

June 25, 2022

Mrs. Carlota [REDACTED]

RE: Concerns Related to Your Communication Sent for Our Meeting on April 17, 2022

Dear Carlota,

Grace and peace to you in Christ! We have written to you previously in response to your email from April 7 in order to acknowledge various sins and failings of the Session. We do pray that you receive that letter with grace, forgiving us and continuing to persevere with our failings with patience and prayer, even as we continue to seek growth and sanctification individually and as a body. At the same time, there are also aspects of what you wrote to us which we do not share your perspective on, some of which also produce significant concern on our part, which we are now writing to express to you. We hope that, through both letters, the Lord would bring us closer together in a common understanding and be pleased to restore greater fellowship and unity between us. Indeed, Carlota, we have to confess that it grieves us to read much of what you wrote, in part because it articulates a strongly different evaluation from our own on some important matters, but more particularly because it seems to express a perspective on the ministry of our church, sometimes based on misunderstanding, that alienates you from us in ways that we greatly lament. Indeed, this sense of alienation from you pains us greatly, especially given the long history of our ministry to and alongside of you and your family, the growth and enthusiasm for the truth we have witnessed in you over the years, and the joy we have experienced together before. We write what follows, then, with the earnest prayer that the Lord might bring us back together. We miss the greater expression of fellowship we have had in the past! May the Lord be pleased to restore and even surpass it and to produce a new and brighter day in our relating together!

As we prepare to send this to you, we recognize with some concern how long and heavy the content below is. This is due to various factors, including the length of what you have written to us, the complexity of the matters you wrote about, and the fact that you specifically requested a written response in return. We hope, though, that the length of the response might ultimately prove helpful, since it will allow us to provide you more detail in response to your concerns, which we pray can help us work through these things together going forward.

Counsel Provided to [REDACTED] and Others

One of the areas where you have expressed particularly strong objection to our ministry concerns the counsel that has been provided to [REDACTED] and other women. You have spoken in extremely strong terms on this score about how you are “aghast,” “outraged,” and filled with a “holy fury.” You have said that the care we have provided is “reprehensible,” done in “seeming cowardice,” categorically misinformed (reflecting that we do not have needed education about topics that you seek to inform us about), unperceptive (since cardinal truths are “lost on” us), characterized by “negligence,” a matter of “shameful folly,” and something that requires us to “repent.” Naturally

such strong statements are difficult to hear, but we are willing to hear and consider them, given what we already know of our own sins and failings. Yet given what Scripture says repeatedly about respecting those holding church office (Tit 3:1-2; Heb 13:17) and the impropriety of bringing accusation against an office-bearer without multiple witnesses (1 Tim 5:19), as we consider your statements we would also expect such very strong language to be backed by considerable substance, including high quality evidence and clear knowledge of situations. To our dismay, though, we are very saddened to instead see that this exceedingly strong criticism and accusation is backed up almost entirely by hearsay from one person as well as mistaken and seemingly uncharitable assumptions used to interpret that hearsay. Even more sadly, the result of all of this ends up being a categorical misunderstanding of the counsel that we have actually given to [REDACTED], as if it were the opposite of what it has actually been, thereby leading to false accusation and unjust anger.

Of particular concern to us is how this false accusation has come about in part due to two crucial procedural errors, which we have witnessed and spoken to you about before in other contexts, namely making judgments only on the basis of hearsay from one party in a given situation and interpreting information through uncharitable and faulty inferences. With regard to one-sided hearsay, while you have heard a limited amount from [REDACTED] about the counsel she's received, you have never talked at any length with Pastor Mininger or others to ask appropriate questions or get further perspective on how we do or do not approach marriage counseling, abuse, or other topics, and this affords you very limited, one-sided information about what has actually been done. With regard to uncharitable and incorrect judgments, you have also made several wrong assumptions when interpreting what you have been told.

