

Report on the Board of Deacons – 2019

Your Deacons met once a month throughout the year with the exception of July and August. For 2019, the deacons were: Cathie Salter, Georgina Balascas, Bonnie Hartley, Margaret Paul, Lenore Nordlund and yours truly, Bong Barredo.

I was originally thinking of preparing our report on the Board of Deacons – 2019 in the same format as our previous Chairs did. But how can I at this time?

It is towards end of May as I write this report and I would like to request the indulgence of our current Chair, Bonnie Hartley, as I feel the strong need to reflect/report not only on our past year but moreso present to our Congregation the challenges of our Church given with what we have awoken to in mid-March because of COVID-19.

I would like my report to focus on 2 things:

1. Church Planning Committee
2. Blythwood in the time of Covid-19

Church Planning Committee. I am happy to report that your Board of Deacons fully support the activities of our Church Planning Committee. This Committee was formed with our Church volunteers representing a slice of our demographics and their goal is to provide recommendations and guidance for our Church's direction in the years to come. We are eagerly anticipating their report some time towards the end of this year.

These challenges we face are not unknown to us:

- Dwindling Church attendance which basically means we lack volunteers
- Consistent year-over-year budget deficits (more on that from our Finance Committee)
- Increasing costs of physical Church maintenance (more on that from our House Committee)

While these challenges do not compare to the lives and communities we have touched and supported (for example: Small Groups, OOTC, Summer Vacation Bible School, Wednesday drop-ins, Bolivia, etc.), our lack of Church volunteers and ongoing budget deficits are increasing the strain on our ability and to continue these activities which mean a lot to us.

Blythwood in the time of Covid-19. Please note that the health and safety of our Church members are paramount in the minds of your Deacons. While we wait for the time for us to be able to physically meet again, we would like everyone to know that we have started discussions on how we can effect physical separation but still being able to meet up within our Church. More to come on this topic.

COVID-19 has been unprecedented for our generation today. The current challenges we face have been magnified by this pandemic. Among many other questions:

- How will our Blythwood Church Community look like if our physical separation and city stay-at-home recommendations hold for the foreseeable future?

- When do we re-start our Small Groups Bible studies?
- How best can we pray, reach/reach-out and support/get support within our Blythwood community?
- What will happen to some of the activities we are supporting?
 - Will there be a Summer Vacation Bible School this summer?
 - Will we be able to restart our Wednesday drop-ins?
 - Will we still be able to host our Saturday evening OOTC program this coming November?

We do not have the answers. But as we start with any of our Deacon meetings, we begin with a devotional and prayer. These are the Lord's work and if I could borrow one of Dennis's previous Deacon's report: We are keenly aware that we need his guidance in our discussions and subsequent actions.

Respectfully submitted.

Bong Barredo, Chairman of the Board of Deacons