

Dear Skillman Family,

I've heard much over the last few weeks about the history and legacy of Skillman. For over 64 years, I too have had a long, continuous history at Skillman. Even during my years at SMU, I attended Skillman weekly. I'm aware of our rich history and contributions in spreading and living out the Gospel. However, Skillman is not as it once was.

Watching Skillman languish over these past several years has grieved me because I feel I've failed Skillman in some way. I own my part in Skillman's demise. You need to own yours.

Grieving was mentioned last Wednesday. I've had much experience with that of late. In the last 18 months, I have personally witnessed Royce and mom, languish, suffer, and take their last breath. Death is not easily watched – you are helpless, frightened, angry, and exhausted. Sound familiar? As witnessed last Wednesday, such feelings erupted into questionable and irreparable behavior. Nobody won Wednesday night and therein, lies the sadness. *Winning* is not the goal.

Like many, I watched the prepared video, heard comments and later read about the alternative plan for Skillman should the congregation decide not to move forward with The Hills. The prepared video indicated FLC usage, with the opportunity of phoning and walking the hallways - *the FLC is used daily by CDC*. CDC uses a classroom downstairs, three classrooms upstairs, the gym, and all bathrooms. To have people from outside our church community using the space to gather, walk, and use restrooms, is a serious concern for an environment with preschool students. Then, in reviewing the booklet information, I noted a Mom's Day Out event and weekly workshops slated for times during CDC school days.

John Mark met with me on Friday and assured me that all the information received on Wednesday was not specific information, but rather vision casting for Skillman's future. I was grateful for his time, clarification, and sincere interest in CDC. I expressed, the potential overlap of community usage with CDC's daily schedule as one of utmost concern to me. The safety of our students and staff is a serious state licensing issue. It could result in CDC being put on probation or closed altogether. Dual building usage during CDC hours is not viable – CDC uses almost every space in the Main building and most space in the FLC. CDC pays a substantial monthly fee to do so. The safety of any child while at CDC, whether in the FLC or Main building, is not negotiable.

I believe the financial report and forecast as presented Wednesday night. During the course of CDC business, I too, receive church financial information. And then every Sunday, I can certainly see for myself, the aging of our congregation. I too, am part of that growing demographic.

I am not confident in the sustainability of Skillman as it stands, and I do not trust in the vision cast by those against the merger. CDC needs a strong and predictable church partner. I am not naïve. *There is risk to CDC whichever way the vote goes. Of this, I am well aware.* I've worked with countless ministry teams, elders, and deacons in past years and know far too well that

trust is earned and not everything goes your way. Faced with our two options, I will cast my vote for dissolution of the Skillman charter and joining with The Hills.

Moving forward, I make a two-fold commitment to my church family. A speaker questioned if those who opposed her position would continue speaking to her. This vote is not a litmus test for my love and concern for my Skillman family – it's simply a difference in how we see our future. I will not withdraw my love or interest from anyone. And, regardless of the voting outcome, I will work diligently to move Skillman forward while maintaining that CDC has a strong influence in the Lakewood community.

Thank you elders for the opportunity to voice my opinion.

Ruth Ann Prude