



FBC MERIDIAN

December 2017 MeridianLife Letter

by Josh King

FBC Meridian,

Dear saints, chosen and beloved by God, I am humbled to shepherd such sheep –sheep eager to follow our great Shepherd. May He magnify His name in us.

Budget

The proposed 2018 budget has been printed separately for your review. Please let us know if you have any questions. Because of God’s blessing, we’ve added back and increased several items that we were conservative on last year. This year we will be adding regular support for the Christ-Centered Churches Conference which we anticipate becoming a more significant fellowship of churches. The resource center will be added to significantly, including Reformation Study Bibles at a significant discount. Staff substitution has been increased to compensate for mileage.

The elders recommend that the 2018 proposed budget be approved.

Also, in our search for a better place to keep our emergency fund, the elders and deacons recommend that we place those monies in one, two, and three year term CD’s with the Baptist Foundation at rates of 2.18, 2.49, and 2.8% respectively, to eventually be converted to three year terms with one rolling off each year. Interest gained from these will be moved into our general fund at the conclusion of each term. Each CD will start with \$10,000. \$20,000 of this will come from our current account with BancFirst. The remainder will be taken from the interest gained from our other Baptist Foundation account that was allocated for a “youth building,” amounting to over \$6000, with an additional \$4000 being taken from our general fund.

The \$28,000 designated by donors in the past for a youth building is currently in a one month term CD with the Baptist Foundation with a rate of 1.42%. We still have not found any way to put this money to other uses with integrity. This being so, we recommend that the money be moved to a five year term account with a rate of 3.19%.



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The elders recommend that we put \$30,000 dollars into three accounts with the Baptist Foundation to be staggered as one, two, and three years terms to eventually be transitioned to three year terms with one rotating off each year. \$20,000 is to come from our current emergency fund, with the remaining \$10,000 coming from the interest gained on the “youth building” account and our general fund.

The elders recommend that the original \$28,000 designated for a “youth building” be transitioned from a one month term to a 5 year term CD.

Elder Confession

A recommended elder confession of faith has been printed separately. This is not a confession the elders seek to have independent of the church. The elders are recommending this as the church’s elder confession. This is what the church will use to test, affirm, and hold their elders accountable. Our congregational affirmation of faith is meant to be as simple as possible so that a new convert can join and grow in the faith in the church. Still, we believe something more is necessary to protect the doctrine of the church. This is reflective of James’ warning that teachers will be judged with greater strictness (James 3:1) and Paul’s command in Titus 1:9 that elders “must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that [they] may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to rebuke those who contradict it.”

The ultimate rule over this confession, the elders, and the church remains the Scriptures. Disagreement with the confession by any elder or elder candidate is never in itself a reason for disqualification. The confession is to be revised when good reasons from the Scripture demonstrate the need to do so.

In line with this, we chose a historical and reformed confession, the Belgic Confession, that we then revised to show our indebtedness to our heritage, the heritage that said, *ecclesia reformata, semper reformanda, secundum verum Dei*, meaning, “the church reformed, always reforming according to the word of God.” We stand on the shoulders of the fathers of our faith that we might reach higher, and we hope the same for our children.

Finally, as many other confessions were first published without Scripture references, so with this one. It is one thing to get men of conviction to agree on the statement of certain truths, it is a much greater task to get them to agree on which Scriptures support those truths. That said, it will be a special project of the elders this coming summer to begin adding Scripture references to the confession. Once finished, a recommendation will be forthcoming for their addition.



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The elders recommend that the elder confession of faith be adopted by the body as the church's elder confession of faith.

Name Change

A separate article explaining the elders recommendation for a name change has been printed for your review. I won't elaborate any further here on the reasons we have set forth. Rather, I only want to clarify that should the recommendation meet with the body's approval, the change would not go into immediate effect, but take place after we have met all legal requirements.

The elders recommend that we change our name from "First Baptist Church Meridian" to "Meridian Church." This may take the form of a DBA (doing business as). This will not go into effect until all legal requirements have been met.

Grace and Peace,

On Behalf of the Elders,

Josh