

Moving from Church Board to Elder Board



AFTER MUCH PRAYER, thought and discussion, the leadership of First Church—Church Board, Deacons, and the pastoral staff—recommends that we return to the original **elder** model of organization from our current **corporate** model.

This article is the first in a series that will introduce the congregation to this important change in church structure and governance. Of course, any change will require a vote and congregational approval.

Informational meetings will offer more details as well as opportunities to ask ques-

tions. *Please see the meeting schedule at the end of this article.*

What is an elder?

“Elder” is the biblical term given to a leader/shepherd/overseer in a church, and the Bible sets a very high standard for this position. Scripture clearly defines the character and gifting required for an elder:

- Must be a shepherd; cares for and protects the flock.

—Acts 20:17-18, 28-31; 1 Peter 5:1-4

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YOU NOTICE from the headline above that the Board is recommending that we return to having an Elder Board. I enthusiastically support this.



The congregational church I grew up in has an Elder Board that leads the church. The congregation still makes congregational decisions. It still has annual meetings. Yet it recognizes those in the church with the gift of shepherd leadership and empowers them to lead the church to God’s preferred future.

I would like to share with you some of the reasons that I support this shift.

First, let me begin by saying that our current Church Board is doing great work. I love working with them, and we are striving together to lead us moving forward. That being said, all of us on the Board believe it is best to return to an Elder Board model.

The greatest reason for returning is that it is a biblical model. The above article shares many of the Scriptures that support this. The early Church, under the twelve disciples, had an elder model of leadership, not a corporate one.

The size of our church also contributes to the need for making this shift. As churches get larger, their governance changes. In a church our size, the Board needs to spend less time communicating what is going on with the different boards and committees and be more future-focused while providing direction and leadership. Our present Church Board has already begun to make this shift, but there is more work to do.

Finally, if we are going to ask the Board to provide more leadership, we need to find the right people with the right gifting to lead us. God has already gifted people in this congregation with the spiritual gift and experience of leadership. My desire is to see them all at the table together listening to God, discerning His direction and helping us get there.

An elder is someone who is called and gifted by God to shepherd His flock by providing spiritual care and leadership. Don’t we want all of those people in the same room leading us? I firmly believe that if we make this decision, God will richly bless us.

—**Pastor Deryk**



The Rule of Life November Sermon Series

NOVEMBER 4

I am a friend of God

Message by Wayne Luman

NOVEMBER 11

I am a servant of God

Message by Deryk Richenbourg

NOVEMBER 18

Creating Partnerships

Message by Deryk Richenbourg

NOVEMBER 25

I am a new creation

Message by Todd Willard

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- Biblical character that shows the ability to care for, and represent, God's Church. Well-thought-of by others in the church and the local community. —1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9
- A mature believer—not brand new to the faith or congregation. —1 Timothy 3:6
- Gifted in directing the affairs of the church. —1 Timothy 5:17
- Holds firmly to sound doctrine and is able to teach it and to correct those who contradict it. —1 Timothy 3:2, Titus 1:9

What is an Elder Board?

An Elder Board is similar to our current Church Board; it is made up of individuals who represent the entire congregation and lead the church in service to Christ and His Kingdom. In

the next issue of *The Spire*, we will look at the differences between an Elder Board and our current Church Board—and why we should return to the elder model after using the corporate model for almost 60 years.

* * *

Informational Meetings

The information given will be the same at each meeting. Childcare will be provided for all but the Saturday meeting.

- **Wednesday, Nov. 14** — 6:30 p.m., Meetinghouse
- **Saturday, Nov. 17** — 10:00 a.m., location to be announced
- **Sunday, Nov. 25** — 8:45 a.m., Worship Room
- **Wednesday, Nov. 28** — 6:30 p.m., Meetinghouse
- **Sunday, Dec. 2**, 10:30 a.m., location to be announced

Thanksgiving 2012

WEDNESDAY NIGHT SERVICE OF THANKSGIVING



Continue steadfastly in prayer, being watchful in it with thanksgiving.
Colossians 4:2

Unfortunately, we do not meet together very often during the year to publicly give thanks for all the great things God has done.

