

January 13, 2021

Dear Hinsdale Covenant Members,

With the start of a new year and our Annual Meeting just a few weeks away, we would like to provide you with an update on potential housing options for Pastor Stromberg and his family.

As many of you know, the Fourth Street parsonage, where Pastor Stromberg and his family live, poses numerous, urgent challenges, including: size limitations for a family of five, significant basement flooding, and disrepair.

The Parsonage Committee, led by Eric Donovan and Stephanie Frees, did a great deal of groundwork researching and presenting possible solutions. In order to make a decision for the future that's consistent with our congregational ideals and church identity, Council sought more information and convened a Long-Term Strategic Planning Team to define our core values as a church.

Our strategic team has worked diligently to draft a core values framework with which to evaluate various parsonage solutions and all future decisions. We are pleased to share these core values with you on the following pages. In summary, *Hinsdale Covenant Core Values* are:

- Our thoughts and actions are **Biblically Centered**
- We commit to **Actively Following Jesus**
- We are an **Authentic Community**
- We value our **Legacy of Mission**
- We act as **Faithful Stewards**

The process of defining core values together highlighted many aspects of church life that are important to us, including the *blessing of and desire for a parsonage in very close proximity to our church*. Our authentic community — one that is interconnected inside and outside of church, one that goes beyond surface fellowship, one that challenges and speaks truth to each other — has thrived with a lead pastor close by. We share school life, family life, neighborhood life, and church fellowship, right next door.

We, as a community, benefit from this interconnected, proximal pastoring — we know where to find our pastor for a conversation, a cup of coffee, or a prayer day or night. Our children meet and play with our pastor's children. We know that our pastor is nearby watching over our church building. Having our lead pastor close by encourages:

- Easy, welcoming, neighborhood hospitality
- A true feeling of interconnectedness in our church family
- Pastoral investment in, understanding of, and availability to the local community
- Robust growth in numbers of new, local congregants

Given our core values and the importance of fostering this interconnected, authentic community, our team vetted several feasible housing options, including:

- Pastor(s) purchasing their own nearby homes with ongoing church-provided funding
- Rebuilding the Fourth Street parsonage
- Buying a home in close proximity to the church and rebuilding the Fourth Street parsonage or repurposing the Fourth Street land

We presented these options to the Council this week. All three options involve keeping the 4th Street land, having our pastors nearby (to varying degrees), and a plan for fundraising and debt repayment. The Council is prepared to present a motion at our upcoming Annual Meeting to purchase a pastor home in close proximity to the church. The motion is included in this Annual Meeting packet.

We need your input on this housing motion. On [January 17th at 6pm](#), we will host a live Zoom presentation about all housing options — pros/cons, associated costs and factors considered. The presentation will be recorded and available for later viewing. On [January 20th](#) and [25th](#) at 7pm, we will host two town hall meetings via Zoom for any questions, concerns or other input that should be reflected in the decision or motion. We want to hear from you to know if we got this right and if you're in support of moving forward. Our goal is to discuss, amend the motion if needed, and vote to approve new pastoral housing at our January 28th Annual Meeting.

We urge you to join in these key conversations to provide essential feedback and envision what part you might play in faithful stewardship. Your involvement is important to us and to this process. Please pray with us for clarity and unity as we move towards a resolution on this time sensitive decision. Each of us can play a role in bringing our church vision and values to life and glorify God through our work together.

Prayerfully,
ECCH Long-Term Strategic Planning Team

Ann Wiesbrock	Yogi Mahendra	Scott Morrow
Rob Cook	Carol Wittemann	Lars Stromberg

Core Values

Evangelical Covenant Church of Hinsdale

Our Thoughts and Actions Are BIBLICALLY CENTERED

Living into our Covenant history, we ask 'where is it written?' in all that we do. We seek to saturate our various ministries in the truth of God's Word in order to be formed, challenged, and united in mission.

John 17:17 - Make them holy by your truth; teach them your word which is truth.

We Commit to ACTIVELY FOLLOWING JESUS

We seek opportunities to be formed in Christ's likeness by participating in the life of the Church. We are formed through education, fellowship, and the use of spiritual gifts, and are encouraged, above all else, to courageously follow the Holy Spirit's leading in our lives.

2 Corinthians 3:17-18 - Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And all of us, with unveiled faces, seeing the glory of the Lord as though reflected in a mirror, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another; for this comes from the Lord, the Spirit.

We Are An AUTHENTIC COMMUNITY

We view our church community as a family. We desire to share life together beyond the church walls through gifts of humble, Christian friendship that let us be known and cared for as we know and care for each other. We extend this invitation of authentic family beyond our church community to benefit neighbors, friends, and strangers.

Hebrews 10:24-25 - And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

We Value Our LEGACY OF MISSION

Townspeople first gathered in worship on the corner of Garfield and Fourth Street in 1892. Side-by-side, these neighbors prayed, rejoiced, labored and mourned together, forming a strong tradition of faith in our community. We endeavor to continue vital ministries of compassion, mercy and justice, proclaiming Christ in word and deed, locally and throughout the world, for generations to come.

1 Corinthians 11:2 - Now I commend you because you remember me in everything and maintain the traditions even as I delivered them to you.

We Act As FAITHFUL STEWARDS

We recognize that God has given us much, and we respond with generous hearts by faithfully stewarding all creation and resources He has gifted us. We view giving of time, talents, and treasures as a matter of discipleship.

2 Corinthians 9:6-8 - Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously.