

MERGER EXPLORATION

Ellisville
First Baptist Church

October 30, 2016

We are grateful for all of the responses received regarding the possibility of a church merger with West County Community Church (WCCC). While there has been a great deal of optimism from both congregations, we also know there are a lot of questions to be answered. You'll find many of your questions addressed below, but please be aware that at this stage in the process, there are many questions that we just can't answer. You may not find your exact question listed, as we have combined similar questions.

Our prayer is that God will bring all our families together in unity with discernment and wisdom as we consider this merger. We are thankful for your prayers as we continue to explore this possibility. We encourage your feedback and your willingness to envision the positive impact this merger could have for the Kingdom of God. Together, we could be more effective at reaching the lost in our community and beyond.

- *Administrative Leadership Team*

Ryan Bowman, Dan Rogers, Becky Pool, Paula Shelden, Jim Hall, Myra Lamb, Steve Tucker, Larry Konneman, Louis Miller, John Smith and Russ Ewing (ex-officio)

NEXT STEPS

- 1. KEEP PRAYING** for God's will to be made clear for our future
- 2. PROVIDE MORE FEEDBACK** cards located at the Welcome Desk due by November 6
- 3. FACILITY TOURS**
October 30 & November 6, 12:30-2:00pm | 17770 Mueller Rd, Wildwood
- 4. WORSHIP WITH WCCC at WCCC**
November 13, 10:30am
- 5. TOWN HALL Q&A at Ellisville**
November 13, 3:00pm | Worship Center

WHY CONSIDER A MERGER?

By combining talents and resources of both church families, the opportunity to provide Gospel ministries is expanded. We hope to reach and impact more lives for Christ by potentially eliminating our combined debt and using those resources to further God's Kingdom work. Joining together will help both congregations to better fulfill the mission to reach our community for Christ. Many of our members have worshiped at Ellisville for years and this church is dear to us, so we understand there are mixed emotions regarding this opportunity. The Lord has mightily blessed Ellisville through the years and this would be a foundation upon which future ministries would be built.

WHY DO YOU THINK THAT WE'LL BE STRONGER TOGETHER?

It's evident that both congregations love Jesus and are passionate about making an impact for the Kingdom of God. We have found that the strengths and needs of each church are complementary. For example, WCCC is younger demographically while Ellisville has more senior adults. WCCC has larger facilities to provide expanded ministries while Ellisville can provide additional volunteer support. WCCC seeks to increase adult Bible study classes while Ellisville can provide experienced teachers and leaders for such classes. In summary, a new church will benefit from additional financial resources, a strong combination of young and old, and an increase in the number of volunteers serving together in effectively reaching our community for Christ.

WHAT'S THE TIMELINE FOR A MERGER?

As leadership from both churches continue to meet to work out specific details, there will be opportunities to tour the WCCC facilities (October 30 & November 6, 12:30-2:00pm), worship with the WCCC congregation on November 13 at 10:30 am, then ask more questions in another Town Hall Q&A session scheduled for November 13 at 3:00pm. As we are sensitive to the needs of both churches, such as Ellisville's plans for facility renovations and WCCC's search for a senior pastor, it's optimal to make a decision to merge before the end of 2016, provided necessary steps are completed. Both churches require a congregational vote (written ballot at Ellisville) to approve a merger.

ARE THE TWO CHURCH'S BELIEFS AND THEOLOGY COMPATIBLE?

Yes, both Ellisville and WCCC believe that the Bible is the inspired Word of God and the basis of our faith. Both churches have subscribed to the statement of faith contained in the Baptist Faith and Message, adopted by the Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) in 2000. Both are also affiliated with the SBC, Missouri Baptist Convention and the local St. Louis Baptist Association.

HOW WOULD MEMBERSHIP BE HANDLED IF A MERGER OCCURS?

As a marriage, the two congregations bring many strengths to a possible union. As a testimony to that, we would ask active members of each congregation to re-enroll in the new church. A plan to carry that out is under development.

WOULD A MERGER RESULT IN A SIGNIFICANT LOSS OF MEMBERSHIP?

We know some will feel saddened by the prospect of moving. It's good that God has used Ellisville so significantly in our families' lives'; it's evidence of God's blessing. We have contacted a local church that has done a similar merger, and the attrition they experienced is very small. Our prayer is as God's plan is made evident on the merger, He will also bring unity to the body.

