

THE SALTSHAKER

A PUBLICATION OF COVENANT REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, ASHEVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA

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Regional Shepherding Groups

By Rev. Sean McCann

The mission of Covenant Reformed is *to gather and grow disciples in Asheville and around the world*. The way we execute our mission (i.e., our “strategy”) is *to depend on the Spirit’s power to gather and grow disciples by embracing the Ordinary Means of Grace in our worship, nurture, and witness*. Those final three words are the three categories of ministry where we implement our strategy. The second word – nurture – we define as *Spirit-led community that is served by our members and led by our shepherds*. And finally, our ruling elders lead and shepherd the flocks as Shepherding Elders leading Shepherding Groups. Each of our members is placed in the care of one of our Shepherding Elders for spiritual oversight and shepherding care. Taken together, the members under the care of a specific Shepherding Elder make up a Shepherding Group.

This structure of organizing our ministry of nurture and shepherding through ruling elders is outlined in *The Shepherd Leader: Achieving Effective Shepherding in Your Church* by Dr. Timothy Whitmer. Whitmer reviews the biblical literature on elder-led shepherding and concludes: “It is important for the sheep to know their shepherd, and for the shepherd to know his sheep.” He goes on: “In order to maximize the mutual knowledge of the shepherd-sheep relationship it is essential that the members of the church be delegated among the elders of the church in order that each elder will know which sheep he is responsible for, and the sheep will know the identity of their shepherd.”

Covenant Reformed has a long history of shepherd-sheep relationships. For many years all-encompassing elder groups focused not only on under-shepherding, but also on fellowship and outreach. Members were divided into groups based on relationships (pre-existing and to-be formed) between members, and group membership was rotated every few years. More recently we have focused on the shepherding relationship between the member and the elder (thus the name “Shepherding Groups”). Group membership has been relatively stable since they are designed to take advantage of natural connections elders have with members.

With the addition of new ruling elders, we have revisited the allocation of our flock and reassigned members based on a new criterion: region. We have matched members with Shepherding Elders who live in their same region, thus forming regional Shepherding Groups. As you can see in the map below, our church draws members from not only across Buncombe County, but from most of the neighboring counties as well. With such a wide range of addresses, the boundaries of our groups are somewhat loose. We drew them with the following principles in mind. First, each group should consist of a ruling elder and deacon living within the group (we had to bend or cross a few boundaries to make this work). Second, groups should be similarly sized. Third, the dividing lines should follow natural population and geographical boundaries. Our hope is that this new division will facilitate shepherding care from elders who live nearby, while also taking advantage of relationships among members in the same area.

We will publish the list at church, but for now here are the boundaries. Starting up north and working clockwise, Ben Badgley (with deacon Noe McHone III) has the “far north” region that encompasses Weaverville, Mars Hill, Marshall, Hot Springs, and Burnsville. Further south, but still north on the compass, is Rob Cook’s group (with deacon Jeff Greene) drawing from North Asheville, Woodfin, and Weaverville. Moving east is the most concentrated group in East Asheville under the shepherding care of Tom Voigt (with deacon David McCullough). Fanning out east and south from there is Tim Wallace’s group (with deacons Rich Bishop and Grey Dixon), which encompasses parts of Asheville, Fairview, Fletcher, Swannanoa, and Black Mountain. Due south on the compass is Gordon Meiners’ group (with deacon Carl Tannenbaum), which is essentially the I-26 corridor of South Asheville, Arden, Fletcher, Hendersonville, and Zirconia. Finally, Clay Dangerfield (with deacon Drew Lefevre) has the west group of West Asheville, Leicester, Biltmore Lake, Candler, and Canton).

March–April

Upcoming Events

For more information about any of these events, refer to our website (www.covenantreformed.net), or the church office (828-253-6578; office@covenantreformed.net).

The Lord’s Supper

Please prepare your hearts in advance to take of the sacrament together.

