

North Heights Lutheran Church Removes 3DM

The authority given to the North Heights Lutheran Church Council of Elders by Chapter 10 of the NHLC Constitution allows us to give the following statement.

The North Heights Elected Council of Elders, on April 2, 2014, voted unanimously to move into the future unencumbered by the 3DM movement.

The congregation was sent a brief email on Saturday evening, April 5, 2014. Below, you will find more detailed information.

Our prayer is that you will be part of building for the future at North Heights and represent His heart of love for one another.

Let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet he did not sin. Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need.

Hebrews 4:14-16

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is 3DM?

3DM stands for 3D-Movements. 3DM describes their business as “a training organization that works with leaders and churches of over 70 Christian denominations.” *3DM website*

2. When did 3DM enter North Heights and how did it affect us?

Six years ago, the 3DM organization (along with conferences, books, trainings, and teachings) was invited into North Heights by our Leadership Staff. The goal was to increase our ability to live as disciples. We believe that the initial positive decision to utilize 3DM as a ministry tool and resource at NHLC has developed into an all-encompassing, controlling factor within our church. It is our desire that this church body be functioning through and reliant solely on the Word of God, the Lordship of Jesus, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Because 3DM has become such a governing rule at NHLC, we believe the only way to course-correct our church is to fully terminate the presence of 3DM at NHLC.

Leaders were compelled to begin utilizing the language and teachings of 3DM. This drained finances, staff availability, a sense of community, and even usurped the power of the Holy Spirit.

As we worked to understand the decline in church attendance, financial instability, spiritual and emotional duress placed on the congregation and staff of North Heights, it became clear that we needed to make a change.

3. What makes 3DM incompatible with the DNA of North Heights?

- a. In contrast to 3DM which creates a tiered system of exclusivity, investing primarily in church leaders, **North Heights believes in the priesthood of believers; that everyone is invited before the throne of God, to learn from Him, serve Jesus, and walk with Him.** *but you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. 1 Peter 2:9*
- b. In contrast to 3DM which separates younger and elder generations, **North Heights is committed to bringing the generations together for ministry, healing, prayer, fellowship, study, service, and worship.** *Impress them (God's commandments) on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Deuteronomy 6:7*
- c. In contrast to 3DM which builds discipleship using shapes, **North Heights believes that Jesus speaks to us directly through His Word and the Holy Spirit.** *Guard the good deposit that was entrusted to you-guard it with the help of the Holy Spirit who lives in us. 2 Timothy 1:14*
- d. In contrast to 3DM which requires the use of their language and culture, **North Heights uses other ministries, such as Alpha and Cleansing Stream, with flexibility to adapt them within our own culture.** *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Hebrews 13:8*

4. **What happened to lead to this decision? Is the Council being reactionary, or are they doing what's best for the North Heights congregation?**
- a. **The Council of Elders is, by its very nature, set up to maintain stability and order.** We recognize that we were too ready to endorse and asked too few questions of our leaders. We willingly took their word that we were headed in the right direction.
 - b. **Yet, there was the painful reality** that worship attendance has dropped off dramatically, especially in the Arden Hills Sanctuary. A corresponding drop in giving, along with staff-cuts has been our reality.
 - c. **Then, beginning in January 2014,** following Mike Breen's talk at North Heights' Leadership Event, his stated role as "Superior Guardian of The Order of the Mission" (TOM) and leader of 3DM, raised new concerns within our community.
 - i. **Letters of concern** about North Heights' engagement with 3DM poured in crossing generations, genders, and ministries.
 - d. **The Council of Elders began a prayerful investigative process.**
 - i. **The Elders listened to the concerns sent** by many members and leaders of the congregation; often following up with personal conversations to more fully understand their experience or understanding of 3DM and its teachings.
 - ii. **The Elders read the prophetic words** submitted to and approved by the Prophetic Roundtable. The Council requested these to be posted; many of the words warned about the direction North Heights was headed and called for correction.
 - iii. **The Elders talked with ministry leaders (both paid staff and lay-leaders),** to understand the influence 3DM had on their ministry. The Elders learned that large amounts of staff time was re-directed from North Heights' ministries and toward 3DM; most significantly impacted were youth, young adults, family, and most recently outreach ministries.
 - iv. **The Elders talked with leaders from other churches who had been either positively or negatively impacted by 3DM.** The Elders could not ignore the caution of the churches that were once on the same trajectory.
 - v. **North Heights' DNA is one soaked in the Holy Spirit; the Elders evaluated the spiritual fruit of 3DM.** Although, some leaders have benefitted from this discipleship process, we could not ignore that after the investment of finances, the reallocation of staff time, and the obligation of church leadership to conform to 3DM, there is very little fruit in the body of believers to show for this investment.
 - vi. **After The Council of Elders reviewed the information and sought wisdom from the Lord** it became clear that we had a constitutional obligation to protect the spiritual, financial, business and organizational aspects of the congregation. [NHLC Constitution 10.01]
 - e. **Going forward the Council of Elders is committed to minding the check in our spirit,** while we engage openly with staff and members; to create a process of interacting within ministries; and to bear at all times the responsibility of listening to the Lord, His prophets, His people, and His Holy Spirit.

5. Why didn't the congregation need to vote to remove 3DM?

Since 3DM was never voted in as an affiliated entity of North Heights, a congregational vote is not required to remove it. The Council has the authority and responsibility for the spiritual oversight of the congregation. It takes seriously the degree to which many are invested in 3DM. In tending to the overall well-being of North Heights, it makes more sense to redirect our energies and resources toward congregational ministries. Our hope has been to be obedient to God, to hear the cries of His heart and Church, and to lead in such a way that the body wasn't put in the position of taking aim at one another.

6. Does the removal of 3DM mean that certain staff will be asked to leave?

The Council wants to be clear that in no way are we requesting that ANY of the staff leave North Heights. We are removing 3DM and that includes requiring that staff members also have no affiliation with 3DM. We are removing 3DM curriculum, language and framework from our church. Where staff members are willing to sever their 3DM affiliation, we would love to have them remain on staff. We understand that some staff are well connected with 3DM and may find it difficult to stay at a non-3DM church. Since employees of NHLC represent our church at all times, outside affiliations with 3DM misrepresent the church's position.

7. Do staff only have until Wednesday, April 9th to decide if they want to stay at a non-3DM church?

The Council heard the concerns about the staff responding by Wednesday, April 9th, regarding the commitment to operate in their role in a church without 3DM and its affiliates. We understand that the decision we asked staff to make may need more time, so the date was left open right now. Staff were notified of this change. We reminded them that each of them are valuable to this church and we believe that each is capable to carry out their ministries in a manner consistent with this new direction. The Council is committed to help staff work through this transition. It is our hope and prayer that the NHLC staff will choose to remain through this shift of focus.

8. How will this change affect the community in which I am involved?

If you are involved in an existing huddle, missional community, or small group you are encouraged to continue, just without the 3DM language. Let the Holy Spirit guide you as you transition your ministry. We have always been a church that has invested in community, Christ-centered discipleship, service and outreach led by the Holy Spirit.

The Council of Elders will work together with the pastors, staff and congregation, to build upon our heritage, strengthening relationships between campuses, generations and reaching our neighbors.

If you are already part of a great community, hold on to it! If you wish to be a part of community, let's work together to build it. We believe that although authentic Christian community comes in many forms, it is strongest when centered in the Word, led by the Spirit, and engaged in the world. This has always been North Heights' DNA.