

new staff proposal 2026

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[0 : 00] Yeah, thanks, Don. It's hard to summarise a life's ministry in five minutes, in 2024 we kind of held steady with what we had.

David's long service leave was getting paid out all across the year and he was doing various internships around different... Internships is not right, but anyway. It's kind of the opposite.

Around New South Wales. But it pretty quickly became evident that this approach had a high cost to the church here, both in terms of the strain it was placing on our preaching and over time the diminishing quality and depth we were able to get into.

And a real lack of capacity to maintain our current ministries, let alone expand and think of new and better ways to support and grow each other. So in term four, we took the first step and we took the step of putting on Damien as an administrative role and Damien's been working behind the scenes across the beginning of this year.

He's established a bunch of online tools that have actually increased the efficiency for those engaged in various ministries and that's been working really well. At that time, we also had some discussions with Martin and by proxy AFES and they agreed for Martin to be able to preach here once a month in lieu of us paying some extra support for his wages.

[1 : 49] We've also expanded the lay preaching roster. So we've had a number of folk across our congregation preaching more regularly than we would have had in the past and that's been of great benefit to the congregation and it's something we're keen to see continue in some capacity but we don't think it's probably optimal and sustainable in an ongoing way.

In term one, we also had David come back for a good chunk of time, six weeks or so, and that allowed Dave Bott to develop the Biblical Manhood and Womanhood series that will follow Hebrews.

Now that's a series that as an eldership we feel is important and they're issues that we need to think through but it's one that required more time and thought than would be possible with just one full-time preacher so we had to get David on board for those six weeks to be able to make that feasible.

So they're the sorts of things we're looking at missing out on if we don't make some changes going forward. So we have been working seriously towards identifying a full-time pastor to add to the team.

Now this will come with some significant financial implications for Grace. It means a commitment to raise approximately 25% more each week which would bring our weekly budget to around \$8,000 a week.

[3 : 14] So this isn't a request we're making lightly but due to the extra time that's passed since David Calderwood redeployed we currently have about \$50,000 in savings which will give us a buffer across that early period.

So it won't be a sharp hit. So with all that into account, the elders would like to propose that Martin Shadwick be appointed as an elder and a full-time vocational pastor at Grace Evangelical Church.

Practically, this announcement is the beginning of us opening up a church-wide discussion and we are hoping to have a vote on the issue early in Term 3.

If called by the full church vote, Martin would then be able to step into both eldership and employment at Grace in early 2026. We've partnered with AFES financially and many of us as participants for a long time and we still see AFES as a really important ministry that we want to support even as Martin leaves that role to join us.

So we want to be as flexible as we can be as they need to seek and recruit someone to replace Martin on the team and a leader for NCS. After the best part of 20 years of NCS, this is going to be a big change for Martin and Jen and the family and the team on the ground at NCS.

[4 : 43] So be prayerful and mindful of that going forward. As Martin will be starting, if it goes forward, in early 2026, we have a further six months to accumulate savings which will reduce the initial jump in costs so if we're able to raise our giving in the next six months, that will offset the impact next year.

Martin, Jen and their kids have been part of Church at Grace for actually for longer than most of us. It's over 15 years, I think. And we as an eldership are satisfied that Martin is of humble, godly character and meets the requirements, the biblical qualifications for eldership.

We feel he has several giftings that will be a real assistance to our church moving forward. My pad really wants me to go back to the beginning, I'm sorry.

In discussing the role of Martin, there have been a few concerns that have come to the fore that are worth noting with everyone at the outset. Firstly, a few years ago now, Martin preached a sermon alongside David on limited atonement and the different biblical positions on that doctrine.

Look, we've discussed limited atonement with Martin and we're comfortable that his position is consistent with Scripture, first and foremost, and also not in conflict with the position of grace in that the atonement is sufficient for all but also only effectual for the elect.

[6 : 29] The second point is that Martin was baptised as an infant and will not be baptised again on profession before joining the eldership. Now this is a departure from past practice but we as an eldership are satisfied that Martin is respectful of our convictions and are satisfied with his commitment to the church beliefs and practices in only baptising believers on profession of faith.

When someone's been among us for as long as Martin has, we know each other really well in a way that's just not possible with external applicants who would be coming into a congregation.

It's in this context of a deeper relationship that we endorse Martin that he's in terrific alignment with grace and our beliefs and practices and he will be a great fit, we believe, for our growth and maturity as a body going forward.

So where to from here? As is our custom, we really don't want the vote next term to be the focal point of this process. Rather, we're really keen to hear from folk and discuss their concerns or hopes for the future at Grace and the substantial role we're proposing Martin will play in that now.

So please, get in touch. Drop us an email. You can send one to all of the elders or just one particular elder. Send us an SMS. Meet up with one of us for coffee.

[7 : 52] Whatever works best for you. Please, table any and all concerns or enthusiasm and we'll do our best to address them or at least explain our reasoning prior to the vote.

We really believe that the church and the congregation body has a key and important biblical role to play in the appointment of our elders. The biblical model is for this role to be based on the assessment of the collective wisdom.

all of the congregation in which that pastor will serve. So please, each one of us, be prayerfully considering this step as it's a big one for us as a church family.

And if you see something that we're missing, please show us where we may be overlooking something or making a mistake as an eldership. We will be taking Martin forward as a proposal to adopt.

We want you to help us to let you know what you need to be able to jump aboard and support that proposal. So that's the model.

[8 : 58] It's one that's served us well over time and it's one we ask for you to embrace as we work through Martin coming onto team in 2026. That's the announcement.

So looking forward to many conversations over the coming months. Thank you.