

# Three Forks Baptist Association

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Fall Semi Annual

October 15, 2019

Minutes

The Three Forks Baptist Association held their Fall Semi Annual meeting on Tuesday, October 15, 2019 at South Fork Baptist Church. Rev. David Cooper welcomed the group with prayer and a Scripture reading from Philippians 3, reminding those gathered to forget what is behind and reach for what is ahead. He urged the association to be in unity, and gave a reminder that looking back can be a hinderance to moving forward. He then opened the meeting in prayer.

Jennifer Waldorf, clerk, then gave the report on the organization of the body for the meeting. The Association was represented by 77 messengers and guests representing 20 churches.

Rev. Seth Norris, moderator, called attention to the information packet given to messengers prior to the meeting. He noted that the minutes from the fall 2018 Semi-Annual were in the packet, along with all Executive Council minutes from 2019. He then recognized the team chairs to give their ministry reports.

## Ministry Reports

### Mission Team Report:

In the absence of Jackie Lawrence, mission team chair, Rev. George Wright gave the Mission Team Report. He noted that 15 churches had participated in High Country Impact this year and that he was thankful to see the diversity of ministry that was carried out by our Association churches. He then asked Travis Burt of Perkinsville Baptist Church to come give a testimony of their High Country Impact ministry.

Perkinsville had chosen to give out water on the Greenway for High Country Impact, and in so doing were also taking opportunities to have Gospel conversations with people on the Greenway. Travis had an opportunity to share the Gospel with a young woman on the Greenway, and she accepted Christ.

George also reminded everyone that Appalachian Christmas Outreach is still an ongoing project, and that there is still time to fill a backpack for this ministry. He encouraged those with questions to call the association office, or to visit Baptists on Mission for more information.

### Church Strengthening Team Report:

David Cooper gave the Church Strengthening Team report. He noted that prior to the resignation of Garland Honeycutt, the TFBA had been in the process of contracting with Travis Tyler to be the Church Revitalization Catalyst for the association. When Garland resigned, the contract with Travis was suspended. He was given \$250 to compensate him for his time.

#### Administrative Team Report:

Ben Bolick gave the Administrative Team report. After 17 years of service to the Association as our cleaning contractor, Amy Trivette resigned. Jatana Grover was hired as the new cleaning contractor.

Christ the King Anglican church is renting office space upstairs at the Association office. In addition, they are using the conference room on Sunday evenings for a Perspectives class.

In June a tree fell on the TFBA office building. Thank You to Harold Bennett and Doug Norris for repairing the roof and to Olin Cook for repairs to the conference room ceiling. Additional thanks to several members of Mt. Vernon Baptist Church, and Matt Foster of Christ the King Anglican Church for assistance in clearing up debris from the property. Thanks as well to Union Baptist Church and South Fork Baptist Church to finishing the clean-up process for High Country Impact. Gutters still need to be replaced.

Harold Bennett has agreed to be a consulting, on-call Director of Missions through the end of 2019.

Travis Burt gave the Church Mobilization Catalyst report. Travis referred those present to his CMC report printed in the information packet. He then gave a word of encouragement from Nahum 1:1-9, reminding us that we are reconciled to Christ. Travis recently returned from Iraq, and made mention of how the events of Nahum took place in the same area of Iraq.

Seth gave time for discussion and questions regarding the Ministry reports. No questions were forthcoming.

Seth then introduce Denise Critcher of Baptist Children's Homes to give the BCH report. Denise thanked the churches for their support of Baptist Children's Homes. In 2018 there were 94,000 people touched in some way by the ministry of Baptist Children's Homes. 70% of these people were unchurched. Since 2014 there have been 669 professions of faith from people touched by this ministry. In addition to the Children's Homes themselves, BCH has a home based ministry at Western Carolina for college students who have been in the foster system, transitional homes for 18 year olds who have aged out of the foster care system, but still need some

assistance transitioning to adulthood, and three children's homes in Guatemala. Locally they operate Joy Cove, a live-in home for adults with developmental disabilities.

November is the month of the Baptist Children's Home offering emphasis. November 10-17 is the week of prayer for Baptist Children's Homes. Denise encouraged the churches to continue to support BCH through November offerings.

### Financial Reports

Pat Dalton, Association Treasurer, gave the treasurer's report. She reviewed the income and expense report thus far for 2019, and highlighted the church giving report. She thanked the churches and church members for their donations to the work of the Association.

Jeff Younce, Finance Team Chair, gave the Finance Team Report. This year Baptist Campus Ministry of the High Country was dissolved. Upon dissolution they had a substantial amount of monetary assets in their account. Because of this, the Association received approximately \$59,000 to be used for ministry to college students here in the High Country. The TFBA finance team decided to use this money to start a grant fund to be used by the churches for collegiate outreach. Five churches were given grants of \$500 each this year. Jeff encouraged the churches to apply for this money next year, by reminding the messengers that there is a mission field of 20,000 college students, most of them lost and very reachable. More information will be given to the churches regarding how to apply and what the funds should be used for at a later date.

