

# Update from Your Church Board

by Jim Ream, Board Chair



I want to tell you about the incredible discussion and action from our board last week regarding the future plans for our church, but that wasn't the only business of the evening. We heard reports from all of our ministry teams and as always the Oversight report was a good barometer for the life and ministry of our church. There continue to be exciting opportunities for ministry. In other business, several have asked for an update on our level of debt as a congregation. As of the first of February, 2011, our principle was \$543,103.24 and our

estimated payoff date is 12/1/16. We were ahead in our giving, at rate that would shorten that payoff by almost 1 year, but the last couple of months, we have fallen behind in our capital pledges.

Following the normal (if there is such a thing for any church board) part of our meeting we began a discussion of the "Roadmap for our Future" that has been the subject of letters from the board to the congregation, a series of café discussions, a commissioned study from BCE, and a board retreat. I went into the meeting with many of the same emotions that I had on Sunday. I was excited about the possibilities and fearful of the unknown. Even though we had announced how we thought the board would vote, until that vote happened, we couldn't be sure. Would the discussion become heated? Would we end up taking a different direction? Would we end up postponing this decision?

I've tried, several times, to write this next paragraph describing the positive and powerful discussion and process that we went through on Thursday evening, but my attempts to capture the synergy and strength that came from our discussion leading to a carefully worded resolution, just falls short. For me it was one of those "mountain top experiences" and any attempt to describe it just feels like trying to explain the Grand Canyon to a foreigner as a big hole in the ground. I trust these board members. I believe in their serious commitment to their faith and our church.

I had high expectations for the level and maturity of our deliberations. What happened exceeded my wildest thoughts about how it would go. Each of the comment cards was systematically reviewed and shared. Each board member took the opportunity to make an uninterrupted statement to the board. There were questions asked and concerns expressed in an atmosphere of respect and trust. At the end of a long meeting we all stood, held hands, prayed together and voted to approve the following:

We the board of Southport Christian Church, having prayerfully considered several options, believe that relocation is the direction for our future. To that end, we will take the following actions:

- 1.) That our Senior Minister begin immediately to work with personnel to write job descriptions and plan for the hiring of new staff that support our ministry and lead us to a new location.
- 2.) That the chair of the board, in consultation with our officers and Senior Minister, nominate three ad hoc committees to:
  - a.) Plan and identify the next steps in this process.
  - b.) Re-establish the vibrancy of our ministry that will place us in a strong position for our relocation.

c.) Implement a communication plan that helps us discover the who, what, why, when and where for our future.

3.) Request the prayers of the entire church as we seek to be faithful servants and leaders in this process.

For over ten years we have been standing at a crossroads wondering which path to choose next or as Doug said on Sunday, which hill to climb. We were in a good place. We had a strong ministry, but we couldn't help but look down those roads and wonder what great opportunities for new ministry lie ahead of us. Sunday, Feb. 20, after our congregational meeting, we did something that I think was representative of where we are going. We talked about our future. We asked questions. And we shared some strong opinions. Then we worshipped God together. We prayed, sang, and laughed. We invited God into our lives and that is what we will continue to do.