



Brothers and Sisters,

When Dr. Ewart presented his assessment report to the Creek Family in February of this year, his number one area of concern was in the area of leadership. He said that “leadership polity, structure, alignment, responsibilities, and compensation must be clarified, modified, and codified.” Actually, conversations about the possibility of re-organizing our leadership structure had been going on for a couple of years, as our current polity (as defined by our constitution) was last updated in 2006. This season of transition at Richland Creek has given us a unique and historical opportunity to address these concerns by praying, planning, and preparing.

The proposal included with this letter is the result of several months of an intentional effort by your Elder Body, with the assistance and advice of Dr. Ewart, to dig deep foundations for the future by grounding our leadership structure in the unchanging truths of Scripture while also being effective for the context in which we find ourselves today.

A work group composed of several members of the Elder Body spent months doing research and carefully crafting a proposal, which the full Elder Body then debated, edited, and approved. What you have here is a proposal to amend Sections I and II of Article VII of the Creek constitution, which deals with church leadership and polity, especially in relation to the office of pastor/elder. According to the dictionary, polity is simply a particular form or system of government. Thus, this document lays out the basic framework which we are suggesting for how our senior leadership, particularly our pastors, relate to our congregation and each other. We believe this proposal represents a collaborative approach to leadership and decision-making, one that values teamwork more than just individual effort and embodies effective, cohesive, servant-minded leadership.

We look forward to walking through this proposal with you on September 13 during our Family Meeting. If you are member who is reading this document but did not get a chance to attend the meeting, and have questions, please e-mail [updates@richlandcreek.com](mailto:updates@richlandcreek.com) and we will do our best to get back with you in a timely manner.

It is a joy to serve our Lord alongside you all.

Blessings in Christ,

The Elder Body

## ARTICLE VII

### CHURCH LEADERS

#### SECTION I                      General

The leadership structure of Richland Creek Community Church is based upon the nature of the Church as revealed in Scripture, as well as the necessary legal requirements for a recognized religious organization. The leadership structure of the Church is intentionally designed to accommodate simplicity, growth, unity, and biblical teaching. The polity of this Church is pastor led, accountable to the congregation. The leadership structure involves a Vision and Preaching Pastor, Pastoral Body, Deacons, ministry leaders, staff, and trustees.

#### SECTION II                      Pastoral Leadership

On the Pastoral Leadership - Christ alone is the Head of the Church (Colossians 1:18, Ephesians 1:22-23). Yet for the purpose of order, and in accordance with the Word of God, certain individuals have been charged with leadership according to their spiritual giftedness (Ephesians 4:11-13). The New Testament Church had a plurality of leadership in each local Church setting, herein referred to as the Pastoral Body. The primary Shepherd is Jesus, and then by extension the under-shepherds, or Pastors, lead the flock (1 Peter 5:1-2; Acts 20:17-18; Titus 1:5-7; 1 Timothy 5:17).

1. Pastoral Body - All Pastors at Richland Creek shall serve on the Pastoral Body. These are men who affirm a calling by God and a desire to serve the local church in the role of biblical teaching, shepherding, leading, and providing oversight regarding the ministries of the church. In addition to calling and desire, these men must meet the biblical requirements of function and character as spelled out in Ephesians 4, 1 Timothy 3, Titus 1, and 1 Peter 5. Those on the Pastoral Body will be ordained to the Gospel Ministry and affirmed by a congregational vote by Richland Creek Community Church.

The Pastoral Body is composed of two categories:

- 1.1. Staff Pastors – These Pastors are employed by the church and may be either part-time or full-time. They are primarily responsible for specific ministry oversight and the day to day operations of those ministries. In addition, Staff Pastors provide teaching, general pastoral care, and counseling for congregants. Staff Pastors, Lay Pastors, and staff personnel work together to provide input and guidance into overall church matters to assure sound doctrine and ministry alignment. Staff Pastor positions are subject to assessment and adjustment as ministry needs dictate. Any positional changes will be communicated to the congregation.
- 1.2. Lay Pastors – These Pastors are not employed by the church; however, they provide a unique awareness of the congregation's perspective and serve to provide insight into the health of the church family. Like Staff Pastors, they are considered Pastors of the congregation and provide teaching, general pastoral care, and counseling for congregants. Lay Pastors, Staff Pastors, and staff personnel work together to provide input and guidance into overall church matters to assure sound doctrine and ministry alignment. Additionally, Lay Pastors serve to provide accountability and oversee pastoral discipline matters as needed, in accordance with established policy and procedures.

Understanding that the Word of God calls for a Pastoral Body to lead the Church, many decisions and responsibilities regarding the life and direction of the Church are left to their spiritual oversight (Acts 11:30, 14:23; Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 5:17). The Pastoral Body is the administrating body of the Church, equipping and overseeing the ministries of the Church (Exodus 18:17-18; John 21:16-17; Acts 20:17, 28; Ephesians 4:11-12; Titus 1:5-7; 1 Peter 5:1-2).

The Pastoral Body shall oversee the ministries of the body of Christ to ensure soundness of doctrine, and to maintain the biblical and practical integrity of the overall ministry of the Church. Plural eldership in the church has several benefits. It allows for biblical accountability and ensures one man does not dominate the church; it provides the church with balance, allowing for a variety of giftedness among pastoral leaders; and it permits the burden of ministry to be shared among a number of called and qualified men. The Pastoral Body shall be empowered to make any and all decisions related to the life of the Church of a business, legal, or doctrinal nature not directly designated for congregational approval. This includes but is not limited to the selection and removal of all officers, agents, non-pastoral ministry leaders, and administrative employees of the Church, changing the principal executive office or the principal business office of the Church in the state of North Carolina from one location to another, and the creation, adoption, alteration, and usage of a corporate seal.

2. Directional Team – This team will consist of select men from the Pastoral Body who will have the responsibility to provide overall direction for the church. This team shall be composed of both Staff Pastors and Lay Pastors, with the specific make up of this team according to current policies and procedures. The Directional Team is empowered by the Pastoral Body to make decisions regarding philosophy of ministry, direction, and the mission of the church after gathering information and input from members of the Pastoral Body, appropriate staff, and other individuals or sources as necessary.
3. The Vision and Preaching Pastor - This individual will be charged with casting vision and teaching via a pulpit ministry, serving as a “first among equals” in the Pastoral Body and Directional Team. After much prayer, he will present his vision to the Directional Team and together they will execute God’s biblical vision within Richland Creek’s context. Through vision-casting and a robust pulpit ministry, he will assure the spiritual health of the church as defined by the church’s biblical goals. The Vision and Preaching Pastor will sit as a member of the Directional Team and lead within a plurality of Pastors on the Directional Team and within the Pastoral Body. In the event of a vacancy, the Pastoral Body will follow established policies and procedures to fill this position.
4. On the Calling and Dismissal of Pastors- In the event of a need to fill a pastoral vacancy or expand the Pastoral Body, the Pastoral Body, upon the recommendation of the Directional Team, shall appoint a selection committee, which will then work according to established policies and procedures to bring a candidate before the Pastoral Body for discussion and approval. Upon unanimous Pastoral Body approval, the candidate will go before the congregation for a vote of affirmation. The vote of affirmation will be for individual names. Upon receiving the congregation’s affirmation of at least 80 percent approval, those Pastors not previously ordained will be ordained at the earliest possible opportunity. Pastors will serve until resignation; or until a two-thirds majority vote of the Pastoral Body determines that a Pastor has failed to consistently meet established performance standards, that a Pastor’s position should be eliminated, or that a Pastor is determined to be disqualified from ministry.