

***FXCC Elder Announcement
Congregational Meeting
March 1, 2009***

Thank you for coming and participating in our family meeting this afternoon.

The question I am sure many of you are asking is “Why are we here?”

There are a few “elephants,” or unspoken concerns, in the room that we are all a little fearful of talking about – and we have been fearful for many years. This afternoon is about acknowledging those concerns and letting you know what your elders are going to do about them.

First, there are many rumors floating around the congregation. Let me share some of the rumors we know about:

- The elders are going to change our name from Church of Christ
- The elders are going to have a woman preacher
- The elders are going to have instruments on Sunday morning
- Families are planning to leave
- Decisions are being made because of a small group wanting them
- Decisions are being made because of social pressures from the world

Now, let me address what we do know. This eldership is not going to:

- Have a woman preacher – we’re not going to do it
- Have women elders – we’re not going to do it
- Have a woman worship minister – we’re not going to do it
- Get rid of our Sunday morning a cappella worship – we’re not going to do it
- Change our name or quit being a church of Christ – we’re not going to do it

We will continue current practices, such as:

- Women participating in announcements on Sunday morning
- Women serving on the praise team
- Using taped instrumental music in video productions in Sunday morning assemblies
- Classes and small groups deciding if women can pray out loud with others in the group

The elders have been studying and praying about these concerns for several years now, and more intensely this past year. We have unanimously agreed that the Bible allows for much more freedom than we have traditionally allowed here at FXCC.

The apostle Paul says in I Corinthians 10:23, *“Everything is lawful,” but not everything is beneficial. “Everything is lawful,” but not everything builds others up.”*

The discussion about what is beneficial is one that we need to have with the entire FXCC family. In December and January, we communicated a different message to the staff, ministry leaders and LifeLine leaders. We told them that we intended to start a third service that was gender and instrumental music inclusive. Due to their valuable feedback, we realized that we made a mistake in not including the congregation in a discussion about what would be beneficial for our family. We apologized to them for planning implementation steps when that is a shared responsibility. We have now taken a step back and are trying to begin again that dialog with the entire congregation in a more healthy way.

We need your feedback to determine what is beneficial for FXCC. Now, here’s a list of some things we have discussed, but we have not decided what we are going to do about them.

- Starting a third service using musical instruments (this has not been decided)
- Starting a third service that allows women to offer an individual prayer (this has not been decided)
- Starting a third service that allows women to offer a communion devotional thought (this has not been decided)
- Women to pass communion trays (this has not been decided)

We are going to begin teaching a class on Sunday evenings and Wednesday nights about liberties the Holy Spirit has revealed from His holy scripture. Specifically, these freedoms He has led us to are as follows:

- God calls on us to remain united in Him, Christ and each other as we explore ways to respect our differences on matters not central to salvation or fellowship.
- Every Christian should come to his or her own understanding of God's will in his or her own life, and on matters of conscience we are encouraged to be unified and gracious with each other.
- Communion can be observed at any time of the week.
- The Bible does not prohibit or discourage the orderly use of instruments in corporate worship.
- The Bible speaks to women sharing more public roles in worship assemblies.

We ask that all small groups make it a point to meet with us on Sunday evening. The Wednesday evening class will be a repeat of the previous Sunday evening for those that cannot make it here on Sunday evenings. Childcare will be provided during both sessions. It is our intent that we will teach these classes for 5 or 6 weeks and we will cover unity, tests of fellowship, approaching differences, communion, the role of women, and the use of instrumental music.

These classes will be taught in a discussion type of format and you will be encouraged to ask questions and give feedback. You also may provide your feedback and questions in a signed letter or an email addressed to the elders. We will also stay here this afternoon to answer any questions you have one-on-one.

Now, let me summarize what I have said:

We are not going to:

- Have a woman preacher – we're not going to do it
- Have women elders – we're not going to do it
- Have a woman worship minister – we're not going to do it
- Get rid of our Sunday morning a cappella worship – we're not going to do it
- Change our name or quit being a church of Christ – we're not going to do it

We will continue current practices, such as:

- Women participating in announcements on Sunday morning
- Women serving on the praise team
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And, finally, we need your feedback on what would be beneficial for us to continue in relationship together as a family. We encourage you to participate in the classes and the dialog. As your shepherds, we expect you to talk to us about these important matters. We will be here in the auditorium as long as we need to today to begin to dialog with you on these topics.

I would like to close now by reading Philippians 2:1-5:

"If you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any fellowship with the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, ²then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and purpose. ³Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves. ⁴Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. ⁵Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus..."

Now let's pray together.