**Transition Team Report and Recommendations**

Interim Pastor Bill Tatum began serving First Baptist Church (FBC) on January 1, 2016, upon recommendation of Church leadership and an affirmative vote of the congregation. On November 22 and 29, 2015 congregants were asked to nominate three persons to serve on the Transition Team. Pastor Tatum tabulated the nominations and met with the leadership team to process the names in order to ensure that those asked to serve were a cross-section of the congregation. Pastor Tatum then invited those selected to attend an informational meeting to find out more about serving on the Transition Team. Following that meeting the following persons agreed to serve on the Transition Team.

Vallee Albert Diane McGarry Robert Staulters

Mary Ann Becker Colleen Pierre Sarah Watkins

Emmeline Hanchett Kevin Porter Dan Wright

Cheryl Hensler Keith Springer Terry van den Heever

Judy Lister Dave Stacey

The Team met several times in January and early February. A Team training was held Friday night (at the home of Diane McGarry) and Saturday morning (at the Parsonage), February 19-20. Terry van den Heever and Dan Wright were selected as co-chairs and Vallee Albert as secretary. Initial discussions focused on the tenure of Pastors from Pastor Lister to Pastor Rudnick. Team members shared joys, sorrows, growth experiences, and what they perceived as challenges. Team members agreed that some Church members, including some on the Team, still are dealing with concerns, frustration and loss relating to the last year of Pastor Rudnick’s service and the events around his leaving.

The Transition Team was charged with leading the congregation through five focus points.

* Heritage
* Mission
* Leadership
* Connections and
* Future

Since February, the Team has met frequently, as a whole or in sub-groups, in preparation for congregational events, surveys and other activities.

1. ***Congregational Event Focusing on Heritage.*** A lunch meeting was held on May 1 following Sunday worship. A heritage timeline (1791-Present) was developed and displayed in the fellowship hall. The timeline included pictures of some previous Pastors and of Church buildings, statistics on Church membership and baptisms, and representative artifacts from FBC’s past. Attendees completed a questionnaire and placed “post-it” notes on the timeline to indicate when they became part of FBC and to indicate significant moments in their lives that involved FBC. Also, they were asked to dream about the future of FBC by placing a “post-it” note at the end of the timeline, noting their greatest hope for FBC’s future. A report summarizing questionnaire results was distributed to the congregation.
2. ***Focus Groups.*** Following the congregational meeting, feeling that there was a need for some members to talk further about the recent past, focus groups were held. These groups were facilitated by Pastor Tatum and six members attended two different focus groups.
3. ***Pastoral Leadership Expectations Survey.*** The surveys will be tabulated by a member of the Transition Team and the results will be passed along to the Pastor Search Committee and used by that committee to develop a Pastor Profile. These surveys were made available to those attending worship on August 14 and were mailed out and sent out electronically on August 24. The surveys remained available at the Church into September.
4. ***Congregational Event Focusing on Spiritual Gifts.*** Following worship on September 11 and a light lunch, a Spiritual Gifts survey was distributed.
5. ***Congregational Event Focusing on Leadership.*** During worship on September 18 a play will be presented that focuses on leadership.
6. ***Special Business Meeting.*** Following worship on September 25, a light lunch and special business meeting is scheduled to act on the following recommendations from the Transition Team.

**Mission**

Recommendation #1 - The Transition Team recommends that the members of FBC of Ballston Spa vote to **re-affirm the Congregation’s Present Mission and Vision Statements.**

Mission Statement: We are a body of believers united in Christ to proclaim, live and love according to God’s Word.

Vision Statement: We will be a church that encourages passionate disciples of Jesus Christ, shares generously, and graciously serves our community through team ministry.

Recommendation #2 - The Transition Team recommends that the members of FBC of Ballston Spa vote to **adopt the following 18-month Ministry Plan.**

**1.**   **Encourage Passionate Disciples:**

a.   Existing Programs- VBS, Church Mouse Nursery School (CMNS), Sunday School, Small Groups, Mom’s Bible Study, Cherub’s Choir and Youth Ministry.

b.   Ministry Plans-

* Foster increased communication, transparency and connection between church leadership and members through monthly announcements in the Messenger/Messenger Lite, FBC Happening E-mails and/or church announcements. Responsible Group: all church leaders.
* Grow children’s musical program to add a Junior Choir and increase participation in Cherub’s Choir to 8 children. Responsible Group: Music Committee and Choir Directors.
* Provide three (3) small group studies per year that foster fellowship and discipleship among all age groups. Responsible Group: Board of Christian Education (BOCE).
* Encourage and inspire our Christian walk by hosting semi-annual guest speaker ‘lunch and learn’ events (e.g. American Baptist representative or a missionary). Responsible Group: Missions Committee.
* Establish a church leadership mentoring program. Responsible Group: BOCE.
* Improve sanctuary worship environment (e.g. upgrade audiovisual system, add air conditioning, etc.). Responsible Group: Board of Trustees.

