

## OVERVIEW

We, as your church leaders, want to come before you today to share some important updates on our efforts the last couple of months regarding the future direction of our church. But before we do that, we want to acknowledge the challenging time our church has experienced this year and the various issues that we continue to navigate through. We want to thank you and encourage you for your perseverance and commitment in the face of so many challenges. So many of us have had to press into God like never before and as it says in Psalm 73, one of my favorite Psalms, "My flesh, and my heart may fail, but the Lord is the strength of my heart and my portion forever." "The nearness of my God is my good." And though hard, if God has drawn you closer and you have greater intimacy with Him today than eight months ago, it's worth all the struggle.

One of the most difficult things about leading during a time like this is dealing with issues in the rearview mirror that still need our attention. Your leaders, many who have stepped into these leadership roles for the first time, have been prayerfully and tirelessly working on these matters. We have a great team addressing these issues. We will continue to communicate as these items progress, but a church can't survive if it's only looking into the past. We must lean into the things that God is calling our church to do in order to move forward. And that's what we want to talk about today.

Throughout this vision building process, we've prioritized listening. Our leaders in various forms have **listened** to you, we've sought counsel from outside resources within the greater church and I'm so blessed at how we have really listened to each other. By doing these things, we believe God has been guiding us and unifying us regarding the future direction of our church. It's our job as leaders to listen, and it's also our job to **lead**.

In this vision, you will hear some new things, but there are also things you will hear that are not new, but we all sense in our spirits that God is doing a new thing a fresh thing in this church body and as we continue to humbly listen to Him and keep Jesus in His rightful place as the head of this church, We can trust our future to him because God promises to build His church on the Rock that is His Son and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. We just want to please Jesus. Just Jesus! With that backdrop, let's get started. I want to introduce Brian Laird, the chairman of our Elder board to share our first point.

## MULTI-SITE CHURCH

Last week, as I'm sure you saw, we launched Niles as [CityLine Bible Church](#). Here are a few pictures of their launch and first services. We felt that God has been leading us through every step to make Niles a fully independent church. Last weekend was an exciting time and they're well on their way to being independent.

But with the planting of CityLine, this naturally raises the question, are we going to plant other campuses? We want to let you know today that we are **committed to the current model of one church in multiple communities** in the Chicagoland area and plan to remain a six-campus church.

As we have sought the Lord about this, we feel called to this model of ministry which combines the strength of a common vision along with the ability to reach the communities surrounding our campuses in unique and practical ways. We are convicted that we are called to reach Chicagoland with the gospel of Jesus Christ through the ministry of our campuses and the incredible leadership of our pastors, staff, and volunteers at those campuses.

With that said, we also are committed to being open and attentive to the Holy Spirit's leading regarding the future of any of our current campuses or potential new campuses.

### **STAFF LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE**

Knowing that in this season Harvest is called to being a multi-site church, we have been thinking through the structure of our staff, specifically our senior staff. Currently, we've been blessed to be served by our Church Leadership Team, consisting of seven leaders representing all areas of ministry.

This team was assembled back in March by the Harvest 2020 Team to help the church move forward after the departure of many of our previous leaders. We have found this team to be effective in making decisions for the church in this difficult season as well as moving forward the ministries of Harvest, while still carrying out their regularly assigned job duties. Though it is a healthy team, it is not a viable long-term solution in their mind or ours. Moving forward, we want to designate senior leaders whose **primary focus will be leading the church**.

In order to reach this kind of structure, we have decided to move from a Church Leadership Team to a group of three primary **Senior Leaders**. Those Senior Leaders are a **Lead Teaching Pastor**, the **Lead Ministry Pastor**, and an **Operations Leader**, all three reporting directly to the Elders for oversight and accountability. This will provide a plurality of leadership. I would like to give you a quick overview of what each of these leaders would be doing. Pastor Greg is going to be giving you more details about the Lead Teaching Pastor, so I will keep my overview short.

The **Lead Teaching Pastor**, who Pastor Greg will talk about in a moment, will be the primary preacher of our church, responsible for leading our church through God's Word as well as developing and training others to do the same. He will be a leader among equals. We will begin the hiring process for this position immediately.

The **Lead Ministry Pastor** will oversee the ministries of our church and how they function. We are pleased to announce that the Elders have offered this position to Pastor Greg Bradshaw and he has accepted. I want to take a moment to pause here and thank Pastor Greg on behalf of the elders and the church body for stepping into his current role in the hardest time in our churches history. Thank you, Pastor Greg. Lastly, Greg will remain the Campus Pastor of the Crystal Lake Campus providing oversight to that campus.