WOULD THE COMBINED CHURCH HAVE A NEW NAME AND WHAT WOULD IT BE?

Laying down our separate identities would be important to creating a new shared future as one church. If a merger is approved, we would seek input from members of the new combined church on a church name. Much prayer and consideration would be given for a name that captures God's vision for the new church. Whatever the name, we would remain Baptist and stay affiliated with the SBC. The combined congregation would vote on the name.

WOULD ELLISVILLE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH GIVE UP MINISTERING TO THE ELLISVILLE COMMUNITY?

No. Ellisville's local outreach has always been beyond the city limits and would continue to include Ellisville and all neighboring communities. The new church would continue ministering to Ellisville, all of West County and beyond.

HOW WOULD THE NEW CHURCH BE GOVERNED?

Leadership from both congregations have asked Pastor Ryan to recommend a governance structure for the new church that is Biblically based and accountable to the combined congregation with the continued use of deacons. We anticipate the blessing of members from both church families serving alongside one another in a combined church. The proposed governance framework would be provided before a merger vote then voted on as a combined church. Copies of by-laws, budgets and financial reports of both churches can be provided upon request in the church office.

WHO WOULD BE THE PASTOR AND HOW WILL OUR STAFF BE IMPACTED?

Most of our staff, including the senior pastor, would move into the same positions with the combined church. Currently, WCCC employs three part-time ministry staff, one intern and one full-time custodian. While some overlapping of positions exist, the desire would be to maintain as many staff from both congregations as possible. Further analysis of actual needs regarding staffing would be finalized.

WOULD EXISTING MINISTRIES CONTINUE (M&M'S, Joy, Be Attitudes, etc...) ?

We expect that the ministries of both churches would continue where there is no overlap, as they meet needs across both congregations. Additionally, we would expect the combined creativities of a new church to birth new ministries.

WOULD THE NEW CHURCH HOST SPECIAL EVENTS (Sportsmen's Banquet, Women's Christmas Gathering, Egg Drop)?

We sure hope so! The WCCC facilities provide more capabilities to host special events. Some expansion of the kitchen capabilities at WCCC would be addressed.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO ELLISVILLE WEEKDAY PRESCHOOL?

It is anticipated that the preschool at Ellisville would continue through the end of the 2016/2017 school year. We hope that the kids and parents would find benefit with the additional capabilities offered at the WCCC campus for the following school year. The preschool directors from both Ellisville and Living Water Academy would work on an integration plan.

WHAT IS THE RELATIONSHIP OF WCCC AND THE SCHOOL (Living Water Academy)?

The relationship with Living Water Academy is another strength of WCCC. It is governed by a board of directors under the authority of the current WCCC leadership. The school is a ministry of the church and the church has final authority over the school. The church owns the buildings and provides usage at no charge to the school. Living Water Academy has a bright future and school officials are currently working on accreditation.

WHAT ABOUT OTHER MINISTRIES THAT USE ELLISVILLE FACILITIES (Home School, Al-Anon, Newborns in Need)?

If these ministries wish to continue at the new location, we would do our best to accommodate them. One of the best ways a church can minister to the community is by use of its facilities.

WOULD ALL FACILITY NEEDS BE MET AT THE WCCC LOCATION?

Mostly yes. The WCCC campus addresses the needs Ellisville approved in the facility renovation project, and much more. The first phase of construction was built in the early 2000s. The second phase, which includes the school and multipurpose facility, was built in 2006. Of course, with every building, there are ongoing maintenance needs and upgrades. Although we don't anticipate very many needs, there would be a few updates needed; expansion of the kitchen space, a larger elevator, allocation of a choir room and ABF spaces, assigning office space and evaluating the need for security cameras. We see these as minor relative to the renovations needed on the Ellisville campus.

WHAT WOULD THE WORSHIP SERVICES BE LIKE?

The combined church would offer two worship services, much like Ellisville has now. One more classical in style, while the other more contemporary. Currently, WCCC hosts one worship service that is contemporary in style.

IS THERE ROOM FOR A CHOIR ON THE STAGE IN THE WCCC WORSHIP CENTER?