As an example of this, it is true that Pastor Mininger did ask [REDACTED] at one point if she felt she was being abused, and he relayed her answer to you as part of a larger effort to help show you that the help you have sought to give [REDACTED] has become counterproductive and does not fit even her own view of her situation. However, the fact that he asked her this question does not mean that that is all that he or others have asked her, and to assume otherwise is both inaccurate and unfair to those keeping watch over the flock. To the contrary, the counsel that [REDACTED] has received has had many components to it and actually fits the exact description of what you say is necessary in every biblical respect, plus many more. She has been encouraged and affirmed repeatedly about her value and worth in Christ. She has been told repeatedly and unambiguously that [REDACTED]'s sins against her are not her fault and that he alone is responsible for them and must repent. We have not silenced her but encouraged her to continue speaking to us and counseled repeatedly with her about how to find godly counsel from others that might also encourage and strengthen her. We have confronted [REDACTED] directly with his sins and are continuing to do so. We have observed noticeable improvements in a number of aspects of this situation. Both Pastor Mininger and Pastor Strange have asked a wide range of questions related to the topic of abuse, including all the questions you have listed as necessary and many others besides. Our antennae do go up when women report feeling mistreated. We do teach and counsel proper biblical love and gentleness from husbands. Yes, it is certainly the case that abuse victims may not recognize they are such or wish to identify themselves that way. We are well aware of this and keep it in mind when we ask questions, which again is why we asked many different questions to [REDACTED], [REDACTED], and others about the situation. Yes, we certainly have to counsel abuse victims not to place false guilt upon themselves but instead need to build them up in their true identity and dignity in

Christ. Yes, we certainly need to call their husbands to account, etc. Far from being things we do not know or do, though, all of the things you have properly listed as concerns on this topic are things we are already very aware of, concerned about, and in the habit of doing, including with [REDACTED]. How is it then, dear friend, that you have arrived at an entirely mistaken set of conclusions and made fervent—even furious—accusation against us when we have actually labored frequently and compassionately, biblically and with nuance with [REDACTED] in the precise manner that you maintain we should? This is not only quite vexing to us but also quite concerning, because of both the inaccuracy of what you have asserted and the seeming indignation with which you have categorically stated it.

Beloved, righteous anger must be based upon truth, but these statements of yours flatly misunderstand and severely mischaracterize what we have done, and similar things could be said regarding past care for [REDACTED] and others. Evidently, then, something has severely clouded your understanding on this topic and has led you to assume much that is false and then allow a great deal of anger to be built upon it! Surely this is not as God would have things be, and it makes us greatly concerned for you and for your disposition in relating to us.

Dear sister, your perspective on our counsel to [REDACTED] is genuinely quite mistaken, and even [REDACTED] herself has repeatedly had to seek to distance herself from your representations of things. It is she who did not want to come to Pastor Strange and Pastor Mininger with you in May of 2021 but decided on her own to come by herself instead, including to express her uncomfortability with your involvement and thus her desire to speak for herself. It is she who came over time to feel trapped by your involvement in the situation, in part due to the extreme nature of your evaluation of the situation itself, and therefore to ask for counsel from us about how to respond to you, which led to Pastor Mininger going with her to support her in speaking to you and asking for you not to keep asking for more information and seeking more involvement.

On balance, then, nearly all of your information on matters between the [REDACTED] comes from [REDACTED], which makes it one-sided by the nature of the case, and yet even [REDACTED] herself strongly disagrees with how you have come to represent the situation. While in principle it could still be wise in such a situation for you to express concern to us about possible problems or failings or oversights in the ministry being offered to her, to instead offer categorical judgment and condemnation of that ministry in the strongest of terms is itself sinful because it is accusing multiple office-bearers of sin based almost entirely on hearsay and unfair assumptions. We must therefore say to you unequivocally, sister, that this way of handling your concerns as well as the particular accusations you've made against us on this topic are both things that Scripture calls you to repent of and repudiate.

Interpreting Silence

Sadly, use of wrong and uncharitable assumptions also appears and has been strongly influential elsewhere in your communication to us too. For example, in your preliminary letter to Pastors Mininger and Strange about your meeting with them in May of 2021, you state that their not contacting you after you had called Pastor [REDACTED] to discuss your concerns “communicated loudly and clearly” that “Your concerns don’t matter and are not worthy of our time. We are busy seminary professors, you see, and have far more important business to which we must

