ARISING CHURCH

One Association Ordination of Pastor Chad and Asa

Chad & Meg Ellens · Asa & Emily Naselli

Sunday, November 22, 2026

"He has made everything beautiful in its time."

ECCLESIASTES 3:11

OPENING

Nick

I want to highlight a passage that frames what I believe God wants to share with you:

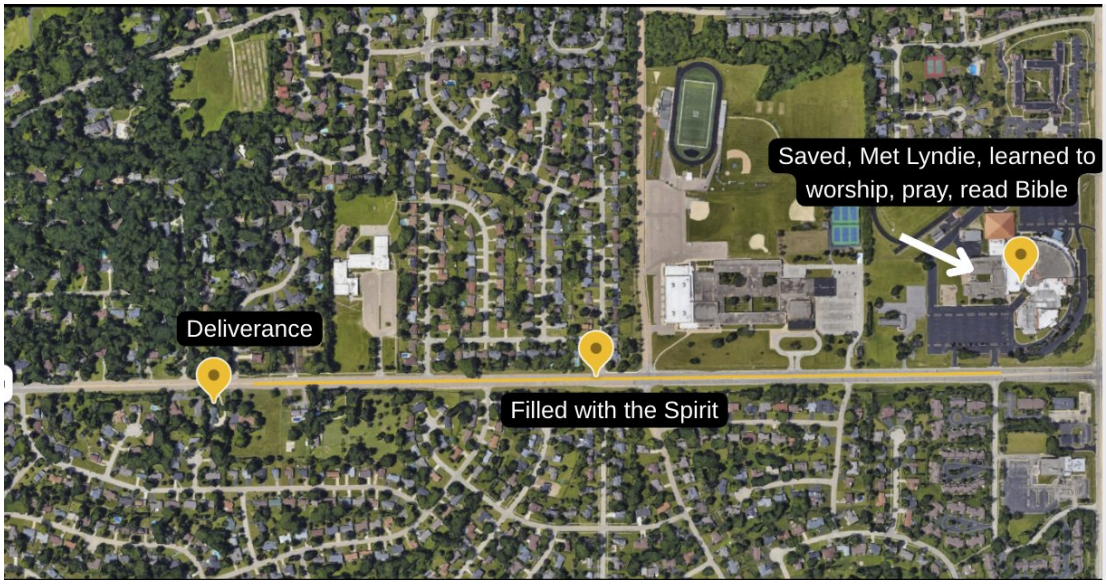
> **ECCLESIASTES 3:1–8, 11 (NIV)**
>
> *There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens:*
> *a time to be born and a time to die, a time to plant and a time to uproot,*
> *a time to kill and a time to heal, a time to tear down and a time to build,*
> *a time to weep and a time to laugh, a time to mourn and a time to dance,*
> *a time to scatter stones and a time to gather them, a time to embrace and a time to refrain from embracing,*
> *a time to search and a time to give up, a time to keep and a time to throw away,*
> *a time to tear and a time to mend, a time to be silent and a time to speak,*
> *a time to love and a time to hate, a time for war and a time for peace.*
>
> *He has made everything beautiful in its time. He has also set eternity in the human heart; yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end.*

When a baby is born, people post a picture of the baby after it has been cleaned up and placed in its mother's arms. Why? We all know the birthing process is very messy, and understandably people don't want to focus on that part, even though we're well aware of what must happen.

Verse 11 says He has made everything beautiful in its time. But death is not beautiful. Killing isn't beautiful; even when the wicked die, God doesn't delight in it. Tearing and hate aren't beautiful by themselves. But when we zoom out, look at the whole picture, and consider what God is doing, it's beautiful.

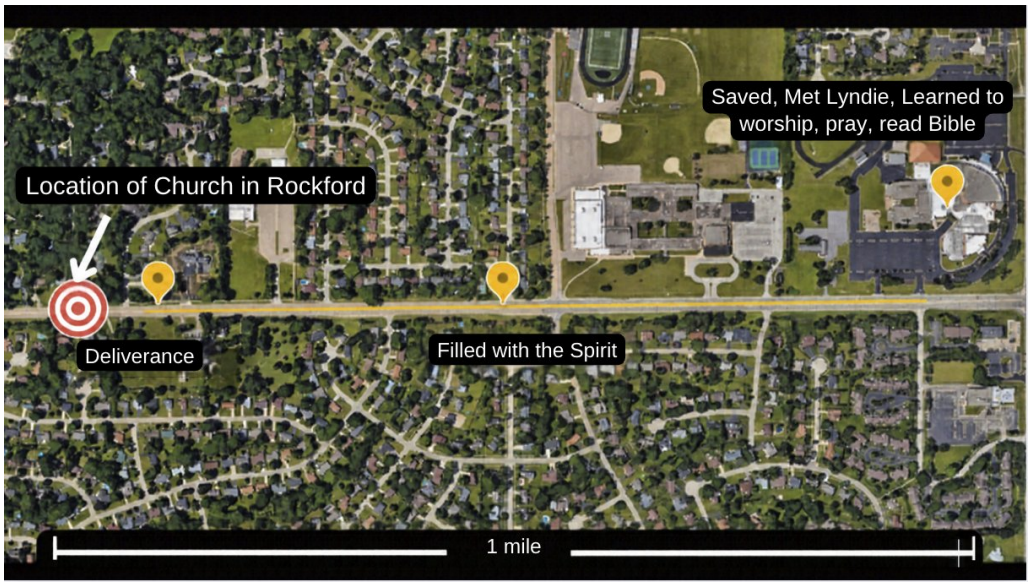
The story God has written with Arising Church is beautiful, and the one He has already been writing with Rockford is beautiful.

Twenty-two years ago I came to Rockford from Lake Jackson, Texas, seeking an escape from the destructive path I was on. I needed the Lord to come through and save me.



While I was in Rockford, He saved me. He introduced me to the woman who would become my wife. He taught me how to worship Him and how to read the Bible. He filled me with His Spirit, and He broke strongholds in my heart and mind that had plagued me.

I wanted to show you this so you can see how special Rockford has been to us for decades. And now look what the Lord has done.



As we pulled up to the house where Chad and Asa will be living, I noticed it was literally right next door to the place where the Lord radically transformed my life and heart so long ago. That was a special moment for me. Twenty-two years later, standing with Chad, Asa, Peter, and my son Caleb at the property where Hebron Church will gather, I

could see God's beautiful plan from a larger perspective.



I can't imagine two better families to start this work than the Ellens and the Nasellis. They will oversee the transformation of so many lives in a city that not only means so much to us, but will mean all the more to them.

After those two transformational years in Rockford, the Lord brought us to a haven at Life Changing Ministries, where we were shown a way of life through the Stephens and the Perots. They helped establish us and build us up in ways that radically transformed our understanding of what it means to follow Christ and build the Kingdom. For three and a half years they poured into us directly, setting an example that shaped us and would later shape the culture of Arising Church.

We want to take a moment to address the church and share the incredible way the Lord has been moving in these two men's lives to lead them to this moment.

TESTIMONY · SHARED BY PASTOR PETER

Pastor Chad Ellens

A STEP OF FAITH

Pastor Chad arrived at Arising on January 7, 2020. He had been living in Grand Rapids, Michigan, where he hoped to start a church with Aaron Payauys. After hitting an all-time low in his faith, he decided to move to what he called "the only place I knew where the word and spirit abounded."