**2.**   **Share Generously:**

a.  Existing Attributes and Programs- visitations, Saratoga Rehab (Maplewood Manor) ministry, Mission Giving/Budget, visitors feel welcomed, support of ABC ministries (e.g. One Great Hour of Sharing), and support of Ballston Area Clergy Association Community Assistance Fund (BACA) and other ways of supporting the needy of our community.

b.  Ministry Plans-

* Encourage and engage CMNS families and children (e.g. volunteer at CMNS functions, beginning of school year make CMNS families feel welcome with coffee & church pamphlet, etc.) Responsible Group: CMNS Board Church Representatives.
* Advertise Christ’s Cupboard and promote increased donations/giving (e.g. create food pantry: logo, website, mission statement and plan to engage both congregation and community for donations and support). Responsible Group: Director, Christ’s Cupboard.

**3.**   **Graciously Serve our Community Through Team Ministry:**

a.    Existing Programs- Christ’s Cupboard, Summer Lunch Program, Mission Programs (e.g. Schenectady City Mission, Back Stretch Children, Shelters of Saratoga, etc.).

b.    Ministry Plans-

* Provide opportunities to engage 100% of FBC’s regular attendees in some level of service or ministry within FBC and/or our community. Responsible Groups: Pastor.
* Establish a community outreach plan for every Church sponsored event. Responsible Groups: Pastor and the event sponsor.
* FBC will be a visible entity in the community by providing one tangible mission opportunity per quarter (e.g. community beautification project, general clean-up, serving food, or other). Responsible Group: Missions Committee.

**Leadership**

Recommendation #1 - The Transition Team recommends that the members of First Baptist Church of Ballston Spa vote to **approve the following changes to the Congregation’s Leadership Structure.**

1. Limit the number on the Board of Trustees to seven members and the other boards to five members. This will enable the boards to operate more efficiently and ensure we have full boards at all times.
2. Reinstate the Missions Committee to full board status. Missions should be one of the primary focuses of FBC. We feel that a strong Missions Board is crucial to our identity as a church that has been called by Jesus to “make disciples of all nations.”
3. Eliminate the Advisory Committee. Currently this committee consists of the chairpersons of all boards plus three at-large members and the Pastor. The functions and responsibilities of this committee are poorly defined and widely misunderstood among members of the congregation. This committee has not functioned efficiently and often has been confused with the Pastor/Staff Relations Committee.
4. Set the Board of Deacons as the Governing Board of FBC, with the responsibilities of:
   1. providing oversight of all other Boards
   2. dealing with all issues related to membership and worship
   3. advising the Pastor
   4. mediating conflict
   5. serving as a support and resource for all other boards
5. Begin quarterly meetings of board chairpersons and the Pastor at which chairpersons report on their board’s activities.

Recommendation #2 - The Transition Team recommends that the members of First Baptist Church of Ballston Spa vote to **authorize the Moderator to select a Committee to do a full revision of the Constitution and By-Laws of FBC. This revision is to be presented to the Congregation for vote at the 2017 annual meeting.**

Recommendation #3 - The Transition Team recommends that the members of First Baptist Church of Ballston Spa vote to **approve having leadership training for all lay leaders at least twice a year.**

Recommendation #4 - The Transition Team recommends that the members of First Baptist Church of Ballston Spa vote to **encourage all those in positions of leadership to be actively looking for persons qualified to become lay leaders, be willing to approach those persons and gauge their interest, and be willing to mentor and support new lay leaders.**

**Connections**

Recommendation #1 - The Transition Team recommends that the members of First Baptist Church of Ballston Spa vote to **affirm and seek ways to strengthen its historical connection with Capital Area Baptist Association, American Baptist Churches of New York State, and American Baptist Churches – USA.**

Recommendation #2 - The Transition Team recommends that the members of First Baptist Church of Ballston Spa vote to **encourage the Missions Committee to do a thorough evaluation of all Missions Committee line items in the budget and make recommendations to the Budget and Finance Committee about possible changes.** The kinds of changes intended are any or all of the following: funding entities or individuals not currently included in the budget, cease funding entities or individuals currently included in the budget, and/or increasing or decreasing amounts in current line items.

Recommendation #3 – The Transition Team recommends that the members of First Baptist Church of Ballston Spa vote to **encourage the Missions Committee to engage the congregation in an aggressive campaign of Mission education.** The intention here is that congregants become more aware of what FBC’s Mission partners are doing and that congregants discover ways to be more engaged with these partners.