attend than to a hurting sheep.” However, this is by no means a necessary or a factually correct conclusion, but a very sad and disrespectful one. In actual fact, the reason for their not contacting you was to be patient and give you room to further consider a matter by obtaining some counsel from another OPC minister. Given the nature of your strong accusations about the ministry being given to [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], even at that time, Pastors Mininger and Strange could have reacted to your conversation with Pastor [REDACTED] with self-defense or have shown unhappiness with you for contacting another minister outside our church about matters internal to New Covenant. But instead, they were more concerned that you receive the feedback you might need to help address your concerns through this inquiry. Moreover, the feedback that Pastor [REDACTED] provided them about your conversation with him did not indicate that you were quite distressed or in urgent need of our further care. It instead was particularly intended to be sure that our Session knew about the concern regarding abuse that you had broached and that we knew that one from our flock had been contacting someone outside the church on the topic. In light of this, Pastor Mininger and Pastor Strange thought it best not to bring this matter up with you at that time, since that could be perceived as their seeking to monitor how much you talk with others or pressure you not to do so. They instead desired to be patient as you processed your concerns and to give you space as you sought further advice. Whether this was or wasn’t the best pastoral decision, it was still one made out of considerateness to you. To conclude that their silence at that time was clearly motivated by arrogance and self-importance is neither necessary nor fair but again relies on an uncharitable and untrue assumption.

Indeed, your assessment of their silence in parts of their May 2021 meeting with you is also uncharitable and inaccurate. Facing very bracing accusations about a brother in the church and about the Session’s pastoral handling of the matter that were not based on proper kinds of evidence, in the context of which you asked no questions for clarification but only demanded a response to specific accusations, there was a limited amount they could say to you without discussing a private, pastoral matter about someone else in the church in an improper way. It was therefore the strongly accusatory nature of your address to them and your demands to know more about the [REDACTED] situation that especially elicited such a limited response, as they told you in that meeting. They instead had to content themselves largely with telling you that the Session is aware of the topics you broach and is addressing them in the proper, confidential way and that you should allow that to continue to take place according to normal protocols. You may have wanted more than this, but the substance of their response was still proper and judicious—in fact, loving to the people you were speaking about and to you. Rather than respond in self-defense when accused, they responded with restraint.

Dear sister, it is not possible to say from Scripture that silence before one’s accusers necessarily indicates lack of care, much less arrogance. Even our Lord’s own experience shows that this cannot necessarily be so. While we are certainly not spotless like our Lord, your conclusions about these pastors’ motivations is neither necessary nor true, but it has again led to your making false accusations against them. This in turn creates obstacles in our relationship by further poisoning your assessment of the church’s ministry. By contrast, for relationships to work well in the church, both the truth and a judgment of charity need to rule the day, and so we plead with you to see what has now become a repeated pattern in your perception of and relating to us and to turn away from these unfair judgments and accusation and instead to help restore our relationship by sharing with us in the disciplines of repentance and forgiveness!

Meeting with Pastor Mininger and Elder Boss

We are further saddened to note that the issue of making unfair accusations on the basis of hearsay must also be brought up regarding the meeting that you and Michael had with Pastor Mininger and Elder Boss in February 2022. You have characterized their words to you as “controlling,” “coercive,” and an instance of “abusing” our powers. However, to say such things neglects the biblical basis that they expressly articulated to you in that meeting as justification for what they said, namely that the accusations you made against [REDACTED] were improper because they were in fact based on hearsay rather than proper, biblically admissible evidence and that in your continued involvement in the [REDACTED] situation you were also interfering with the biblically mandated process of Matt 18:15-20, which [REDACTED] and the Session have been and are continuing to follow in relation to [REDACTED]’s sins. In other words, the Session was not abusing its authority by insisting on our own preference but was telling you that your involvement has not only been unhelpful (in fact, making proper handling and resolution of various things more difficult and delayed) but also unbiblical. What we have said, then, is that your communication to [REDACTED] was not at all “perfectly lawful,” as your letter to us states, but was inappropriate and against Scripture because it was not based on proper biblical standards for making accusation or dealing with private, personal sins. Indeed, if accusations like the ones you’ve made, with a basis in hearsay, were brought formally to a court of the church, it would have to be categorically dismissed as illegitimate.

In light of all this, it is crucially important to examine the topic of when something is or is not “controlling,” “censorship,” or “abuse” of proper church authority. It is not so simply whenever the Session urges someone to stop speaking about something. It is instead so if they urge someone to stop speaking without biblical grounds, which we did not do. You and Michael admitted that almost all of the evidence at your disposal for the accusations you made came to you from [REDACTED] (or in Michael’s case, mediated through you). Is it proper to take one person’s representation of a situation as clearly factual and make categorical judgments, never having heard from the person accused or other relevant parties? Biblically speaking, it certainly is not, as Deut 19:15, Matt 18:16, 2 Cor 13:1, and other texts show. Nor is it right to draw conclusions about sin without hearing multiple sides of a matter (Prov 18:17), particularly including the testimony of the person being accused.

