

The Palma Ceia Presbyterian Church In Tampa, Florida

MOTION BEFORE THE CONGREGATION FOR JANUARY 20th, 2019 at noon, in the Sanctuary.

-A merger with Bel Mar Presbyterian Church and Palma Ceia Presbyterian Church.

Session Recommendation:

The Session recommends for the merger.

The Session with 33 present voted on December 16th:

Affirmative 20

Negative 13

Abstaining 0

Attached:

Rationale from those in favor.

Rationale from those opposed.

Resources

Rationale from the Session majority recommending:

- Voting to allow Bel-Mar Presbyterian to merge into PCPC is a faithful response in care for a rapidly diminishing neighboring PCUSA congregation that can no longer care for itself and now requests PCPC to take over care of its assets and small parish. It carries out very practically Christ's commandment "to love your neighbor as yourself." They seldom have more than 20 in worship and their membership is below 50. The trend is downward and the need is immediate.
- PCPC's material resources by any measure have to be amongst the top 3 of the 74 churches in the Presbytery. Perhaps the greatest of any church in the Presbytery. Bel Mar's must be amongst the least.
- In the Gospel of Luke Jesus tells the story of the Good Samaritan who stops by the road to aid the traveler in need. The Good Samaritan pays for lodging and goes out of his way to provide for shelter for the broken traveler. The alternative to allowing Bel-Mar to merge with PCPC seems unattractive in light of that scriptural imperative to be willing to stop and help, even at the risk of some possible expense and effort.
- Bel-Mar Presbyterian has no debt. They own their property on Manhattan Avenue without mortgage. They have operated in the black every year for the last 20 years or longer. As a part of their expenses Bel-Mar carries now, and has for years, property and liability insurance. Their small staff expenses are diminishing further as their staff retires and exits. They are served now by 1 part time sexton, and their Designated Pastor of 3 years has another full-time job requiring his regular presence. Keeping the status quo they require very little staffing.
- The Stated Clerk of Presbytery citing General Assembly has ruled that in a merger PCPC would assume control of the selling and control of the Bel-Mar property without requiring approval of any other church body than PCPC's congregation. The Hillsborough County property appraiser appraises the property value at \$2,044,773.00 (Two million, forty four thousand, and seventy hundred and seventy three dollars).
- If expenses require it a portion or the whole of the property at Bel-Mar can be sold.
- Because there are nearly no programs at Bel-Mar the operating expenses are smaller. Not counting the pre-school tenant rent revenue the current congregation contributed \$36,723 in 2017. Their total income was \$97,209.00 and their total expenses were \$88,412.00 (A difference of \$8,797.00 to the good). As of Nov 2018 they have \$20,000 in savings. And their similar 2018 finance numbers, though not yet finally tabulated, also appear to be ending in the black as well.

- The current pre-school tenant at Bel-Mar has expressed an intention to possibly move this year, but not prior to the end of May, and perhaps not until 2020. There is a paying tenant for the near term future and if the pre-school were to leave there would be options to replace them or subdivide the property.
- PCPC's Bel-Mar Session Committee (made up of PCPC Session members and congregation members) would be charged with recommending to the PCPC Session how to best shepherd and steward the Bel-Mar mission going forward. The questions of rejuvenating, reinventing, closing and re-establishing elsewhere and in another form, these are all questions for the future of the project surround by investigation, dialogue and prayer. But Bel-Mar is the only Reformed or Presbyterian Protestant Christian worshipping community south of Bay to Bay. It is reasonable to believe the Gospel mandate to "make disciples of all nations" calls for us to seek to continue this witness south of Bay to Bay, and the expanding south of Gandy and Westshore communities. This is the mission of Christ's church. It's what we are called to do.
- Voting to allow Bel-Mar Presbyterian to merge into PCPC follows the request of the Presbytery Executive that as the larger sister church we try to shepherd this smaller congregation.
- PCPC is their closest geographical Presbyterian neighbor. We are under 2 miles away and we have many shared historical and family connections.
- The merger proposals allows for one elder from Bel-Mar to join PCPC's Session of 36. Their designated pastor would become PCPC's Parish Associate. Management of the Bel-Mar mission would become the work of a PCPC Session committee reporting to PCPC's Session in the same model in which the PCPC preschool operates through a committee reporting to PCPC's Session. Bel-Mar's income and expenses could be kept as separate ledgering even as the PCPC Preschool finances are kept as separate ledgering.

