

# COUNCIL OF ELDERS REPORT

## August 2021

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Summer 2021 brought a time of relief for the members of our Council of Elders as we came through a season of very challenging circumstances. Through Covid, the loss of Jeff Bucknam, and the confirmation process of Mark Burch becoming our new Lead Pastor, it has been good to sit back for a few weeks as we prepared for our annual retreat.

For a number of years, the Elders and Pastors, and their families, have met at the First Conference Center in Bellingham for three days of refreshing, connecting, and discussion about what is to come. Thanks to Covid, that hasn't been possible. A year ago, the pastors and elders met on a Thursday and/or Friday at Stillwood Camp but families couldn't join us and no one could stay over at the camp.

This year the pastors met on Thursday morning and into the afternoon and then the Elders and all the families joined them for a time of church picnic type activities followed by a barbecue, a time of worship, and Mark's first "State of the Union" address. For me the best part was being able to reconnect with people we hadn't spent time with for a long time and to get to know Aaron and Melissa Goulet from Real Life Community Church in Surrey, our newest campus. Aaron has been serving as their Interim Pastor for about three years as a lay minister while we discern together God's person to lead the church into the future.

On Friday the day began with prayer for our church, our leaders, and our community. To use Thaleia's term, there's a lot of "Muck" out there and we are not immune to it.

Throughout the day, we broke into groups to look at some aspects of what we do, and then brought the results of those conversations to the entire group. This began with a discussion around our strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT). We are a church which has been extremely blessed with some incredible strengths (preachers, theological training, leadership development) and opportunities. So many smaller churches are looking for the kind of support we are able to provide! But with every strength there come weaknesses (pride, self-sufficiency) and the potential threats in our world (Covid-19, fear of large gatherings, influence of an inclusive and affirming culture). We need to be prepared as much as we can. And that drives us back to our knees as we are dependent upon a loving God.

We also discussed our use of social media as a means of marketing our many events and how it has become such a jungle of opinions, many of which so quickly become offensive and even abusive. On the other hand when comments are turned off you leave yourself wide open for accusations of censorship. It's not an easy course to navigate.

We also affirmed these elders for their roles within the Council:

Moderator: Darryl Kropp

Assistant Moderator: Graham Nickel

Secretary: Stuart Carsience

Communications: Phil Routly

Development Committee: Bruce Styles - Chair

Discernment Committee: Matt Yarema - Chair, Clayton Tuffnell

External Ministries Liaison: Marv Klassen

Governance and Risk Management: Marv Klassen - Chair, Phil Routly

Missions Committee: Kevin Peters - Chair, Vic Wiens, Sean Allison

Personnel Committee: Jeff Gamache - Chair, Stuart Carsience

Stewardship Committee: Bruce Belsher - Chair

Theology Committee: Clayton Tuffnell - Chair, Dan Hiebert, Sean Allison, Graham Nickel

And of course, we discussed the ever evolving world of Covid-19 - the implications, challenges, and impact on our world, our church, and our people. From the beginning of this pandemic, we have consistently tried to make the best recommendations we can for Northview and our church family. Often, when there is a great diversity of opinion, both among the elders, and throughout our congregation. We always ask for wisdom and for your prayers for our wisdom as well.

And now, on to whatever comes next...