

Dear Members of St. Paul,

As part of the ongoing efforts to address the future growth, viability, and financial needs of St. Paul, the Parish Council chartered the Business Planning Group in January 2016 with express direction to identify major financial items confronting the congregation and make recommendations to address them.

This group identified many areas of deferred maintenance that needed to be addressed. At the same time it also made a recommendation that the various education activities of the church (Liberty SPECC and Infant Toddler program) and (Earhart SPECC and day school) be reviewed with the aim of them becoming financially self sustaining.

Through the 2016-17 budget preparation process operating shortfalls were identified at the SPECC Liberty site along with potential major immediate expenditures for foundation repair or replacement at the Infant Toddler house and lead abatement in both the Infant Toddler House and in parts of the sanctuary used for the SPECC program. Because of the immediacy of the lead abatement costs (required to meet licensing requirements by August) and because of the greater indications that there were major costs identified in general but not specifically quantified and because we were well into the enrollment process for the 2016-17 school year, the Executive Committee took the following actions:

- Allocated \$25,000 to cover the immediate lead abatement costs
- Directed the Board of Education (the Board responsible for the SPECC activities) and the Principal, Bob Burgess, (the senior line management individual over all of the day school and SPECC activities) to do a deep dive in the SPECC programs at Liberty and Earhart, including the Infant Toddler program, and report back to the Parish Council in the fall with recommendations.

After the Board of Education analyzed the current programs, identified the necessary long-term capital repairs, and reviewed the data with key Liberty staff, the Board of Education determined the current model for IT and SPECC was unsustainable and therefore recommended "... the discontinuing of both IT and SPECC Liberty programs by 7/1/2017." The Parish Council accepted this recommendation at its December meeting. Because the Liberty SPECC program was originally chartered by the Voter's Assembly, the Parish Council is bringing this recommendation to the Voter's Assembly at a special meeting to be held on January 17, 2017.

To facilitate congregational discussion, three "information only" meetings will take place. The first is 1/10/2017 at Earhart at 7pm. Additional meetings will also be scheduled for 1/15/2017 at Liberty between Sunday services during the Bible Class time and at the Earhart after the service. Also, the presentation that the Board of Education made to the Parish Council will be attached to the church and school websites and the e-unity. Copies of this presentation will also be made available in print form at both worship locations.

This is a difficult recommendation. Nobody wants to see programs terminated that have been part of our church family fabric for many years. However, just as God calls us to move out in faith, He also calls to be good stewards of the resources He has provided. The ultimate discernment decision in this situation lies with the congregation. I request that we all take extra time in prayer during the next few weeks so that as a congregation we will hear the Lord's word and respond to it.

In Christ's love and blessing,

John Burch, Congregation President