Rationale from the Session minority dissenting:

Those that object to the merger include: The Board of Trustees, The Finance Committee, and certain individuals on the session. The reasons for their objection are listed as follows:

- The PCPC Finance Committee has assessed all information it has been able to obtain over the three year period since the merger was first proposed and has consistently and unanimously voted that while it sympathizes with the remaining members of Bel Mar, due to its fiduciary responsibilities to PCPC it cannot support any activity of the church where the financial ramifications are unknown. The Committee is against incurring debt for PCPC in the absence of a plan.
- As Trustees of the assets of PCPC, the Trustees, like the members of the Finance Committee are against incurring debt. The Trustees of PCPC at their December 2018 meeting were in consensus that “the merger is a liability that we should not assume” and voted unanimously to present the following statement to the Session at its December meeting: Without operational and financial plans, the PCPC Board of Trustees cannot support this merger but would welcome the congregation of Bel Mar to PCPC.
- Merger with Bel Mar includes deeding the property to PCPC with the expectation of revitalizing the church as a worshipping community. There has been no determination as to how the church might be revitalized or what would be expected of PCPC to staff, operate, and maintain Bel Mar.
- Attendance at Bel Mar on Sundays has been reported as 15-30. Other mainstream churches in the vicinity have closed. Non-denominational churches such as Grace Family and Radiant have opened. There has been no demographic study as to whether a need exists which would sustain a Presbyterian presence.
- Estimates for the major repairs which are necessary to support the revitalization of Bel Mar have ranged from over \$100,000 (*attached Glisson report*) to \$500,000 (*2 knowledgeable verbal opinions*). Keeping the sanctuary but demolishing the detached buildings has been mentioned as a possibility and would require building bathrooms attached to the sanctuary. There is no estimate of the cost of those facilities which would have to be constructed to code.
- Bel Mar’s primary source of income comes from a non-church Preschool. That source contributes at least 60% of Bel Mar’s total budget. The remaining 40% (approximately \$34,000) comes from contributions from members. (*the Bel Mar budget is attached*);
 - The Preschool indicated it will relocate this year which will result in a 60% loss of income

- the dwindling membership's contributions will not be able to support the cost of the revitalization effort, thus it will be almost totally dependent on PCPC
- There is no assurance Bel Mar's property and liability insurance meets PCPC's risk management criteria. It is unknown whether the addition of Bel Mar will affect our current insurance program without an inspection of the property and an indication of the staffing and operations expected.
- Proponents of the merger state that there is no financial risk to PCPC - that costly repairs and operating deficits can be funded by borrowing against our Bel Mar property. But, there is no plan which determines how much will need to be borrowed and what the cost of borrowing will be on an annual basis. If the revitalization effort is unsuccessful, potentially hundreds of thousands of dollars will have been lost that could have been used for Presbytery mission programs like Beth-El and Cedarkirk. The known benefits that could be realized by the Presbytery from a future sale of the Bel Mar property outweigh the risks of an uncertain revitalization effort.
- PCPC can welcome the Bel Mar members into its congregation while Bel Mar and Presbytery consider other options for the property besides merger. Without a plan which demonstrates the probability of success, revitalization should not be pursued.

Other Resources Attached:

1. Minutes of the PCPC December Session meeting
2. A map and picture of Bel-Mar Presbyterian
3. 2018 Bel-Mar budget
4. Financial facts from Bel-Mar Treasurer
5. Inspection report

December 16, 2018 SESSION MEETING Palma Ceia Presbyterian Church. Fellowship Hall

ATTENDANCE:

Staff: DeBevoise, Abdnour, Hubbell, Intern JD DeBevoise, Kelly, Wilcher.
PCPC Treasure McKeel, Clerk of Session Mims.

Guests: Pastor Mike Peacock, Marsha Rydberg, Nat Pieper, Burk Clark, David Pead, Jim Armstrong, President PCPC Board of Trustees and PCP Foundation Ben Hill.

