



Church on Mill

Moving Toward Eldership

*Schedule, Letter to Members from the Transition Team, Testimonies
from each Elder Candidate, and Article IV of the Bylaws*

Moving Toward Eldership

Schedule of Events

OCT 29

Present Elder Candidates

Members Meeting, Oct 29

Present Elder Candidates to members
Distribute Elder Candidate testimonies
Distribute eldership schedule

After Members Meeting, Oct 29

Send out letter to all members

NOV 1-30

Candidates Share, Members Pray

Gatherings, Nov 5

Tad shares briefly at both gatherings

Gatherings, Nov 12

Randy shares briefly at both gatherings

After Gatherings, Nov 12

Q&A in auditorium after 11:15am gathering

Gatherings, Nov 19

Todd shares briefly at both gatherings

DEC 3

Members Vote and Install

Gatherings, Dec 3

Church votes on all three Elder Candidates

Members Meeting, Dec 3

Installation of affirmed elders

LETTER

A Note from the Transition Team

October 30, 2017

Beloved fellow members of Church on Mill:

Eight years ago, the Leadership Team at Church on Mill started scouring the New Testament for how the early church functioned, and compared their findings to what our church was doing. One item that stood out was that the individual churches in the New Testament had multiple elders or pastors, many of whom were selected from the church body and not imported from outside. Our church tended to rely on paid staff, with a nod to shared leadership in the use of a Leadership Team, but not giving full pastoral responsibilities to those team members. The COM leaders at that time decided to pray and teach what the Bible said, and then allow the church to grow into a more biblical view of church leadership and membership.

This resulted in a change in the way our members thought about leadership. Two years ago, the church voted to embrace becoming a congregationally governed, elder-led church by amending the church bylaws. We established a Transition Team to assist our Lead Pastor in seeking potential elder candidates. Those candidates went through a training process and were examined closely for their character, ability to teach God's Word accurately, and calling. Many candidates participated in this process, which the Bible commends as good. But being an Elder is a calling given by God, not man, and this process helped the candidates and the Transition Team better discern what God's will might be in this.

After much prayer and scrutiny, the Transition Team is pleased to present three candidates to Church on Mill for consideration as elders: Todd Diehl, Randy Hagler, and Tad Skinner. We have reviewed their character, commitment, and calling. We believe they meet the biblical qualifications for Eldership outlined in 1 Timothy 3:1-7, Titus 1:5-9, and 1 Peter 5:1-4. These are not necessarily the only men within our body whom God will call as elders, but this is the first group we now recommend happily.

LETTER

A Note from the Transition Team, Continued

We encourage you now to prayerfully consider these men, and whether they are qualified to assume this important role of shepherding within our church body. They are not perfect; in fact, they are sheep being shepherded by Jesus Christ along with the rest of us. But God desires that we submit to earthly leaders within our church body as His designated under-shepherds. If you have issues with any of these men which would be an obstacle to yielding to their authority (Hebrews 13:17), we encourage you to discuss that with them. And if you are aware of issues that would disqualify them according to biblical principles, we encourage you to discuss that with members of the Transition Team. This is not a competition in any way. Each candidate should be considered individually as to whether he should be given this responsibility.

On Sunday, December 3, we will vote as a church on whether each of these men should serve as an Elder. Ballots will be accepted until 12:30 pm. If the church confirms that these men serve, they will be installed as elders that evening in a Members Meeting in a celebration of God's faithfulness in providing leadership for His church.

You can find more information on elder ministry and biblical qualifications, as well as a recording of last night's Members Meeting by going to the website and looking under "Featured Content" at churchofmill.org.

Thank you for allowing us to serve you in this process, and thanks to God for assembling this body and providing for its needs!

The Transition Team

Andy Clare

Kent Hardy

Chuck Newkirk

Pat Nickel

TESTIMONY

Todd Diehl, Elder Candidate



I think I can say that nine months ago, I didn't imagine I would be writing about how I believe God has called me to this place of humbly submitting myself before Church on Mill as a candidate to lead and shepherd this church.

God has been exceedingly gracious to me. I grew up in a Christian home, and accepted Christ as my savior and was baptized as a young teenager. That being said, when I went off to college, my feet didn't cross the threshold of a church during those four years. I didn't really want to have anything to do with God, I was rebelling against my earthly and my heavenly fathers. After graduating, God graciously placed people in my life who helped draw me back towards Christ. Through conversations with them and in reading some influential books, my faith was renewed. However, I suffered for many, many years, questioning my salvation as I struggled with guilt and shame over sin in my life. A number of years ago, by God's grace and with loving help from other brothers here at Church on Mill, I was broken over both my sin and my attempts at somehow trying to add to what Christ has already done for me. I give thanks to God that while I was a sinner, Christ died for me (Romans 5:8). All this to say, I'm here solely by the grace of God, and because of his relentless pursuit of me.

