

Dear Friends of NEC,

You don't want to miss Sunday October 24 message "Near and Far" from Pastors Chris and Mike about God moving us into a different and exciting future!

Listen Here: newenglandchapel.org/nearandfar

Below you'll find some helpful follow up information for you. Also, keep in mind, there will be plenty of time and many opportunities in the coming weeks and months to pray and discuss our future together.

God told Abram: "Leave your country, your family, and your father's home for a land that I will show you. I'll make you a great nation and bless you....All the families of the Earth will be blessed through you." *Genesis 12:1-3*

Jesus said:..."Go out and train everyone you meet, far and near, in this way of life,...I'll be with you as you do this, day after day after day, right up to the end of the age." *Matthew 28:18-20*

Leaving and going have long been an integral part of New England Chapel's DNA. From the outset, we've never shied away from the call to leave behind the comfortable and the familiar to help others grow in a new way of life, knowing that God was with us each step of the way. Anyone who has been around for a while knows it hasn't always been easy but throughout it's nearly 20 year history, NEC has both been blessed in its mission as well as a blessing to many.

Over the next several months New England Chapel will leave 40 Kenwood Circle and move into a new space, 750 Union Street. Chris and Cindi Mitchell will also move into a new venture. Mike Laird will become our Senior Pastor. It is our hope and prayer that, through these changes, more people, near and far, will be able experience, embrace and express the love of God, inside and outside the walls of NEC. Below are answers to some key questions you, or your volunteers, might ask. This is by no means an exhaustive list, but will give you a glimpse into the decisions and conversations that have brought us to this point and where do we go from here.

With these transitions in the life of NEC, will there be any changes to the mission or core values of NEC? Will NEC still be the same as it always has been? Chris, Mike and the Elders are committed to the mission of NEC--to help those who have given up on church but not on God experience, embrace and express God's love through Jesus Christ--and will remain so throughout the transition period and into the future. The Elders are confident that Mike, who has been a part of the NEC community from the very beginning and has played a key role in carrying out that mission over the last several years, will continue to uphold the mission and core values of NEC as Senior Pastor and will lead the community well in it's next stage of life.

750 Union



1. Why move into a building, why this building?

Over the last several years, we have been looking for a property that would allow us to increase our visibility in Franklin as well as deepen our community partnerships, while still enabling us to carry out our mission at a price we could afford. This property meets all of those criteria and offers the potential for future growth, much more so than anything else we've looked at or even know to be available in Franklin.

2. Why now? Does this have anything to do with CM leaving?

The Elders have long entertained the idea of moving into a permanent facility when the time was right, and so have been on the lookout for a property that met certain criteria. We originally toured 750 Union when it first came on the market and, while it met most of our criteria, it was over our budget re purchase price. A few months ago, we were notified that the price had been reduced significantly and was now within our price range. After a great deal of prayer and consideration, we decided to make an offer which was accepted. The timing of the two events, Chris' decision to shift into a different role, and the offer on the building are not directly related but rather are the result of God lining things up behind the scenes. That being said, it was important to Chris to be transparent about his future plans as soon as possible within the process of NEC moving forward.

3. Can NEC afford it?

As part of our last building campaign, New England Chapel set aside funds for just such a time as this. We have sufficient funds to cover the down payment but will need to raise additional money to cover

the remainder. We have a number of financing options available but will look to the generosity of those who call New England Chapel home to help make this vision a reality.

4. Will there be another capital campaign? What happened to the money from the last one?

Last year's capital campaign was a success and without the generosity of those who contributed we would not be in the healthy financial position necessary to pursue this building. The campaign gave us much needed cash reserves and enabled us to invest in improvements to our existing facility, many of which we will be able to transfer to the new space. That said, we will need a new capital campaign to build out this new space. We plan on financing the purchase price, which puts us at the same expense level as our current monthly facility cost. For the buildout of our new facility, we hope we can count on the continued generosity of those who call New England Chapel home to help us reach our campaign goal.

5. When would we move?

There are a number of factors that will determine our move-in date, many of which are still up in the air. We hope to complete construction in the spring of 2017, with a move-in date as early as possible ... Easter 2017? But, again, these are tentative and dependent on a number of factors beyond our control.

