

Dear Congregation of Remembrance Church:

Just prior to the most recent leadership update and survey announcement, the Elder Board welcomed a few men representing others from our congregation to a regularly scheduled Elder meeting. At the meeting, a letter was presented which contained questions regarding the mission of Remembrance Church, its initiatives to fulfill the mission, how decisions were made, worship styles, etc, and provided recommendations for change to some of the items. The Elder Board discussed the questions and recommendations presented and determined to provide a response to the men and the portion of members they represented. However, it was important to the Elder board to know the minds of more than just this group regarding some of these matters. Therefore a survey was developed to consider the opinions and preferences of our entire congregation.

In the beginning of August, Pastor Steve informed the congregation that the Leadership wanted to better communicate how Remembrance Church is fulfilling its mission in developing fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ. We first developed the Remembrance Update-Leadership Edition and then on August 13<sup>th</sup>, 2009 you received the survey. The leadership has been greatly encouraged with the comments received by many of you about the contents of the survey and the opportunity to provide your opinions and preferences to the Leadership.

On or around August 15, 2009, many of you received an anonymous letter and/or pamphlet, which contained allegations and generalizations pertaining to the direction of Remembrance Church, the decision-making processes of the leadership, and other misleading statements. The staff and Consistory were extremely disappointed in the mailing. We feel this attempt at communicating a cause represents a poor way of attempting to impose change and uses confusion as a concern for change. Although freedom of speech is 'legal' according to the law of the land, the Consistory recognizes that God's word is the law by which we will abide and feel sending anonymous letters to the church body is very inappropriate.

The Consistory met on Wednesday, August 19 in order to discuss the issues presented to the Elder board and to respond with a reply to the concerns in a 'Q & A' format. You will find this below. The answers are generally brief; therefore, we have scheduled two open, informational meetings at Remembrance Church. The meetings are at different times for your convenience; enabling all who would like to attend to come and ask the Consistory additional questions or gather further explanation. Each meeting will be in the Multi-Purpose Room and each will have the same agenda so there is no need to attend both but you are welcome. Please join us on:

- 1) Sunday, August 30 at 11:15 am (after the morning service)
- 2) Wednesday, September 2 at 7:00 pm

## **Q & A with the Remembrance Church Consistory**

The following responses may include references to the *Remembrance Reformed Church By-Laws* and/or the Reformed Church of America *Book of Church Order*. If you should desire a copy of the By-Laws please contact the office and we would be happy to provide one to you. The entire *Book of Church Order* is most easily accessible at [www.rca.org](http://www.rca.org)

**Q1 – We have had many inquiries in regard to the Elder board having the authority in all matters and/or the role of the Executive Team in making policy decisions. So who is the governing body of the church?**

**A1–** The Consistory is the governing body of the church as defined in the Church By-Laws.

Article V – The Consistory; 5.01 - Governing Body. The governing body of Remembrance Reformed Church shall be the duly elected Consistory, which body shall be composed of eighteen (18) members, nine (9) of whom shall be Elders and nine (9) of whom shall be Deacons.

In addition, the RCA *Book of Church Order* states the following:

Part I - The Consistory, Article 4 - Transaction of Business, Sec. 1. The consistory shall be guided in its transaction of business by such rules of order as it shall adopt from time to time, and which are in accord with the Government of the Reformed Church in America. Elders and deacons have an equal voice.

**Q2 – Who is on the Executive Committee and what do they do?**

**A2 –** The Executive Committee has been in place at Remembrance Church for many years and is made up of 2 Elders (the Vice-President and Clerk) and 2 Deacons (the Chairperson and Treasurer). Each of the stated positions is elected annually by their respective board. The Executive Committee assists the Pastor in planning and executing the tasks assigned to him by the Consistory. The Executive Committee reports to the full Consistory. They do not possess any binding decision making abilities.

**Q3 – Does the congregation nominate the Consistory members?**

**A3 –** Although congregational members are always welcome to supply names to the Consistory of those they feel would make appropriate Elders and/or Deacons the final 'slate' of nominees presented to the congregation for election to the Consistory occurs as defined in the Church By-laws.

Article V – The Consistory; 5.03 – Nominations. The Consistory shall nominate a double slate of candidates for each occurring vacancy.

Article V – The Consistory; 5.04 – Election. Candidates for Elders and Deacons as designated by the Consistory shall be elected at the Annual Congregational Meeting, such election to be on the basis of at least one vote over one-half of the ballots cast.

**Q4 – Who are the officers of the Consistory?**

**A4 –** The officers of the Consistory are President, Vice-President(s) Clerk and Treasurer; each is elected according to the by-laws:

Article V – The Consistory; 5.07 – Meetings.

**President** – The Minister of the church shall be the President of the Consistory, and as such shall preside at and over any and all meetings of the Consistory. Pastor Steve is not elected, however is expected to assume the role as President as the lead pastor.

**Vice-President** – The Consistory shall elect one of the Elders to be the Vice-President.

**Clerk** – The Consistory shall elect a Clerk from among the Elders.

**Treasurer** – The Board of Deacons shall nominate and the Consistory shall elect a Church Treasurer from among those currently serving in the office of Deacon.