That is why we are so excited about our upcoming Thanksgiving service. Our service will be **the night before** Thanksgiving Day—on **Wednesday, November 21, at 6:30.**

Pastor Deryk's message is entitled ***An Attitude of Gratitude***, and his text will be Colossians 4:2.

Like last year, during this Thanksgiving service, there will be significant time, for those who wish, to give thanks publicly. What a glorious night it will be, to recount God's blessings over the past year! Then, on Thanksgiving Day, people will be able to give thanks in their homes with their families and loved ones. Will you be with us Wednesday evening, and invite others as well?

COMMUNITY THANKSGIVING DINNER AT NOON

On **Thanksgiving Day—Thursday, November 22**—there will be a wonderful community dinner served at **12:00.** Let us gather together and give thanks to the Lord for His goodness!

All are welcome to the First Church Thanksgiving Dinner in Keith Jones Hall, whether from our church or from the wider community. The entire festive turkey dinner will be provided free of charge, prepared by our chef and his helpers. A free-will offering will be received. This is not a potluck event, but if you can't resist bringing a dessert to share with others, we won't turn it down!

If you plan to attend or would like to help in any way, please mark the sign-up poster in the Wells Fellowship Area or call the Caring Ministries office at 860.529.1575, ext. 210.

Churchwide Prayer

We believe the Lord wishes to bless us in unique ways, and only in uniting as a family of faith can we enter those deeper blessings.

On **Wed., Nov. 7**, from 9:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., and on **Wed., Dec. 5**, from 6:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., join us in the Meetinghouse at any time to worship God together in music and prayer, with **David Spicer** and **Bryan Minerly**.

In addition, you are invited to follow the excellent **2012 Election Prayer Guide**, a Bible-based, non-partisan guide to praying God's purposes for the November 6 elections. You will find it at firstchurch.org/electionprayer.

An Angel Tree Christmas

Would you like to help make the Christmas season more meaningful to a child of a prisoner? Our **Angel Tree Christmas Party** for over 100 children we are supporting will be held on **Saturday, December 15**, from 11:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. in Keith Jones Hall.

To buy a gift for a child who might not otherwise receive Christmas gifts, stop by the Angel Tree table in the Connector between and after services on **Nov. 4 and 11.** (We need volunteers to help pass out the gift tags!)

We also need volunteers to sort gifts, make reminder calls to the children, and "hang out" with the kids at the party—as well as *people to deliver gifts to children not attending.*

To sign up as a volunteer, or to donate to the purchase of food, supplies and gifts, please contact **Wendy Parker** at 860.371.0367 or wendysparker@gmail.com.

SUNDAY RECEPTIONIST NEEDED

Are you naturally upbeat and helpful? If you are interested in this rewarding role, please call **Hazel Brown** at 860.828.4188.

A Time for Compassion

For the past few years, First Church has been partnering with **Temple Zion Church in Barranca, Peru**, alongside **Compassion International** and its **Church to Church** program. Last May, a team from First Church visited Temple Zion and met the children our congregation sponsors as well as the other children in its outstanding **after-school program**. We were able to see how effectively Temple Zion, through its outreach to the children in the community, is confronting the cycle of poverty.

Go to firstchurch.org/partnership to learn more, and see firstchurch.org/C2C for an in-depth article about the phenomenal Church to Church initiative.

This year, Temple Zion has added **50 children** to its program. Though we are not obligated to sponsor all these children, we certainly have been blessed with the ability to have a very tangible impact on these young lives through our sponsorship, which is \$38/month for each child. Learn more at compassion.com.

On the **Sundays of November 11 and 18**, we will have packets available in the Connector of individual children looking for sponsorship.

On **Sunday, November 25**, there will be a **meeting** in the Parlor following the 10:30 services for those interested in our March 6-13, 2013, **trip to Barranca**. Please join us.

