

Dear Prince of Peace,

Last week I wrote to you about the purpose of the special meeting of the congregation this Sunday. Here is an update to that message.

When the Council decided to call a special meeting, we said the purpose was to act “on a plan to respond to the closure of the Caterpillar Learning Center.”

As I said last week, you will not see a fully developed plan. I also said in my last letter that you would be asked to vote on the key questions which must be answered before a plan can be made. The questions I set out in my last letter were:

- 1) Is providing childcare for the community consistent with the mission and vision of Prince of Peace?
- 2) Should PoP proceed to develop a new childcare center?
- 3) Should PoP seek a new childcare provider to be our tenant and wait until they obtain a license to resume daycare?
- 4) Should Prince of Peace plan to become a licensed childcare center and operate until a suitable tenant can obtain a license and take over?
- 5) Should Prince of Peace plan to operate a licensed childcare center on an extended basis as part of our mission

It is unlikely that any of these questions will be put to a vote on Sunday. The Caterpillar Work Group, the Finance Committee, and the Council have been working diligently to provide you with the information you would need to answer these questions. The feedback we got from you in our informational meeting was welcome and useful. At this time, however, I cannot assure you that you will have all of the information you need to cast a vote on any of these questions.

There are two main reasons for this. First, in the last week, we have been told that we would need to invest up to \$500,000 in a sprinkler system and other safety upgrades to continue hosting childcare services under a new license. We have also been told that we may not be required to do so. We cannot ask you to make a decision pro or con on childcare without a clear and binding answer.

Secondly, the best option for transitioning to a new provider has been to negotiate an agreement with the current management of Caterpillar to continue operations under their license until a new license could be obtained. At the time that the special meeting was called, it seemed likely that we would know whether or not that is possible. That would be a key consideration in any decision you would make. However, as of this writing, that negotiating process is still underway. There are many contingencies that enter into that negotiating and we simply are not able to supply you with all the information you should need to reach a decision on how to vote on these questions.

So, what can you expect on Sunday?

First, we will report to you on the work we have done so far. We will provide an overview of the financial impact of the closure and attempt to estimate what the impact of continuing or resuming daycare operations might be. There are many contingencies and unknowns at this time, so those estimates will not, in my opinion, be reliable enough to help you make a voting decision.

Second, I will take this opportunity to invite all who are engaged in our various ministries together for discussions of how we should realign our ministries and resources to live our faith and do the work God intends for us. This part of the planning process I briefly described at our meeting in January, or a series of meetings. These meetings will be the next step in reconfiguring our structures as an outcome of the Liberating Structures project you have heard about. On Sunday we will describe this process more fully and invite you to commit to becoming involved.

We have many more issues than childcare before us. While we have limited the issue to be explored on Sunday to childcare we agree, as some of our members have expressed, that there are other challenges and opportunities we need to address. The planning work that we need to undertake at this time has been bifurcated, which is a fancy way of saying that I and the Council have narrowed our immediate focus to the childcare issue and by default have put other core issues in a different basket of work. Up to this point that has been the only way that I could see us making timely decisions on the childcare issue, but from here on the planning process will expand to include all of the key issues.

Last night I attended our Lenten service. My reaction was visceral. I literally got goosebumps as I mingled with the large number of you that turned out. Although I have only been with you for a few years, so many memories came back as I met you, person by person, of how good and loving and faithful you are. I came home excited about the future we have, not anxious about a fearful and dying congregation. I hope to see that excitement build as we move into the future together.

Yours in faith,

Michael Stetzer
Congregational President