During Morning Worship:

March 3, 17

April 7, 21

During Evening Worship:

March 29—Good Friday Service

Good Friday Service:

March 29—6:00 pm

Fellowship Meal:

April 7, following morning worship

CRPC Youth:

April 20—Asheville Tourists Game

Weekly Events

Sunday:

Sunday School 9:30 am

Morning Worship 10:45 am

Evening Worship 6:00 pm Except for 1st Sundays

Wednesday Evenings:

Supper 6:00 pm

Bible Study/Prayer 6:45 pm

Bible Study

For Men:

Men’s Prayer Breakfast 8:00 am 2nd & 4th Saturdays

ROMEOS at Cornerstone 7:30 am Every Thursday

Norm Bomer’s Home 7:00 pm 1st & 3rd Thursdays

For Women:

CRPC 10:00 am Every Thursday

Gail Albee’s Home 9:30 am Every Tuesday

Prayer at Cate’s Home 7:00 pm 1st & 3rd Thursday

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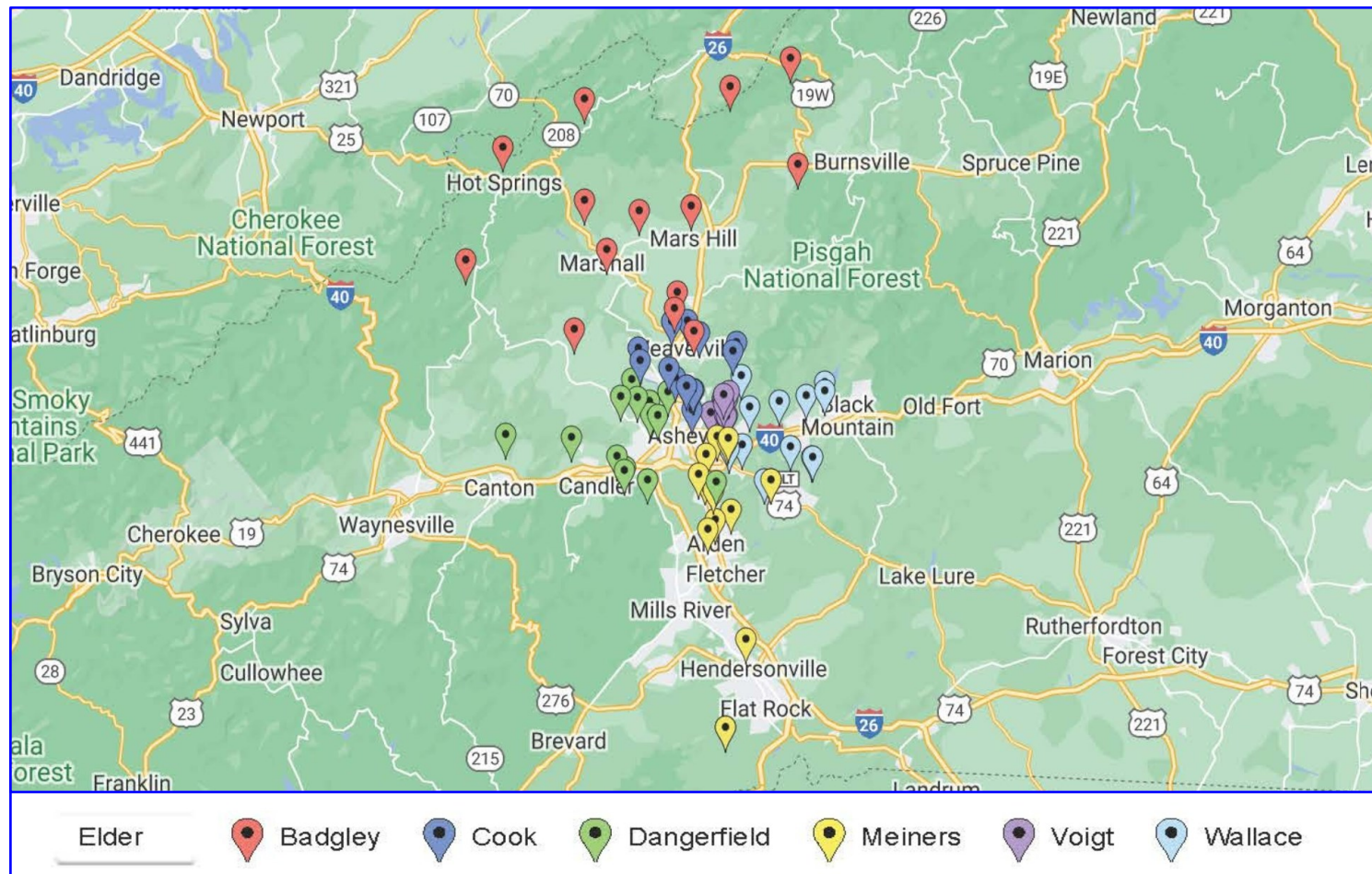
As we adjust to these changes, keep in mind the following outcomes that we hope will result. First, deep relationships formed over time. We understand the hardest adjustment will be for those members and elders who had formed especially tight bonds but are no longer paired together. If that is you then don't worry, you can still be close with a ruling elder who is not your Shepherding Elder! Plus, we hope over time a similar relationship will form with your new Shepherding Elder. The central purpose for this change is to facilitate shepherding relationships between elders and members. And while these relationships certainly are not formed through physical proximity, it doesn't hurt to live near and among those with whom you are aiming to grow deeper over time.

