

Update from Sunday's Congregational Meeting Email Sent from Paul Hahn: 8/23/2021

Dear Pacific Crossroads Family and Friends,

Grace and peace to you in Christ Jesus our Lord! And blessings on your week ahead!

I am so thankful for all of you. It is my great privilege to serve as your interim pastor, to worship and follow the Risen Christ together with you.

For those who were able to be with us in worship yesterday, whether in person or via livestream, I am so glad that you joined us. We made a good beginning together in the Book of Jonah, considering the amazing grace of our God. Even when we run from him, he chases us down in love and mercy, at times hurling storms into our lives, only to bring us back into the arms of his love. There is love even under the waves of the tempestuous seas that our running from God takes us into, for Jonah and for us. Next Sunday, we will consider the grace of God that comes to us as we pray to him, even as Jonah did from the bottom of the deep inside the great fish.

After worship, we held our congregational meeting for those able to be in attendance at SAMOHI. If you weren't able to be present with us, here is my brief summary of what occurred:

- A substitute motion was brought by Tom Ramsey. I helped Tom formalize it after he came to me with it on Saturday morning. Our elders came around the idea on Saturday afternoon and were encouraged by it. I really appreciated the spirit in which Tom brought this. The substitute suggested that in lieu of holding a vote at this time, we would table a vote until March 2022 and continue to work with the presbytery in specific steps of reconciliation.
- A long discussion ensued. After that, the substitute motion was voted down by the body, as was another substitute motion offered from the floor. And all this debate and these votes took quite some time, about an hour and a half.
- Once we were ready to go back to the original ballot and pick it up for a vote to stay in or to leave the PCA, a number of you had had to leave, quite understandably. Someone requested a recount of our quorum numbers at that time, which was their right. A count was made and quorum was no longer in place, so we could not hold a vote.
- It was determined that the session would set a date to come back and vote again on the original ballot, as expeditiously as possible. The meeting was adjourned with prayer.

For some of you there, this was all quite confusing, frustrating even. You came to vote, we had spent a month getting ready to vote, with three different meetings to get ready, and now we were doing all this other stuff? Some of you risked CoVid concerns you would not normally take. Some of you needed to leave with children or to engage other plans. I so get any of or all that. I am so sorry. I get it. If you feel that way, that is totally understandable. And I am very, very sorry.

As your interim pastor, I have been quite clear that I believe that staying in the PCA is the best thing for us as a church, especially at this time. But, much more than this, I have been begging God to give us pathways through this that keep us together, that unify and strengthen us in our life together and mission through the gospel of Jesus. I felt like maybe this was God's ram in the thicket he was providing for us, like he did for Abraham and Isaac, at the eleventh hour, to give us an unseen path to staying together and even being strengthened in our unity. So, please know that this was no planned bait and switch. I am sorry if it felt like it in any way. But, I assure you it was not. I was having a special day of prayer on Saturday, and this seemed to me like it might be a special answer from the Lord. Our elders shared this hope.

But, you as a congregation saw it differently. And that is beautiful. Truly. We believe in the priesthood of all believers and that the Spirit moves collectively in the body. Yes, you are cared for and led by pastors and elders. But, on key points of decision — when you call your next permanent senior pastor, when officers are elected, when you purchase property, or when you consider your denominational affiliation — our polity recognizes that the body needs to come together and gain a sense of consensus from the Spirit. And this is all really good for many reasons, not the least of which is that I and your elders are certainly far from all-knowing or infallible! We need the whole body engaged as we were on Sunday. We need the wisdom of God's Spirit collectively manifested in his people.

The session will meet tonight to determine when we can hold another meeting to proceed to vote. We will announce that to the congregation as soon as it is established, prayerfully by tomorrow. We will give further updates in the worship service on Sunday. And we will keep seeking the Lord for his grace, even and especially in challenging times.

There were many good things yesterday — we once again were able to treat each other with gospel civility; humility was demonstrated in many ways; we were gracious and patient with each other. And a mandate seems to have been established: you are ready to vote on this matter, putting a decision behind us and moving forward in congregational life. These are very solid outcomes from yesterday.

Again, I am so grateful for you all and for the privilege of walking with you in this season. May the Lord continue to sustain us and lead us forward, and may his amazing grace carry us all the way!

Much love in Christ,

Paul

Paul Hahn
Interim Pastor and Moderator of the Session
Pacific Crossroads Church