Compassion International uses a **holistic approach**:

- **CHILD-FOCUSED** — committed to making a difference in each child's life. Local staff is personally acquainted with each child to minister to his or her unique needs.
- **CHRIST-CENTERED** — committed to honoring Jesus Christ in all that we do. Every child who participates in a Compassion program is given the opportunity to learn about Jesus Christ and discover how to develop a lifelong relationship with God.
- **CHURCH-BASED** — working exclusively through indigenous churches to create child development ministries so that church leaders and members around the world can become effective child advocates in their communities.
- **COMMITTED TO INTEGRITY** — committed to upholding the highest professional and biblical principles.

In conjunction with the new sponsorship opportunities, Compassion's **Peter Habyarimana** will be with us on **Sunday, November 18**. He will speak briefly during our worship services that day. Many of you have already heard Pastor Deryk talk about Peter's incredible story as a Compassion-sponsored child in Uganda.

Born in the village of Kabale, Peter fled his home at 13 and lived on the streets for 14 months before being found by Jacque



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The Blue Good Sam Envelope Brings Blessings!

Many people from this congregation and the surrounding community are just getting by financially these days. Sadly, some are not, and they need a helping hand to get them through a tight spot.

Our Good Samaritan Fund has been providing impartial assistance for people in need for many years. Our congregation has been very supportive of this special outreach, and now we are asking for *your help in getting the word out* to those fellow congregants, or those in your community, who need a helping hand in catching up on a past-due bill or are in need of something as basic as food. Because of your generosity, the Good Sam Fund can be the answer to prayer for a person or family in need.

Please call **Eileen Murray** in Caring Ministries—860.529.1575 x210—for details on the application process. Thank you, and God bless, from the Good Sam Committee.

Third-Grade Bible Presentation, Nov. 25!

Do you remember the day you were given your own personal Bible? Our wonderful third-graders will experience that day on **November 25**, as they recite Psalm 100 from memory during the service! Let's celebrate this special occasion with the children and

their families. The presentation is during the 10:30 service in the Meetinghouse. Please join us! Special seating will be reserved for families of the third-graders. A reception for all in attendance will take place immediately after the service in the Wells Area.

Men's Ministry Leader Bob Papertsian Steps Down

After many years of faithful service, **Bob Papertsian** is leaving his position as Men's Ministry Coordinator. With a passion for leading and serving men, Bob brought this ministry to the next level, empowering both men and youth to go deeper with Christ and become more committed to serving others in His Name. We thank Bob for his amazing and fruitful ministry among us!



Help Complete a School in the Dom. Republic

You are invited to **join a team** to continue to help build a school in the Dominican Republic, led by **Paul Breglio, November 15-20**, or you may like to **donate school supplies** that will help the children learn.

For details, see firstchurch.org/school (*photos of the school and children have been*

added!) or contact Paul at 860.563.1659 or pbreglio@crestmechanical.com.

HCM's Noah After School Needs Your Help!

Will you tutor Hartford 1st-5th graders in need of homework help and Jesus' love? **Noah After School** needs once-a-week volunteers Mondays thru Thursdays, 3:30 to 5:45 p.m. Please contact **Cheryl Maida** at cherylm@hartfordcitymission.org or call 860.246.0132. See an informative flyer at firstchurch.org/NAS for more info.

HCM's Innovative Noah Christmas Store

Deadline is **December 7** for you to donate gifts that parents of Noah After School children can buy at discounted prices and then joyfully give as Christmas gifts for their children—with proceeds used for sending kids to Lakeside Christian Camp next summer! See firstchurch.org/NCS, and call **Lisa Breglio** at 860.563.1659 for instructions.

Nursery School Wooden Toy Shopping Week!

November 1-7, 20% of the profit for items you buy at The Wooden Toy (near Office Depot on the Silas Deane Hwy.) is given to our school; just mention the First Church Nursery School at checkout!

Church Library Alert!

