February 4, 2024

Dear members and friends of the Knox-Metropolitan community of faith,

It is about a month since we were appointed as commissioners for your church and that has been a busy time for us of reading and meeting, listening and learning. We are grateful that so many people have taken the time to send us emails with thoughts and opinions about the situation and possible ways forward. We have received too many to reply to them all individually, but be assured that they are appreciated and read by all three of us.

What we have observed so far is a community of people who are passionate about their faith and dedicated to their church; this is a wonderful thing. We have heard requests from some people who would like us to implement changes immediately and are frustrated that change is not happening faster. However we have also observed that there are strongly-held and contrary opinions about what direction Knox-Met should take; as a newly appointed commission, we have taken the position that we need to fully understand the situation before we move ahead with any significant changes. The recent congregational meeting where the proposed budget was sent back to us for reconsideration is one example of those strongly held differences of facts and opinions.

We know that for some members of the Knox-Met church family, the strongly-held views and opinions have been hurtful and toxic. Sadly, some folk who simply want to be part of a worshiping Christian community of faith have chosen to leave. We hope they find a new church home in a less conflicted community of faith and that the day comes soon where Knox-Metropolitan is able to welcome people into an uplifting and hopefilled place. We deeply regret experiences where members of the Knox-Met church family, staff or volunteers, have felt unappreciated, devalued, harassed or maligned in any way.

We need to acknowledge several things in our work with you:

* there was a review of Knox-Met in the first half of 2023 and the decisions that came out of that review remain in place, even if they have not yet been implemented
* the previous board of Knox-Met was not fired; there was an agreement between the board and Living Skies Regional Council that the congregation was in such a state of conflict that governance from people outside the congregation could be helpful
* there are currently several employment contracts that are active with staff and changes to those contracts will only happen in negotiation with the staff members and ministries they are accountable to
* the commission has been appointed by Living Skies Regional Council and is accountable to that body and, like the board before it, the commission is responsible for implementing the decisions of the 2023 review of the congregation
* the commission has limited capacity with three volunteer members. Mitchell and Christa both have full-time jobs and while Bryan is retired, they collectively will not always be able to meet with each individual or group or respond to every message instantaneously, but are trying their best to provide time and leadership to the people of Knox-Met

After our first month of listening and learning, we fear that healing, reconciling and going forward as a viable community of faith with a board that represents the whole community will be a long and difficult journey. With God's guidance we are seeking ways to deal with the brokenness in your church family with honesty, compassion, forgiveness and respect for each other. We ask that you join us in praying for one another and for healing.

Rev. Mitchell Anderson

Rev. Christa Eidsness

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