He came with no job and no place to live, and against the counsel of most people in his life. Paul Quick took him in, and he lived in Paul's basement for two months. One month after arriving, he got a job at Sherman Hospital. It was clear the Lord was blessing his steps of faith.

A MAN AFTER GOD'S HEART

The Lord began to cultivate Acts 13:22 in Chad, charging him to complete every deed God had set apart for him and his family.

> ACTS 13:22 (NIV)
>
> *After removing Saul, he made David their king. God testified concerning him: 'I have found David son of Jesse, a man after my own heart; he will do everything I want him to do.'*

DISCIPLESHIP AND MARRIAGE

In March 2020, Chad moved into the Men's Ministry Training House and began more intentional discipleship and training to become a future minister.

In April 2020, Meg moved from Colorado into the Morrisons' home to be discipled by Mark and Brenda. Chad and Meg had dated before but had laid the relationship down to focus on discipleship. Almost a year later, on April 3, 2021, they were married.



COMMIT AND TRUST

Chad and Meg spent several years leading Home Group and living with Matt and Chelsea Payauys. The Lord gave them Psalm 37:5 as an anchor for their marriage and a word for their future ministry: *Commit and trust, then wait for God to act.*

> **PSALM 37:5–6 (NIV)**
>
> *Commit your way to the Lord; trust in him and he will do this:*
> *He will make your righteous reward shine like the dawn, your vindication like the noonday sun.*



In this season their ministry began to take shape. Counseling and ministering became a regular part of their weeks, and lives around them began to change.

HILLSIDE

In December 2022, Chad and Meg bought their house on Hillside, next door to Aaron and Becka Payauys.



They formed a team with three families they had wanted to do ministry with since college: the Payauys, Riders and Neumanns. The whole team moved onto the property together and began to cultivate unity and ministry.



Together they led home groups, preached, attached to leaders, and grew into some of Arising's finest future ministers.



TODAY

Today, as a pastor of Arising Church, Chad and his family could not be more instrumental to our ministry.



The Ellens Family

FAMILY MEZUZAH

"To reveal God's presence and incline hearts to the life-changing power of the Word."

CHARACTER

SACRIFICIAL
PROBLEM SOLVER
SINCERE
ADAPTABLE (all things to all people)
HOPE-FILLED

TESTIMONY · SHARED BY PASTOR PETER

Pastor Asa Naselli

A CALL TO DISCIPLESHIP

At a time when Asa felt discouraged and troubled in spirit, he began to pray while searching for a church that would disciple him biblically. He heard the Lord say clearly, *"Find your brother Isaac."* He called right away and learned Isaac was at TAC. Asa drove 45 minutes to Crystal Lake and caught the last 12 minutes of the message. Afterward he went straight to Pastor Masi and said, "I started a church in Beloit and I need a lot of help!" Pastor Masi was stunned. The day before, they had been in Beloit praying that a man with a heart for Beloit would come to be discipled. Asa answered, "Here I am! Help me!"



LAYING DOWN BELOIT

For a time, Asa kept leading Monday evening church in Beloit and Rockford while attending Arising the rest of the week. In March 2021, as he got ready to go to Beloit, the Lord told him, *"Tonight is the last night."* That same night, Devin Reed showed up with a scripture for him: 1 Timothy 3:1–6. Asa took it as confirmation that he needed to lay down the Beloit church and be discipled into a man who could one day serve those people. When he and Devin returned to the group, they found that the churches of the people there had all resumed regular services. Asa closed the work despite pushback from several people, telling them discipleship had to come first.

Later that March, Asa received a word from the Lord: *"Learn the way of life of these pastors of the OAC."* He has spent the nearly six years since doing exactly that.

MARRIAGE

On September 22, 2021, Asa began pursuing Emily Douglas, one of Arising's longest-standing and best disciples. They were married on September 24, 2022.



FAITHFUL WITH THE FLOCK

In February 2023, sitting in a Portillo's parking lot, Asa was weighed down by the work in Rockford. He knew it needed a team but couldn't see how that would happen. As he cried out to God, the Lord answered: *Before Moses was sent, he was faithful with his father's sheep. Be faithful with the sheep of this flock.*

> **EXODUS 3:1 (LSB)**
>
> *Now Moses was pasturing the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian; and he led the flock to the west side of the wilderness and came to Horeb, the mountain of God.*

From then on, Asa's stance toward the team and the Rockford mission was to be faithful in Crystal Lake, serve his fathers there, and trust that Rockford would come in due time.

THE FORMING OF A TEAM

On June 30, 2023, Asa and his family had dinner with the Morrison and Thomas families. Ian and Caleb had been praying about forming a team with Asa, and they believed they were called together to serve the pastors like David's mighty men (2 Samuel 23:8–17). The team formed around Judges 1:3–4, where Judah and Simeon go up together into each other's territory. Through prayer and with their pastors' commendation, they joined as a covenant team. They understood they had formed around a purpose, not a location.

THE NASELLI FAMILY MEZUZAH

In July 2024, Asa told the pastors he believed the Lord was leading his family to move back into the Allens' home for discipleship. That Tuesday, the Lord gave him further revelation of the Naselli family mezuzah.

PREPARING THE SOIL

During the altar call at Sukkot 2024, the Spirit spoke to Asa: *"I am preparing the soil. The time is to prepare the people with desperate hearts."* Ian brought him Ezra 7:10 and told him the Lord was training him like Ezra. He urged Asa to press into his preparation and keep weeping for the people of Rockford. So the team gave itself to building up their families and the body in Crystal Lake until that time came.



TODAY

Today, as a pastor of Arising Church, Asa could not be more instrumental to our ministry.



The Naselli Family

FAMILY MEZUZAH

"To lead others into the presence of the Lord (Exodus 3:1) for freedom and maturity (Isaiah 61:1–3; Psalm 32:5; 51:13) through the bold declaration of the light of Christ (John 3:19–21; Ephesians 5:8–14; Revelation 19:11–13)."

CHARACTER

FAITHFUL
COMPASSIONATE
DILIGENT
PROPHETIC
HUMBLE



This all culminated in these men being formed together as one team, set apart for the work in Rockford.

THE CHARGE

Pastor Ben

> **HEBREWS 6:11–12 (ESV)**
>
> *And we desire each one of you to show the same earnestness to have the full assurance of hope until the end, so that you may not be sluggish, but imitators of those who through faith and patience inherit the promises.*

FAITH · PATIENCE · DILIGENCE

This is what Chad and Asa have demonstrated in this season.

I have been so impressed with these two men, because they have demonstrated something I don't know that I would have demonstrated in their shoes.

If I knew God had called me to Rockford and I was waiting for that promise to be fulfilled, I think I would have been anxious. I would have been asking our team when we were going to Rockford. When are we going to scout the land? When are we going to pray there? When are we going to figure out where we're meeting, who we're reaching, and how we're going to get started?

But that has not been Asa and Chad.

They have been completely faithful and secure while waiting for the promises of God. They have been absolutely secure in what the LORD has spoken and the direction He has for their lives.

They haven't been waiting around for their ministry to begin. They have been ministering faithfully the entire time.