Yes. The platform has ample room for a choir. As well, space would need to be allocated to establish a choir room.

DOES THE WCCC FACILITY HAVE A BAPTISTRY?

Yes. The baptistry is located on the Worship Center stage with dressing rooms off stage.

WOULD ELLISVILLE'S ASSETS BE MOVED IF WE MERGE?

We hope to be able to re-purpose all assets for use at the WCCC campus not associated with the sale of property. Examples include pianos, organ, furniture, risers, appliances, work spaces, utensils. We will move all furnishings, fixtures and equipment needed at the WCCC campus.

WOULD ABF CLASSES CONTINUE AND IS THERE ROOM FOR THEM AT THE WCCC CAMPUS?

ABF, Sunday School classes and small groups are pivotal in the success of a merger. We would continue all classes and small groups. Leaders are currently investigating several options to best accommodate the space needs of those classes. Most importantly, we pray that those classes would grow and multiply as we combine our congregations. The classrooms on the WCCC campus are permanent, just a few have one divider to allow for larger classroom space.

WOULD WE CONTINUE WEDNESDAY NIGHT MEALS?

We are committed to our Wednesday evening fellowship meals. Expanding the kitchen capabilities at WCCC will be addressed.

WHAT KIND OF TRAFFIC CONTROL CONSIDERATIONS WOULD BE MADE ON HWY 100?

We would employ a traffic officer to direct traffic at the end of services. Additionally, we would investigate the possibility of a traffic signal with the appropriate authorities.

WOULD THE SHUTTLE BUS CONTINUE?

Certainly! We would continue to run existing shuttles for Gambrell Garden residents.

IT'S HARD TO SEE THE WCCC BUILDING, WOULD THERE BE NEW SIGNAGE?

A larger monument sign would be considered after the churches combine, contingent upon Wildwood code requirements. It's likely that we would have signage at our current location directing visitors to the WCCC campus, contingent upon the terms of the property sale.

COULD WE UPGRADE ELLISVILLE'S CAMPUS AND KEEP THE ELLISVILLE LOCATION?

Ellisville has been blessed to serve this location for over 50 years. Over the past three years, we've explored other opportunities which are very costly. This merger opportunity is the most fiscally responsible means to accomplish the level of facility improvements needed.

HOW WOULD THE BUDGET AND FINANCES BE MANAGED?

The budgets and assets of both churches would be combined and the new church would have final authority over its finances. The combined church would assume all the assets and liabilities of both Ellisville and WCCC and any contracts would be reviewed for continuation.

WOULD FACILITY MAINTENANCE COST MORE AT THE WCCC LOCATION?

Since the WCCC facilities are newer, the overall maintenance should be less. There is more property at WCCC than Ellisville, which could lead to slightly higher costs for upkeep. Overall, we don't anticipate a significant increase in building and grounds upkeep.

HOW DO THE WCCC EXPENSES COMPARE TO ELLISVILLE EXPENSES?

The WCCC draft 2017 budget is less than half that of Ellisville's. However, WCCC debt service costs are similar to ours. Contingent upon debt reduction of a combined church, a new church's operating budget would be reduced significantly by up to \$500,000 a year.

WOULD LIABILITY INCREASE BECAUSE OF THE POND ON THE WCCC CAMPUS?

Ellisville currently carries a large amount of umbrella insurance. We would confirm that the coverage is adequate for the pond.

HOW QUICKLY WOULD THE ELLISVILLE OWNED HOMES BE SOLD?

The houses (with the exception of the missionary houses) would be available for sale if the two churches approve a merger after ample notice to the tenants.

DOES THE ALT PLAN TO GET A CURRENT ASSESSMENT OF OUR PROPERTY VALUES TO ENSURE THAT A COMBINED CHURCH COULD BE DEBT-FREE?

A prior market assessment of the Ellisville property was conducted. As a result, we do have confidence in a baseline value. If the merger is approved, we would obtain a current market appraisal of the Ellisville church property. The proceeds of the sale of the Ellisville property would be used to pay the debt of the combined church.

WHAT ARE MY NEXT STEPS, HOW CAN I HELP?