So how is it that I now believe I'm called to be a shepherd here at Church on Mill? To be honest I've struggled with that question and what exactly that looks like. When I joined the Transition Team a couple of years ago, I did so because at the time I didn't feel any particular calling to be an elder. Rather, I felt that I could serve the church through the interim time as

TESTIMONY

Todd Diehl, Continued

other men spent time considering a calling. Over these past couple of years, I have felt a growing and discernible burden for this church that has led me to consider that I might after all be called to eldership. About 9 months ago I felt that God was leading me again to trust him. I decided to go through the Discovering Eldership class with the intention of both discerning the call, and using the time to help prepare for eldership should that be God's will for me. During the four months of the class, I spent a lot of time praying about and considering in particular the words of 1 Peter 5:2 where elders are called to serve willingly and not out of compulsion. I have since become increasingly assured that God has called me to share the responsibility of shepherding this church. I'm grateful as well for the gracious encouragement of others, and believe that this encouragement is also part of God's way of affirming the internal calling that I have sensed.

I'm keenly aware of the responsibility God places on those he calls to shepherd his church. It often makes me pause and wonder "why me?" I believe that God in his infinite patience has been preparing me, and has brought me now to a point where I can joyfully and willingly serve. I'm thankful that God isn't finished with me, that he continues to mature me as I step out in faith, and I can only trust that God will use my weakness for his glory.

I know that should I become an elder at Church on Mill, I can't fulfill all the responsibilities of an under-shepherd of Christ to his church perfectly. But I do look forward to giving myself to the work of helping each of us, including myself, to "grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ" (Ephesians 5), and to love and care for you sacrificially as Christ has done for us.

TESTIMONY

Randy Hagler, Elder Candidate



If I had to condense God's call to one word it would be "unexpected". Although it began the same as other elder candidates, names on a list, attending the Discovering Eldership class, etc, it did not progress the way I imagined.

Throughout the Discovering Eldership class, I alternated between feelings of assurance and fears of inadequacies, seemingly more eager to discover my expectation of "clarity" than God's call. In a way, it seemed that the call became somewhat lost in my effort to discover the call!

There were many questions that surfaced over that time, but the one that seemed insurmountable was, "Am I seeking God in this process or only seeking the right decision?" Although I didn't understand it at the time, God was providing a precious lesson of how to better trust Him.

Biblically, refusing to follow God's call solely based upon a personal fear of failure is sin (Numbers 14:1-12). The same can be said for acting presumptuously and rushing ahead of God. We see this in both the presumptuous act of Abram and Sarai in Genesis 16:1-4 and the wicked and slothful servant in Matthew 25:24-26. Who has the greater sin? If my desire to always be right is the greatest of all my desires, and if being wrong is the strongest of all my fears, has self-righteousness functionally overtaken Christ's righteousness? Was being right at all costs, or fearfully never risking, preventing me from following God?

AW Tozer summed this up well, "It is not what a man does that determines whether his work is sacred or secular, it is why

TESTIMONY

Randy Hagler, Continued

he does it.” As I served on the Transition Team this past year, the why came into view as my heart’s motivation was exposed. Killing the sin of living in my own strength rather than faith (Galatians 5-6), and assassinating the desire to perform the rule of the law while ignoring the heart of a fruit bearer (Matthew 3), displays the heart of a righteous leader. I needed to learn that before the calling to eldership came. This is who I want to be and, by God’s grace, the person I see myself becoming.

I cannot promise to be a perfect leader, but I can pledge to make every effort to follow well. Following Jesus well means to guard against my own heart, as I help you do the same with yours. It means to hunger for His word, seeking out and fulfilling His will as He calls us out for the sake of His glory, first in the Hudson/Ash neighborhood, then in Arizona, and finally in all the world. It means tenderly, compassionately, humbly holding one other accountable to live lives worthy of our King while ministering to one another’s wounds as we limp along, arm in arm, further in His kingdom. It means making disciples who make disciples as we glorify God through lives changed by the gospel of Christ.

I love you and I want to be obedient to God’s call. If you’ll have me as your elder, I will seek to serve our heavenly Father as He teaches me the ‘why and how’ of loving you as He loves you.