Our First Church Library has a substantial number of books/CDs/DVDs that have been borrowed from our library but are long overdue! Please be a good steward of these wonderful resources by returning right away any that you have. You may leave them at the library desk or with the receptionist, or you can use the "Book Drop" slot just outside the Marsh Street entrance door to our church.

ALSO—If you would like to **serve our library** in some capacity on Sundays and a few hours during the week, please call **Linda Papertsian** at 860.257.7566 or **Laurie Allen** at 860.236.2114, as we are in real need of new helpers for this important ministry. Thank you!

First Church

FIRST CHURCH OF CHRIST IN WETHERSFIELD
CONGREGATIONAL
860.529.1575 • Fax: 860.721.7861
250 Main Street, Wethersfield, CT 06109
Website: www.firstchurch.org
Email: info@firstchurch.org

Sunday Worship Times

Traditional Services in the Meetinghouse:
8:45 and 10:30 a.m.
Wind Contemporary Service
in Keith Jones Hall: 10:30 a.m.

First Church on Facebook

www.facebook.com/FirstChurchPage

Dial-A-Message: 860.529.1785

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Back page drawing is by Faith Goble.

What will you leave behind?

Please remember First Church in your will.

Atessa M. Afshar Associate Minister
Wayne E. Luman Director of Caring Ministries
Marcia J. McCann Dir. of Children's Ministries
T. Michael McDowell Associate Minister
Donald W. Morgan Minister Emeritus
Deryk P. Richenbourg Senior Minister
David C. Spicer Minister of Music & the Arts
Todd E. Willard Associate Minister

OUR MISSION

We are a community of Jesus followers who love God, love one another, and make disciples.

SPIRE DEADLINE

Material for the December issue of *The Spire*, which will be mailed/emailed on 11/28/12, must be submitted to Dave Gilbert by noon on Thurs., November 15, at daveg@firstchurch.org or 860.529.1575, x225.

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THE HELEN L. REINFRANK CHORAL CANTATA SERIES

Christmas Concert

An encore performance of one of the most exquisite concerts of the past quarter century

We have offered many memorable concerts in what is now my 26th year at this wonderful church!

One program that felt "just right" was the Christmas Concert we presented in 2007. My thought was to get the same brass group and percussionists we had then, and present **the very same program (twice!) this year, on Sunday, December 9**, in our beautifully decorated Meetinghouse.

Not all of the players can be with us—though a few will be—but we still have an outstanding ensemble! ***O Holy Night***, arranged by Robert Hebble, was so

exceptional five years ago that one of the professional trombonists (who has heard that carol many, many times) remarked that it really got to him. We will sing that, along with ***Gloria*** by John Rutter, ***Gloria In Excelsis Deo*** by Daniel Pinkham, ***Christmas Day*** by

Gustav Holst, and many familiar carols.

After checking the 2007 program, I was delighted to see that the date we had chosen

was December 9—just like this year!

So, invite friends to dinner and then to the concert (or vice versa) and join us for "2007 in 2012" on **December 9, at 4:00 p.m. or 7:00 p.m.** If you come early for the 4:00 concert, you will hear the Wethersfield High School Choralaires as well, directed by Scott Rioux.

An offering will be received. Childcare is provided (up to age 8). You are encouraged to bring a

nonperishable food item to be given to our local food bank for those in need.

The first concert is funded by the Reinfrank Choral Cantata Fund, in loving memory of Helen L. Reinfrank (1924-2002).

—**David Spicer**, Min. of Music and the Arts



A Time for Compassion

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Masiko, then the Uganda Director for Compassion. With Jacque's help, Peter was introduced to Christ. He worked in Rwanda during the genocide in 1994, where he witnessed the dark side of humanity, but through which he also gained a heart for children. In 2006, Peter

graduated from The Master's College in Santa Clarita, California, and is now Regional Manager for Donor-Church Relations at Compassion's Global Ministry Center in Colorado.

Be in church **November 18** and hear more of Peter's remarkable story!