First, prayerfully seek God. Pray that we accomplish His will in ways that please and honor Him. Pray for the leaders of both churches as they navigate this opportunity. If you have additional questions, don't hesitate to ask for clarity. You can submit questions via the feedback cards available at the Welcome Desk, via the web at info@fbcellisville.org, by reaching out to church staff or speaking directly to Pastor Ryan, Russ Ewing or members of the ALT.

MERGER EXPLORATION

Ellisville
First Baptist Church

Q&A

November 13, 2016

HOW WOULD WE ENCOURAGE COMPROMISE AND BALANCING TRADITIONS BETWEEN THE TWO CHURCH FAMILIES, INCLUDING A NEW CHURCH NAME? I PRAY THAT WE WOULD BE OPEN TO CHANGE.

We agree that the combined church would have a new name. However, there would be no change in doctrine, statement of beliefs, or affiliations, thus we will remain a Baptist church. If the merger is approved by both churches, there would be a process that we go through as a combined church to select the new name, including soliciting ideas from both congregations. Also, project teams, such as facilities utilization and ministry integration, with representation from both churches would help coordinate the transition. These project teams will research information on specific areas related to the potential church merger and provide recommendations and strategies related to their areas of focus. The teams will work to provide critical information to help the churches come to an informed decision prior to a vote. If the merger is approved, the teams would continue to work through the transition period to assist with matters related to these areas.

1. Facility Usage & Transition Team

Parking (designated area for Sr. Adults, etc.), Storage & Office Usage, Kitchens, Audio / Video, Safety / Security Needs, Church & School Coordination (incl. ABF / SS usage), Classroom Usage, Weekday Preschool Planning, Transportation Planning

Ellisville: Russ Ewing, Becky Pool, Brad Canalejo, Melissa White, Jim Hall, Paula Shelden

WCCC: Kimberle Fowler, Sharon Baker, Dale Nowlin, Greg Schuster, Tom Keller, John Olejnik

2. Vision / Name Team

Develop process for new vision statement, Develop process for the selection of new church name

Ellisville: Ryan Bowman, Dan Rogers, Larry Konneman; WCCC: Dan Little, Brad Gilbert

3. Finance / Real Estate / Legal Team

Provide legal framework for the merging of two entities, Develop process for the selling of real estate, Develop future budget

Ellisville: Russ Ewing, Steve Tucker, Mac McCarthy; WCCC: Steve Banton, Mick Sander, John Brooks

4. Governance Framework / Personnel Team

Develop framework for future governance structure of new church, Recommend personnel structure of church staff for new church

Ellisville: Ryan Bowman, JB Peterson, Louis Miller, John Smith; WCCC: Pieter Barnard, Dan Little, Steve Banton

5. Communications Team

Create comprehensive communications strategy, Evaluate best practices to ensure maximum communication

Ellisville: Kara Crisp, Becky Pool; WCCC: Amber Rogers, Renee Wigger

6. Ministry Integration Team

Develop strategy for having members from both churches serve on Ministry Teams for new church, Develop strategy for integrating existing Ministries (Children, Student, Women, Men, Sr. Adult, etc.), Work with unforeseen issues that arise following merger

Ellisville: Russ Ewing, Lee White, TBD; WCCC: TBD

Overall Coordinators:

These individuals will work with the project teams to ensure that goals are being established and timelines are being met. A Master Document will be developed.

Ellisville: TBD; WCCC: TBD

WHAT IS A REALISTIC TIME FRAME FOR THE SALE OF THE ELLISVILLE CHURCH PROPERTY AND COULD THE NEW CHURCH SUPPORT THE COMBINED DEBT UNTIL A SALE IS MADE?

We don't have a way to gauge how quickly the Ellisville property would be sold. Currently the church property is zoned residential. Before listing the property, we would obtain a current appraisal and investigate the benefits of rezoning. The current commercial construction activity in the vicinity indicates that we are in a desirable location. Yes, the new church can support the combined debt. We would continue to manage cash flow and expenditures of the combined church as a function of giving and re-allocation of Ellisville renovation funds. Once the property sells, proceeds would help pay the debt of the combined church and the new church's operating budget would be reduced significantly by up to \$500,000 per year because of reducing debt service.

WHAT WAS THE PEAK AVERAGE ATTENDANCE AT WCCC?

The peak attendance was approximately 500. The capacity of West County's worship center is approximately 600.

