

# Town Hall Frequently Asked Questions

## 1. What have we done so far in the strategic planning process?

The Strategic Planning Ministry Team (SPMT) has been meeting for two and half years. The SPMT has led 5 leadership retreats (Dec. 13, 2008, May 30, 2009, Oct. 30-31, 2009, Nov. 20, 2010, Apr. 9, 2011), written a new mission statement, created a new logo, surveyed the congregation and reported the results, identified 5 strategic initiatives which we have started working on, and now we're proposing some changes to the structure to better fit our needs.

## 2. What are the goals of the restructure? Are the goals measurable?

We have 8 main goals for the restructuring. They are not measurable at this point, but the SPMT and the Executive Pastor (XP) will define these more specifically.

1. Update the structure to fit a larger growing church
2. Simplify structure: fewer boards and committees to free people up to do ministry
3. More efficient and effective processes (decisions, budgets, ministries)
4. Provide people with clear guidance on what they should be doing (sandbox)
5. Connect ministry teams to pastoral staff
6. Create a structure that allows us to more effectively accomplish our strategy and strategic initiatives
7. Link budget to strategy and strategic initiatives
8. Use ministry teams to lead ministries in the church

## 3. Why do we think we need to update the structure?

As a growing church, we have reached a size that requires a different and simpler structure than we currently have. This is a normal progression as churches grow. We want to free up more people to do ministry instead of serving on boards and committees. We want to have fewer toll booths that prevent effective ministry. This means a more streamlined budgeting and decision making process to help us be more effective ministers.

## 4. What are we proposing to change?

We are proposing that in place of the councils for Administration and Education we have 11 ministry teams (this number could change) that are centered around related activities. Each of these ministry teams will report to a pastoral staff member. In order to make this plan feasible we are also proposing adding a new pastoral position called an Executive Pastor. This position will help implement the strategic initiatives, oversee ministry teams, guide the other pastoral staff and provide leadership in the church.

## 5. What are we actually changing in the Constitution and Bylaws?

There are several changes to the Constitution and Bylaws. They are designed to allow us be more flexible in how we organize the work that we do. Here are the specifics:

### **The changes to the Constitution:**

1. Bring constitution into compliance with prior congregational approval of the new EFCA

statement of faith

2. Eliminate reference to "Council for Administration" a group that is not defined in the Constitution.

**The changes to the Bylaws:**

1. More authority and responsibility are transferred to pastors and staff to make decisions over ministries and budgets. Pastors lead ministry teams.
2. Deacons
  - Transition to a ministry team that is appointed by the Elders
  - Provide shepherding and pastoral support, prayer, Blue Cards, etc.
3. Ministry teams with Team Leads are formed to cover the responsibilities currently covered by Council for Administration and Council for Education

**6. Are we trying to grow the church or to accommodate growth?**

We should expect natural growth if we are doing the Lord's work, given the growth of the community. We need to be ready for growth. Grow the people who come, not grow brick and mortar. Focus is more on church health not numbers.

**7. Who has served on the Strategic Planning Ministry Team?**

There have been 11 E-Free members that have served on the team in the last two and a half years. The current members are: Norm Millikin, Scott Bryant, Jim Keena, Jim Loessberg, Carol Kankelborg, Jeff Cade and Brett LaShelle. Past members are: Jennie Graham, Jane Phillips, Steve Anderson and Keith Aune.

**8. Should we add younger people and more women to the SPMT?**

Yes. We plan to add younger members to the team—likely after the January Congregational Meeting. We have had three women serving on the SPMT. We currently have one woman on the team. Part of this is due to the SPMT having several elders. Leadership retreats have included all leaders. We plan to add more women to the team.

**9. What happens to the Council for Administration and the budget process?**

The Council for Administration becomes the Finance Ministry Team. This group will be headed by an elder and the Executive Pastor and will be responsible for creating and managing the church's budget. They will recommend a budget to the elders for approval before congregational vote.

**10. What ministry teams do you plan to form right now?**

We have 11 ministry teams planned right now to handle all the current ministries in the church: Deacons, Finance, Building, Evangelism & Missions, Discipleships, Worship, Strategic Planning, Communication, Caring and Social, Children's, Youth. Each team will be connected to a pastor or staff member.

**11. Why is there not a prayer Ministry Team? Should it be part of the structure?**

The elders and the SPMT will consider whether a prayer ministry team is needed. The new role of the deacons will involve significant prayer over the blue cards and for the needs of

the congregation. However, more may be needed and ministry team may be just what we need.

**12. Should we have prayer meetings as part of the restructuring process?**

Yes, we should. We had a prayer meeting before the 12/4 Town Hall Meeting. We will have more prayer meetings as well in January.

**13. What sort of person are we trying to hire for the Executive Pastors (XP)? Seminary? Trained pastor? Business background?**

This will depend on the final job description. The elders and SPMT may specify a pastor position or may leave it open to an administrator as well. The person we hire will need support to round out that person's skills. Hundreds of churches have XPs that oversee ministry and implement ministries. This person combines a pastor's heart with an administrator's skills. The XP will have about 25% of the job description focused on finance and administration. The rest of the job will be focused on implementing discipleship, small groups and other ministries. The XP will work with pastors, staff and ministry team leaders to implement ministry in the church.

**14. Role of XP? Supervise other pastors and staff? Administrator?**

The role of the XP will depend on the final structure the elders adopt. It will also likely depend upon the person hired. The intent of an XP is to report to the senior pastor and be the supervisor of the pastors and staff. This is designed to provide leadership support to all the pastors and staff and help them be more effective in their roles. An effective XP can free up all the pastors, lay leaders and attenders to be more effective in their ministries. XPs can create a multiplier effect that provides positive influence far beyond what the XP can do by himself.

**15. Can we afford to hire an Executive Pastor?**

Yes. According to Jim Loessberg, the chair of the Council for Administration, "we can't afford not to hire an executive pastor." We will allocate budget to this position. We will also consider using some of the excess we pay every month on the mortgage to pay for this position. We also hope that in the long run this position will pay for itself in terms of retaining people who visit and growing the church—in numbers and in discipleship. We operate very lean at E-Free and with our recent growth, it's time to add a new staff person.

**16. Does this structure give an Executive Pastor too much power or authority?**

The bylaw changes don't specify a new executive pastor. The SPMT, elders and Councils are proposing hiring an executive pastor at this point. However, the specific job description of this individual will be defined after we approve the changes to the bylaws. There are hundreds of executive pastors working across the country in churches. There is clear precedent for combining the pastor role with an administrative role.

**17. Will the congregation continue to hire and fire the pastors?**

Yes. That does not change in the bylaws.

**18. Will deacons and ministry team leads be deacon qualified?**

Yes. They will be deacon qualified as specified in the bylaws.

**19. Will deacons and ministry team leads continue to be voted on by the congregation?**

No, not in the current draft. The idea is that the elders have nominated these positions in the past and they are overwhelmingly approved by the congregation. This allows the leaders to fill these positions more quickly and effectively. However, the elders and SPMT will continue to discuss this issue. The elders will have a commissioning ceremony as new deacons and ministry team leads are added to the leadership. The congregation will be notified in advance on this commissioning to allow time for input and comment.

**20. Will we have a formal way to track the changes to the bylaws?**

Yes. They will be on file in the church office. The current bylaws have all past changes in the document. We could continue to do this, though it does make for a long document.