

## CENTER FOR PREGNANCY CHOICES FUNDRAISING EVENT

Northpointe will be hosting a fundraiser for *Center for Pregnancy Choices* during the month of May. You may scan the QR Code here or go to <http://event.fundeasy.com/25376> for ways to donate today. Thanks so much for making a difference in the lives many women and babies!



## NORTHPOINTE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



May 2023

### From the Pastor

#### Understanding Presbyterian Church Government

During the week of June 12th, 2023, elders from across the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) will gather in downtown Memphis, TN, for our **50th General Assembly**. The PCA formed in 1973 after separating itself from what was then the Presbyterian Church in the United States (today known as the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, or PCUSA) due to serious doctrinal errors in the old denomination. For 50 years now since, the PCA has sought to “hold fast what is good” (1 Thess 5:21) with relatively few challenges. But more extensive challenges to what is good, to the true doctrine of God’s Word, have crept in to the PCA in recent years. And recent General Assemblies have revealed rising levels of disagreement, distrust, and discontentment. For this reason, now more than ever, it is incumbent upon PCA church members to bulk up their understanding of our church polity known as Presbyterianism and to resolve to pray urgently for the enduring peace and purity of Christ’s church—both represented by PCA churches and the broader church.

To this end, this month and next, I will attempt to present a brief explanation of our polity. My focus will be on the courts of the PCA. This month, I will present a primer on Presbyterian polity, an overview of the courts, and then seek to overview the court known as *Presbytery*.

First, a primer on Presbyterian polity. Every denomination and every church that names itself independent has a polity. That is, a system built on principles for how the church ought to function, how it orders itself, how it guides and guards itself. Presbyterian polity, then, is one of many systems. It self-professes itself to be the system that seeks most closely to apply principles either mined directly or deduced from Scripture. The term *Presbyterian* denotes a Greek word often used in the New Testament to speak of the office of elder. And so, Presbyterian polity is unabashedly focused on the principle of being elder led.

The elder is a man called by God, set apart by him and by the church, to exercise Christ’s authority in oversight, in teaching, and in discipline of the church under his care. The Preface to the Book Church of Order (BCO) of the PCA says, “It belongs to [Christ’s] Majesty from His throne of glory to rule and teach the Church through His Word and Spirit *by the ministry of men*; thus mediate exercising His own authority and enforcing His own laws, unto the edification and establishment of His Kingdom.”

Further, as the evidence of many New Testament passages makes clear (Acts 14:23, Titus 1:5), no church is to be led by only one elder. There is, therefore, in God’s providential grace, always to be a plurality of elders. This plurality necessitates a purposeful gathering of the elders in carrying out their labors for the church (see Acts 15). These gatherings are rightly known by the term *court*. And Presbyterian polity, and the PCA specifically, has generally maintained three courts functioning together for the good of the church.

Second, an overview of the courts. The three courts of the PCA are the Session, the Presbytery, and the General Assembly. Our BCO describes the courts’ work: “The jurisdiction of Church courts is *only ministerial and declarative*, and relates to the doctrines and precepts of Christ, to the order of the Church, and to the exercise of discipline.” There is not space here to discuss the importance of the above statement (read it again slower). But the work of the courts is fundamentally limited. The sphere of the work of each court pertains to distinct bounds. Again, the BCO says: “The *Session* exercises jurisdiction over a single church, the *Presbytery* over what is common to the ministers, Sessions, and churches within a prescribed district, and the *General Assembly* over such matters as concern the whole Church.” The three courts relate together almost like concentric

circles with each Session as the smallest in relation to the wider circle.

Third, what is the Presbytery? At its most basic level, the BCO says that “the Presbytery consists of all the teaching elders and churches within its bounds.” Every teaching elder in the PCA (men ordained for preaching and administration of the sacraments) holds his membership in a regional Presbytery. Every church in the PCA belongs to a Presbytery in whose bounds it resides. The Presbytery represents, in many ways, the best of what Presbyterian church government offers. Several New Testament passages speak of the unity of Christ’s church (John 17:22-23, Eph 4:4-6, 1 Cor 12:12). According to Guy Waters, in his book *How Jesus Runs the Church*, the Presbytery captures this unity in two related ways: “First, church government exists beyond the local level, and above the local congregation. Second, the local congregation therefore exists in a relationship of mutual accountability and submission with other local congregations.” The Presbytery is the court that most encapsulates both the significance of individual local churches and the unifying authority of Christ over his church—as local churches work together for mutual good in their bounds and submit to one another under their one Head, who is Christ (Eph 4:15).

The meeting of Presbytery is, first and foremost, a worship service. The Word is read and preached. Singing resounds. Corporate prayer is offered. Only secondly is vital business related to the work of the congregations within its bounds conducted through committee reports touching on such items as evangelistic efforts, college campus ministries, disciplinary needs, and the examination and ordination of men to gospel ministry. There is to be nothing dry or stale about the meeting of Presbytery. Christ reigns over his church. He orders it to his own glory and to the good of his people. When you know the Presbytery to which your church belongs is meeting, pray earnestly for the labors of the elders, for holding fast the whole counsel of God, and for discernment amidst challenges.

Pastor Kevin Vollema

Northpointe Presbyterian Church  
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## MISSIONS MINUTE

### A Note from Esther Goita - Mali Widow and Orphan Aid

Hello Pastor Mason and Church Body,

On behalf of the team in Mali and all aid receivers I want to say thank you so much for your continuous support. May the Lord continue to provide. As of right now two checks have been sent out from Northpointe and used for various activities. The money has gone to specific cases of need notably aiding a few widows with their businesses and orphans with school fees. Additionally, an Easter donation was organized and other emergency needs of the beneficiaries were covered at the discretion of the team in Mali. I will soon try to put a more detailed report together and send it your way.

