

TO: Prince of Peace Lutheran Church
Congregation Council

16 May 2017

FROM: Jack Ranby, Chair of the Personnel Committee

SUBJECT: Options to Supplement Pastoral Services

Background:

The current council must decide how to proceed regarding the contract pastor position because the position has become vacant without a plan to fulfill the tasks performed by the person in the position. In order for the Council to make an informed decision, the Personnel Committee undertook the following tasks: gathered information regarding the visitation services provided in 2015-2017; and surveyed the congregation concerning the level of visitation expected, its attitude toward lay volunteers performing visitations, acceptance of visiting pastors as substitutes, acceptance of lay bible study teachers, and some indication of the interest in being a volunteer.

Executive Summary:

The Council has three options:

1. Fill the existing contract second pastor position to perform the same tasks previously performed. This option is the simplest to execute as it does not require shifting duties among existing staff, maintains current experiences and expectations of congregation, and maintains the auxiliary benefits provided by having an experienced second pastoral staff member.
2. Hire another pastor to perform more limited tasks; and supplement with volunteers. Depending on the assigned tasks, benefits include having a permanent substitute in lieu of using visiting substitutes means Pastor Rick can maintain his focus on other tasks instead of devoting time to recruiting and orienting the substitute and planning the service, and it maintains continuity of visitor to shut-ins. Also, it keeps the auxiliary benefits of a second pastor to do congregation outreach on Sunday morning and be a sounding board for ideas regarding growth. This option may result in some cost savings depending on how limited the role.
3. Do not hire another pastor, but instead re-configure job descriptions for existing staff (Pastor Rick, Audrey, & Maria); and supplement with volunteers, and possibly clerical staff; hardest to implement; has most moving parts; but may result in cost savings to use funds for other purposes.

Recommendation:

Establish a pilot project working toward the third option. During the summer, use visiting pastors to cover Sunday services while implementing a plan to have volunteers shoulder at least 50 percent of the visitation services. Re-evaluate in October as the council approaches the budget cycle.

Discussion:

For the past several years, the church has operated with a second pastor, who was contracted for a set number of hours to perform specified duties. The most recent position description contains three main components:

- Visitation of members with focus on long-term needs (e.g. assisted living, homebound); also backfill Pastor Rick in short-term situations (e.g. hospitals)
- Substitute pastor: planning and preparing for the service (contents of bulletin, coordination with music); officiating and preaching on Sundays when Pastor Rick was gone, but in any event preside and administer communion approximately every three weeks.
- Bible Study classes; teach regular weekly session
- Auxiliary benefits included:
 1. Continuity of same person to stand in at visitations, funerals, and provide spiritual guidance for church staff and leaders in Pastor Rick's absence.
 2. Second pastoral staff to connect with congregation members on Sunday mornings as well as other times.
 3. Person who can be a true substitute because the person knows and can work with church staff to perform all tasks associated with organizing and officiating at a service (bulletin, music, communion servers).
 4. In-house sounding board and idea generator for senior pastor and church leadership.

Keeping this model would be the easiest to implement as it will only require recruiting a replacement. Financially, it would maintain the status quo as the congregation included funding the position in the 2017 budget.

A second option would be a mixed model where a second pastor is hired with more limited scope of duties. The combination of tasks could be any of the three, but the most likely would be serving as substitute pastor only or with bible study or visitation added. The congregation survey showed that close to 80% of the congregation preferred having visiting pastors. Therefore, including that task in the job description of a second pastor has low priority with the congregation; however, the congregation only sees the Sunday morning efforts; not the behind the scenes efforts that using a visiting pastor does not eliminate.

The third option is based on three major changes; reprioritizing and redistributing the duties of the pastoral staff by using lay persons (volunteers or paid) and visiting pastors. The vast majority of the congregation would accept the use of visitation volunteers and lay bible teachers. Survey respondents supported using volunteers for at least some visitations, lay teachers for bible study, and a variety of pastors for substitutes. However, going with this model eliminates all of the auxiliary benefits of having a second pastoral staff, places more work on church staff because itinerate pastors only officiate at the service, but this does not remove the need to plan the worship service. Using volunteers for visitation will create some new workload for the church staff in the form of recruiting, training, scheduling, and

tending to the potential spiritual needs of the volunteers. It will force Pastor Rick to face the age-old question “when is it easier to just do it myself versus having to manage someone else doing it.”

