

A Brief Summary of Two Years of Work at University Congregational United Church of Christ

In our post-interim time, we are discerning and articulating how God is calling us as a congregation. Our vision statement will help us name that, and our understanding of ourselves as a Leadership Church will help us understand how we implement that. In that post-interim context, the Church Council has agreed that there are several staffing changes which will best serve the congregation as we move into our future:

- 1) change the Church Business Administrator position to a full Church Administrator position to encompass broader responsibility for helping identify and implement strategies that support the vision, mission and ministry of the church by marshalling / leveraging / caring for our resources to carry out the church's vision in the most efficient, effective and faithful ways.
- 2) hire a Facilities Manager to supervise the facility staff and handle building maintenance and management in keeping with the New Cornerstones project. (Due to other custodial staffing configuration changes, this is a net 0.5 FTE increase);
- 3) continue support for the parish care program assistant and explore ways to make it even more effective
- 4) continue support for the Youth Program Assistant; and,
- 5) we will not fill the clergy position, which had been held by the Rev. Dave Shull.

These recommendations have evolved from the work of two committees, many people and feedback from the congregation over the last two years. During 2006 the Church Council appointed the Interim Advisory Committee (IAC) and the Long Term Staffing Task Force (LSTF) to help us find our way through the many questions and challenges which arose after the resignation of the Reverend Dave Shull in January, 2006. The Reverend George Meier worked with both of these committees, along with the Revs. Catherine Foote, Peter Ilgenfritz, Don Mackenzie and Church Business Administrator, David Anderson.

The work of each of these committees was designed to complement the other. The Interim Advisory Committee reviewed previously completed work (2000 Church Survey, 2003-2004 Discernment Task Force, 2003-2004 Alban Institute consultation, 2004-2009 UCUC Priorities) and then completed four projects (Congregational Systems Inventory, Congregational Values Statement, Congregational Identity Statement and Environmental Realities Survey) in order to develop their

recommendations. You may have participated in a survey, a forum or a small group in which they gathered data.

The Long Term Staffing Task Force gathered information from other similar churches and assessed our own staffing strengths and weaknesses. They developed a Church Staff Requisition Form, a Hiring Process for Administrative/ Custodial Staff and a Hiring Process for Program Staff.

While this work was in process, our Interim Minister, George Meier, also was working intensively with our Leadership Staff team. The clergy spent seven days in retreat which helped them move forward in their knowledge of each other's skills and a common understanding of "team." Two concepts in particular became the focus for subsequent recommendations: we need to manage our systems in a way that frees individuals and the church to answer God's call, removing barriers and making the new possible; and, we need to find a way to manage efficiently, freeing time for transformational leadership.

By June, 2007 the Leadership Team brought a draft vision statement of "taking Love to hard places" to the Church Council for discussion. They are now sharing their thoughts about how this vision can come to life in our midst and the Church Council and clergy enthusiastically welcome any and all comments and suggestions which you have about this proposed vision. Come to the discussion gathering on February 10, send a note or call in with your comments. We will vote on a proposed Vision Statement at the spring annual meeting.

During spring and summer, 2007 all of this work began to coalesce and in August, 2007 the Interim Advisory Committee put together a notebook of all the information they had gathered regarding our values, identity, internal and external environments. The LTST meantime blended the information they had gathered with the work done by the Interim Advisory Committee and developed the recommendations above which were affirmed by the IAC, discussed by Personnel Board and approved by Church Council. Both detailed reports have been distributed to Church Council and are available in the Church Office and Library.

In June, 2007 a major change occurred in the congregation's life when Music Director, Bob Scandrett retired after many years of dedication and superb leadership. This was followed shortly by the resignation of accompanist, Greg Bowers, who had completed his

doctorate and took a teaching position back east. The Church Council agreed to seek a one year Interim Music Director and Interim Organist/Pianist in order to help us transition from Bob's beloved leadership to the changes which inevitably come with another's style. Heidi Blythe and Paul Swenson have come on board and are already valued participants in our community. A music futures group has been formed to support the music ministry during the next year. We will begin a search for a permanent Music Director in 2008.

As we move ahead into all that God has in store for us, the work of these committees, affirmed by the personnel board and church council, will help us staff appropriately for the work and ministry that lies ahead. You should have received a mailing last week about what it means to be a leadership church and how we might embrace that identity.

Next steps...