Faith and hope in God's promises should always produce faithfulness in what is right in front of us. The way these men have handled what God has entrusted to them is proof that they will be faithful with more.

There has never been a sense from either of them of, *"When is it going to be my turn?"* Instead, their attitude has consistently been:

- *How can I help build what God is doing here?*
- *How can I help carry the burden?*

- *How can I strengthen these people?*
- *How can I serve these pastors?*

And I want to tell you, this is the kind of men you want pastoring the people of God.

> **1 PETER 5:5–6 (ESV)**
>
> *Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble." Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you,*

At the proper time, He may exalt you.

Their conduct has shown the character of men who respond to God's leading, humbly obey completely what He asks of them, and entrust themselves to God.

These men are exemplary. And when I say that, I am not simply complimenting Asa and Chad. I am testifying about the grace of God.

I see men who are not driven by selfish ambition: men who can labor for another church with the same commitment they will one day give to the church they are sent to establish. They have been God's grace to us.

This is why I have so much confidence in what God is going to do through these men. I know they are not going to Rockford simply to build something for themselves. They love what God is doing in Crystal Lake. They love what God is doing throughout the One Association.

They will carry that heart with them as they go to Rockford soon. They are not just going to be a blessing to the church in Rockford. They are going to continue to be a blessing to all of us.

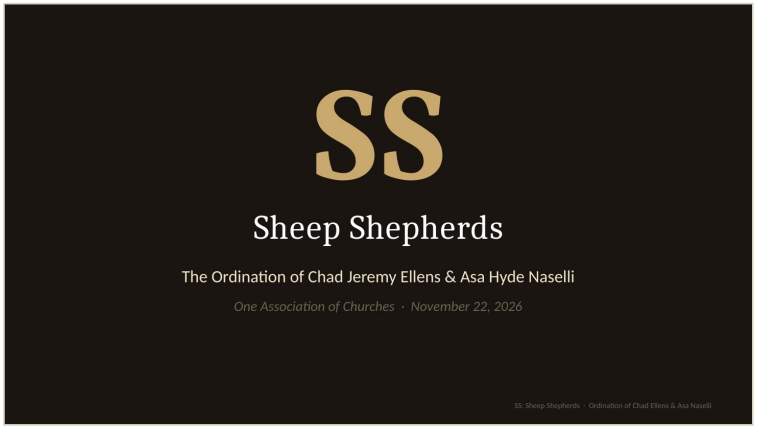
MAIN MESSAGE · PASTOR ERIC STEPHENS & PASTOR MATTHEW PEROT

SS: Sheep Shepherds

Delivered by Pastor Eric Stephens and Pastor Matthew Perot speaking as one voice. Slide cues mark where each sermon slide goes on screen; stage directions are in grey brackets.

I. Welcome

ON SCREEN · SLIDE 1



Good morning, Church! Today is November 22nd, 2026, and today is a special day. We have a surprise for you that is not going to surprise any of you who are spiritual. This morning we are ordaining two men who already serve as pastors in this house into the One Association of Churches, and we are sending them out as a team to plant a church in Rockford, Illinois.

The two of us have the privilege of representing the pastors of the One Association who are here today, and also those who could not be here but have fully endorsed Chad and Asa. Brothers, thank you. Your endorsement is part of this ordination, and you'll see why in a few minutes.

We want to introduce the men we're here for, together with the women who have stood beside them: Chad Jeremy Ellens and his wife Meg, and Asa Hyde Naselli and his wife Emily. *[Applause.]*

In 2021 we ordained our first team: Nik, Payton and Judah. That day we said that most of the time we ordain men and trust that they will form teams. Something has changed since then. What used to take us a long time, we are getting better at. We don't ordain lone rangers and hope they find friends any more. We ordain teams and send teams. Dylan and

Caileb are going out to North Carolina from Remnant the same way, and this morning Chad and Asa go to Rockford as one unit.

II. SS

ON SCREEN · SLIDE 2



We want to start with two letters: S. S.

When we say "SS," we're afraid some of you think of Nazis. That's not where we're going this morning.

Meg and Emily, when you hear "SS" you may think your husbands are super sexy. *[Pause.]* We'll let you have that one.

The Sheridans hear "SS" and think Super Sport. Classic cars. Chrome, horsepower, and a big engine under the hood.

But when we look at Chad and Asa, we can't help thinking that the world would call them Super Stars.

That's how the world thinks about gifted men. Every few years we have the argument again: Jordan or LeBron? Messi or Ronaldo? Who is the GOAT, the greatest of all time? Business has its superstars too, and so does the church: one name on the sign, one face on the billboard. Can anybody here name the elders who surround the most famous megachurch pastor in America? Of course you can't. It doesn't matter, because he's the GOAT.

Church, Jesus does not separate superstars. He separates sheep from goats.

> **MATTHEW 25:32–33 (NIV 1984)**
>
> *All the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. He will put the sheep on his right and the goats on his left.*

There are no GOATs in the flock of Messiah. There's only one flock and one Shepherd.

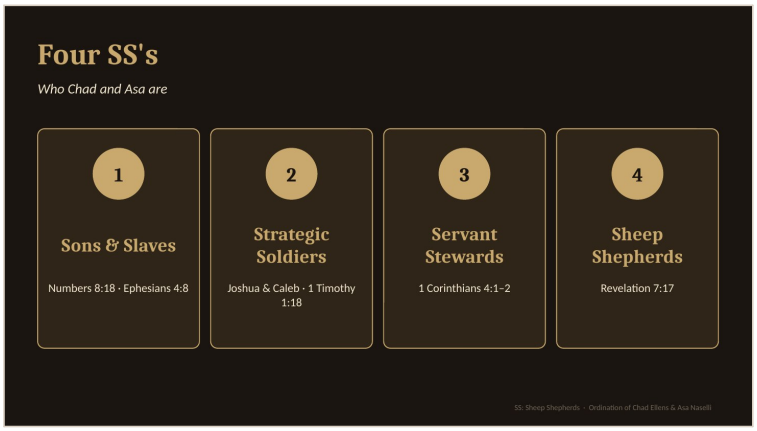
So here's the SS that Jesus Christ highlights: Sheep Shepherd. Now, you may have heard that as "a man who shepherds sheep." That isn't what we mean. We mean a man who is both a sheep and a shepherd at the same time. He has never stopped being a sheep, and that's exactly why he can be trusted to shepherd.

Look at how John describes heaven:

> **REVELATION 7:17 (NIV 1984)**
>
> *For the Lamb at the center of the throne will be their shepherd; he will lead them to springs of living water. And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes.*

The Lamb is the Shepherd. Our Shepherd has never stopped being the Lamb. David, the shepherd king, wrote, "The LORD is my shepherd" (Psalm 23:1, NIV 1984). The best shepherds in the Bible never stopped being sheep. And notice where that Shepherd leads: to springs of living water. Hold on to that word "springs." We're coming back to it.

ON SCREEN · SLIDE 3



Over the next few minutes you're going to hear four SS's. Chad and Asa are Sons and Slaves. They are Strategic Soldiers. They are Servant Stewards. And above all, they are Sheep Shepherds.

These men are gifted, but not the way the carnal mind thinks about it. The emphasis is not on their personal talents. It's that these men are being gifted to you and to us for our corporate development. In the tradition of the apostles before us, they work to earn their own living. They are not paid by the church, and yet they give themselves daily so that all of us can become an acceptable offering that presents Messiah to the world.