Moving onto the third Senior Leader, the **Operations Leader** who will oversee all Finance, IT, Facilities, and HR functions of the church. We are currently in the search process to find the

Operations Leader and are aiming to have this role filled in the next 90 days.

Under these three leaders will be two key leadership teams: will be two key leadership teams that will make many of the normal decisions for the church. Those teams are the [Ministry Leadership Team](#) and the [Operations Leadership Team](#) made up of men and women leaders on staff. This structure will give us more of a shared leadership approach.

The timing of putting this new structure in place will be based on when we can hire two of the three Senior Leaders.

### **PREACHING VISION**

Regarding our Lead Teaching Pastor, we have both a long-term and a short-term plan for preaching at Harvest:

#### **Long-Term Preaching Plan**

As Brian just shared, for the long-term plan, we are going to hire a new Lead Teaching Pastor. The main role of the Lead Teaching Pastor is to be the primary messenger of God's Word to our church. This teaching will be recorded and streamed to all of our campuses approximately 2/3 of the time. In addition, one of the other roles of the Lead Teaching Pastor will be to develop a Teaching Team of other preachers who are exceptionally gifted in this area who will also preach to our entire church.

With that said, we have been greatly encouraged how our local Campus Pastors have handled the Word of God so well in this season. We will provide opportunities for the Teaching Team and Campus Pastors to preach approximately the other 1/3 of the time.

As a part of his job description, we desire for the Lead Teaching Pastor to be visible and able to connect with our congregation across all locations by frequently visiting campuses and preaching live at other campuses throughout the year. This will help the Lead Teaching Pastor to have a pulse on what God is doing in the lives of those at each of our campuses and for him to be accessible to you.

We are praying and asking the Lord that we would be able to find the Lead Teaching Pastor by the fall of 2020 and we will be starting the search process this year. We are open to internal and external candidates.

#### **Short-term Preaching Plan**

So that begs the question, what do we do until this position is filled? As you know, **Pastor Dave Stone** agreed to be our Interim Teacher through December of this year. We have asked him to extend his role here and he has agreed to remain in this Interim Teacher role until June of 2020. He will continue to not only preach twice a month but also be coach and mentor to our church leaders as he continues to help us navigate through this season. He has been an incredible encouragement and source of stability to our pastors and staff and we want to publicly thank him now for the way he has stepped into this role in 2019. He is truly a blessing to our church.

In addition to Dave Stone, we are establishing a team of three teaching pastors in the interim who will bring God's Word to us. That team is **Ed Ollie**, who serves as the Cathedral Campus Pastor, **Tommy Creutz**, one of our Elgin Campus Pastors, and **Eddie Hoagland**, our Lead Pastor of Worship and Production. These men will be the primary teachers to lead us through the book of Mark this ministry year in our sermon series, "**Just Jesus: Come and See.**" This short-term plan also includes preaching opportunities for local pastors every 4–6 weeks.

## **ELDER BOARD**

Next, we want to update you about our Elder Board. From a historical perspective, we started 2019 with 34 elders which have all rolled off of the Elder Board, and a team of nine new Elders was installed through our Elder nomination process in May in which every campus is represented.

With the planting of the Niles Campus as CityLine Bible Church, our friend, brother, and fellow elder Al Miranda will become a founding Elder of CityLine once the purchase of the building is completed, which will leave our Elder Board with eight members.

As we have been serving and overseeing our church, it has become clear to us that we need to adjust our model in order for it to be sustainable and more effective in its purpose.

The Elders have a desire to love and shepherd our people and be present with our church family. Because of this, we will be transitioning to two lay (non-staff) Elders per campus, bringing the number of lay Elders from eight to twelve. The **four new lay Elders** will be selected through the same process as the current nine.

In addition, we the Elders have made the decision that staff should be included as part of the Elder Board. The first group we are adding from is our Campus Pastors. Historically, these men have never served as Elders. As many of you know, the Campus Pastors hold the highest shepherding position of our church. We believe adding **two Campus Pastors** to the Elder Board will increase communication between the elders and our congregation. The Campus Pastors will rotate on a more frequent basis than a lay elder, but the exact timeframes are still to be determined.

