

July 21st, 2024

Proposal For Adding An Early Service To Our Sunday Morning Schedule

Prayer- Before our church undertakes any major initiative it must be bathed in prayer. Jesus said, “My house shall be called a house of prayer.” Matthew 21:13 (NIV)

- I. **The Mission of Cedar Grove Baptist Church-** “Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” Matthew 28:19-20 (NIV)

- Our mission as a church is the Great Commission of Jesus

- II. **The Current Challenge Facing Cedar Grove Baptist Church-**

- With the continued numerical growth of our congregation the current challenge is having adequate space to accommodate new people who desire to worship and connect with us on Sunday mornings. This is a positive challenge!
- 39% of Southern Baptist Churches are declining more than 10% each year
- 42.5% are plateaued
- 18.5% are growing more than 10% each year

Source- Exploring the Pandemic Impact on Congregations, Lifeway Research

Aaron Earles, September 26, 2023

- III. **The Current Statistics Related To Our Challenge**

- Current seating capacity of our sanctuary is **250**. Total maximum capacity is **270**.
- There is an 80% Law of Space for worship and Sunday School space. This Law of Space states that when a congregation reaches 80% of its seating capacity the congregation will plateau or decline and cease to grow. (Sporting event vs. Worship)
- In 2023, CGBC averaged **224** in Sunday morning worship. (89.6% for our seating capacity of **250** and 82.9% for seating of **270**).
- To alleviate some of the overcrowding in worship between 10-30 members have been watching the video feed of our service in the Church Parlor.
- Through 26 Sundays in 2024, CGBC is averaging **261** in worship attendance. This is a 16.5% increase over worship attendance in 2023. (96.6% capacity in 2024.)

- IV. **How Do We Address This Challenge?**

- Build a new sanctuary or expand the current sanctuary
- Propose that the church prayerfully consider adding an early worship service as an option to alleviate overcrowding and create more space for new people
- This would appear to be a wise decision from a stewardship perspective
- There are **168** hours in a week. Many sanctuaries are only used for 3-5 hours per week with the exception of special events. However, with fixed charges CGBC is paying for sanctuary space for only a few hours per week. Fixed charges are HVAC, electricity, building insurance, janitorial services and ongoing maintenance and upkeep.

- As our congregation refers back to its mission in Matthew 28:19-20 as well as other passages of scripture such as I Corinthians 9:19-23 where Paul wrote that, “He became all things to all people that he might win some to Christ,” our church must continue to have the attitude and mindset we will do whatever it takes to reach new people in our community for Jesus Christ.
- Our church members are doing an excellent job of reaching out and inviting family and friends to CGBC. It will be difficult for new people to connect to our Lord and His church if we do not make space for them.

V. **Concerns and Challenges With Adding An Early Worship Service**

- How do we maintain the family atmosphere and friendly environment of CGBC?
- How do we strive to not create two churches?
- How do we logistically create a service and experience that is equal to our current service at 10:50 am? (See separate sheet for logistics and strategies)

VI. **Observations for addressing these concerns:**

- Growing churches are by nature unselfish churches
- Growing churches are willing to sacrifice some of their personal preferences for the opportunity to reach new people for Christ
- As a church grows larger it must also grow smaller
 Gathering time for church wide fellowship in the Gym each Sunday, 9:30-10:00 am
 This means the combined Sunday School time at 10:00 am will be critical for connecting with other members for Bible study, fellowship, member care, prayer, encouragement etc.
 Church wide fellowships will be very important as well as men’s fellowships, women’s fellowships, deacons’ fellowships, Sunday School fellowships, etc.
 Starting of other small groups outside of Sunday morning in homes, restaurants, and other venues.
- CGBC has shifted from the small “Family Chapel” church (100 or less active members on Sunday morning) to a medium sized congregation. Even now it is difficult to know everyone by name and interact with **250-260** people on a Sunday morning.