**Q5 – What are the hiring procedures at RC?**

**A5 –** The answer depends on the type of position to be filled by Remembrance Church.

**Lead Pastor.** Remembrance Church must adhere to the standards set forth in the RCA *Book of Church Order*. The standards reference if “the church has not made other provisions”; it should be noted, the Remembrance By-Laws do not declare other provisions.

Part I - The Consistory, Article 2 - Responsibilities of the Consistory, Sec. 3. The consistory shall provide a minister, or ministers, for the church. It has the authority to call persons to the ministry of the church if the charter of the church has not made other provisions. The consistory shall endeavor to learn the mind of the congregation with respect to any person who may be called to the ministry of the church. The judgment of the congregation in such matters shall be considered to be of significant weight, but not binding. The instrument of the call to a minister shall be signed by the members of the consistory. If the call is approved by the classis and accepted by the person called, the latter’s name shall be published in the church on three successive Sundays, so that opportunity may be afforded for the raising of lawful objections. If no such objections are raised, the classis or its committee shall install the minister according to the office for installation in the Liturgy.

**Assistant Pastor.** Remembrance Church must adhere to the standards set forth in the RCA *Book of Church Order*.

Part I - The Consistory, Article 2 - Responsibilities of the Consistory, Sec. 7. A consistory may contract with one or more assistant ministers to serve along with its minister(s) serving under a call. The contract(s) shall follow the guidelines established by the classis. The assistant minister may be commissioned by the classis as a minister under contract, but shall not be *ipso facto* a member of the church or the consistory.

Please note, as of August 17, 2009 Remembrance Church has successfully contracted Eric Cook to fill the role of Pastor of Adult Ministries; his start date is anticipated to be September 8, 2009. Although ordained, Eric was not called by Remembrance Church, he was contracted to be an Assistant Minister.

**Q6 – Can the congregation receive more in-depth Biblical teaching and preaching?**

**A6 –** The Elders addressed this issue at a meeting this summer. It received further discussion at the full Consistory as well. It was decided that, while all past preaching has been biblically based, more in-depth biblical teaching/preaching would be provided in Sunday morning worship. The Elders have the primary responsibility to evaluate the quality of teaching being presented by our pastors. In addition, we are excited about acquiring more in-depth learning and training opportunities for adults through adult classes, seminars, and small groups with the hire of our Pastor of Adult Ministries, Eric Cook.

**Q7 – Do you have to be a pastor to lead the congregation prayer?**

**A7 –** The Consistory has recently decided to have one of our pastors, or an active member of Consistory, deliver the Congregational prayer. Our pastors will fulfill this responsibility a majority of the time.

**Q8 – What are the expectations of the Lead pastor to participate and be visible in the majority of church functions?**

**A8 –** Pastor Steve continues to be committed to attending and actively participating in most church functions, especially functions that he is specifically invited to and asked to attend. As the church grows and additional programs and events are scheduled, Pastor Steve's ability to attend all functions will decrease simply because of scheduling conflicts. Pastor Steve, in counsel with staff members and Elders, will determine the priority of events he will attend.

**Q9 – Who is responsible for providing care for our sick and shut-ins?**

**A9 –** Going forward, Pastor Steve, Pastor Vern, additional pastoral staff, Caring Elders, and the Care Givers Ministry will share the responsibility of providing care for the sick and shut-in of our congregation. The Consistory has encouraged Pastor Steve and additional pastoral staff to maintain balance in meeting the expectations of their primary roles, as well as, visiting those who are sick or shut-in here at Remembrance Church.

**Q10 – How often and which version of the Apostles Creed and the Lord's Prayer do we recite?**

**A10 –** Earlier this year, the Elder board decided to include the Apostle's Creed and Lord's Prayer as regular elements of worship. Typically we include these elements during special worship services: Membership/baptism Sunday we recite the Apostle's Creed, and Communion Sunday we recite the Lord's Prayer. The versions of the Creed and Lord's Prayer we use at Remembrance Church have been approved and included in Worship The Lord: The Liturgy of the RCA, which is an approved constitutional document.

The Elder board approved the following motion in January, 2009:

During the January 2009 Elders meeting, the Elders discussed the importance of using various creeds and prayers during the worship services. A motion was made to recite the Apostle's Creed (or other RCA approved creeds) and the Lord's Prayer in the worship services at least quarterly with an attempt to recite any of them every month. The motion passed and was directed to the Worship Committee.

**Q11 – Can we have a prominent symbol of our faith on display in the Multi-Purpose Room (MPR)?**

**A11** – The MPR was not installed with a permanent cross hung on the wall. Remembrance Church has historically positioned a wooden cross on the stage during Lent and Easter and randomly throughout the year. At the August 19, 2009 meeting the Consistory requested that a cross, as a symbol of our faith, be given a permanent presence ‘up front’ in the MPR going forward.

**Q12 – Who approves renovations and physical changes to the MPR?**

**A 12**– Facility renovations and maintenance are primarily the responsibility of the Deacon board. Stage design and seating arrangements are developed by our Worship planning team. Elder input is sometimes solicited, but not always required. If you have specific suggestions or concerns, please bring them to the staff, lay leaders or the Deacon board.