The second group who will be included on the Elder Board our **two Senior Leaders pastors**. As we have already shared, Greg Bradshaw will serve as the Lead Ministry Pastor and will, therefore, become a part of the Elder Board. We also have reserved a space for our future Lead Teaching Pastor. Then as appropriate our Operations Leader. This would bring the future Elder Board to a maximum of 17 members.

With the exception of any unfilled Senior Leader positions, all of these additional elders, both lay elders, and staff elders will be added to the board by the beginning of 2020. Would you please be in prayer with us for who the Lord will raise up to serve as new elders and for the whole process overall?

## CORE VALUES

With all of these changes we have shared we want to let you know how excited we are with how the Lord has led and brought consensus among the leadership groups that I would now like to invite to the stage. These are the groups of people who have led our church in 2019. They include the current Elder Board, Church Leadership Team, and our Campus Pastors.

This group of leaders has been praying and planning over the last few months including a two-day Vision Summit in early August about the future direction of our church. Through our time together in this season, we have sought the Lord and have discussed what we believe God is leading our church to focus on in the years ahead.

Together, we are committed to our core values as a church. This includes our Mission Statement: that we exist to “[Glorify God through the fulfillment of the Great Commission](#)”. We continue to believe in this calling and invite each you to help lead this mission forward as we reach people for Christ across Chicagoland and beyond.

We are also unified and committed to our 5 Pillars which our ministry was built upon:

1. **Unapologetic Preaching**
2. **Unashamed Adoration**
3. **Unceasing Prayer**
4. **Unafraid Witness**
5. **Unconditional Love**

In addition, we are committed to our [4 W's](#). We want everyone who calls themselves a disciple of Christ here to **Worship** Christ, **Walk** with Christ, **Work** for Christ, and to **Witness** for Christ. These are signs of a healthy disciple and we want our people to continue to grow in these areas.

## DISTINCTIVES

Our leaders have also identified the following distinctives that define who we are as a church:

The first distinctive identified is our commitment to the **Authority of God's Word**. This means that we are committed to our preferred method of **expository preaching**. We also still believe in the **practical application** of God's life-changing Word to our everyday lives.

The second distinctive is **Passionate Worship**. We have seen our church lean in and engage more than ever as we have worshiped the Lord this year. Just this past Thursday Vertical Worship recorded a new album. Songs are being written here as an overflow of passionate worship from our people and the Lord is using these songs all over the world. Many of the songs recorded this week were songs written in the very season we've been in this year, and we are already seeing the Lord use these prayers and cries of our hearts to draw us closer to Him. It's not about Vertical Worship, It's not just about songs, but it's about our people growing in

their surrender to the Lord as they live a life of worship. We want to continue to grow passionate worshipers of Jesus Christ.

The third distinctive is a commitment to **Quality Discipleship**. At the end of the day, we believe that the job that God has given this church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ; disciples who truly know Him, grow in Him, and serve Him. And we do this through a biblical community with one another.

## **OUTREACH**

As we look to the future, we believe God is leading us toward an emphasis on **Outreach**. The Lord has used our prior efforts to plant churches all over the world in a powerful way. Since 2000, we have planted 193 Bible-believing churches all over the globe. We look forward to continuing our work in church planting in the future, but we believe in this season the Lord is leading us to increase our personal involvement in reaching our communities here in Chicago; at our jobs, in our schools, and in our surrounding cities. We are a light most bright when we are in the darkness, and we have a passion for reaching people for Christ.

Our first step in supporting this priority is allocating a portion of the Closer Campaign funds, which will be divided across our campuses [for the sole purpose of outreach as previously announced](#). Additionally, as we prioritize the reduction of our debt, we look forward to allocating a significant portion of those freed up resources to our campuses for expansion of our outreach efforts. You will be hearing from your Campus Pastor in the months ahead about the specific Outreach initiatives on your campus.

## **CLOSING**

And finally, and this is where we end today, we want everything at Harvest Bible Chapel to be **led by the Spirit**. This might sound like a given, but all of the things we have shared today are in vain if we are not led by His Spirit. We want to increase our awareness and attention of our complete dependence on the Lord for everything. We are committed, more than ever, that in every meeting, every discussion, and every decision, we are going to seek God because we want the Holy Spirit to be the One Who is guiding us. We want this to be reflective in our congregation as well through the way we pray with one another, how we talk to one another, and how we carry out the work of Christ together.

So let's pray now together as a family. We are in this together. We are a family. And we are committed to the ministry God is doing here. Because we believe He's not done with this church. Let's step out in faith together and let the Spirit lead us.