6. What will happen to our space at 40 Kenwood?

The Elders are seeking a tenant to sublet our existing space. We are also open to a group or organization that would be willing to take over or extend a new lease with the landlord. The Franklin commercial real estate market is fairly healthy and we are optimistic that options will be available when we get closer to our expected move-in date.

7. What happens if the contingencies in the P&S aren't met? Will we look for another building? Will we stay put?

Putting down roots in a permanent facility has long been a goal of the Elders. If for some reason the contingencies are not met or we meet with some other obstacle, we will resume our search for a property that is a good fit for New England Chapel, trusting in God's guidance to lead us to our next true home.

8. How long have the Elders and leaders been planning these things?

The Elders have long entertained and communicated the hope of moving into a permanent facility when the time was right. One of the factors necessary to securing a property was improving the financial health of NEC, especially related to Summer time cash flow. Two years ago, the Elders made the decision to focus on this, creating a cash reserve and improving money management practices. Thanks to the generosity of those who contributed to the Investing in Our Future campaign, as well as good stewardship, NEC has achieved financial stability ahead of schedule and we can now turn our attention to securing a new, permanent facility.

Chris Mitchell

1. Why is Chris leaving? Why now? Does the new building have anything to do with it?

When Chris and Cindi started NEC nearly 20 years ago, they knew that, one day, it would be time to move on. They were never sure exactly when that would be, or where they would go. Just as they felt certain their children would one day grow up and move out on their own, they knew that one day, NEC would move into a similar stage of life without their direct leadership. While that thought has always been in the back of Chris and Cindi's minds and prayers, the graduation of their youngest son, Mickey, this past June, along with NEC's impending 20th anniversary, brought it to the forefront in a new unavoidable way. After much prayer and seeking the advice of trusted mentors and counselors, Chris and Cindi decided that the time is now right for them to start moving onto the next chapter of God's work in and through them. They are excited about the new building and the opportunities it presents and look on it as a part of their legacy to NEC as it moves into a new stage of life.

2. When is Chris actually leaving?

Chris will be working very closely with the Elders, Mike and the staff, well into next year, helping with the transition of leadership and the building project. During that time, he will continue with his current responsibilities, but also start handing off senior leadership to Mike and seeking out his next role.

3. What will he do next? Will he start another church?

Chris has grown increasingly interested in getting back into the marketplace to rub shoulders in everyday life with the very people he enjoys working with most, people who have given up on church, but not on God. He's not identified a specific company or role yet. That will come as part of his work next year. However, he's most interested in teaching, coaching and consulting in the areas of teamwork, collaboration and the 'human side' of corporate life. He'll likely end up something like an 'undercover corporate chaplain' ... applying his faith in the world of business like many of you do.

4. Are Chris and Cindi leaving Franklin?

Chris and Cindi plan on staying in Franklin for the time being. They do hope to be able to spend more time in Southern Maine, where much of their family now lives. They will likely have something of a 'straddled existence' for a few years. They look forward to attending NEC as their home church, guest preaching and singing when circumstances allow.

5. Will Chris still be available for events such as weddings and funerals?

Chris has been a pastor for 25 years and will continue in that capacity (in some way), even after stepping down as the Senior Pastor at NEC. He will still be motivated by the same mission--loving God and loving people--just in a different venue. With regard to weddings, funerals, and the like, he'll be looking for ways to continue to be a part of these important milestones in people's lives, as they are a chance to stay connected to church life in some meaningful way, as well as bridging new people into church.

6. How long have the Elders and other leaders known about this?

While Chris, Cindi, and their mentors have been discussing and praying through this for quite some time, Chris started sharing his thoughts openly on his impending shift with the Elders, one on one, over the summer. In September, the team was ready to start working on the specifics of a plan for transition. Staff and leaders were the next to be notified, followed by an announcement to the church-wide community.

Mike Laird

1. What will Mike's new title and role be?

The transition from Chris' leadership to Mike will take place over the course of 2016. During that time, they will both operate as Co-Pastors, sharing senior leadership responsibilities. At the end of that period, when Chris officially hands leadership over, Mike will take the title of Senior Pastor.

2. When will Mike take over?

Mike will shift fully into the Senior Pastor role once Chris has officially stepped aside, sometime in late 2016.

3. Who will preach on Sundays?

Mike and Chris will continue to share preaching responsibilities through the transition phase. We will also continue to invite other speakers (from within as well as outside NEC) to speak on a regular basis.