



Spruce Grove Alliance Church

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January, 2012

Spruce Grove Alliance Church Family,

Greetings on behalf of the Board of Elders. Thank you for making SGAC a part of your life and in turn, contributing to the life of this local body of Christ. This is the first in a series of letters I will write this year to introduce you to the current Board, what we do, highlight some church news, and introduce developing items.

First let me introduce myself, Neil Hollands. Along with my wife Linda, and our sons Eric and Kyle, we have made SGAC home since 2005. I previously served on Alliance church boards in Brooks, Alberta and Prince Albert, Saskatchewan. I was appointed as the Board chair in November 2011. The past chair, Doug Fidelak has served this board for over 5 years with distinction and needed to step down to focus on family matters. Thank you Doug for your years of service.

You can view the list of current Board members in the weekly bulletin, and our pictures are also in the church foyer near the entrance, in case you need to put a face to a name.

What we do:

I'll get into what we do in future updates. Instead I'll tell you what elders are to be:

Servants.

First and foremost we must be submitted to the will of God, and we're called to serve the people of our local congregation, SGAC.

One of the first things the new Board does in the fall, is retreat together for a day and a half to seek the Lords direction, get oriented and get to know each other. Each of us signs a covenant that commits to what our values are, what we can expect of each other, and what the church can expect of us. We may not always live up to the commitments and expectations, but we strive towards them and desire to see God's purposes for our church accomplished.

Highlights:

At each monthly Board meeting, we hear from one of the pastoral staff about their ministry area. In January, **Pastor Coreen Frey, Children's Ministries Pastor** provided an update. This is such a busy area but some of the highlights include:

3 new classrooms were opened last fall, providing much needed additional space for the children, and for many other church functions.

Children's ministries are helping develop fully devoted followers of Jesus.

In our weekend services we encourage tithing, bible reading, prayer and witnessing;

In AWANA they study scripture and memorize verses;

In our SMILE program we train our Grade 6'ers to become true disciples of Jesus and leaders in Sunday School plus opportunity to evangelize the lost; and

Our VBS and Harvest Festival reaches our own community to bring them in to the house of God; and

Our Antigua missions team reaches 10,000 kids to fulfill the Great Commission to disciple Nations. This year 27 from our congregation will be going.

A big thanks to Coreen, her awesome support team, and all the volunteers who pour themselves into the

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lives of the young ones in our congregation. Please uphold them in your prayers, and if you can, please volunteer your time in this crucial ministry area.

Developing items:

In the next few weeks, you will be hearing about a couple of upcoming events that the Board is working on:

Listening process - At the September 2011 general meeting of SGAC, the membership prompted a commitment by the Elder Board to undertake a listening and learning process in early 2012. This commitment has stimulated many hours of spirited discussion about how best to listen. It was decided that this process should serve two purposes:

Listen to Heal - Are there unresolved hurts and frustrations from the past?

Listen to Plan – What goals and dreams for the future of SGAC do you have?

In the next few weeks we will start that listening process. Details will be provided during the weekend services in latter February, and through emails, mail, and other means of communication.

Sabbatical Leave – The Board created a sabbatical policy for pastoral staff three years ago, and it was updated last year. This is a policy to allow pastors who have been with SGAC for a significant period of time to take a paid study leave of up to 3 months, to refresh and renew. There are specific parameters around this policy and you can find the details on our website. We also have copies available at the information booth.

Pastor David is now in his seventh year of ministry at SGAC. He has requested and received Board approval for a sabbatical leave that will focus on completing his doctoral studies. This leave will take place this year from mid April to mid July. During his absence, our very capable staff will handle all the preaching and lead pastor functions.

In the life of a body of believers, there are times of rejoicing and excitement, times of sorrow, times of conflict, times of contentment, sometimes everything at once. As a leadership team, we are seeing good things happening and sensing great things stirring, but for right now it is time for us to listen - to God, to you, individually, and corporately.

And then lets see where the Lord leads us...

Blessings,
Neil Hollands
Chair, SGAC Elders Board

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