

Selecting and Supporting Our Church Planter

Evangelical Free Church of Mt. Morris | September 21, 2017

I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ. Philippians 1:3-6

Selection Process

There are many uncertainties in church planting. We want our selection process to allow for the planter and his family, the core group, and EFCMM to be able to go into this venture with as much clarity as possible. Here is a basic outline of the steps we will take in choosing a planter:

Résumé: applicant makes initial contact, information reviewed by pastor/committee

Questionnaire: committee sends follow-up questions for more detailed information

Interview(s): committee and applicant get to know each other, clarify possible relationship

Visit #1: see Sterling, visit EFCMM, spend time with core group and EFCMM elders

Visit #2: spend time with core group, be introduced to EFCMM congregation, preach

Vote: EFCMM congregation chooses to affirm the candidate or return to selection process

We would like the newly appointed church planter to move to the Sterling area as soon as possible. See below under “Mentoring and Partnership” for next steps.

Financial Support

Compensation

The planter’s compensation will come from a combination of sources, including the church planter himself, with EFCMM committing to provide a significant portion for at least the first two years. The following is a simplified proposal that may be modified for a particular candidate.

Planned Total Compensation (including benefits): \$60,000

This breaks down accordingly, per year:

\$30,000: provided by EFCMM

\$15,000: given in regular weekly offerings of new church plant (\$300/week)

\$15,000: raised by planter from churches and individuals and/or earned in part-time work

We have relationships with other churches in our region, both in and out of the EFCA, some of whom have already given or expressed a desire to participate. We have approximately \$70,000 already in reserve to go toward these commitments.

Ministry

Besides the pastor’s compensation, there will be many other expenses related to ongoing ministry. EFCMM is committing an additional \$6,000 per year for the first two years.

Mentoring and Partnership

Depending on the timing of his arrival, we anticipate the church planter and the core group will continue to meet for worship on Sunday mornings in Mt. Morris until ready to launch their own regular worship service. The planter will participate in elder and deacon meetings at EFCMM to become acquainted with our people and approach to ministry. During this time, we hope to have evangelistic small groups meeting during the evening in Sterling.

We will send two elders from EFCMM to share the task of shepherding and leadership with the new pastor. In addition, the pastor and other elders remaining at EFCMM are eager to give guidance and support. Pastor Bruce McKanna expects to have at least weekly meetings with the planter in the early months of this process and wants to be very responsive to his needs through the early years.

Our EFCA denomination also provides a wider network of support through other pastors in the region, as well as district and national conferences. There is specific support for church planters available in our Great Lakes District.

It is our hope that the new church will continue to have a close relationship with the Evangelical Free Church of Mt. Morris. We envision an ongoing partnership in that may include special events, youth activities, and additional church plants. At the same time, this new congregation will be fully independent, so that it does have the freedom to focus on reaching Sterling and Rock Falls for Christ.

Family Resemblance

All parents try to instill their values in their children, while also wanting them to mature enough to stand on their own. EFCMM wants this new church to share its core convictions as it grows toward independence. Some of the characteristics we would like to see reproduced include:

- *Robust, gospel-centered theology:* Our glorious God has revealed himself to be known by grace through faith in Jesus Christ. A church not focused on the gospel will be distracted by other activities, and fail to fulfill the mission Christ gave us.
- *Expository preaching and sound teaching:* God's Word creates, sustains, and guides God's people. A church that is light on God and his Word is not worth supporting in the easy times, and it will not stand in the hard times.
- *Blended worship:* Worship is more than music, but the church's songs should reflect both the heritage of faith and the new work God is doing among his people. Leaders make music to support and strengthen the voice of the congregation in worship.
- *Fellowship and Care:* The church is a gospel-centered community experienced as loving relationships that look after spiritual and practical needs.
- *Elder-led, congregational government:* A plurality of elders gives spiritual leadership as shepherds, deacons and deaconesses provide practical support, and the congregation follows while taking responsibility for ongoing fidelity to biblical standards.
- *Prayer:* While present throughout its ministry, there must also be special times of prayer for the sake of the church and its needs, both corporate and individual.
- *Missions:* The global mission is supported by giving generously and sending sacrificially.
- *Humility:* Doctrinally and otherwise, it is important to major on majors and minor on minors. The church should not be a place for ego or power politics. United in Christ and for his cause, personal agendas are surrendered so that he gets the glory.