TESTIMONY

Tad Skinner, Elder Candidate



I was called into vocational ministry during my college years – seemingly too long ago! One summer during college, I served as a youth minister at a small church in rural Oklahoma. I was driving our youth back from an amusement park one weekday and clearly heard God telling me that I was to serve in vocational ministry full time. That was not what I had in mind for my life, and I did not fully know what that meant at the time. Eventually I came to believe that this calling meant that I was to serve as a Christian counselor.

Over time though, I began to become more involved at Church on Mill and around 15 years ago was asked by the church to serve on staff as Associate Pastor. Over the last several years I've experienced a few changes – certainly in terms of my responsibilities and title in ministry, but even more so in my love for the church.

Two of my favorite passages of Scripture describe who I strive to be as a church member and as a staff member. First, 1 Corinthians 4:1-2 reads, “This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful.”

I want to serve Christ by loving and caring for the church well. I love our church. I love the people of Church on Mill. I love that the truth of Scripture guides all of our decisions and ministry philosophy. I love that we are increasingly reflecting the neighborhoods and people around us. I love that so many church members are fully committed to Christ and to growing

TESTIMONY

Tad Skinner, Continued

up in him. And, I want to be found faithful in serving and in being a steward of the grace of God. A second meaningful passage to me as a church member and staff member is Colossians 1:28-29. “Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ. For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.”

There are many things that I enjoy about working on staff at our church. We have a wonderful staff, and I enjoy interacting with each of them on a daily basis. I also love the opportunities to teach Connection Classes, lead our Gospel Community, teach Disciplemakers, meet with guys one-on-one to read the Bible, and preach on occasion. Our God is worthy of our efforts to proclaim his glorious name to all around us. And, I’ve been grateful for the opportunities to do that both formally and informally.

I’ve been aware of the weight of the scriptural passages regarding elders being held to a high standard for several years. Though I’m by no stretch perfect, I desire to increasingly glorify the one who has saved me from my sins. And, I’ll certainly need your help and prayer as I continue to grow and more faithfully reflect the love God has for me.

The Discovering Eldership classes that I’ve attended in the past couple of years have served as a confirmation of the call that I received around 25 years ago. Though being called as an elder in a local church is one of the last things I would have expected as a teenager, it is clear to me that this is God’s call on my life. I’m grateful for this opportunity and am glad to honor him in whatever ways I’m asked to serve.

BYLAWS

Article IV

Section 1. Governance generally. Church on Mill shall be governed by a biblical structure; namely, congregationalism, eldership, and diaconate. The members and Elders shall be mutually accountable to one another. Members are responsible to follow Elder leadership (1 Peter 5:1-4, Hebrews 13:17), and Elders are responsible to bring before the members the biblically-identified issues set forth in the first bullet point below.

- Congregationalism: Church on Mill is congregationally governed. God entrusts the final authority of and responsibility for the local church to the members; this is expressed biblically in four areas of decision making. The members are responsible for: preserving unity and promoting holiness in matters of significant dispute between members (Matthew 18:15-17 and 1 Corinthians. 6:1-8); guarding the gospel message by removing Elders who teach a false gospel (Galatians 1:6-9); protecting the purity and reputation of the church by overseeing her membership (2 Corinthians 5-8; 1 Corinthians 5:1-5, cf. Matthew 18:15-17); and affirming the church's budget and office holders.
- Eldership: Church on Mill is Elder led. God cares for, teaches and protects the local church through a plurality of qualified and called men who share these pastoral responsibilities.
- Diaconate: Church on Mill is served by Deacons. God frees the Elders to concentrate on spiritual oversight and provides for the physical care, administrative needs and day-to-day functioning of the church through qualified and called men and women.

BYLAWS

Article IV Continued

Section 2. Elders/Pastors.

A. Responsibilities. Elders serve as the pastors of the Church. They are responsible to shepherd the Church as a team of equals. They protect the Church from false teaching and teachers, feed and thereby equip the Church by passionately preaching and teaching God's Word, lead the Church through sacrificial, courageous and humble oversight, care for the spiritual needs of the Church, and serve as examples of Christ likeness (Acts 20:28-32; 1 Timothy 6:3-10; Titus 3:8-11; 1 Timothy 5:17-18; Ephesians 4:11-16; 1 Timothy 3:2; Acts 20:17-35; 1 Timothy 3:1-7; 1 Peter 4:1-4; James 5:14; 1 Peter 5:3). The Elders shall constitute the Board of Directors of the corporation as required by Arizona law.