

CHURCH COUNCIL – Change in By-Laws

Overview: The idea of a church council has been talked about for many years as a way of governing VHCC. I want to extol a few of the virtues of this form of church governance.

- A church council would allow ministry leaders to have a voice at the table when we are making decisions about that ministry.
- A church council would hold ministries accountable for doing their specific task of ministry while upholding our 4 pillars: Gospel-Driven, Mission Engaged, Discipleship Making, and to Care Well.
- A church council would create a synergy of purpose, ideas, and communication of how we are accomplishing our tasks of ministry, open up dialogue about what ministry we would like to accomplish in the future, and how we could do ministry better together.
- A church council would provide systems, procedures, and processes to efficiently operate our church with maximum buy-in by those leaders sitting at the table. Instead of hearing reports about what we have accomplished, they would be on the front lines enabling, encouraging, and planning what we should do to best accomplish the goals, dreams, and ideals we feel are vital in ministry.
- A church council would facilitate the inclusion of new people with new ideas along with the stability of those who understand the history of VHCC and how we have effectively done ministry in the past. It would enable the leadership to serve on a rotating basis, allow new people to flow into existing ministry, and allow gifts, experiences, and convictions a place to serve.
- A church council would give a wider breadth to a true community church empowerment of the body to be involved in ministry. Instead of a few blazing the trail and being responsible for the health of our body of believers, many would be involved in the forward movement of the kingdom of God through the people of VHCC.

Here are the meat and potatoes of the changes:

Lead Pastor – Will have oversight of the vision and direction of the church in concert with the Executive Committee. He will serve at the pleasure of the VHCC church body. He will be an *ex-officio* member of all committees with voting privileges, serve as the moderator of the church council meetings and business meetings. He will serve as a Trustee in the role of President of the corporation for legal purposes.

Pastoral Leadership Team – Made up of Pastor Dennis Stoneman, Pastor Dan Broyles, Pastor Randy Goff, and Pastor Mike Broyles, and any future Pastor(s) VHCC calls. The Pastoral Leadership Team will be involved in giving theological guidance to the church. Will be responsible to uphold doctrinal integrity, teaching the Bible, training disciples to make disciples, devoting ourselves to prayer, leading by being a servant, and having watch care over the spiritual needs of VHCC. The Pastoral Team will serve together with the Personnel and Finance Committees as The Executive Committee.

Executive Committee – Made up of the Pastoral Leadership Team, Trustees, Personnel Committee, and Finance Committee. Will meet quarterly or as needed to discuss, strategize and find a remedy to sensitive issues such as members out of fellowship, emergencies, church discipline, the recommendation to remove a pastor, issues concerning finances, any issue that has legal implications, and/or any other issues that may arise that requires confidentiality and/or speed of a decision based on urgent or pressing needs. The Executive

Committee also serves as the nominating committee for the yearly nominations of the Personnel Committee and the Finance Committee.

Personnel Committee – Persons who serve on the Personnel Committee will be nominated by the Finance Committee and Pastoral Leadership Team. The nominations will come before the church council and if affirmed would be presented to the body to be affirmed by vote to serve on the Personnel Committee in the yearly business meeting. They will be elected to serve terms of 1, 2, or 3 years. At the end of their terms of service, they will be required to take at least one year off and then be eligible to be nominated again to serve on the Personnel Committee. The Personnel Committee will elect a chairperson who will sit on the church council and serve as a Trustee as the Vice-President of the corporation for legal purposes.

The Personnel Committee will serve as the primary liaison between the body and the pastoral staff. If a concern from a member of the body is raised that cannot be settled directly, that member may take the matter up with the Personnel Committee to act as an advocate on their behalf. Also, if a pastor has an unresolvable issue with a member of the body the Personnel Committee could act as an advocate on their behalf as well.

Because the Personnel Committee is elected by the body they will serve as representatives of the body to come alongside the Lead Pastor and the Pastoral Leadership Team to help advise, strategize, implement, communicate needs in the body at the pleasure of the Lead Pastor. In matters of urgency, the Personnel Committee would serve as part of the Executive Committee.

