

Senior Leadership Team Update August 2024 & September 2024

The following are highlights of the **September 3, 2024**, Senior Leadership Team meeting.

1. Reports for Information

a. Elders (*SLT representative – Don Van Beek*):

- The Elders heard a report from Erin Pacheco, who reflected on her first few months as Director of Worship and discussion of Elmhurst CRC's worship values, including hospitality, family involvement, accessibility, spiritual vitality, intellectual engagement, creativity, and variety.
- The Elders approved a motion to extend a letter of call to Kevin Moxon to become a Minister of the Word and Sacraments in the CRC, specializing in chaplaincy, which informs the denomination and classis that his credentials reside with Elmhurst CRC.
- Updates were shared on the growing momentum of prayers after Sunday services and encouraging a culture of prayer in our ECRC community.

b. Deacons (*SLT representative – Ron Tazelaar*): The Deacons have made updates to the operating procedure for benevolence requests for a streamlined approach to gather the needed approvals to help with an expedient response.

2. Executive Director of Operations (*Justin Lawrence*): Justin was welcomed and introduced to the SLT as the new Executive Director. The SLT looks forward to utilizing Justin's gifts and experience!

3. Lead Pastor (*Gregg DeMey*):

- a. Reflections: In the spirit of Labor Day, Gregg shared his perspective on rest and a way of thinking about the end of the day as instead the "start of the day," so that you start the day with full rest before awaking and carrying on the work of the day.
- b. Northern Illinois Classis Updates: Elder Don Van Beek and Pastor Gregg will attend the September 18 gathering of our Classis at Trinity Christian College.
- c. Macro goal discussion: Pastor Gregg opened up the discussion about becoming a healthy church that plants churches. In the US, up to 10,000 churches close annually; it's estimated that 8,000 – 12,000 church plants are needed yearly to keep up with population growth and church closures. He explained that ECRC has already had a few "training wheel" experiences to keep building our capacity towards these goals, such as:
 - Supporting the Bible Church Ukrainian Chicago
 - Moving towards being the calling church of Mo Pacheco and Grace in Garfield CRC
 - The Elmhurst Farmers Market

4. Treasurer's Report (*Bastiaan van den Berg*): The Balance Sheet, Income Statement, and liquidity levels were distributed to the SLT. We have received \$1,414K as of August 25, 2024. This is \$198K above target by this week in the year. Preliminary Aug Financials show we spent \$1,866K on expenses and our income was \$1,561K, resulting in a \$305K deficit. There was discussion that this is a normal trend at this point in the year. As of September 1, the loan balance is \$4,023,324.

5. **Hearts Ablaze (One Fund)** (*Chad McQuade*): Staff is working hard on a number of deliverables in preparation for the public phase, including conducting interviews for video testimonies and writing small group curriculum to empower post-worship conversations and application. Church staff continues to dedicate their time and talents to organizational efforts behind the scenes. The Hearts Ablaze effort can be thought of in three segments:
 - a. One Campaign (pledge-based, aiming for 100% participation across ECRC members)
 - b. Two Years (over which pledges are fulfilled)
 - c. Three Targets (Elmhurst Ministry Fund budgets for 2025 and 2026, debt elimination, new ministry ventures).
6. **Christian Education Committee** (*Bill Terpstra*): We have begun monthly payments to Timothy Christian for the 2024-25 school year (September – June). Payment details have also been worked out for Chicago West Side Christian (by semester).
7. **Personnel Committee** (*Brian Stolzenbach*): There is excitement about the hiring of Lyndsay Chandler as the ECRC Youth Ministry Coordinator, who brings an impressive ability to connect with students on a personal level. Pastor Jeff is working with Lindsay on a smooth transition during her training and onboarding. As a second position is still open, the youth ministry hiring committee continues to meet with additional candidates and has a promising lead.
8. **Other reports** (*Todd Bouman*): The SLT has begun the process of bringing forward Senior Leadership Team (SLT) nominations for two open roles in 2025.
9. **Approved Motions:**
 - a. Authorize adding Justin Paul Lawrence, new Executive Director, as an authorized signer on all Elmhurst Christian Reformed Church's (ECRC) Providence Bank accounts; and removing Mimi Stanton, former Executive Director, and Rob Petroelje, former SLT Chair.

The following are highlights of the **October 7, 2024**, Senior Leadership Team meeting.

1. Reports for Information

- a. **Elders** (*SLT representative – Don Van Beek*): The Elders and Pastor Gregg launched a discussion that they will explore together over the next six months: church membership. Pastor Gregg introduced and compared two concepts of church membership: A traditional model, akin to a country club membership representing clear fences, with responsibilities and dues, and clear rights and privileges. This model of church membership was successful in North America for a very long time. The second was the Australian outback model, which relies not on fences but vital proximity to watering holes. In the outback, there is so much land and little water that it's a matter of life and death for the animals to stay near a watering hole. This is another way to think about church membership, where Jesus' followers are like a flock near a particular watering hole. These models reference the work of Alan Hirsch. The Elders discussed these models and explored the concept of membership and how it might evolve within our community.

