

Dear church family,

At our Congregational Meeting this past Sunday evening, we shared an exciting development of which we want you all to be aware!



Our church's mission is "Seeking the good of the West Shore and beyond through deep truth, deep lives, and deep love, for the glory of Christ." With the desire to fulfill this mission, we formed a group called the City Team with the goal of identifying and helping to solve needs within our city. It began by gathering people from our body knowledgeable in healthcare, education, law enforcement, marketplace, and government. For a year, these individuals went on a listening journey by meeting with folks in our region who lead and serve in each of those areas. Conversations arose about how our church's resources and strengths may overlap with possible solutions. Throughout this listening journey, we heard of broken families within our community, lacking mentoring and transportation needs. The City Team has a vision of

strengthening families by equipping them to meet the needs of their vulnerable children.

With this vision in mind, we saw needs within our own staff. We desired to find someone who could really champion the integration of seeking the good of the West Shore throughout the ministries of our church and launch new initiatives and partnerships that engage our congregation and the region. Through conversations with senior staff and the elder board, we realized the person with the perfect resume for this type of work might already be engaged with us in the work. We began to pursue conversations with him about joining our team.

After months of conversations, we now have the joy of announcing that Ryan Keith will be joining our staff on July 1, 2018, as Pastor of Strategic Initiatives!

We feel the Lord has uniquely equipped Ryan for this position:

- He has a background in economic development across our region and a Master's in Public Policy from Harvard Kennedy School.
- He founded and led the non-profit Forgotten Voices, a ministry partner of ours, for almost 13 years.
- He serves on our elder board and as a member of our preaching team. (In order to join staff, Ryan will be resigning his position as elder effective June 30, 2018.)
- He partnered with Pastor Trent in a volunteer capacity to create our City Team initiative and lead our discussions.

The creation of this position represents a commitment on our part to be a gospel teaching/preaching church that cares for the needs of people in our community in tangible ways. We desire to serve those who don't have the resources to care for all their own needs at this time. We commit ourselves to giving those without a voice a voice. We believe that the division between churches that care about gospel proclamation and those that care about justice is a false one. Instead, we choose to practice both within our own church, and with partner churches and others in the community.

We believe that a deeper commitment to justice work will aide gospel proclamation in a cultural time when our evangelical "tribe" is perceived to care for little other than cultural power and political gain. We truly do believe good work will create good will to share good news. Most of all, we want a deeper commitment to care for the needs of vulnerable families in our community because God is deeply committed to it and we want to be like Him.

Praise God with us for His provision of this part of what we need to fulfill His call on us as His body!

Looking forward to partnering together in what God will do in us and through us,

Your Board of Elders