### A Note from Scott and Christina - Sensitive Area

#### Rejoicing in His Resurrection

We were encouraged to celebrate Easter together with a church full of both regular attenders and visitors from various cultures and backgrounds. Our worship time included the baptism of a young man who has been attending for the past couple of years. It was a blessing to be worshiping together with others whose baptisms we remember from 10 or 15 years ago. Many who participate in the life of the Body here for a season move on and we don't always know the rest of their story, but it is a gift to get glimpses into His faithfulness. Please pray that He will draw many more worshippers to Himself in this place and raise up leaders from the next generation to sacrificially serve Him and His people. Engaging with interns

God has raised up five interns to join us in May/June for an "intensive", an opportunity for university students to learn and serve cross-culturally. We are grateful to have another couple in our company joining us as we lead and mentor these university students. Please pray for His protection and provision as we work out the details of our schedule and plans.

#### Expanding earthquake efforts

Thanks to the generosity of the broader Body of Christ (including many of you), our church has been able to help meet some of the many needs of those affected by the devastating earthquakes. Through our contacts in that region, we've been able to connect with several individuals and families who we are seeking to support for the next several months. Pastor Turgay, his daughter who is working on a master's degree in psychology, and Scott were able to visit the earthquake area this past Monday. Please pray for His mercies over many who are suffering, dealing with trauma, and seeking to rebuild their lives and livelihoods. Pray that many will find help and hope in the Living Christ.

#### Regional opportunities

Give thanks for His provision of new workers who are eager to serve overseas. Pray that He will give many more a vision for seeking Him and His Kingdom in this part of the world. In May, we are helping to plan another gathering of local leaders from our region to give an opportunity for fellowship, worship and collaboration. Pray that He will use this time to equip and encourage each one who is able to participate.

#### Please pray for...

**His church in this place...**growth for each follower of Jesus, growth in our love for one another and for those who don't yet know Him

**Relief efforts...**strength for those helping in the earthquake region, hope for those in overwhelming circumstances, healing for those injured and traumatized

**Regional needs...**guidance and provision for new workers in various stages of preparation, relationships and stamina for newly arrived workers, wisdom and good collaboration for newly forming teams. Pray too for His leading as we seek to partner with local leaders throughout our region.

**Our international school...**urgent staffing needs for next year. Please pray that He will provide for the positions described on the flyer at the bottom of this letter. Pray, too, that the school building will pass earthquake-related inspections.

**Interns...**His help in their preparations, safety in travel, flexibility and a teachable spirit, good connections and providential encounters, good fruit both during and after their time in our country.

Thankful for His resurrection life,

*Scott and Christine*

## REMINDERS

- The Readers Game Night will be **May 5**, at 6 pm in the Hill home. [7989 Poplar Springs Dr]
- Women's Prayer Time dates this month, beginning at 7 pm, are **May 4 and 18**, in the home of Carmel Madeja. [420 Eastwood Street]
- Men's Prayer Breakfast dates for this month are: **May 2, 9, 16, 23 & 30 @ 6:00 am**.
- Men's Saturday Breakfast Discussion is **May 27**, at 8 am.
- The dates for the Men's Book Study this month will be **May 8 and 22** at 7 pm in the home of Bill Madeja. [420 Eastwood Street; Meridian]

## SACRAMENT OF THE LORD'S SUPPER

We will be observing the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper on Sunday, **May 7**, during the morning service.

## YOUTH FELLOWSHIP

Northpointe Youth!! We will have senior night on **May 15**. We are going to celebrate our senior Allie Phillips. Come ready to celebrate all she has accomplished! We will be finishing up Acts that night. Looking forward to seeing you there.

## LADIES' SUMMER STUDY OPPORTUNITY

This summer our book study will focus on the pressing topic of identity. Join us as we read Carl Trueman's *Strange New World*. How did the world arrive at its current, disorienting state of identity politics, and how should the church respond? The study will begin on Tuesday, May 2 at 9:30am at Northpointe and be 9-12 weeks long. We will have an evening study as well. There is a book and study guide, along with short video intros of each chapter. Please contact Leah Kiple at 815-861-9700 for any questions.

## VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

Mark your calendar for VBS on **June 26-30**. This year will be full of castles, knights, and dragons with our Keepers of the Kingdom theme: a study on the armor of God. Volunteers (teens included) are needed! Please contact Leah Kiple (815-861-9700) if you'd like to help. All kids 4-12 are encouraged to register now at northpointepca.org/vbs. Please grab an info card and invite a friend!

## QUARTERLY FINANCIAL REPORT

The Lord continues to bless our church in many ways, including financially. Give thanks and praise to God for His goodness to us. And thank you for your generous and cheerful giving. Pray that we will always be good stewards of what God has entrusted to us.

### First Quarter (January – March)

Tithes and Offerings:	\$124,523
Expenses:	\$117,652

Please note that the expenses include what was given to missionaries, local ministries, the PCA agencies, our Presbytery, and benevolent gifts to those in need.

## MAY BIRTHDAYS

4	Ben Thaggard
	Justus Grammer
12	Dalton McIlwain
14	Liv Joransen
18	Alec Thaggard
	Burke Thaggard
	Julia Thaggard
25	Christopher Stevens
27	Smokey Ethridge
	Crista Ericksen
28	Katie Morrow