Sunday, Jan. 13, 2008: forum on what it means to be a "Leadership Church." Together we will explore our role and responsibilities as a large congregation in the University District and in the United Church of Christ, and the characteristics, opportunities, and challenges that lie before us to be an effective and faithful congregation. In that context we will also explore the staffing

recommendations from the Interim Advisory Committee and Long Term Staffing Task Force (and affirmed by the Personnel Board and Council) about the staff leadership to carry out our call. Plan to learn, ask questions, and better understand the recommended changes and how they will help the congregation live more fully into our call. Food and childcare will be provided.

Sunday February 10: forum on the vision statement. A chance to talk about how we articulate what God is calling us to, how we discern that, and how we best express it.

Sunday February 24: our annual budget meeting. The financial activities of the church (and ourselves for that matter) are not separate from our faith, but in fact are one of the most concrete ways we can respond faithfully to God's call. How our funds are used to support God's ministry and mission are a crucial expression of our priorities and commitments. That said, our funds are but one way we respond to God's call, and our commitments in other areas of our common life are also significant and vital. The budget will thus necessarily focus on but one aspect of our life together. Also at this meeting we will have an opportunity to affirm the staffing model the council has authorized, and to do so in the context of the direction that a vision statement and our identity as a Leadership Church may be moving us.

Leading and Equipping a Leadership Church

"In a spirit of memory, thanksgiving, and hope, we covenant with God and with one another ..."

Congregation

The members of the church live in covenant with God and with one another, and cooperate together to carry out God's call as expressed in our vision and fleshed out (incarnated) in our covenant. We hold, lead and equip one another with the following structure:

Leadership Team

"Team" is a cooperative form of ministry that requires full collaboration and not hierarchy or top-down authority. It makes the most of talents that come together in individuals who form a team and creates a means to collaborate with members of the congregation in ways that support the gospel's call to love and its consequences: cooperation, compassion, justice, forgiveness and reconciliation.

The leadership team includes our three pastors, Don Mackenzie, Peter Ilgenfritz, Catherine Foote, and our church administrator, David Anderson. The Leadership Team:

- provides spiritual leadership to the congregation
- works with the congregation to live out our call, "taking Love to hard places"

- provides leadership to implement our covenant
- works with the Executive Committee and the Church Council and the wider church to manage church programs

Areas of focus:

- Catherine Foote's focus: supporting and equipping the congregation to identify our ministries and move forward through discipleship, spiritual formation, parish life.
- Don Mackenzie's focus: helping the congregation be engaged in the wider world through movements to change society and help those who are injured or disenfranchised because of it, offering a public voice of reconciliation and cooperation.
- Peter Ilgenfritz's focus: helping the congregation stay in touch with God through responsibility for the integrity and faithfulness of our worship life, maintaining solid connections among youth and their families, and support for the organizational structure that helps carry forward God's call
- David Anderson's focus: helping identify and implement strategies that support the vision, mission

and ministry of the church by marshalling / leveraging / caring for our resources to carry out the church's vision in efficient, effective and faithful ways. Implementing values of stewardship, insuring/guiding the process, strategic planning, and helping plan how we move forward.

What's new:

As a member of the Leadership Team, the church administrator provides strategic leadership, oversight and support in the management of staff, resources, processes, policies and procedures needed to sustain the church and its ministries. This position's goal will be to collaborate and lead in all settings to inspire, support, and implement the vision and ministry of the congregation.

Currently, we have a Business Administrator who not only functions as a member of the Leadership Team, but also carries a large number of other responsibilities, including building management. The proposal of the LRSTF to shift this position into a broader Church Administrator position, and hire a separate Facilities Manager offers us an opportunity to strengthen team ministry.

The new position of church administrator will be a part of a leadership team that is charged and empowered to implement the dreams and vision of the congregation. The team, including this position, is to lead the congregation in moving forward with grace, effectiveness and faithfulness toward that which has been identified and embraced as God's call to the congregation.

Combining this administrative role with the clergy leadership roles at the Team Leadership level offers a balance that will increase its overall efficiency and effectiveness.

For information, the following structural pieces also have

responsibilities for the ministry of the congregation:

Executive Committee of the Church Council

The executive committee consists of the church officers, including the immediate past moderator, two at-large members of the council and the ministerial and leadership staff. The Executive Committee:

- joins with the Leadership Team to provide spiritual leadership to the congregation
- meets to review issues pending before church council and assists the moderator in preparation of the council's agenda.
- assists the council in its work by keeping track of the big picture and overall direction of the church.