- b. **Deacons** (*SLT representative – Ron Tazelaar*): Reports were shared on the impact of ECRC diaconal ministries, including the SHE Ministry, Ten Talents Team, Servants on Standby, 5th Sunday Serve, Care Team, Elmhurst Walk-In Assistance Network, and People’s Resource Center.

2. Executive Director of Operations (*Justin Lawrence*):

- a. Grace in Garfield CRC (GIGCRC): Moises Pacheco’s credentials were officially transferred from Hope CRC (Oak Forest) to ECRC. In some ways, this also officially transferred the denominational responsibility to ECRC as GIGCRC is an emerging congregation, but not yet a full church. Justin and staff are doing discovery and assessment on best ways to enfold and enable GIGCRC as a ministry of ECRC.
- b. Elmhurst Farmers Market: Justin, along with a committee of laypersons and staff, is working on the exciting venture of the Elmhurst Farmers Market, which we anticipate will yield a mutually beneficial outcome for both the market (in terms of location and space) and ECRC (as a means to serve the community and welcome community members onto our campus). The York and Vallette Business District have offered to transfer ownership of the market to ECRC free of charge starting in the summer of 2025. Justin has spoken with two church-run farmers markets for further information; this church-based farmers market model is done at sites around the country, including at another CRC congregation in New Era, Michigan. Justin has also spoken with Brotherhood Mutual regarding insurance liability.

3. Lead Pastor (*Gregg DeMey*):

- a. Worship theme planning: Pastor Gregg and Pastor Jeff had a fruitful sermon planning retreat in mid-September. It was exciting to look beyond campaign season and into a new year to plan on worship themes in 2025:
 - January/February: “How to Read the Bible for All it’s Worth” - an encouragement at the beginning of 2025 to get into the Bible and make a realistic reading plan part of your life.
 - March/April: Lenten deep dive into the Gospel of John, chapters 11-13
 - May: A series on what fully engaged worship looks like in our context
 - Summer: A series on Biblical Freedom (Freedom from... and Freedom to...)
- b. Gratitude: Pastor Gregg expressed thanks for all those who participated in the Feed My Starving Children event on 5th Sunday Serve—over 100,000 meals were filled!

4. Treasurer’s Report (*Bastiaan van den Berg*): The Balance Sheet, Income Statement, and liquidity levels were distributed to the SLT. We have received \$1,596K as of September 29, 2024. This is \$174K above target by this week in the year. Preliminary financials show we spent \$2,200K on expenses and our income was \$1,757K, resulting in a \$443K deficit. This is not an uncommon cash flow at this time of year. As of October 1, 2024, the loan balance is \$4,008,500; we paid down \$37,594 on October 1 which was divided into \$22,770 principal and \$14,824 interest.

5. Hearts Ablaze (One Fund) (*Chad McQuade*): Staff is working hard on a number of deliverables in preparation for the public phase, including video testimonials, and designing and ordering t-shirts and booklets. Mimi Stanton has returned as the part-time Campaign Specialist to help with event planning, especially the large outdoor event on November 15 in the East Lot. Key dates on the horizon:

- a. Sunday, October 20: Public Phase of the campaign begins
- b. Friday, November 15: Advanced Commitment Night
- c. Sunday, November 24: Commitment Sunday for the entire congregation

6. Personnel Committee (*Brian Stolzenbach*):

- a. PTO policy: In late September, we were able to roll out the new Paid Time Off policy to the staff at a meeting led by Personnel Committee Chair Brian Stolzenbach. (The PTO policy for ECRC staff was in need of updates to align with a new state requirement and to provide policy clarity overall.) This will be rolled into the Personnel Manual in early 2025.
- b. Youth: Following approvals by the Personnel Committee and SLT in mid-September, the second ECRC Youth Ministry Coordinator position was extended to and accepted by Luke Norris, who will graduate from Liberty University in December and will start with ECRC in January 2025. Luke is a Pastoral Studies major originally from western Maryland. Luke and his wife Alana will be looking for affordable housing to ease their transition in the coming months. Luke will join Lyndsay Chandler, who started as ECRC Youth Ministry Coordinator in September. Pastor Jeff is working with Lindsay on a smooth transition during her training and onboarding and will do so with Luke as well.

7. Approved Motions:

- a. Authorize Justin Lawrence and Pastor Gregg to offer the remaining open Youth Ministry Coordinator position to Luke Norris.
- b. Move forward with a letter of intent stating that ECRC will assume responsibility of the Elmhurst Farmers Market from the York & Vallette Business District.
- c. Approve the resolution to renew the line of credit and designate authorized loan signatories of Justin Lawrence (ECRC Executive Director) and Bastiaan van den Berg (ECRC Treasurer).