The visitation program deserves special attention. Because of the median age of our congregation, the visitation workload is substantially higher than would be experienced by a younger congregation. And while the survey results show the respondents support using volunteers, it is important to point out that most respondents have not used visitation services. Among the respondents who have used visitation in the last year, there was less support for volunteers. And the survey did not reach the homebound or assisted-living populations that use the services the most. However, Pastor Rick reports that most of the current shut-ins would welcome more visits than they currently receive. He believes these additional visits can be accomplished by volunteers. With increased visits by volunteers, he may be able to reduce slightly the frequency of pastoral visits. However, with the additional duty of supervising the volunteers, a reduction in overall workload may be slight.

Using volunteers increases the church’s liability exposure. When volunteers enter homes of elderly members who may have diminished memory or are easily manipulated, there is a risk of charges of theft when personal property goes missing or undue influence regarding financial or personal matters. There will need to be a vetting process for volunteers, which should reduce the risk; but it cannot be eliminated.

The financial impact of this option is hard to quantify, but there should be some reduction in personnel costs. It would not be 100% of the current budget line item because it may require increasing support staff expense as well as paying for visiting pastoral services. The 2017-18 council mission of growing the membership certainly provides opportunities to spend money. Do we seek professional help in developing a growth strategy and marketing plan, help in developing a social media presence, and development of our website? The allure of adopting option three to save money is strong. It is equally important to appreciate the benefits brought by a second pastor that will be lost. And, it is equally important to determine realistically the depth, breath, and commitment of volunteers to shoulder some of these tasks.

In making its decision in this matter, the council must to keep in mind that Pastor Rick is a finite resource, and it is important for the Council to prioritize the tasks it wants him to focus on. The tasks may include:

1. Routine planning and officiating at weekly worship.
2. Provide pastoral services to the congregation, e.g. counseling, visitations, weddings, funerals.
3. Be a chaplain and counselor to the preschool children, staff, and leadership.
4. Be Prince of Peace’s public face to the neighborhood, and participating in pro-growth activities.
5. Provide general administrative oversight of church operations, including staff development, leadership development, and new programming implementation.
6. Engage in vision casting, long-term planning,
7. Maintain a good work-life balance so he can perform these duties Prince of Peace for years to come.

The council needs to determine what level of effort it wants him to devote to each of these areas. Shifting some of the tasks historically performed by a second pastor to him will naturally impact the level of effort he can devote to new or higher priority efforts.

Teri Traaen's email includes the Synod manpower guidelines. The Synod's manpower guidelines are obviously for an "average" congregation. Prince of Peace congregation presents unique characteristics. Therefore, the solution adopted by the council needs to be tailored to the unique needs of our congregation.

It is the consensus of the Personnel Committee that proceeding to implement option three in some form is appropriate. The idea is to see which tasks historically performed by a second pastor can be provided successfully by using volunteers and visiting pastors. A successful implementation will take the coordinated efforts of the congregation, council, pastoral staff, and support staff. The Committee recommends the Council establish milestones for each task group to measure how successful the implementation is going. One member of the council should accept responsibility to be point person for this effort. And that in October 2017, the decision needs to be re-examined in front of the budget process. In the next couple of months, the Council needs to develop a specific growth plan and determine what contribution it expects Pastor Rick to contribute to that effort and how that might impact the workload of option three so that impact can be factored into the October program review.

Attach:

1. May 2017 Survey Results
2. Summary of Visitation Data
3. Data for Personnel Committee 2nd Pastor Research
4. Pastor Rick Memo
5. Proposed Second Pastor Job Description
6. Teri Traaen's/Synod Perspective