Carlota, you have said that, “how I received this information [about [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]] is totally irrelevant anyway.” But biblically speaking that is not the case. The Bible does speak about the nature of evidence that must undergird an accusation against a brother, and this requires multiple witnesses, not just hearsay from one. Not only this, but Scripture also speaks against being a busy-body and interposing oneself improperly into other people’s concerns (1 Tim 5:13). While we have dealt and continue to deal with the [REDACTED] about matters in their life and marriage, then, how others interact with them, how they acquire information, and on what basis they bring accusation is also something we are obligated to address as a Session because Scripture itself speaks to these things too.

Indeed, Scripture never says that the ends justify the means. So then, even if your purpose was to help [REDACTED], the way you sought to accomplish that purpose must be in accordance with Scripture too, and it is not abusive or controlling or coercive for us to say that. Yes, we were in fact trying to get you to stop speaking in certain ways, especially in terms of divisive speech that tells [REDACTED] you are not associating with him fully and also in terms of making strongly stated accusations without proper biblical warrant. These are things that no one in the church should do, and we call upon you to hear us in this and not to characterize biblically based admonition as coercive. In a time period in our society when people regularly make accusations without following proper, biblical procedure, we in the church cannot give in to such harmful trends, and so we urge you to repent both of making accusations based on hearsay and of saying that it is coercive or abusive to tell you what Scripture says in this regard. There are many concerns we may have in the church. There are many things we may think are possibly or likely going on in others' lives or in the ministry of the church that greatly concern us. But there are also proper, biblical ways of addressing such concerns, and it is specifically this that we addressed you about, which is necessary for us to do as we seek to teach the whole counsel of God.

We also regret to say that you seem to have misunderstood what Pastor Mininger and Elder Boss said in response to your report that [REDACTED] spoke harshly to you when you sought to talk with him in person about your letter to him. They did not tell you that you "had it coming" or anything to that effect. Instead, while acknowledging the inappropriateness and sinfulness of [REDACTED] or anyone else speaking rudely or without gentleness, they also sought to elicit your understanding of the difficult position that [REDACTED] found himself in in that particular situation, given the fact that your letter had made such strong and categorical accusations in summary judgment based on hearsay and also stated that you had cut off proper fellowship with him due to your view of his sin. For a person to receive a letter of this kind, which includes such an unbiblical way of dealing with sin and dividing the church, is no doubt difficult for that person, and it is not wrong for us to point this out. Instead it is something important for all of us to recognize as we seek to bear even with one another's sins. Pastor Mininger and Elder Boss pointing these things out was an attempt to help you see the conflict you had experienced with [REDACTED] on that occasion with a gracious standard of evaluation in order to help reduce the alienation you felt in relation to [REDACTED] because of it. Clearly nothing one person does excuses anything another person does, and so Pastor Mininger did speak with [REDACTED] later about this conflict and urged him to speak gently and appropriately as he should, even if being accused. As a Session, we are very careful to hold each person accountable for their own sins and not to blame one person's on someone else.

Yet, while that remains the case, please remember that one of our great concerns in that meeting with you was the divisiveness of your and Michael's letter, and we were seeking, through Pastor Mininger and Elder Boss, to encourage your proper fellowship with [REDACTED]. It is with that in mind, then, that we were seeking to help you have greater understanding of the overall situation that your letter had created so that you could have a more patient evaluation of how [REDACTED] had spoken to you on that occasion and therefore be more ready to forgive and participate in proper fellowship with him and others as Scripture requires. We were seeking to help you understand from your end how the improper, unbiblical approach you took to confronting and dividing from a brother could feel for someone on the receiving end, even as we sought to convey to [REDACTED] how his speech to you made you feel.

You are a dear sister, Carlota, and we do seek to protect you in all proper ways. But this is not mutually exclusive from seeking to show you how your and Michael's very strong assertions in that letter to [REDACTED] had impacted the larger situation. This negative impact is never an excuse for how anyone else acts, but it may still help you place someone else's sin in context and so be more ready to forgive even as we ourselves have also been forgiven so much.