III. The Lampstand Faces Forward

Turn with us to Numbers chapter 8.

> **NUMBERS 8:1–4 (NIV 1984)**
>
> *The LORD said to Moses, "Speak to Aaron and say to him, 'When you set up the seven lamps, they are to light the area in front of the lampstand.'" Aaron did so; he set up the lamps so that they faced forward on the lampstand, just as the LORD commanded Moses. This is how the lampstand was made: It was made of hammered gold—from its base to its blossoms. The lampstand was made exactly like the pattern the LORD had shown Moses.*

These first four verses are packed with revelation. Before a priesthood could be ordained, the sevenfold lamp of God had to be present. It was God's design, made according to the pattern, the work of a craftsman from its base to its blossoms. And it always faced forward. It lit up the area in front of it.

ON SCREEN · SLIDE 4



Here's something we love. Both of these men have a mezuzah, a personal mission statement written on the doorposts of their house. And both of them are about light.

Asa's mezuzah comes from Ephesians 5: "Lead others into the presence of the Lord by revealing the light that is His word."

> **EPHESIANS 5:13–14 (NIV 1984)**
>
> *But everything exposed by the light becomes visible, for it is light that makes everything visible. This is why it is said: "Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you."*

Chad's mezuzah comes from Isaiah 29 and 42: "To open the eyes of the blind by leading others to encounter His power."

> **ISAIAH 42:6–7 (NIV 1984)**
>
> *I, the LORD, have called you in righteousness; I will take hold of your hand. I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles, to open eyes that are blind, to free captives from prison and to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness.*

The lamps were set to light the area in front of the lampstand. Church, what lies in front of these two men is Rockford.

And the Lord has been facing us forward towards this day for a long time. Through 2024 and 2025 these men sat on Elder Mark Morrison's back deck, week after week. Those conversations led to refreshing Ministry Training 1 for a group of men, and then to finishing Ministry Training 2 together. At the October Regalia the Lord confirmed Rockford prophetically. These men made an offer on a home and church property, and that offer was accepted. Psalm 77:19 says, "Your path led through the sea, your way through the mighty waters, though your footprints were not seen" (NIV 1984). Except that in this case we can clearly see His footprints!

IV. Levites, Firstborn, Gifts

Let's keep reading in Numbers 8 and watch the team form.

> **NUMBERS 8:9–11 (NIV 1984)**
>
> *Bring the Levites to the front of the Tent of Meeting and assemble the whole Israelite community. You are to bring the Levites before the LORD, and the Israelites are to lay their hands on them. Aaron is to present the Levites before the LORD as a wave offering from the Israelites, so that they may be ready to do the work of the LORD.*

You can see the picture. All Israel are God's sheep, and some of those sheep are responsible for preparing the whole flock. There wasn't a single superstar goat among them. Ordination is, and always has been, an act of the whole body of Messiah. These

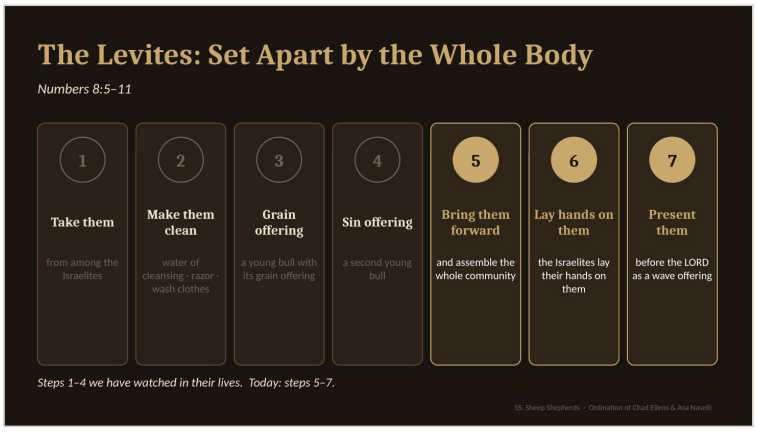
men are not a special class, cloistered in a protected clergy, apart from the rest of the body. They are members of this body whose function is a gift to the rest of the body. Paul uses that picture again and again.

ON SCREEN · SLIDE 5



[Comment on the slide before moving on. Don't read every Scripture, just explain One Body.]

ON SCREEN · SLIDE 6



Look at the process God gave Moses for setting the Levites apart. First, take them from among the people. Second, make them ceremonially clean: sprinkle the water of cleansing, shave every area of their bodies with a razor, and wash their clothes. Third and fourth, the offerings: a young bull with its grain offering, and a second young bull for a sin offering. Steps one through four are already obvious in these men's lives; we have all watched God cleanse them and prepare them. Led by the Spirit, today is the day for steps five through seven. Five: bring them to the front and gather the whole community. Six: the people lay their hands on them. Seven: they are presented before the LORD as a wave offering.

As a young man in Israel, one of us was asked by a group of people whether he was ordained. He had been, but nobody had prepared him for how to answer, because the man asking made a point of saying he had been ordained through Princeton's school of divinity. That seemed very important to him.

We want you to understand something. These men are being ordained through the church, and the church is you. The final act of ordination today will be you putting your hands on them. This is not an academic certification. It is the body attesting to a relationship you already recognize is there.

Now look at verses 16 to 18. Don't skip these.

> **NUMBERS 8:16–18 (NIV 1984)**
>
> *They are the Israelites who are to be given wholly to me. I have taken them as my own in place of the firstborn, the first male offspring from every Israelite woman. Every firstborn male in Israel, whether man or animal, is mine. When I struck down all the firstborn in Egypt, I set them apart for myself. And I have taken the Levites in place of all the firstborn sons in Israel.*

ON SCREEN · SLIDE 7



The Levites stood in the place of the firstborn. So every Israelite family was to receive the Levites as its own firstborn son. They were not hired help. They were family, the firstborn of every house.

Hear us, Church: Rockford will not be receiving hirelings as employees. Jesus said the hired hand sees the wolf coming and runs, because he cares nothing for the sheep (John 10:12–13, NIV 1984). Rockford is receiving two firstborn sons.

And there is something deeper here, a sod. The Levites stood in for the firstborn of Israel. Chad and Asa, as members of His body, stand in for the Firstborn Son of Israel: Jesus, "the firstborn among many brothers" (Romans 8:29, NIV 1984), "the firstborn from among the dead" (Colossians 1:18, NIV 1984). That's our first SS. They are firstborn Sons standing in the place of Jesus, representing Him to the rest of the world!

> **NUMBERS 8:19 (NIV 1984)**
>
> *Of all the Israelites, I have given the Levites as gifts to Aaron and his sons to do the work at the Tent of Meeting on behalf of the Israelites and to make atonement for them so that no plague will strike the Israelites when they go near the sanctuary.*

These men are gifted to us. We make them gifts, and they make us gifts to the world from the LORD.

Asa, we can't let this go by. You named your son Asahel, and the Asahel you named him for was a Levite. In the days of King Asa's son Jehoshaphat, Asahel was one of the Levites sent out who "taught throughout Judah, taking with them the Book of the Law of the LORD; they went round to all the towns of Judah and taught the people" (2 Chronicles 17:9, NIV 1984). You named your son after a travelling Levite teacher, and today you are set apart as one.