A second hoped for result is facilitating meaningful Shepherding Group gatherings and relationships. On our church calendar we reserve four Sundays each year for these groups to meet (the first Sundays of February, May, August, and November). The purpose of these gatherings is fellowship and prayer. The primary way our Shepherding Elders exercise spiritual care is by praying with and for their flock – both as a group and individually. And while these groups are not “small groups” in the traditional sense, they do offer another avenue of fellowship to form deeper relationships with fellow members. Our groups meet a minimum of four times per year, but there is nothing stopping them from meeting more often. One way you can help is by volunteering to host a gathering at your home, or at your

apartment building community space, or even at a park. Help your elder share the joyous burden of hospitality. Finally, a third hoped for result is facilitating intentional service and outreach. Our Women's Ministry Service Committee plans to take advantage of these group as they organize congregational care during times of birth, marriage, sickness, and death. Each group has at least one deacon who can work with the elder to coordinate spiritual and physical care for those in need and communicate with the diaconate when there are more significant needs. Maybe you could plan a service project for a widow in your group. Or recognize a community need in your area and recruit group members for an outreach event. Or just gather for a picnic or cookout that you intentionally invite friends and neighbors to. The possibilities are many as you start to think and pray intentionally for your region.

Change is never easy, so please join us in praying for spiritual fruit to be born out of these new shepherding relationships. And the best way you can help these relationships bear fruit is by getting to know your Shepherding Elder and letting him know how he can specifically pray for you. It is his job to seek you out, and it is your job to be easy to find! May the Lord use this ministry of nurture to shepherd his flock by leading us beside still waters and restoring our souls.

Map View of Regional Shepherding Groups



New CRPC Officers—Class of 2026

Ben Badgley—Ruling Elder



Ben and Rachel joined CRPC about 5 years ago and now have 3 children: Emma, Luke, and Leah. Ben is thankful for CRPC's ministry focus on the ordinary means of grace. He believes that God's Spirit works in believers and the world through the local church, and is looking forward to serving the CRPC congregation.

Clay Dangerfield—Ruling Elder



Clay and Carol recently celebrated their 25th anniversary! They have been part of CRPC since 2019. Clay is humbled and excited to serve and shepherd at CRPC. He is grateful that CRPC is a church that preaches the whole counsel of God and desires to take that saving faith and hope to Asheville and beyond.

Jeff Greene—Deacon



Jeff and Pinkney were members of Grace Kernersville, PCA for twenty years prior to moving to Asheville. They were delighted to join CRPC in July of 2022. They have three boys: Jacob (22), Eli (20), and Noah (16). Jeff is a civil engineer and works part-time for a utility contracting business. He has found great joy in the teaching at CRPC and the Christ-honoring fellowship of our congregation. He is honored to serve as a deacon.

Drew Lefevre—Deacon



Drew arrived to CRPC in 2019 and has been blessed and encouraged by the faithful preaching of the Word, appreciated the observance of the Lord's Day through morning and evening worship, and is thankful for the Wednesday night ministries, because he is one who requires the gospel message with regular frequency. He looks forward to serving this congregation and continuing to grow in the grace and knowledge of God's truth.

Noe McHone—Deacon



Noe and Jennifer are very grateful that the Lord has brought them to be part of the church family at CRPC, which they have belonged to for the past three years. They appreciate how they been able to grow while having the opportunity to serve with such a wonderful group of people.

Carl Tannenbaum—Deacon



Carl has been attending CRPC since 2014 & became a member in 2017. His wife Liz and their four young boys have loved attending a multi-generational church that values expository preaching and faithfulness to Scripture. Carl has enjoyed serving the church in a variety of ways over the years, and is looking forward to continuing to serve in his new role as Deacon.