

## Planning Committee Board Report September 2023

As you are all aware, major actions or projects involving changes to our branch church, have been put on hold as we reflect on all the metaphysical support given to the membership through the Metaphysical Committee assignments or from the prayerful work and citations for study provided by Janet Horton. Also, a series of The Mother Church workshops were held and open to all members and friends of the Fairfax CS Branch Church to enlist the help of The Mother Church in strengthening our branch church. As the planning committee mentioned in its June report, Planning Committee members would be interviewing all members of the church in the fall with key questions as to how to move forward as a church or to consider possible changes, such as becoming a society or even remaining a church fulfilling the Manual requirements of a branch church with yearly lectures, having a Sunday School, providing a Reading Room for the community and remaining true to our original purpose of the founding of this church “to promote the truths of the Bible as taught and demonstrated by Christ Jesus and as explained through the writings of MBE, and to help “reinstating primitive Christianity and its lost art of healing” in accordance with the Manual of the The Mother Church for the community of Fairfax.

As the Board Report indicated, we are so grateful for the dedication and support of every member of this church. The following questions will be asked of each member, those living locally or out of state currently. Each planning committee member will ask the same questions to the members they are randomly assigned to talk with. We will be sending the four questions that we will be asking out this week, so you can prayerfully consider your responses. When the questions are sent, PLEASE indicate if you would prefer to write your responses rather than have a call from the Planning Committee members. And if you wish to have your input confidential, you can email your response to the chairman of the Board, Kim Williams, who will honor your request for confidentiality. But note that all inputs, whether confidential or otherwise, will be shared with the entire congregation in the November 13 special meeting. Our goal is to have every member reply and feel free to be sincere and safe in sharing their responses.

The four questions are:

- What are your hopes for church?
- What lies need to be addressed?
- How to deal with the lies?
- Anything else you wish to note?

Every survey, or article written by noted religious forums (Pew Research Forum, Global Center for Religious research, Public Religious Research Institute, articles in the Christian Science

Monitor ) show there are many spiritually minded people searching . The way people get their information today has changed dramatically and the Pandemic allowed religious teaching to be presented differently and from any location. Surveys show people, however, are still deeply interested in spiritual growth, peace and connections. Many churches that have remained well attended, have Bible Study available, prayer circles and small faith based gatherings. Churches that are not meeting those “connection” issues are meeting the challenge of people voting with their feet and leaving organized services.

We are thinking of new ways to reach out to our community that involve the Reading Room right after every service that could provide a “connecting”, questioning time, a listening time....to help visitors or our “Friends of the Church” to ask questions. Subject to support by members, starting this Sunday, right after the church service, the Reading Room will be open for visitors, guests, friends to sit down and chat about any questions about the lessons, prayerful support, or just to talk about any help with any of the tools we have in the RR to assist with gaining a greater understanding of the Science of the Christ.

We have to recognize that people are increasingly not comfortable with a traditional form of worship, leaning toward spirituality but not finding it in a structured church atmosphere. We are deeply seeking ways to share CS and it’s healing message. Help is at hand. We hope this outreach will give all a sense of hope and fellowship.

Mary Baker Eddy states:

As you journey, and betimes sigh for rest “beside the still waters,” ponder this lesson of love. Learn its purpose; and in hope and faith, where heart meets heart reciprocally blest, drink with me the living waters of the spirit of my life-purpose, — to impress humanity with the genuine recognition of practical, operative Christian Science.

(Miscellaneous Writings 1883–1896, Mary Baker Eddy, p. 206:32)

Respectfully Submitted,  
Jan Ramp, Chair