V. Prize of War

Turn to Psalm 68. You might write "Ephesians 4" in the margin, because this is where Paul got his Ephesians 4 discourse.

> **PSALM 68:15–16 (NIV 1984)**
>
> *The mountains of Bashan are majestic mountains; rugged are the mountains of Bashan. Why gaze in envy, O rugged mountains, at the mountain where God chooses to reign, where the LORD himself will dwell forever?*

Bashan was the seat of celestial rebellion, and it looked with envy on the Lord and on the nation that forms His dwelling.

PSALM 68:17–18 (NIV 1984)

The chariots of God are tens of thousands and thousands of thousands; the Lord has come from Sinai into his sanctuary. When you ascended on high, you led captives in your train; you received gifts from men, even from the rebellious—that you, O LORD God, might dwell there.

Our God went to war with those powers and invaded what they thought was their territory, to liberate men like Chad Ellens and Asa Naselli. In His victorious campaign He took them as captives, as the spoils of war. Now listen to how Paul quotes it:

EPHESIANS 4:8 (NIV 1984)

This is why it says: "When he ascended on high, he led captives in his train and gave gifts to men."

In Psalm 68 He received gifts, men taken from the enemy. In Ephesians 4 He gives those same men back to His church as gifts. Slaves of the enemy became sons of the King, slaves of Christ, and gifts to His body. That's why we rightly say these men are gifted: not because of their personal talents, but because the LORD has gifted them to this body and to the people of Rockford.

They are like Baruch. Jeremiah told him:

JEREMIAH 45:5 (ESV)

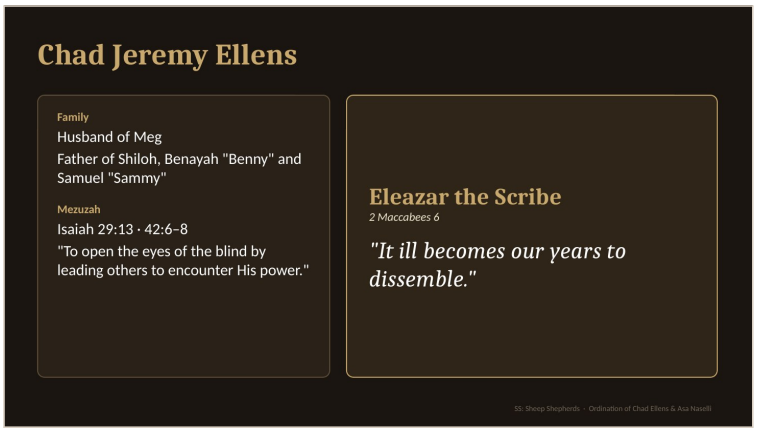
And do you seek great things for yourself? Seek them not, for behold, I am bringing disaster upon all flesh, declares the LORD. But I will give you your life as a prize of war in all places to which you may go.

Church, can we testify that Chad is not seeking great things for himself? *[Response.]* Can we testify that Asa is not seeking great things for himself? *[Response.]*

These men serve here now. Next they will serve in Rockford, and after that, wherever the nations call. But what makes them special is that they see their lives as a prize won in war, and they make their lives a gift to the body of Christ in every place they stand. Here today, Rockford next, the nations to come: they are the same men everywhere they go, and they already work as a team.

VI. Chad and Eleazar

ON SCREEN · SLIDE 8



[Testimony of Chad, about 2 minutes.]

Chad is the husband of Meg. Chad is the father of Shiloh, Benayah and Samuel. Chad's mezuzah sets Isaiah 29 against Isaiah 42. Isaiah 29 is the disease: "These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me" (Isaiah 29:13, NIV 1984). Isaiah 42 is the cure: "a light for the Gentiles, to open eyes that are blind… I am the LORD; that is my name! I will not give my glory to another" (Isaiah 42:6–8, NIV 1984). Duplicitous lip religion is learned from men. True spiritual sight only comes by encounter.

When we think of Chad, we think of an old man named Eleazar in 2 Maccabees chapter 6. He was "one of the principal scribes," ninety years old, when the servants of the Greek king Antiochus tried to force pork into his mouth. He refused, "welcoming death with renown rather than life with pollution."

Then came the subtler temptation. The men running that feast were old friends of his, and they took him aside "for the sake of old acquaintance." They said, in effect, "Bring your own kosher meat. Just pretend to eat the king's sacrifice. No one will ever know." That is Isaiah 29:13 exactly: honor with the lips while the heart is somewhere else. Eleazar said, "It ill becomes our years to dissemble." In other words: I'm too old to start pretending now.

Church, the greatest danger to a new church is rarely open idolatry. It's pretending. Pretending things are better than they are. Pretending to be stronger than you are. Pretending the power of God is in the room when it's only the noise of men. Chad will not pretend. And a church that watches its pastor refuse to pretend becomes a church where the blind actually see.

Eleazar knew who was watching. He would not "lead many younger persons" astray; he meant to leave "a noble example to the young." Shiloh, Benny and Sammy are watching

their father more closely than any congregation ever will.

Eleazar never saw the victory. Within a few years Judas Maccabeus cleansed the Temple and the lamp burned again. That's the light Israel still remembers at Hanukkah. The old scribe wasn't there to see it, but his faithfulness was oil in that lamp.

And Chad and Meg named their eldest son for the place where that same story played out in another generation. At Shiloh, Eli's eyes had grown so weak he could barely see, "the lamp of God had not yet gone out" (1 Samuel 3:3, NIV 1984), and the boy Samuel lay near the ark until the Lord called him by name. That's Chad's mezuzah in a single chapter.

We are truly gifted to have this man serving the body in a unified team!

VII. Asa and Tyndale

ON SCREEN · SLIDE 9



[Testimony of Asa, about 2 minutes.]

Asa is the husband of Emily. Asa is the father of Azi and River. Asa's mezuzah comes from Ephesians 5:13–14: "Lead others into the presence of the Lord by revealing the light that is His word." Paul says, "everything exposed by the light becomes visible… Wake up, O sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you" (NIV 1984).

When we think of Asa, we think of William Tyndale. As a young man Tyndale argued with a learned cleric who said men would be better off without God's law than without the Pope's. Tyndale answered that if God spared his life, he would make the boy who drives the plough know more of the Scripture than the cleric did. The light of the Word was never meant to be kept by scholars for scholars. Asa is going to put it into the hands of Rockford's ploughboys: the factory worker, the single mother, the young man who has never opened a Bible.

For that vow Tyndale became a fugitive. He translated in hiding and smuggled New Testaments into England in bales of cloth. The Bishop of London bought up every copy he could find so he could burn them, and the bishop's money paid for Tyndale's corrected edition! What gets burned in Rockford, the Lord will repay with a better edition.

In the end Tyndale was betrayed and imprisoned in the castle at Vilvoorde. From that cell he wrote the only letter we have in his own hand. He asked for a warmer coat, and for a candle, "for it is wearisome to sit alone in the dark." Above everything else, he begged for his Hebrew Bible, his Hebrew grammar and his Hebrew dictionary. The man who gave England light asked for a candle so he could read the Scriptures of Israel. Our light is borrowed from Israel.