Church Council

Church Council is the governing body of the church on behalf of the congregation that helps us carry out our work. The church council has authority to act for the church on behalf of the congregation between congregational meetings. Its duties include:

- coordination and evaluation of the overall church program, establishment of revised and new directions for the church, and long range planning.
- establishing personnel practices, procedures and organizational lines of authority for the employees of the church together with contract terms, including salaries, vacations and other benefits.
- administration of the church's property, cash, funds and securities and the preparation of the annual budget which it presents to the congregation for consideration and approval.

Boards and Committees

- Carry out specific programmatic or administrative responsibilities within their areas of ministry

Church Staff

- Supports congregational plans for equipping ourselves for ministry

Some reflections around questions concerning the role of Church Administrator in our ministry

1. Why not a fourth minister?

A There is a more effective and efficient way to carry out the ministry of the church. What we need is not an additional pastor but some ways to accomplish the administrative work needed so that the pastors we have can be more effective in their leadership.

2. What is the new position of Church Administrator?

A Aligned with the pastors, church council, and vision of the church, this position provides strategic leadership, oversight and support in the areas of administration, human resources, finance, facilities, communication, and information technology. This position focuses on the management of staff,

resources, processes, policies and procedures needed to support the church and its ministries. This position's goal will be to collaborate and lead in all settings to inspire, support, and implement the vision and ministry of the congregation.

3. Why this change?

A David Anderson has worked as our Business Administrator since 1997. During this time he has taken on additional duties not included in the original position description and provided leadership in areas where it was needed. It is important to note that he has also gone well beyond the traditional role of a "business manager" to serve the church from a deeply spiritual perspective and to identify his job as

an important part of his own personal Christian ministry. With three ministers instead of four, and with changes in the management of the building as a result of New Cornerstones changes, it is advisable to change this position for two reasons:

- The Church Administrator needs to play a fuller role in church leadership, and
- Maintenance of the building demands additional energy and supervision.

4. How does this change what the pastors do?

A This will free the pastors to do what they are called to do: ministries of preaching, teaching, pastoring, and transformation. This will strengthen them to carry out their ministries in a coordinated fashion and direction.

5. What would be the responsibilities in the position?

A In this new position, David Anderson would work as a full member of the leadership staff to help discern and define the congregation's vision, and then to help identify and implement strategies that support the vision, mission and ministry of the church. In another nonprofit setting, this position would be similar to the work of the Chief Operations Officer, with the entire leadership staff operating as the Chief Executive Officer. The full leadership staff would collaborate with the Church Council and other leadership to discern the church's vision and move it forward. In addition to the leadership and strategic responsibilities, this position would allocate administrative resources to carry out the church's vision in efficient, effective and faithful ways. This position would have responsibility for appropriate human resource, financial and legal realities, and would be a resource for the programs of the church to help them implement their ministries. This position would the congregation put its ideas into action. The new position would also include technology oversight, some communications oversight and disaster planning and safety.

6. Should this person be a member of our congregation?

A Yes, because this and the other leadership positions are charged with the spiritual health of the congregation, this would be appropriate. David has offered to move his membership to this congregation. We would enthusiastically accept his offer.

7. Should this person be present here on Sunday, every Sunday?

A We believe that while there will be several Sundays during the year when that person should be here, a better use of time for that role would be Monday through Friday. The pastors' current schedule is Sunday through Thursday., and this seems to give an appropriate balance of presence, collaboration and coverage.

8. Shouldn't this position be filled by an ordained person rather than a lay person?

A This is where we hope to embrace a new role in the United Church of Christ, that of Commissioned Ministry. A Commissioned Minister is called to perform specific vocational, church-related ministry for which he/she has special knowledge and skills. Such areas recognized by the Pacific Northwest Conference include: Christian education; church administration; church music; parish work, spiritual direction, and others. This is a way of honoring roles and gifts of non-ordained church leaders without the need for a Master of Divinity degree. David has proposed pursuing this status of Commissioned Minister and also to pursue receiving certification from the National Association of Church Business Administration.

9. How will a salary be determined?

A The council has approved a process for looking at leadership staff salaries in terms of equity (not necessarily equality) with each other and in wider contexts. This position will be included in that exploration. Look for more information from the council about this in the months ahead.

10. Is this creating a position for an individual rather than creating the positions the church needs and finding the best-qualified individual(s) to fill those positions?

A Our call as a leadership church requires a staff position like this to fill out our complement of staffing. This position does recognize the skills and background David brings, and allows us to use those skills in the best ways possible for the church.

11. How does the congregation as a whole understand and approve this important shift in makeup of the leadership team?

A It is essential that the congregation be completely engaged in this process and the January 13 congregational conversation will be such an opportunity. At the February 24 congregational meeting we will have an opportunity to vote to affirm this staffing structure and direction.