

# Updates from our Elders



*Dear Central Family,*

*The Elders recently met and discussed Central's current climate and happenings while facing the difficulties of the pandemic. We want to give everyone the opportunity to be involved and ensure we are communicating as to the health of our church. The good news is that we have heard firsthand that people are still meeting regularly and thriving! Most Life Groups are finding ways to meet virtually and for that we are grateful and encouraged. People are also joining Life Groups and continue to minister and lift each other up in prayer and with generous giving to our church and each other.*

*We have been fortunate to personally connect with some of you by phone. These calls have been encouraging to hear how fellow believers are thriving despite the economic, physical, and emotional pressures we are facing. There are reports of good news and celebration that Christ reigns over our circumstances. We appreciate your prayers and your prayer requests so we can pray for you. People are making regular efforts to listen to our online sermons, many of whom will still put on their "Sunday best" and use the opportunity to connect with their families. There are upwards of 700 views on our average Sundays.*

*Secret Church has also taken off with a tremendous response from you! We celebrate that our brothers and sisters are keen to delve into God's word together. We pray for God's blessing over this endeavour. We also encourage you to reach out to the church if you are in need:*

- [+ for practical needs through "Help in the time of need"](#)
- [+ for prayer - submit prayer requests](#)
- [+ to join one of our "Life Groups"](#)
- [+ to join our Secret Church online theology classes](#)



**PAUL GRAHAM**

*Elder, Interim Moderator*

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*A number of godly men were nominated for the role of Elder earlier this year. Because of COVID-19 measures and the discernment team's desire to interview these individuals in-person, the process was paused. We feel that we can proceed with the interviews now, while taking the proper*

precautionary distancing measures and hope to have nominees to put before the congregation in the next couple of months. Please pray for us as we discern.



## **ALF WIEBE**

*Elder, Elder Discernment Team Chair*

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*The elders would like to update the congregation on some operational matters of Central that you may be curious about right now, both in terms of interest but also on how to be praying right now. There are 3 areas we'd like to update you on: finances, staffing, and our plan for moving forward.*

*First, Central's finances are in relatively good health for this time of year. We are in a \$90,000 deficit year to date at the end of April. This, at first glance, seems concerning, and it is, but we are often here at this time of year. Giving among the congregation has held steady from last year overall so we have not seen a dramatic drop in giving. That said, we do see some concerning patterns and want to be mindful of our deficit situation. We have cut expenses by temporarily laying off some staff and by asking for reprieve from our rent of the Agassiz Hall and Promontory school while we are not meeting. We are still paying our mortgage and we still have substantial commitments related to our properties, current staffing, and ongoing operations. The bottom line right now is that we have money in the bank and we are trying to navigate this unique and difficult situation the very best we can while still pressing forward with Central's vision of reaching the eastern Fraser Valley with the gospel. We continue to rely upon the weekly giving coming through online and via the Central app. Please pray for continued obedience to God's call for us to have generous hearts and that we would have the means to faithfully give to the ministry of Central.*

*Second, staffing has been the most challenging and heart wrenching aspect of this crisis for us as we deeply love our staff. It became clear in March that we would be unable to meet in person for many months and that our ministries would be focused online for an indefinite period of time. This led us to do a dramatic rethink of who we needed on staff for the time being, given that we wouldn't be meeting on Sundays or midweek for a very long time. We sadly, due to a lack of work, lack of workplace, and to preserve our financial health as an organization we laid off 18 full-time and part-time staff members. This has been the most emotional and challenging aspect of what we've had to do over the past 8-10 weeks, firstly for our staff, but also for us as elders and the congregation. We've been in touch with staff to ensure they are able to meet their obligations while staying onside of the myriad of regulations in employment law. Please pray that God would provide means for us to bring back our staff as soon as possible and that He will provide for them right now.*

*Lastly, we have affirmed a phased plan for moving forward as a church. You can [read that here](#).*



## **EDDY MEJLHOLM**

*Elder, Stewardship Team Lead*