Meeting with [REDACTED] and Pastor Mininger

With regard to the meeting between [REDACTED] and you in Feb 2022, we wish to point out that, contrary to what you have said, [REDACTED] has not at all been silenced about the topic of how [REDACTED] treats her or acts in general. She came to Pastor Hollister and Pastor Mininger for counsel before you were involved in this matter, she wanted to talk to Pastor Strange and Pastor Mininger herself on her own (rather than with you) in May 2021 so that her own voice could be heard in the way she preferred, she continues to come to various of us for counsel, and we have counseled her all along the way about proper ways to receive support from others too, which we have encouraged and helped arrange. [REDACTED] has also been aware of [REDACTED]'s talking with us along the way, has talked with us openly himself, and is addressing topics of his own sin seriously in light of Scripture. Your representation of [REDACTED] as a victim being silenced, whether by her husband or by us, is simply not fair or accurate. Indeed, we are just as concerned about proper process of communication and dealing with sins when we interact with [REDACTED] and [REDACTED], making sure that proper speech is always enabled (and improper speech curtailed), as we are with you or anyone else in the church.

Your God-given Gifts

Now with regard to your God-given gift of engaging people and whether Pastor Mininger and Elder Boss spoke disparagingly of it, we all gladly acknowledge your giftedness from the Lord in a variety of ways as well as your many other, wonderful qualities. Your faithful presence at church functions, your extended engagement with the saints after services, your comfortability talking with a wide range of people at church, your committed service in helping with the church directory, calendar, Flocknote, and other matters, your zeal for spiritual things, your desire to learn theology, your commitment to teach a women's book study, your concern for the effectiveness of the ministry at NCCC, and your concern for [REDACTED] are among various things we happily acknowledge and for which we thank the Lord! Yet just because someone has a gift from the Lord does not mean that that gift is always used well. Indeed, to be used well a gift must be used in accordance with God's Word and in ways that edify and build up the body. Accordingly, Paul tells those speaking in tongues in Corinth that their gifts were sometimes being misused, to the detriment of the body itself and the Lord's worship (1 Cor 14). In your case, then, your willingness to engage others is generally very valued and beneficial, but if that engagement is used for the purpose of asking for information about otherwise private, personal sins and then that information is used to disregard the specifications about how private personal sin is to be handled, as outlined in Matt 18:15-20, but instead to state strong categorical judgments based on hearsay, then this is not at all a proper use of your gifts. When Pastor Mininger and Elder Boss spoke to you about your methods of engaging [REDACTED], then, it was not your gifts which they were concerned with but your use of them, which [REDACTED] herself had

repeatedly expressed concern and frustration with, just as she did in the meeting which she requested Pastor Mininger have with her and you.

Beyond that, what Pastor Mininger and Elder Boss tried to impress upon you in their meeting with you and Michael is how your own manner of engaging people can at times be quite strong as you press for desired information, which can be off-putting or overwhelming to some people, thereby making the giftedness you do have less useful or even problematic in its use in that instance. [REDACTED] felt pressured to divulge more information than she felt comfortable with on several occasions. Various ones of us have also experienced something similar from you at other times, including about the [REDACTED] and other situations. Others in the church have also expressed this concern to us on other occasions. In light of this, Pastor Mininger and Elder Boss were in fact being loving to try to make you aware of this feature of your interaction with [REDACTED], as it is a detriment to some (but by no means all) of your engagement with people. Moreover, given how acute the situation with [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] had become, including your communicating direct judgments against [REDACTED] and cutting off full fellowship, for us to point out this concern with your manner was a pastoral attempt to help a fracturing situation. Rather than interpreting what these two brothers said as disparaging speech, then, we urge you to see it as an effort to help redirect your use of your clear, God-given gifts according to Scripture, to help you not apply your gifts and abilities to hurtful or problematic ends but to harness and channel them for greater edification instead.

Reflection and Further Steps

In the end then, dear sister, we have sought to acknowledge our own sins and weaknesses in a variety of areas in our previous letter, and we also urge you to seek to do the same now in response to what we have said here. In particular, this includes repenting of making summary accusation of sins and wrongdoing based on hearsay, making uncharitable assumptions and judgments about others, including office-bearers, unrighteous anger based on false accusation, not respecting the biblical process for dealing with private, personal sins outlined in Matt 18 and elsewhere, and accusing officer-bearers of sin without proper biblical grounds. Clearly such things are not the fruit that the Lord desires to see in the church, but things we must repent of and turn away from in Christ.