On October 6th, 1536, he was strangled and burned. His last words were a prayer: "Lord, open the King of England's eyes." Within three years that same king ordered an English Bible into the churches, and most of its words were Tyndale's.

Now listen. Tyndale's dying prayer, for opened eyes, is Chad's mezuzah. Asa brings the light of the Word. Chad leads men to encounter the power that opens blind eyes. Together they are Tyndale's whole life in two men.

We are truly gifted to have this man serving the body in a unified team!

VIII. Every Part Doing Its Work

Church, let's walk through Ephesians 4 together, since this is an ordination.

> **EPHESIANS 4:11–13 (NIV 1984)**
>
> *It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.*

Jesus, as our High Priest, does exactly what the high priest did in Numbers 8. He gives some within the body to prepare all of us for our works of service. And notice that this ordination is about the maturity Jesus wants in every member, and even the ministers are still growing. Just ask our elders.

> **EPHESIANS 4:15–16 (NIV 1984)**
>
> *Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.*

In 2021 we said Nik was like the bones, Judah like the muscles, and Payton like the ligaments. These two men are a joint: two members bound together so tightly that the supply flows through them to the whole body. Paul tells the Colossians the whole body is "supported and held together by its ligaments and sinews" as it grows (Colossians 2:19, NIV 1984). Chad and Asa are not two separate parts. Together they are a joint, and life flows through the place where they meet.

This team shows how all of us have to do our part if we're going to present Messiah to the world. Would everybody say it with us: "We ALL are going to do our part!"

IX. Not So With You

> **MARK 10:42–45 (NIV 1984)**
>
> *Jesus called them together and said, "You know that those who are regarded as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their high officials exercise authority over them. Not so with you. Instead, whoever wants to become great among you must be your servant, and whoever wants to be first must be slave of all. For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many."*

Earlier this month a blue wave swept the midterms, and the Democratic Socialists of America had a record night. One chapter posted, "Socialism wins!" Every few years somebody new promises that the right rulers, with enough power, will finally fix us. Red wave, blue wave: Jesus said, "Not so with you." Neither wave is going to plant a church in Rockford. The only wave that changes a city is the wave offering of Numbers 8: men presented before the LORD as gifts.

And there is another rule rising in our time. Islam is advancing across the world as a colonizing force. It isn't only a private faith; it's a system that means to rule, a kingdom that comes by submission and compulsion. Its teachings are a retrograde counterfeit of the Gospel. It offers a ruler who lords it over men; we serve the King who gave His life as a ransom for many. These men have been trained to confront those teachings lovingly and directly.

But hear us clearly: they stand against the teaching and for the people. If the nations are the goyim, then metaphorically the Muslim is the gentile of gentiles. And when the gentile of gentiles falls in love with Jesus, Israel will take notice.

> **ROMANS 11:11 (NIV 1984)**
>
> *Again I ask: Did they stumble so as to fall beyond recovery? Not at all! Rather, because of their transgression, salvation has come to the Gentiles to make Israel envious.*

That is part of Chad and Asa's mission in Rockford. A man has to know the love, the freedom and the purpose of the body of Messiah to be a gift to it.

> **REVELATION 1:5–6 (NIV 1984)**
>
> *To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father—to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen.*

Like those before them, Chad and Asa know the love of our Messiah. They are walking in His freedom and helping others into it. They have been made priests who serve this body by helping every member fulfill their priestly service to the world. They are slaves of all, like their Master. They are sheep helping to lead sheep: Sheep Shepherds.

X. The Heritage

Since our first conference in 2015, the One Association has watched man after man recognized by his own local body: Sugar Land and Crystal Lake, Gainesville and Denham Springs, Denton and Elgin, Cluj and Bergamo, Arequipa, Tegucigalpa and Indonesia. In 2021 we ordained our first team. Today Chad and Asa join that line, and the line will keep growing after them.

We are not a sports franchise; there are no GOATs here. We are not a corporate monopoly and we are not a business-model denomination. Every member of the body has its part. The Bible calls all of us ligaments and sinews, so that together we can present Messiah to the world.

XI. The Charge

[Chad and Asa come forward and stand.]

ON SCREEN · SLIDE 10



Chad and Asa, would you please come up and stand with us. You're being ordained as a team, and that's not an extra. It's a necessity for your future.

> **ECCLESIASTES 4:9–12 (NIV 1984)**
>
> *Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their work: If one falls down, his friend can help him up. But pity the man who falls and has no one to help him up! Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken.*

Would you two men join hands? *[Pause.]* Never, never, never attempt to operate independently from one another, or take any action that diminishes the nobility of this cord that is your calling and your ordination. You are two strands, and the Lord Himself is the third.

This is what Antioch did:

> **ACTS 13:2–3 (NIV 1984)**
>
> *While they were worshiping the Lord and fasting, the Holy Spirit said, "Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them." So after they had fasted and prayed, they placed their hands on them and sent them off.*

That's what TAC is doing today. Jesus sent His disciples out two by two, and today we send you out two by two.

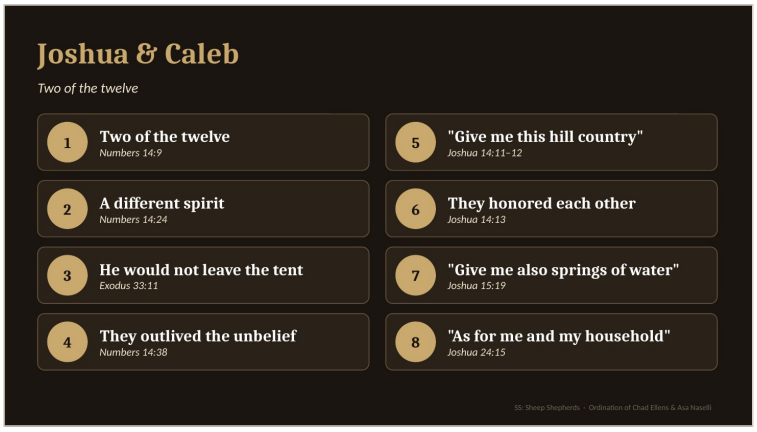
JOSHUA AND CALEB

ON SCREEN · SLIDE 11



We've already seen two SS's this morning. You are Sons: firstborn sons standing in the place of Jesus, representing Him to the world. And you are Slaves: captives taken from the enemy, now slaves of all for the sake of your Master. Here's our third SS: Strategic Soldiers. Your pattern is Joshua and Caleb.

ON SCREEN · SLIDE 12



1. **Two of the twelve.** Twelve men went in to spy out the land, and only two brought back a good report: "Do not be afraid of the people of the land… the LORD is with us. Do not be afraid of them" (Numbers 14:9, NIV 1984). Rockford is one of the Twelve Springs that will feed the nations and bring the gospel back to Israel. You are being sent to bring back the good report, and you will raise up men who will rebuild the road back to Jerusalem.

2. **A different spirit.** "Because my servant Caleb has a different spirit and follows me wholeheartedly, I will bring him into the land" (Numbers 14:24, NIV 1984). Your team will not be marked by talent. It will be marked by wholeheartedness and by the power of the Spirit through signs and wonders.

3. **He would not leave the tent.** "The LORD would speak to Moses face to face… but his young aide Joshua son of Nun did not leave the tent" (Exodus 33:11, NIV 1984). Asa, that's your mezuzah, and you will lead others into the presence because that is where you have stayed yourself.