**Q13 – What is the history of worship music at Remembrance and which style is “approved”?**

**A13** – Since the 1999 music initiative (see below), there have been many different tweaks and changes that Remembrance Church has initiated in terms of its ‘worship music’. The style did not remain static. Following is a brief timeline of some of the changes and portions of meeting minutes regarding the use of instruments demonstrating the desire of the 1999 decision to include a variety of instruments.

Special Elder Meeting of November 29, 1999 – 7:30pm

Purpose of meeting: To discuss and come to some conclusion as to the music we will use in our worship services.

- o A variety of instruments
- o Keep a balance of instrumentation

Respectfully Submitted,

Bernie VanderZouwen, Clerk and Rod Kamrath, Pastor

**Remembrance Church Worship Arts Department Brief History**

- 1999 Part-time Choir Director Clark Matthews; continued to use screens in previous church located on Maplerow as was typical since early 1990’s.
- 2000 Paid Choir Director and paid Organist; Deb May was interim Choir Director at this time. Risers for the choir were utilized on the stage in the MPR when we moved into our present church building here on Remembrance Rd. The use of additional instruments had not yet been implemented.
- 2001 Part-time Choir Director and Trumpet Player Rich Stoezel requested a full-time position. Remembrance Church determined a full-time Worship Arts Director was necessary; however, Rich Stoezel was not selected for this position.
- 2002 Part-time Choir Director Aaron Niemi; no instruments or praise teams in place at 2003 this time.

2003 According to the minutes of the June 16, 2003 Consistory meeting, the Director of Music Ministries Search Committee presented their recommendation to hire Doug Wendt to the Consistory. A motion was made and supported to extend a contract to be the full-time Director of Music Ministries. The motion passed. The issue of the need for a congregational meeting was discussed in regards to the hiring of Doug. It was decided that a congregational meeting was not necessary.

Throughout the remainder of 2003 Doug began purchasing instruments and using something other than the organ. Many different instruments were being introduced to worship.

In November of 2003 Doug Wendt hired the first bass guitar player.

2004 Deb May was hired as a part-time administrative assistant for the Worship Arts department. The use of more instruments was introduced at the Easter, Thanksgiving and Christmas services; as well as, a drum corp was used as special music. New screens and additional media equipment were utilized in full.

2005 Began to use new software for words on the screen; MediaShout replaced PowerPoint, lots of color and graphics were introduced.

In the fall of 2005 Remembrance Church began two morning worship services.

In November of 2005 the evening service was discontinued.

2006/ New Sunday evening worship options were introduced including pulpit supply,  
2007 Foundation Series, Pastor Rod taught a 201 class for 6 weeks, SOMA was held for approximately a year.

2007 Deb May resigned from her position in the Worship Arts department; although Doug Wendt played the organ occasionally very little organ was provided after Deb's resignation.

2008 Doug Wendt left the Worship Arts department in March, 2008.

2009 In February 2009 the Elder board voted to approve two different worship services in the morning utilizing two different styles of music. The 8:30am service would be a traditional blend with the piano and organ being used more frequently; the 11:00am service would be a more contemporary blend with guitar and drum being used more frequently.

The Elders met again in July 2009 and voted to return to the two distinct worship styles in the fall of 2009. The Elders determined that this would allow our members and visitors an opportunity to worship where the music is played in such a way that suits them more closely.

**Q14 – Shouldn't we stay at just one service this fall until the MPR is full?**

**A14 –** During the 2008-2009 program 'year', we had a dozen Sunday's with more than 750 people attending our morning services. As we prepare for an evangelism campaign this fall, (details will be forthcoming in another edition of Leadership update) we want to ensure that Remembrance Church not only has a worship style and time slot for all, but also room to accommodate each of your families, friends and visitors.

We are excited about what God has in store for us and we will continue to look to Him as we follow His leading for Remembrance Church!

The information and Question / Answers provided above was approved by the Consistory for publication and distribution to the congregation on August 25, 2009. The Consistory members included:

**Elders**

Pastor Steve Bristol – President  
Chuck Snoap – Vice-President  
Tom DeMaat – Clerk  
Steve Kragt  
Larry Langeland  
Mike Longcore  
Al Stoutjesdyk  
Steve Zarnosky  
Jim Gaikema  
John Jacobitz

**Deacons**

Jay Fisher – Chairperson  
Mike Staal – Treasurer  
Pete Folkringa, Jr  
Steven Chanter  
Bob Penninga  
Chris Ritsema  
Jeff Isenga  
Jamie Rynbrandt

Thomas Nieuw  
Steve Zarnosky  
Al Stoutjesdyk  
Michael J. Kragt  
Steven J. Kragt  
Chuck Snoap  
Larry Langeland  
Steven J. Bristol  
John Jacobitz

Jay Fisher  
Pete Folkringa  
Robert Kuisin  
Jeff Isenga  
Steve Chanter  
Jay Fisher  
Mike Staal  
Jim Gaikema