

The Elders met in February for the purpose of discussing the 2021 decision of the Elders to move from two Sunday services to one. Our meeting included an update for the new elders about the months of discussions and prayer that went into the decision. It also included a review of written correspondence from individual members of the congregation, some of whom asked the Elders to reconsider the decision and others affirming the decision.

We are thankful for the correspondence, as well as the opportunity to revisit the decision given four of our twelve elders are new. Here are our thoughts:

First, a point of clarification. The decision to offer one Sunday morning service has impacted everyone in the church as we have moved from the pattern of two services (one traditional and one contemporary) to one service which is neither contemporary nor traditional. We have, in effect, launched a new service which blends both traditional and contemporary elements. As expected, this new service has challenged the sensibilities of both groups: those who prefer a more traditional approach to worship and those who prefer a more contemporary approach to worship.

Second, an acknowledgment. Many have questioned the timing of the move from two Sunday services to one. Those questions are legitimate and there seldom is a perfect time to make a significant change. It is noteworthy, however, that we have been offering but one Sunday service since the onset of the pandemic nearly 2 years ago. This reality led us to think it best to maintain the habit.

Third and most importantly, we believe that the Sunday service is a unifying activity. In other words, we strengthen our unity as brothers and sisters in Christ when we worship together. Each ritual, from fellowship before the service to fellowship after the service, strengthens the ties that bind us together. We strengthen our family bonds as we join our voices in song, pray for one another, receive the message and the Lord's Supper, affirm our covenant in baptism, serve one another, create memories of life together, while on our mission to serve and witness in Jesus' name

Fourth, we believe ECRC needs to strengthen the ties that bind us together. We are a scattered congregation wherein too many of us know so few among us. Surely, we enjoy the sevenfold unity described in Ephesians 4:4-5—one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, and one God and Father of all. Still, we need to make every effort to live out our unity (Ephesians 4:3). One way to do so, and historically the best way, is by worshiping together.

Fifth, we believe the benefits of one Sunday morning service outweigh the benefits of two Sunday morning services.

1. With one Sunday service, every worshiper receives the same spiritual meal each Sunday. Every worshiper witnesses important spiritual events like baptism, the profession of faith, and ordination of elders and deacons. Every worshiper will be called upon to sacrifice personal preferences for the sake of the whole.

2. The morning schedule is less demanding on our Sunday morning volunteers: our greeters, musicians, choir members, elders, deacons, nursery attendants, and others.

3. Additionally, one Sunday morning service allows us to expand congregational activities before and after the Sunday service.

Finally, for the reasons described and after prayerful consideration the Elders have reaffirmed our decision to offer one Sunday morning service. We do so with the hope that you will join us as we joyfully and expectedly enter a new chapter of life and ministry as a congregation.

In Christ,
The Elders of ECRC