4. **They outlived the unbelief of their generation.** Of all the men who went in, only Joshua and Caleb lived to enter the land (Numbers 14:38). Your calling is long-lived and perennial. You will fight to keep that attitude for life.

5. **"Give me this hill country."** At eighty-five Caleb said, "I am still as strong today as the day Moses sent me out… Now give me this hill country" (Joshua 14:11–12, NIV 1984). You will never retire from the fight.

6. **They honored each other.** Joshua, the leader, blessed Caleb and gave him Hebron (Joshua 14:13). Never compete with one another. Each of you advances the other's inheritance. That's the Transjordan principle we've fought for since 2017.

7. **"Give me also springs of water."** Caleb's daughter Acsah came to him: "Since you have given me land in the Negev, give me also springs of water." So Caleb gave her the upper and the lower springs (Joshua 15:19, NIV 1984). Land without springs can't sustain life. The Lord has given you a house in Rockford. Make it a spring that waters the seventy nations and teaches them about our debt to the nation of Israel. Remember Revelation 7: the Lamb who is our Shepherd leads His sheep to springs of living water.

8. **"As for me and my household, we will serve the LORD"** (Joshua 24:15, NIV 1984). Today we prophetically ordain your sons in advance to work under your direction wherever this team sets its feet. Shiloh, Benayah, Samuel, and Asahel belong to the LORD and will work in His service, and you shall accept no other outcome! And you are a father to every man you teach Torah. You're young, and you'll be tempted to treat those men only as brothers. Be fathers.

PSALM 62

One of the psalms written for Jeduthun will serve you well in the years to come.

> **PSALM 62:1–2 (NIV 1984)**
>
> *My soul finds rest in God alone; my salvation comes from him. He alone is my rock and my salvation; he is my fortress, I will never be shaken.*

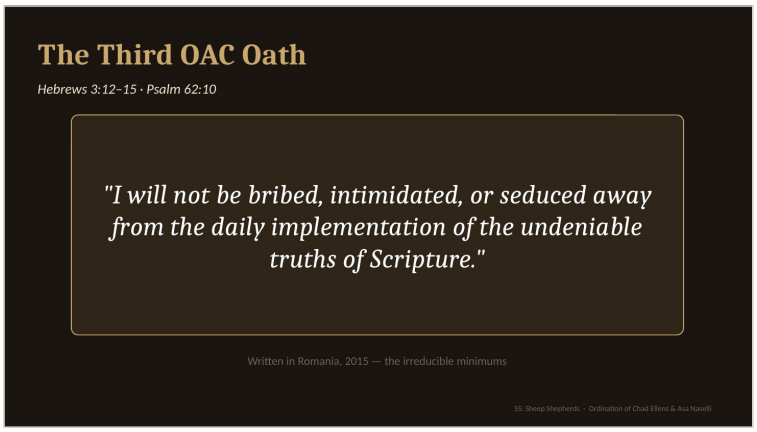
Your souls will be at rest when you remember that the Lord won you as a prize of war and your lives no longer belong to you.

> **PSALM 62:7 (NIV 1984)**
>
> *My salvation and my honor depend on God; he is my mighty rock, my refuge.*

Your honor, your kavod, will always depend on God. Never seek it from another source. This is the verse that kills the Super Star.

> **PSALM 62:9–10 (NIV 1984)**
>
> *Lowborn men are but a breath, the highborn are but a lie; if weighed on a balance, they are nothing; together they are only a breath. Do not trust in extortion or take pride in stolen goods; though your riches increase, do not set your heart on them.*

ON SCREEN · SLIDE 13



You cannot be bought, bribed or intimidated. You swore it as an oath, and we'll read it over you now: "I will not be bribed, intimidated, or seduced away from the daily implementation of the undeniable truths of Scripture" (Hebrews 3:12–15).

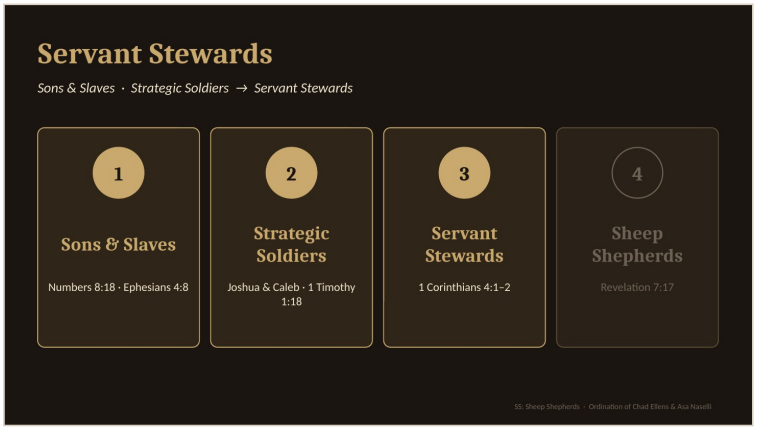
And Psalm 77, another psalm written for Jeduthun:

> **PSALM 77:16, 19 (NIV 1984)**
>
> *The waters saw you, O God, the waters saw you and writhed; the very depths were convulsed... Your path led through the sea, your way through the mighty waters, though your footprints were not seen.*

Every time we have seen a team act as one God-ordained unit, the sea has split. There will be seasons when your footprints aren't clear. If you fight for your unity and keep it, you will always look back and see that your mighty God led you through the sea.

SERVANT STEWARDS

ON SCREEN · SLIDE 14



Let's recap. You are Sons: firstborn sons standing in the place of Jesus. You are Slaves: prizes of war, slaves of all like your Master. You are Strategic Soldiers: Joshua and Caleb, sent to bring back the good report. And here is our fourth SS: you are Servant Stewards.

> **1 CORINTHIANS 4:1–2 (ESV)**
>
> *This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful.*

Servants and stewards. The mysteries of God have been entrusted to you, and you have been found faithful. Not announced as faithful, but found faithful, proven over years by men who were watching. And you will go on being found faithful. A steward manages a house he doesn't own, and the Lord has just put a house in Rockford in your hands. Keep it as something entrusted, never as something owned.

> **ROMANS 15:14–16 (ESV)**
>
> *I myself am satisfied about you, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge and able to instruct one another. But on some points I have written to you very boldly by way of reminder, because of the grace given me by God to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles in the priestly service of the gospel of God, so that the offering of the Gentiles may be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.*

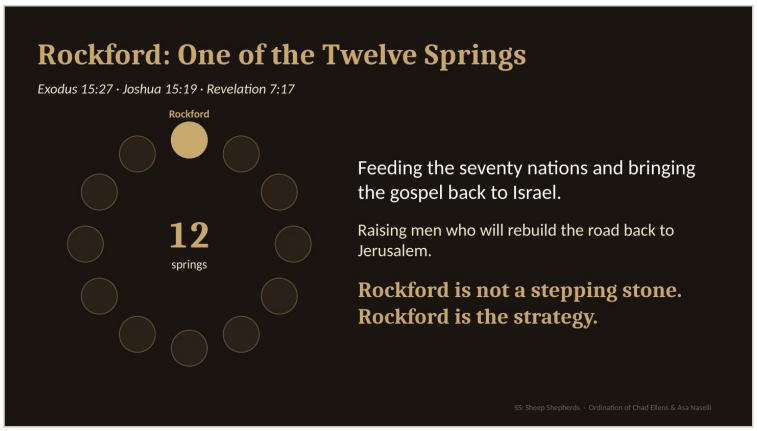
We are satisfied about you, our brothers. You are full of goodness, and you are able to instruct. And here is the hinge of this whole morning. In Numbers 8 the Levites were presented before the LORD as a wave offering. Today we present you, so that you can present the lives of Rockford, Muslims among them, as an offering that is acceptable and sanctified by the Holy Spirit, on behalf of God's plan for the world through Israel.

