



# The Hamilton Beacon

July 20, 2020

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## A HAMILTON COMMUNITY CENTER ZOOM MEETING

On Thursday, July 9<sup>th</sup>, the idea of a Hamilton Community Center moved forward. Fourteen people from the community and our congregation gathered on their computers for an internet meeting, a Zoom meeting with each person speaking from their own computer.

The purpose of the meeting was to introduce the idea of transforming Westminster Hall into The Hamilton Community Center.

Admittedly, the group asked a lot of questions we could not answer because the idea is just too new for detailed answers. Debbie Bowen, Dave Greenwood, and Jack Hodges are part of a group that will draft some preliminary ideas for discussion.

This Zoom meeting was recorded and you can watch it for yourself. Here is the link to the video:

<https://bluecircledesigns.com/hcc/Hamilton-Community-Center-meeting-1-7-9-2020.mp4>

## A REPORT ON THE JULY 15 MEETING OF THE SESSION/TRUSTEES

The group actually met, spread out in a big circle in Westminster Hall. Here is a very brief report:

### GRANTS APPLIED FOR AND RECEIVED

Baltimore Presbytery has given us a \$5,000 grant for roof repair. We have also asked for a Program Grant of \$8,500 and have yet to hear.

### “DUMPSTER DAYS” COMES TO HAMILTON

It's well-known, the group that leased Westminster Hall left it in a total mess. There so much to be thrown in a dumpster! Come and help! Stay as long as you are able. Together we will get this done!

We will meet – beginning at 9:00 am – on:

Saturday, July 25<sup>th</sup>

Saturday, August 1<sup>st</sup>

### HAMILTON CHURCH WELCOMES SPLASHHOOPS

SplashHoops, Inc. was founded in June of 2016 by Barry Carrington and Bill Toole. Their mission is to teach, develop, and offer youth players the opportunity to improve their fundamental basketball skills, in a positive and nurturing environment.

The Session/Trustees met Barry and decided he could use Westminster Hall for his program. In exchange, the group will be doing some work around the Hall, cleaning, repairing and mowing the lawns. They will also be helping with Dumpster Days.

## PROPERTY FOR SALE

To generate necessary cash for repairs and the future of the congregation, the Session/Trustees has decided to sell two portions of our property.

1. Two lots on Hamilton Avenue across from Harvest Fair. We have engaged an appraiser to establish their value. We'll use the money for roof repair and the renovation of Westminster Hall.
2. We will sell the Manse. First, we must effect a subdivision to separate it from the total church property. Because of the virus and no workers at City Hall, this process will take some time. We have engaged a Land Use Attorney to help us navigate this maze.

## OUR INSURANCE COMPANY BECOMES CHURCH MUTUAL

On August 1<sup>st</sup>, we begin with Church Mutual Insurance. Since they focus on churches, their rates are more beneficial. We will save \$3,760 in annual premiums.

## FIXING THE SANCTUARY ROOF

This is an expensive proposition with two major leaks: where the roof intersects with the tower wall, and the Tower roof itself. It will take a week to accomplish and involve major construction equipment.

Only after this is completed can we work on the Sanctuary walls where paint is peeling and plaster is bulging. We will also tackle the Men's restroom on the ground floor where the walls have literally disintegrated from water leakage.

WE KNOW THIS IS A LOT! MUCH IS AHEAD.  
AS A CONGREGATION, WE ARE LIVING IN HOPE.

# WHEN Will WE OPEN FOR CHURCH?

At their July 15<sup>th</sup> meeting, the Session/Trustees had a lengthy and heart-felt discussion. Certainly all present wanted, with every fiber of their being, to worship together in our Sanctuary on a Sunday morning.

Frankly put: we miss each other!

The second truth is we do not know the future. Is tomorrow going to be any different from today? We do not know.

Baltimore Presbytery has provided guidance on opening which is pretty much wrapped up in this message from the Session of Faith Presbyterian Church on Loch Raven:

1. No choir.
2. No singing.
3. No hand shaking.
4. No hugging or kissing.
5. Everyone in masks at all times—including the preacher, (which means it will be harder to understand).
6. No worship bulletins.
7. No hymnals or Bibles.
8. Sanitize all surfaces before and after worship.
9. Constant cleaning of rest rooms, hand rails, etc.
10. Worship must be severely shortened, since "prolonged periods of time" according to CDC means 15 minutes or more. So, no announcements, no minutes for mission, no Joys and Concerns spoken from the congregation....

If we were to worship outdoors, we'd still have many of these restrictions. Lacking big trees that are away from Harford Avenue street noise, we'd have sun and heat problems. Westminster Hall is not an option. It is beastly hot in there.

This is all pretty tough stuff.

Taking this all into account, the Session/Trustees decided it was not the time to open for worship.

Our congregation is in the most vulnerable group. Our concern must be for the health and safety of our members. If Hamilton Presbyterian Church became a COVID-19 "hot spot" that would very hard.

The Session/Trustees constantly review this decision and specifically voted to consider again in September.

#### WHAT TO DO IN THE MEANTIME?

1. Call every church member that you know, just to say "hello" and check in.
2. Use the Resources and Reflection page everyday in your Bible reading and prayer, knowing that other members and friends are doing the same.
5. We are working on a plan for an on-line Sunday School beginning August 2<sup>nd</sup>. More information next week.
3. PRAY!           If you are praying about it,  
                          God is working on it.
4. BELIEVE!  
      We will make it through this and be stronger for it.

