that you can return to it and think and pray over these potential directions we are considering. We will work hard to communicate regularly, clearly, and consistently and correct our communication (as we did today) when necessary. The website will be an excellent resource for keeping all of us on the same page. We ask that if we cause confusion, you would seek out your flock elder for explanation. It is our strong desire to serve you well as we move through this phase of the Chapel's life together..

Finally, pray and pray much. Pray that we as a body would be unified in our commitment to be all that we have been called to in the great commission - that we would selflessly sacrifice our own desires where necessary to see His people grow and his kingdom expand.

Pastor Devon Berry
For the Elders