In addition, given the repeated nature of some of these sins, which we have spoken to you about before and yet continue to manifest themselves quite strongly in your letter to the Session to which we are now responding, we are also left in the unhappy position of observing several patterns in how you have treated both us and others and the negative perspective through which you have frequently interpreted our actions. Carlota, we have labored for and alongside of you for many, many years and enjoyed warm fellowship with you and your family throughout so much of that. Against that background, we are left greatly concerned—indeed, grieved!—to see how alienated we now are from you and how your assumptions and judgments against us so often have such a strongly negative bent toward them. All of this leaves us asking what has happened! What is going on underneath the surface that leads someone who has been an appreciative contributor within our midst to harbor so many false and unfair conclusions about us and others in our communion? Something seems to have poisoned your relationship with us in a way that is of the utmost concern to us, and we want to be reconciled with and restored to good

relations with you, a wonderful sister in Christ! We would like, as part of that, to be able to have good discussion where needed, even if we have legitimate differences of opinion. We would like to experience a judgment of charity where needed and patience with our failings, even as we seek to extend that to you. We would like to know that there is commonality and trust between us, as we are committed to and love the same things. But what we have experienced from you of late from the pulpit, in person, and in letters is so different than that!

And so we ask you, dear friend, to hear us in love and to prayerfully and carefully consider what is at the root of this harmful and repeated pattern of behavior and of unfair judgment described above. In your letter to us, you have described yourself as greatly concerned for the unity and purity of New Covenant and as fueled by a “burning passion for both God’s glory and the purity of Christ’s bride.” And yet, while we agree and thank God that you are concerned for these things, we also recognize—and urge *you* to recognize—that the sins we have described above are not what good and proper motivations like those produce. There must, then, be more going on here. While some of what we described above could constitute mere misunderstanding, much of it seems to proceed from something else, producing a bent toward uncharitable assessment and much bitterness throughout a lengthy series of interactions between you, others, and now us. And so, in light of this, we plead with you to examine what else is in fact going on in your heart that has come between us, so that it can be dealt with and the way paved toward our reconciliation and unity, which we so greatly desire.

And, while we do not profess to know what these underlying issues are, we urge you to consider various possibilities and to seek godly counsel about this crucial topic. Have you unknowingly imbibed our broader culture’s penchant for anger, bitterness, and making summary judgment against others? Have you become influenced by an unbiblical disrespect for church office or individual officers? Are you discontented with various aspects of your own calling or lot in life, leading toward resentment and a tendency toward strife and accusation or to a desire to obtain greater status within the body of Christ by taking teaching and rebuking functions in the body upon yourself or by pulling others down? Are you preoccupied with finding out other people’s sins and failings as a way to distract attention from your own? Is the situation in your own marriage or other aspects of your private life much worse than you have so far represented, leading to embitterment? In asking these questions, we are not making any accusation against you, sister, or saying that these specific things are happening. We are simply asking, based on knowledge of Scripture and past pastoral experience, *whether* any of them are in fact true in order to spur you on to proper inward examination and ultimately to seek to *help* you.

Clearly zeal for the Lord and proper exercise of gifts do not themselves produce sin. And so we are all called to seek the Lord together and ask him to discover our own hearts to us. Even as we continue to do that regarding ourselves and remain open to biblically based correction from you or others, we solemnly urge you to do the same for yourself and to seek godly counsel, whether from us or from others qualified to give it.

And finally, we do recognize with some trepidation the weighty nature of the things discussed in this letter, and so we pray for you as you read and consider it. We earnestly desire that everything we have written here and our continued service for and alongside of you, Michael, and your whole family might be faithful to Scripture, edifying to you all, and something which

the Lord is pleased with in and through Christ. We confess that we ourselves are a mixture, as both saved and still sinful, even as we have described to you before. Nevertheless, we commit this heartfelt letter to you with the prayer that the Lord would graciously use it, by his inimitable power, not to divide us from you more but in fact to bring us closer together in the joy of his lordship and of sins forgiven in his name.

Oh, that we might each become less at New Covenant and Christ become greater in us, individually and all together! May the Lord also give you great grace as you consider what we have written here, and may our mutual response to all the things we have discussed together glorify him as we are drawn “nearer still nearer” in the bonds of Christ, in whose name and in the exercise of whose offices we write these things to you.

Sincerely in our Savior’s love,
The Session of New Covenant Community Church