Jeff then presented the proposed 2020 budget for the Association. A brief time was given for the messengers to review the budget, and then time was given for discussion and questions. Harold Bennett asked why there was no line item for an annuity for the office manager. Jeff noted that the Administrative team would have to recommend that the office manager be given an annuity. Ben Bolick, Administrative team chair will follow up on this issue.

As the budget was proposed by a standing committee, it did not need a second. The motion to approve the proposed 2020 budget was passed by a show of hands.

Seth Norris then noted that as an additional agenda item, the Executive Council recommended that the Association retain the same officers for 2020 as in 2019. These officers are as follows:

Seth Norris: Moderator

Travis Suits: Vice Moderator

Pat Dalton: Treasurer

Jennifer Waldorf: Clerk

David Cooper: Church Strengthening Team Chair

Ben Bolick: Administrative Team Chair

Jackie Lawrence: Mission Team Chair

Jeff Younce: Finance Team Chair

Time was given for questions and discussion of these nomination. No questions were raised and the motion carried.

Seth then addressed the messengers and guests regarding the speaker for the evening. He stated that after the resignation of Garland Honeycutt on May 14, we found ourselves with more questions than answers. It was clear that the Association needed to return the vision to the churches, and that the vision needed to be articulated, refined, and communicated. During meetings of the Executive Council it was determined that instead of finding a Director of Missions to give us a vision, we needed to determine the vision, and find a DOM to implement it.

There are several groups who work with organizations to help them determine their vision. The Malphurs group is one such group. The Executive Council determined that they would be the best group to help us chart our way forward, and help us to determine our vision for the future. There will be commitments of both finances and time required for this process. The Association does have the available funds to manage the financial commitment, and the Baptist State Convention of North Carolina has also made funds available through a strategic partnership, to help offset some of the cost of the process. The greatest commitment will be time.

Seth then introduced Tim Coffey, pastor of Emmanuel Baptist Church. Tim was invited to share what God has been doing in Emmanuel over the past few months, since he was called to be their pastor earlier this year.

Tim noted that at first, he did not feel called to Emmanuel, but God changed his mind, and noted that when God tells us to go somewhere, we should go.

When Tim arrived at Emmanuel, they did not have a vision for the future. They began by talking about holding a Vacation Bible School for the first time in many years. Within the first 90 days of Tim's arrival at Emmanuel, over twenty souls had been saved. The children's program is growing, and they have started an AWANA program.

It is all about Jesus, not about the church or the pastor. You must start with prayer. Pray for a vision, and then expect things to happen. Thank God not only for what He is doing, but also for

what He will do. He noted that excitement in the church must start in the pulpit and floor out into the congregation and out the door. He admonished the churches of the association to love one another, and not to be in competition with one another, and closed by reminding us that struggles come with growth, but that God will take care of us.

Seth Norris then introduced the speaker for the evening, Scott Ball of the Malphur's Group.

Scott began with a reading of Nehemiah 2:17-20.

Scott reminded those gathered that When trouble comes, we have to acknowledge it. We live with dysfunction all around us, and that affects the church as well. Within Three Forks Baptist Association, there were 38% fewer baptisms in 2018 than there were in 2017. But we must remember that God's calling and his provision are one, and if He calls us to do something, He will provide for us to do it. But God calls us to do the work. We can't just sit back and expect things to happen.

The Strategic Envisioning Process that Malphurs will lead us through gives our leadership an opportunity to work through the central issues of our Association. Although the Executive Council and a few others will be the primary decision makers for this process, everyone is welcome to attend all of the sessions and pastors and church leaders are especially encouraged to attend. This process is useful not only for associations, but for churches as well, and the principles used during these sessions will be easily transferable to churches who are defining and refining their vision.

There are three sessions involved in the Strategic Envisioning Process. In the first session we will define our mission and core values and answer the questions "What is our mandate?" and "What motivates us?" During the Second Session we will address our Engagement Pathway and answer the question "How will we structure our ministry to accomplish our mandate?" In the third session we will decide upon our long-term vision and 1 year strategy by answering the questions "Where are we going?" and "What will we focus on this year?"

Scott encouraged us to strengthen our hands for the good work. Just as in Nehemiah , there will always be opposition. There will always be those who attack your motives, sometimes with malice. There will always be negative voices. Don't be that voice, and don't listen to those voices. The God of Heaven will make us prosper. There will also be constructive criticism, and we should be prepared to listen to it.

Seth Norris gave concluding remarks. The vision of the Association belongs to the churches. The Executive Council discussed, discerned and prayed over the decision to ask the Malphurs Group

to help us through this process. They will labor to articulate and define the vision for the Association. He then asked the messengers and guests to commit to praying for the Association, the Executive Council, and others who will invest their time in this Strategic Envisioning Process.

The congregation joined in singing “When We All Get to Heaven”. Ben Bolick closed the meeting in prayer.