PAUL'S CHARGES

> **1 TIMOTHY 1:18–19 (NIV 1984)**
>
> *Timothy, my son, I give you this instruction in keeping with the prophecies once made about you, so that by following them you may fight the good fight, holding on to faith and a good conscience.*

The language Paul uses is soldier language: strategize the good strategy. As fathers in this association we proudly call you our sons, and we give you this command, which agrees completely with the prophecies spoken over your team. At the October Regalia the Lord confirmed Rockford.

ON SCREEN · SLIDE 15



Rockford is one of the Twelve Springs that will feed the nations and bring the gospel back to Israel. There are no goats and no superstars among us, only one flock, and your strategy must involve every member of the flock. Rockford is not a stepping stone. Rockford is the strategy.

> **1 TIMOTHY 6:11–12 (NIV 1984)**
>
> *But you, man of God, flee from all this, and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness. Fight the good fight of the faith. Take hold of the eternal life to which you were called when you made your good confession in the presence of many witnesses.*

Pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, endurance and gentleness towards all your called brothers. Agonize the good agony for their eternal objectives the same way you do for yours, because they're the same. This is your good confession in front of all these witnesses. The same tenacity you brought to your own discipleship, you will bring to theirs.

> **1 TIMOTHY 6:20 (NIV 1984)**
>
> *Timothy, guard what has been entrusted to your care. Turn away from godless chatter and the opposing ideas of what is falsely called knowledge.*

We charge you two men to guard what has been entrusted to you. Turn away from godless chatter and from the worldly wisdom that is falsely called knowledge. Assess the sheep by the Spirit and speak to them by the Spirit, for they are the LORD's flock, your flock, and our flock.

> **2 TIMOTHY 3:10–11, 14 (NIV 1984)**
>
> *You, however, know all about my teaching, my way of life, my purpose, faith, patience, love, endurance, persecutions, sufferings... Yet the Lord rescued me from all of them... But as for you, continue in what you have learned and have become convinced of, because you know those from whom you learned it.*

You know our teaching, our way of life and our purpose. You've seen what happens to us, and you've seen the Lord rescue us from all of it. Continue in what you have learned, because you know who you learned it from. And hear us: we expect more of you. You've been given more investment, more teaching and more anointing, so your example must exceed ours, just as the teams that follow you will exceed yours. Follow our example, and do it exponentially better.

ON SCREEN · SLIDE 16



Sons and Slaves. Strategic Soldiers. Servant Stewards. And above all, Sheep Shepherds: men who will never stop being sheep, following the Lamb who is their Shepherd to springs of living water.

XII. Words from the Elders and Pastors

[Invite the OAC elders and pastors present to come up and speak briefly as the Spirit leads.]

[Brothers also speak during this time: Robert, Brett, Aaron and Max; then Ian and Caleb.]

XIII. Laying On of Hands and Presentation

We've said it all morning, and by now you probably have the picture. Ordination is not an ecclesiastical endowment and it isn't an academic pursuit. It is the body recognizing what God has already ordained.

Meg and Emily, would you please come and stand with your husbands.

This is the picture from Numbers 8: the existing leaders lay their hands on the men being recognized, and every member of the body joins in by connecting hands. Elders and pastors, gather around them. Church, come and join us, connected hand to shoulder. If you have a word of prophecy, or a Scripture the Spirit is bringing to you, that's welcome, but be appropriate to what the Spirit is doing. We're not going to listen to fifteen Scriptures you just happen to want to read.

[Prayer and prophetic words.]

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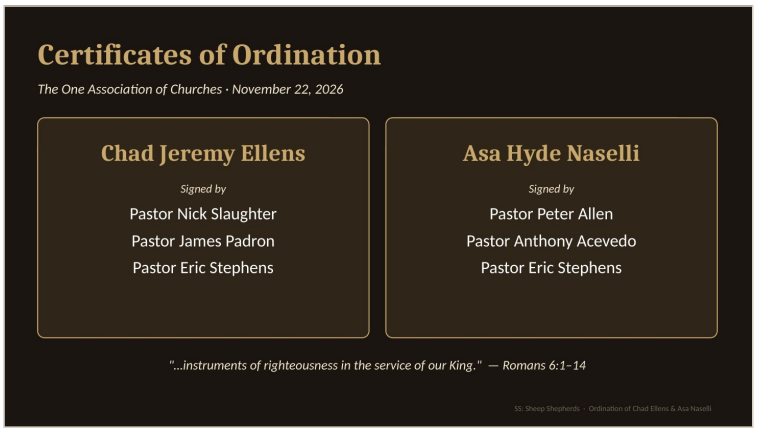

Chad and Asa, each of you has a letter from Pastor Eric to read in your own time. And here are your certificates of ordination into the One Association of Churches.

Chad's certificate is signed by Pastor Nick Slaughter, Pastor James Padron and Pastor Eric Stephens.

Asa's certificate is signed by Pastor Peter Allen, Pastor Anthony Acevedo and Pastor Eric Stephens.

"This will certify that our beloved brother is set apart for the ministry of the Eternal Gospel for the glory of our Lord Jesus the Christ… we unite with him in this high honor in the Lord of becoming instruments of righteousness in the service of our King" (Romans 6:1–14).

Church, while we're all touching one another, look around and make eye contact for a second. We are one body. These two men are not only being ordained for something in the future, somewhere else. We recognize them as pastors here, now. We need them, and they need us. Many of you will be ordained as well one day; that's how this works. Twelve springs here at home feeding the seventy nations, and then we repeat the model in every nation we go to.

Let's pray. Father, thank You for these two Sheep Shepherds You have given us. Thank You for the cord that will not be broken. Thank You for their example in our lives and for our co-partnership with them in advancing Your kingdom. Send them to Rockford as firstborn sons, as strategic soldiers and as servant stewards, and make the house You have given them a spring of living water for the nations and for Israel. In the name of Jesus our Messiah, the Lamb who is our Shepherd. Amen.

CLOSING

The Nine Chairs

As we close, we want to take you back to the first picture of this church, and the reason there are chairs up here.



[The Naselli and Ellens families come up and sit in the chairs]

This church started, as you can see, in a living room with nine chairs. Those nine chairs were a faith-filled act, believing that God could send nine faithful brothers and sisters in this city to help take the gospel to the nations.

In a few short months, when Rockford is planted, we will be emptying nine chairs that God filled. This too is an act of faith that God can raise up nine more who will take the gospel even further than these families will.

The question is: who will fill them?

> **ISAIAH 6:8–9 (NIV)**
>
> *Then I heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" And I said, "Here am I. Send me!"*
> *He said, "Go and tell this people: 'Be ever hearing, but never understanding; be ever seeing, but never perceiving.'"*