

## Elder Board Update #1

We want to thank all those who participated in the Town Hall Meeting on August 27<sup>th</sup>. While we struggled through some of the questions and didn't get to all of them, we want you to know how much we value your input and engagement. We know there is more work to be done and are committed to the process, confident in the Lord's ability to use it for our good and His glory.

Our plan is to provide regular updates in the weekly email that goes out. We want to be appropriately transparent with you and keep you informed about issues we are working through and steps we are taking. This is also a forum for us to interact with questions we are receiving.

To kick it off, here are our thoughts on some FAQ's:

### **Who are the elders?**

Called by God, equipped by his Spirit and elected by the congregation, elders provide oversight of the congregation by shepherding, overseeing, leading, protecting and exercising discipline in the local church. Elders pledge to pursue the peace, purity, unity and edification of the church.

Elders not serving a term on the Elder Board serve as Shepherding Elders and are focused exclusively on providing for the spiritual care and growth of the members of Covenant. They are Jon Gindhart, Glenn Longmuir, Greg Michael, Mark Pappas, Larry Rankin, Kevin Sheetz, Matt Toll and Sam Totaro.

The Elder Board of Covenant Church is charged with maintaining the governance of the church, and its primary responsibilities are three-fold:

**1. Spiritual Leadership (Health of the Body):** The Elder Board is responsible for ensuring the spiritual health and long-term spiritual growth of members and attenders of Covenant.

**2. Strategic Leadership (Direction of the Body):** Alongside the Senior Pastoral Leadership Team, the Elder Board serves as the guardian and advocate of the mission, vision and values of Covenant.

**3. Administrative Leadership (Organization of the Body):** The Elder Board is responsible for overseeing membership, the stewardship of resources (including but not limited to finances and care of property) and supporting the development, care and supervision of staff and ministry leaders of Covenant.

Current members of the Elder Board are Galen Burleigh, Brad Brautigam, Karl Kimball, Bruce McMordie, Duane Smulling, and Doug Wesney. Elders rotate on and off the Elder Board, serving no more than two consecutive 3-year terms. Associate

Pastor Bruce Finn serves as the moderator of the Board. Executive Pastor Rob Bloss is an ex-officio member.

### **Will there be any changes made to the Elder Board?**

Yes, there will be changes! We are in the process of preparing and presenting a pool of new elder candidates to the congregation for approval. This pool will add much needed shepherding elders to our church, providing greater breadth and depth of representation and care. From this pool we will be adding new members to the Elder Board. Several Elder Board members have already completed their terms and/or rotated off (Sam Totaro, Greg Michael and Jon Gindhart). Galen Burleigh plans to serve only until new elders are added, and Karl Kimball is serving in a short-term capacity during this transition.

The board has been wrestling with their own contributions to a culture that resulted in Bob's decision to leave, and we are open to making the changes necessary moving forward. These changes include greater accountability among elders, increased participation and interaction with staff and congregation, and more transparency. We want to be more accessible and develop and deepen relationships with staff, the diaconate, and each of you. We want to do this not out of our role as elders but out of our love and partnership in the gospel.

### **Will Covenant continue to be Covenant?**

Yes! The "BIG" things won't change. We are committed to our stated mission, vision, and values as well as our beliefs as a reformed church. We are committed to remaining a PCA church as long as it isn't a barrier to pursuing our unique mission, vision, and values. We are committed to preaching and teaching the whole gospel of Christ without compromise. We are committed to expanding the footprint of the gospel here, there and everywhere, and creating safe spaces for people to belong even before they believe. We are committed to maintaining a generous approach to the gospel even as we are committed to keeping Christ at the center of everything.

### **How will we go about searching for our next Lead Pastor?**

A Search Committee, comprised of congregational members in good standing, will be identified, nominated and approved by the members of Covenant. The Committee will reflect a full representation of ages, stages of life, gender, and ethnicity. Members must be invested and committed to our mission, vision and values. Our Executive Pastor will serve as an ex-officio member of the committee and serve as a consultant and manager of the process. One elder would also serve on the committee.

Broad input is needed and will be solicited in the process of developing the church and position profiles. In the coming weeks, please watch for an invitation to submit nominations to serve on the Search Committee. The Committee will ultimately present to the church a highly qualified candidate for approval. It is typical for this process to take between 18 to 24 months, but we trust in the Lord's timing of leading

us to the person of His choosing. In the meantime, we are grateful for our staff and each of you for assuring that all of our excellent ministries will continue to grow and flourish.

We are hopeful. Not because we have all the answers, but because we have Jesus! We love our church because Christ loves our church, imperfections and all. We repent of those things we have done, or left undone, that have caused hurt or division. If we have hurt you, we ask for your forgiveness.

We are grateful for those that have come alongside as we have worked through these trying times. We ask for your continued patience, partnership, and prayers. We are confident that God, in His sovereignty and by His grace, will provide us with all we need so that His name would be magnified, and His glory would shine for all to see.

Praying Expectantly,

**The Elder Board of Covenant Church**

P.S. To contact an elder you can email any of us using our first name and last initial @covenantdoylestown.org