



## Family Meeting Announcement (12/11/22)

Brothers and Sisters,

Thank you for being here and prioritizing your church family tonight. It is a true and rare blessing. Trinity is, indeed, a special and unique place to call home.

We want you to know that there has been some conflict amongst the Pastoral Team. Early on in the conflict, we realized we were stuck in a bit of a gridlock about how to best move forward. As a result, we reached out to a third party (PastorServe) that specializes in helping churches sort through organizational challenges. Sadly, at the end of the process, we got to a point where we couldn't agree on how to proceed.

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As a result, Kevin McFadden has resigned from the board.

This is really hard news. As you can imagine, we are grieving this loss. Kevin is more than a friend. He is our brother. He is family. And, he is a talented teacher, theologian, and author.

We have many fond, shared memories with Kevin. We have laughed and cried and labored and prayed together for years. We have been improved as men, theologians, pastors, and Christians by Kevin. We will miss him as a pastor in our church. Truly.

You should know that Jason Todd has resigned his place on our team as well.

Jason and Kevin have their own unique reasons for resigning. This is demonstrated by the fact that the McFaddens have resigned their membership and are moving on. Thankfully, however, the Todds are planning to stay as members here at Trinity.

Once we arrived at the end of the conflict, Jason decided, because of some differences of opinion, that it was best for him to step down.

Please know that we definitely wanted *both* the McFaddens *and* the Todds to stay in the church! We urged them to. We are so glad the Todds plan to stay with us.

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We want you to know that conflict is normal, even for Christians. As painful as it is, it's not unprecedented ... not even for ministry leaders.

There is a reason the Lord gives us the account of Paul and Barnabas (see [Acts 15:36-41](#)). It's important to note that this dissension between Paul and Barnabas was not over a doctrinal issue. The rupture involved a personal dispute based upon a judgment call.

This is very much the case in our situation. The debate was not a theological one. We believe our brothers' theology to be sound and their faith to be genuine.

One of the lessons we're all learning is that we need to learn how to do conflict better as Christians. We know that we have a lot to learn. I certainly do.

Thankfully, PastorServe gave us some excellent, biblical tools to help prevent this kind of thing in the future. Just know that we are committed to improving and to our own Spirit-wrought sanctification.

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Obviously, Kevin's departure has a very painful side effect: we are losing the incredible gift of Colleen. We realize the disorienting effect this is going to have, particularly on you ladies. I feel that, too. In all of my church experiences, she is absolutely unique.

Sisters, we are so very sorry. Colleen is a good friend, an incredible teacher, and a faithful discipler. We feel nothing but gratefulness for her. It's hard to imagine life in this church without her.

I want you to know, again, that we really wanted Kevin and Colleen to stay. We pleaded with them to stay. But, in the end, they have decided to move on.

We would encourage you to send them notes of encouragement and blessing on their way out. Please let them know, specifically, how they have blessed and served you. Let them know the impact they have had on your life. I'll join you in that as they have both indelibly and eternally impacted me for good. This will serve to encourage them during this difficult season.

Ladies, you'll have a chance to do this tomorrow night in person, too, as Colleen plans to be at the cookie and prayer exchange.

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We want to take this opportunity to embody the reality that we say often: it's ok to not be ok because Jesus meets us in our weakness. And, praise God, He *has* met us, changed us and, by His Spirit, is continuing to sanctify us.

When we ask you to pray for us, it's not for nothing. The Evil One is seeking to devour us as men, as husbands, as fathers, as leaders, as pastors, and as a church ... and to decimate the sweet gospel momentum we have been enjoying together as a church.

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In light of the situation, we have sought a Pastoral Advisory Board comprised of Mel Benson, Dan Lloyd, Lee Henderson, and Joe Gough. They have generously jumped right in to help us carry the load, help us process what has happened, and to help us think about how to proceed in the coming months. By God's grace, they are with us in this and we couldn't be more grateful.

Some of them have been pastors/pastors before. And, among others, we'd love for all of them to be pastors at some point in our future. They are all open to that prospect and we are eager to add them into the mix when the timing is right. We covet their age, godliness, and weathered experience.

But, more on that later.

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Please hear this, church. We are here for you. We love you. We, together, are Christ's Bride. His flock. And, His radiant joy. He is zealous for us.

We will be here with you and for you through thick and thin. Better yet, Jesus, the true Lead Pastor of our flock has promised never to leave us or forsake us. We just want to point you to Him and help you make it to the Last Day still flourishing in your walk with Jesus.

Please know that we have nothing to hide from you and that we want to be prudently transparent. We are not beyond questioning. But, understandably, we may not be able to disclose certain details.

At the same time, know that the men on the Pastoral Advisory Board have heard the whole story - they know the details as best our ability and memory will allow. We have shared with them in order to gain the benefit of an unbiased perspective on what we've just walked through, as well as to provide accountability for the future.

Praise the Lord that they have all indicated they are here with us, and for us, and for *you* as we navigate this next season.

Ok, church. We know this is a lot to process. We have bathed your hearts in prayer before you even heard this. We trust the Lord is ministering to you even now.

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**Here are a few closing thoughts:**

- 1. Don't gossip.** We want to caution you against gossip and speculation. If there is a concern or question you just can't shake, we encourage you to come directly to one of the pastors or the Pastoral Advisory Board.
- 2. Trust Jesus.** Family, it is Jesus who builds His church (Matthew 16:18). Not me. Not you. Not any leader. Jesus.

The church was here before us. And, it will be here long after us. And so, we trust Jesus.

While this news was hard news to hear, the gates of Hell aren't prevailing and won't prevail in the end, either. The key to a thriving Trinity Community Church isn't any one person. Thankfully! Because every last one of us will pass from this place at one time or another in the future.

**The key to a thriving church is our pursuing the will of the Father, committing to Christ and His Word, and being empowered by his Holy Spirit to live in the Truth.**

We're going to keep on pursuing these pivotal practices in community.

- 3. Grieve and hope.** I think all of us will probably leave tonight carrying the emotion of grief with us. But, I'm praying that there will be another emotion added into the mix of our hearts, too. Grief, yes. But, also hope. I want you to know that I am fully convinced that those two emotions *can* coexist. They can be

good roommates, living comfortably together in the same heart. It's ok to grieve. And, it's ok to still be hopeful. I feel both right now.

My prayer for each of us is that we'll know how to live well in the tension of these two realities.

The mission still lies before us, Church. Let's limp together and we lean on each other as we keep on walking with Jesus. PastorServealm 30:5 says: "Weeping may tarry for the night, but joy comes in the morning."

In other words, this grief isn't permanent.

Do we weep now? Yes.

But, is joy coming? Yes. Make it so, Lord Jesus.