

FAQs for the New Church Leadership Structure

WHAT PROMPTED CHURCH COUNCIL TO CONSIDER SOME CHANGES?

Church council regularly prays for the needs of the church, and especially for the needs of our senior pastor and our pastoral/administrative staff teams. We have continued to be concerned about the overwhelming needs of our body and the drain/stress it places on our pastoral staff, and prayerfully felt moved to take action.

In addition, we felt a burden to take steps to better meet our growing needs in two of our “Big Four” areas: Loving Community and Life Transformation.

Specifically we wanted to enhance and expand in the following ways:

- Connections
 - Assimilating new and continuing members
 - Membership meetings, Next Steps, Data Base
 - Leader training and connecting for service
- Loving Community
 - Pastoral Care & Counseling
 - “Life event” Care (weddings, funerals, crisis etc.)
 - Small Groups/Missional community culture
- Life Transformation
 - ABFs (Including deacon and similar care ministries)
 - Creating new opportunities for members to truly transform spiritually and stay on a development path
 - Felt Need & Recovery Ministries

The growth of our ministries had created a significant strain upon our Pastoral staff. Our senior pastor was too often involved in dealing with many different issues, pulling him away from the critical areas of leadership, vision casting, being a cultural champion, and studying/proclaiming God’s word. In addition, our Associate Pastor was over-extended, overseeing the Student and Children’s Ministries, Business/Finance, and leading most administrative efforts such as staff retreats, staff meetings and staff searches. He also had ongoing supervisory responsibility for most of the staff.

WHAT WAS DONE TO “CHECK AND BALANCE” THE ABOVE VIEWS?

We have been studying for some time the needs of comparable churches of our size, and how they addressed the growth challenges we were also facing. Numerous outside sources seemed to advise us that, a church of our particular size was somewhat under-resourced at the pastoral staff level both at our current ministry levels and certainly for any future growth possibilities.

Specific tools we utilized included: one on one consultations in person and via e-mail of a variety of senior pastors in the Metroplex, an article by Tim Keller titled, “Leadership and Church Size Dynamics, and an outside consultant who works with a number of pastoral leaders in a variety of settings.

WHAT WAS CONSIDERED IN TERMS OF “CHANGE OPTIONS”?

We wanted to create a structure that best supported our senior pastor, while expanding our leverage for the desired areas of ministry growth, (primarily, but not exclusively, Loving Community and Life Transformation). In addition, we wanted to optimize our current staffing structure to better meet the current and future needs of our church. We attempted to keep the following objectives in mind:

- 1) Improve the efficiency of ministerial and administrative staff operations and equity of workload
- 2) Best utilize and “unleash” the giftedness of current staff
- 3) Judiciously consider adding to the staff a position(s) which would both lighten the shared workload and position our staff for future church growth
- 4) Support the current and future needs of our senior pastor, allowing him to better focus on leadership, vision casting, teaching, being a cultural champion, and studying and proclaiming God’s word.

We looked at the workload and responsibilities of the entire staff and considered if just re-balancing the load would help us meet our goals. There didn’t seem to be anything particularly “out of whack” other than just the quantity of what staff was being asked to accomplish.

We considered the possible addition of a variety of staff positions (i.e. additions to current ministry model reporting to existing pastoral staff, the use of lay leaders to step up in certain areas, the use of multiple people via “job-sharing,” etc.)

We challenged whether or not we had the right individuals in the right roles, based on their specific giftedness and what they were being asked to do. In addition we looked at how various ministry responsibilities were “grouped” to see if we had the right things in the right responsibility areas.

In the end, it seemed that, based on the critical nature of the need, as well as our ability to meet the need, an additional pastoral staff member was one of the keys which would best allow us to deal with some urgent immediate situations, as well as to prepare our church for the future.

WHAT IS CHANGING?

Church council is implementing a new leadership structure whereby all church ministries and administrative functions would report up through three Associate Pastors that would report collectively to our Senior Pastor. The three positions are Associate Pastor—“Leadership & Administration,” “Associate Pastor—Community & Transformation,” and “Associate Pastor – Worship.”

As part of this change, Church Council has asked Jim Mustain to step into the role of “Associate Pastor—Community and Transformation.” We couldn’t be more excited (as is Jim!) because this not only is a perfect match for his expertise and giftedness, it is an area of great passion for him. Positioning his leadership in this area clearly unleashes Jim to have the time/bandwidth to focus upon an area of critical need as well as allows the church to better avail ourselves of his strength and experience in building community and mentoring others in transformational activities.

In addition, Church Council has asked John Hewlett to step into the newly created role of “Associate Pastor—Worship.” John’s current role clearly already encompasses much of this area, but as an Associate Pastor, we are adding some additional supervisory responsibility which provides us the opportunity to benefit from John’s leadership gifts while simultaneously providing John an opportunity to continue developing his pastoral gifts.

Church Council has requested that our Finance and Personnel Committees prepare for the addition of an Associate Pastor—Leadership & Administration, and based on their review and concurrence, we believe at this time that our budget will allow for the addition of this staff member and that the structure proposed continues to meet the goals we have set for our staff and our church alike. (Because we believe this change can occur within the existing budget plan, it will not require approval of a new budget by the Church). This position (brand new) will oversee much of staff leadership and church operations.

We also believe these proposals will increase our Senior Pastor's ability to remain focused upon God's call on his life, extending and expanding upon his giftedness in leadership, vision casting, teaching, being a cultural champion, and studying and proclaiming God's word. We do not believe this represents a change from what he is already doing per se, but it will certainly create space and time for him to grow and become as effective as he can be.

WHEN? WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

Church Council has approved the addition of an Associate Pastor—Leadership & Administration and is working with Personnel to create the search committee and prayerfully anticipate having the new Associate Pastor on board by Fall, 2012.

Church Council is working on changes to the bylaws to reflect the "three-associate structure," including membership on Church Council (currently "the" Associate Pastor is a member of Church Council). We anticipate presenting that by-law change for church approval on at the annual all church conference in August of this year.

Existing staff has been informed of the changes, and various reporting structure nuances are being worked out so that there will be a relatively pain-free transition process.

WHAT CAN I DO?

Pray that this transition time goes smoothly and that the staff adjusts to the various changes, continuing the excellent staff unity that already thrives.

Be patient as things change and various ministries grow, expand and new ones "pop up."

Encourage our pastoral staff whenever you can.

Let a member of Church Council or the Personnel Committee know if you are aware of a qualified "Associate Pastor—Leadership & Administration" candidate.