WOULD ACCOMMODATIONS BE MADE TO MOVE THE ORGAN, STAINED GLASS WINDOWS, ETC...?

We would move all furnishings, fixtures and equipment needed at the WCCC campus, as feasible. As well, any memorials on the Ellisville campus would be accommodated on the WCCC campus.

HAS CONSIDERATION BEEN MADE REGARDING THE LONGER COMMUTE FOR SOME MEMBERS?

While the WCCC campus is only about 5 miles from the Ellisville campus, we understand that the extra distance may be a concern for some of our members. We do hope, however, that all of our members would give the new commute a try. The majority of our members live within a ten-mile radius of the WCCC campus.

WHAT MEASURES OR PROCESSES WILL BE IN PLACE TO HELP ENSURE UNIFICATION OF THE COMBINED CHURCH BODY?

A first step will occur with our November 13 time of worship together. We encourage everyone to get acquainted with the families of WCCC. We also encourage everyone to yield themselves daily to the Lord, rely on His strength, and treat each other as more important than themselves. *"May the God of endurance and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another, in accord with Christ Jesus, that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."* Romans 15:5-6

I WISH TO SUGGEST THAT A PRAYER TEAM BE ESTABLISHED WITH THE SOLE PURPOSE OF PRAYING FOR THE DETAILS OF A MERGER, BOTH POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE.

Leadership from both churches began this process with prayer and fasting. We have encouraged everyone from the beginning of the discussion to pray about the merger, asking for discernment. Please continue those prayers. We are also planning a special prayer emphasis with more information to come.

COULD THE COMBINED CHURCH USE THE ELLISVILLE CAMPUS INSTEAD OF THE WCCC CAMPUS TO AVOID LOSS OF ELLISVILLE MEMBERS?

Ellisville has been blessed to serve this location for over 50 years. Over the past three years, we've explored other opportunities for facility updates which are very costly. This merger opportunity is the most fiscally responsible means to accomplish the level of facility improvements needed as well as to reduce debt and free up finances for other Kingdom work. Currently, a residential overlay district could prevent expansion of the Ellisville campus beyond our current parking lot. Our hope is to not lose a single member in a merger.

IS THERE ENOUGH SPACE ON THE WCCC CAMPUS FOR ALL OF OUR ABFS?

Yes. There is room in the building for our ABF classes. A facilities utilization team would work on a plan for classroom assignments. There are classrooms beneath the worship center as well as school classrooms, the gym floor and the chapel; all of which could be used for ABFs. An alternative could also be to offer two Bible study hours.

HOW DOES THIS IMPACT THE SEARCH FOR A FULL-TIME STUDENT PASTOR?

The formation of the search committee would be delayed to allow time to include equitable representation from the WCCC congregation, if a merger is approved.

WHAT ARE THE DEMOGRAPHICS AND GROWTH POTENTIAL FOR WILDWOOD?

Growth in the general population is projected as subdivisions are currently under construction. There are many unchurched families in the area; however, our desire is to continue to minister beyond Ellisville and Wildwood to the larger West County area.

WOULD THE ELLISVILLE WEEKDAY PRESCHOOL STAFF BE RETAINED IN THE COMBINED CHURCH?

Most of our staff, including our pastor, would move into the same positions with the combined church. We desire to retain all staff from both churches. The preschool directors from both schools would work on an integration plan and staffing requirements would be finalized at a later date, since Ellisville Weekday Preschool plans to finish this school year on the Ellisville campus.

IS THE OFFICE SPACE LARGE ENOUGH TO ACCOMMODATE ALL OUR STAFF?

Our goal is to accommodate all of our staff in the WCCC office space. As needed, we would consider other spaces in the building for office use.

IF UPGRADES WERE NEEDED AT THE WCCC CAMPUS, HOW SOON WOULD THEY BEGIN?

As renovations are needed, they would be done with appropriate financial planning. Any renovation costs at the WCCC campus are expected to be less than the many needed renovation costs of the Ellisville campus. There would be project teams assigned to work on any of these issues.

HOW WILL THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN A COMBINED CHURCH AND LIVING WATER ACADEMY BE HANDLED?

There will be a project team to develop a plan for church/school relationships, and building usage and other relationships. The project team will include members representing the congregations of both churches and the school.