Elders:

Class of 2018

Jeff Andrews*
Carrie Fowler
Sally Glisson
Fitzsimmons
Derek Guida
Rick Hardesty
Bill Lewis
Larry Lansrud*
Deon McFayden
Erin McKinney
Kim Miller
Jennifer Pandolfi
Kem Toole

Class of 2019

Cindy Alander
Sylvia Campbell
Ray Charles

Susan Clark
Marvin Crabtree
Kurt Hine
Tina Maddux
Robert Mims
Jenifer Ownby
Gay Rivas
Teale Smith
Beth Sessums

Class of 2020

Trey Carswell
Paul Clark
Amy

Robin Flournoy
Wendell Gaertner
Leah Maurer*
Susan Peacock
Patricia Pead
Rob Stern
Diggs Vann
Earl Whitlock
David Winter

*absent

Moderator DeBevoise called the meeting to order at 12:35PM with prayer. It was moved, seconded, and approved to change the order of the agenda.

The first motion to be considered by session is to recommend to the congregation that Bel Mar PC merge with PCPC. If this motion passes, consideration will be given to a second motion that a congregational meeting will be called for noon on Sunday January 20, 2018 for a congregational vote on this merger.

Discussion/opinions/letters were shared from Chair Rydberg of Bel Mar/PCPC Merger Commission, PCPC Board of Trustees Ben Hill, the Finance Committee, Mr. Pieper from Presbyterian Homes & Housing Foundation, Elders Rob Stern, Bill Lewis, Sylvia Campbell, Ray Charles, Paul Clark and Larry Lansrud.

A motion to use a super majority vote vs majority vote on the 2 Bel Mar questions was made and seconded. The motion failed with 16 yes to 17 no. (A motion for a super majority vote requires a 2/3 majority to pass). The Moderator stated paper ballots will be used for voting.

The first motion is for session to recommend to the congregation a merger with Bel Mar PC and Palma Ceia PC. The motion to merge Bel Mar with PCPC passed with 20 votes yes to 13 no.

The motion to call a congregational meeting for January 20, 2019 after the 11AM worship service to ask the congregation to vote on the merger was made. A substitute motion was proposed by Elder Paul Clark and was seconded: That the session call a meeting of the congregation to vote on the recommendation to merge with Bel Mar and that this meeting be convened as soon as possible after session receives a specific financial report and operational plan from the Bel Mar/PCPC Commission. Motion failed with a 15 to 15 tie (not a simple majority).

The motion to call the congregational meeting on January 20, 2019 passed with 21 votes yes to 9 no.

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Pastor Ken Hubbell requested session return to a single Connection Service at 9:00AM because the intended demographic is not being reached with the 11:00AM service so the Connection is being diluted across two services. The motion to hold a single 9:00 Connection Service is made, seconded, and passed.

The Personnel Committee is continuing to search for a PCPC Administrator and wants to hire a consultant to assist in looking for someone to fill this specialized position. The cost is within the search committee's budget. Session approves.

The minutes of the November stated session meeting were approved.

The meeting was closed with prayer at 2:20PM.

Beverly A. Mims, Clerk of Session

Financial Facts from the Bel-Mar Treasurer as of early December 2018

1. Name of Church.: Bel Mar Presbyterian
2. Total income for 2017: \$97,209.12.
3. Current total income for 2018 through Nov: \$79,723.06
4. Of that (#2) \$36,723.00 is contributions and \$60,485.72 is other income.
5. Our budget anticipates \$84,141.68 total income for 2018.
6. Additionally we have approximately \$20,300.00 in savings and/or restricted accounts or other financial reserves.
7. Total expenses for 2017 were \$ 88,412.06
8. Total expenses for 2018 through Nov 2018 were \$82,653.69
9. Our budget anticipates total expenses in 2018 of \$89,058.53
10. Of that (#9) \$42,800.00 is compensation. (\$6284.00 IRS)

-Are there any known legal actions or investigations, civil or criminal, financial or personal, pending with respect to the church? **No**

-Are payroll taxes current? **Yes**

-Does the church own property other than it's current worshipping address? **No**

-Has the church received notice of a pending estate gift? **No**

-Does the church carry property and liability insurance? If so, with whom?

Yes, Guide One