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We exist to love Jesus and live for Him.

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We envision a congregation whose love for Jesus and one another leaves a clear and compelling witness for Christ.

So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves. Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.

Philippians 2:1-4

Decisions, Decisions by Brian Watson

This month's business meeting will not be held on the second Sunday of the month, May 8, because it is Mother's Day. As exciting as our business meetings are, we are sure that the mothers in our church would prefer to be honored in different ways. The business meeting will be held on May 22 immediately after the morning worship service.

There are three important issues that will be discussed at this business meeting: nominations to the Church Council, nominations for deacons, and the next church budget. Though there was some confusion last month, at this time the only decisions we are making regarding church leadership are the open positions on the Council and the church's desire for more deacons. I will address the issues of the Church Council and budget, and Ryan will address deacon nominations.

First, I will discuss the Church Council. According to our church constitution:

"This church will maintain a church council which shall meet regularly for the purpose of assisting the pastor in planning and coordinating the ministries of the church. The church council shall consist of those individuals elected to serve as heads of the various programs of the church, and may include any other individuals whose involvement is needed. The church council is expected to recommend a calendar of ministries to the church, and to coordinate all efforts necessary for the accomplishment of ministry activities, according to the instructions of the church. The moderator shall

serve as chairman of the church council."

What the constitution *does not* say is how many people are on the Council and what their specific roles should be. The constitution also dictates that the moderator should be the chairman of the Council. In past years, the senior pastor was the moderator. Recently, we have decided to use another person as moderator, because it seems to provide a good measure of objectivity and balance to our business meetings. Our current moderator, David Northrop, is one of the people we are nominating for a Council position.

Though the Church Council has existed in our constitution, it did not exist *in fact* until several years ago. When the Council was formed, it was modeled after Rick Warren's *The Purpose-Driven Church*, which suggested there should be five purposes of the church: outreach (or missions), worship, fellowship, discipleship, and service (or ministry). Council positions were made for each of those five areas. To those five were added the deacons, represented by the deacon chair, and the position of administration/stewardship. Last year, we added a position for children's ministry, because we became aware that our efforts were not well-coordinated with that area of the ministry.

Marj Taylor currently serves as the missions coordinator, Sandy Cherry as the children's ministry coordinator, and Robert Andes as the deacon chair. Marj and Sandy began

their three-year terms last year, and the deacon chair is automatically on the Council. The ministry and worship positions have been open for quite some time. Jana Loose was the discipleship coordinator, Shari Hinckley was the fellowship coordinator, and Dave Williams was the administration/stewardship coordinator. Their three-year terms ended in March.

At this time, we would like to nominate David Northrop for the administration/stewardship coordinator position and Katherine Bigney for the fellowship coordinator position. Since the areas of ministry, worship, and discipleship overlap so much with our pastoral ministries, Ryan and I believe these positions do not need to be filled at this time. These nominations will be made through the nominating committee at the next business meeting.

Finally, the finance committee will be presenting an initial budget for the last six months of this year. In years past, the church's fiscal year has run from July 1 to June 30. The finance committee recommended that we change our fiscal year to synchronize with the calendar year. (This was approved at the last business meeting.) This will make things less confusing, and will help the pastors deal with tax issues. (To put it simply, it is easier to account for our housing allowances and business expenses if these are based on a calendar year.) In order to coordinate the budget year with the calendar year, we will have to propose a six-

(continued on back)

Decisions, Decisions (continued from page 1)

month budget, which will begin on July 1. Toward the end of the year, the finance committee will recommend a twelve-month budget that will begin on January 1. The finance committee will be meeting shortly to review the budget and recommend a new one. This will be presented in May and a final version of the next budget will be voted on in June.

As always, please pray for our church. We ask that you would pray for us, that God would grant us wisdom as we seek to lead this church in a way that is pleasing to Him. We ask that you would pray about the decisions we make. Pray that God will continue to bless this church in all ways and in all areas, from our leaders to our

members to our finances. We realize that we—as individuals and as a church—are completely dependent on God’s gracious provision in every area of our lives. ☞

Deacon Nominations by Ryan Reese

A major item on the agenda for the May business meeting is the nomination of deacons. I recently preached a message on the biblical office of deacon as part of our current series, *Indestructible Church* (April 17, “Indestructible Servants”). For those who did not hear and those who need refreshing, I will review some of the elements of that message for guidance in nominating deacons.

What is a deacon? A deacon is simply a servant of the church, someone who gives selflessly of their time and effort to make sure the physical needs of the congregation are met. While the deacon receives no official job description in the New Testament, it seems reasonable to infer from Acts 6:1-7 that the spiritual leaders in the church could not meet both the spiritual *and* physical needs of the growing congregation. As the New Testament church develops we see two offices emerge in the church: Overseer (also called pastor or elder) and deacon. The elders are given the task of overseeing the spiritual growth of the congregation—primarily through teaching the Scriptures (1 Tim. 3:2; Titus 1:9-11). The deacons are not to lead by teaching the church, but are rather the official *servants* of the church. Since no job description is given, Deacons should act to meet whatever material needs arise in the church—which can include anything from care for the building and oversight

of benevolence, to finances and administrative tasks.

Who can be a deacon? The qualifications for a deacon are listed in 1 Timothy 3:8-13 as follows: For the MEN:

“Dignified”—respected by those who know them.

“Not double-tongued”—not two-faced or insincere with their words.

“Not addicted to much wine”—not a drunkard.

“Not greedy for dishonest gain”—works with integrity and is not a lover of money.

“Hold to the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience”—right belief coupled with right living.

“One-woman man”—sexually pure, faithful to his wife, if he is married.

“Managing their children and their own households well”—godly father, if he has children.

And for the WOMEN:

“Not slanderers”—not a gossip, not speaking poorly of others.

“Sober-minded”—clear or level headed. Also may include aforementioned addiction to wine.

“Faithful in all things”—she must be a

godly woman, respectable, with right belief and practice.

This is the biblical standard for deacons in the church and we must examine our potential deacons according to God’s Word. The nominee should be a godly man or woman who is *already* working hard to serve the congregation—not someone we hope could fill the role someday. They should not be nominated based upon their popularity, worldly success, or natural abilities. Men or women should be nominated based upon their Christian character and faithful service in meeting needs. Those who receive the most nominations will go through a period of testing with the pastors and other deacons (1 Timothy 3:10)—to ensure that both their beliefs and practice reflect genuine, biblical Christianity. Once approved, the nominee will again be recommended to the congregation for ordination. I ask that you be in prayer during the next month regarding this process. Yes, we are all called to serve one another, but who among us is doing so in a tremendous, selfless way? Who do you go to when you have a practical need? Who do you know that will—and has—dropped everything to help you, because of both their love for Jesus and for you? That person is a deacon of the church. ☞