The Personnel Committee will meet quarterly with the Executive Committee to discuss church strategy, direction, and any pressing matters that need addressing. The chairperson of the Personnel Committee will be required to attend the quarterly Church Council meeting.

Finance Committee – Persons who serve on the Finance Committee will be nominated by the Personnel Committee and Pastoral Leadership Team. The nominations will come before the church council and if affirmed would be presented to the body to be affirmed by vote to serve on the Finance Committee in the yearly business meeting. They will be elected to serve terms of 1, 2, or 3 years. At the end of their terms of service, they will be required to take at least one year off and then be eligible to be nominated again to serve on the Finance Committee. The Finance Committee will elect a chairperson who will sit on the church council and serve as a Trustee as the Treasurer of the corporation for legal purposes.

The Finance Committee will serve as the oversight committee of the church budget and financial practices. They will work closely with the Business Manager (Secretary/Clerk) of the church to make sure that our finances are being correctly handled. They will make and keep policies and procedures about how offerings are collected on Sundays, tabulated, recorded, and deposited. They will meet quarterly to make sure all finances are accounted for and how they might encourage our body to be good stewards, how to best raise monies and how to emphasize to the body the priority of generously engaging in giving our monies to the work of the church.

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The Finance Committee will meet quarterly with the Executive Committee to discuss church strategy, direction, and any pressing matters that need addressing. The chairperson of the Finance Committee will be required to attend the quarterly Church Council meeting.

Trustees – The Trustees of the church shall serve as the Corporate Officers. They may consist of a President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer.

The Lead Pastor will hold the office of President.

The Chairman of the Personnel Committee will hold the office of Vice-President.

The Chairman of the Finance Committee will hold the office of Treasurer.

The Business Manager will hold the office of Secretary.

The Vice-President and Treasurer will have maximum terms of 3 years which correspond to their tenure on either the Personnel Committee or Finance Committee.

The principle function of the Trustees shall be to hold title to the real and personal property of the church, and to sign such instruments and documents as are necessary or advisable in the name of, on behalf of, or at the direction of the church or the Executive Committee, which may include, but are not limited to, construction contracts, notes or loans obtained by the church for projects or purposes it has authorized, employment memoranda, contracts for the provision of other goods or services to the church, or contracts which concern any real, personal, or other tangible or intangible property owned, controlled, or to be purchased or disposed of by the church.

Church Council—The Church Council will be made up of ministry leaders from all active ministries at VHCC. Currently, that includes Children’s, Youth, Women’s, Men’s, AWANA, Worship, Personnel, Finance, Missions, Building and Grounds, Care, Events, Pastoral Leadership Team, and Business Manager.

Each member of the church council will meet at least quarterly with their respective committees to plan out their ministries and record in written form how current and future ministry will embrace the four pillars of VHCC: Gospel-Driven, Mission Engaged, Discipleship Making and to Care Well for our church body and the community of Santa Clarita. Each ministry will be required to submit a written report of their committee meeting at the quarterly Church Council Meeting. Reports will be kept in a book of minutes.

What it all means: A rewrite of the VHCC Bylaws has the express purpose of giving congregational empowerment to the governance of this body of believers. The rewrite seeks to balance power between the Pastoral Leadership Team, the elected Personnel, and Finance Committees and to give a voice to ministry leaders in a church council leadership model. The desire is to multiply the number of influencers in the VHCC body by giving them a voice in the direction, decisions, and implementation of the ministries they care about and serve in.

The rewrite of the VHCC Bylaws also gives rise to collective accountability for ministries of the church embracing and carrying out in tangible ways the four pillars of our church: **Gospel-Driven, Mission Engaged, Discipleship Making**, and to **Care Well** for our body of believers and the larger community of Santa Clarita. By setting quarterly church council and committee meetings whose purpose is to collaborate, plan and carry out these pillars we will give each ministry a voice and a role to fulfill our mission of *partnering with God in transforming people into devoted followers of Jesus Christ.*

In Christ,

Pastor Dennis