

Report of the UCUCC Staffing Proposal Committee-February 7, 2020

The Staffing Proposal Committee (SPC) has been meeting weekly to develop a revised staffing proposal that grows out of and incorporates information from the staffing structure proposed by the Future Task Force (FTF) and presented to church council in October 2019. In a Church Council vote in November 2019, the FTF proposal was not adopted because although 66% of members were in support, it did not meet the 75% approval level agreed on by Council. The SPC was then created and charged with developing a staffing proposal that considered both concerns raised by members of Church Council who voted against the proposed structure and concerns identified by the Futures Task Force and addressed in the original proposal.

We looked to many sources of information to inform our discussions including: Futures Task Force Report, “Sure Foundations--resources for the relationship between pastors and congregations” developed by the UCC denomination, UCUCC Accountability document created in 2012, reports from prior consultants, Associate Conference Minister of Church Vitality, Personnel Committee, Leadership Staff Parish Relations Committee (LPRC), Leadership Staff, and Anti-bias consultants.

We are a committee of diverse opinions but are unanimous in our support of this updated proposal presented to UCUCC Council at their February 2020 meeting. There are three components to the proposal: 1) Job descriptions for three clergy leadership positions 2) Accountability Chain and 3) Personnel Guideline changes.

How is the SPC proposal the same and how has it changed from the original Futures Task Force proposal?

The updated proposal retains the three clergy leadership positions contained in the Futures Task Force proposal: Minister of Care and Outreach (MCO), Minister of Vision and Stewardship (MVS), Minister of Worship and Christian Formation (MWCF). We have simplified and rewritten the job descriptions but have retained the general focus of the roles. (See detailed job descriptions)

The structure for supervision of Clergy Leadership staff was the focus of significant concern among Church Council members and the SPC spent the majority of our time considering options. The updated proposal does not assign supervisory authority to the MVS position, as was included in the original proposal. We believe, at this time, that Church Council, with the support of the Personnel Committee and Leadership Staff Parish Relations Committee, remains the appropriate supervisory authority for clergy leadership. In our proposal, the Personnel Committee is responsible for the process of evaluation but in the event of performance or behavioral issues the moderator and assistant moderator will be included in discussions. (See Appendix 1: Accountability Chain and Appendix 2: Personnel Guideline changes)

What are the problems these staffing proposals address?

Consultants working with our Leadership team over the last 15 years have consistently identified **three concerns** and these same concerns were reflected in the Futures Task force report.

One: Lack of clarity regarding roles and responsibilities.

Solution: Clear differentiation of roles and responsibilities in the new job descriptions.

Two: Lack of ability to define performance goals and enforce accountability

Solution: MVS position charged with ensuring an articulation of and tracking for performance goals of Leadership Team members. Increased clarity of relationships between Leadership Staff Parish Relations Committee, Personnel Committee and Church Council create a covenant and accountability chain (see Appendix 1: Accountability Chain)

Three: Inefficiency and a lack of strategic planning and vision

Solution: MVS position as Leadership Team Coordinator for efficiency and fostering clarity. MVS position as lead pastor for facilitating a process of visioning and helping the congregation develop a strategic plan from that vision.

Handoffs and Recommendations for ongoing work:

The Church Council charge to the SPC was to propose a staffing and accountability structure for the Leadership Staff. During our conversations and learnings, issues were raised that were outside of our scope but we believe are essential to the success of this proposal.

Anti-bias training: We need to deepen our work related to how we can be equitable, inclusive and fair in our decision processes. The Futures Task Force identified the need for anti-racism and anti-implicit bias training and that participants should include the Leadership Team, the Church Council, the Personnel Committee and the Leadership Staff Parish Relations Committee. The SPC agrees with this recommendation and would add ministry chairs to the list of participants.

Evaluation Process: Timely evaluations that include anti-bias considerations and the unique dynamics of pastoral evaluation are a key part of maintaining our commitment to our mutual Covenant and to pastoral excellence. The SPC proposal specifies that evaluations will happen yearly and that the MVS will support the work by identifying best practices. The scope of the SPC work did not include the tasks of articulating and tracking performance goals and implementing best practices. This is important ongoing work that will require more involvement of our congregational leadership including Moderator and Church Council to support the Personnel Committee and the Leadership Staff Parish Relations Committee (LPRC). It will require all of us to dig deeper into what is working well and what needs to be improved and how we can all work together for the good of our mission and faith journeys.

Communication around accountability: There is tension between the need to be confidential and a desire to be transparent. These processes need to be governed by clear guidelines about who is involved in discussions and how the information is shared. The SPC proposal specifies a yearly Personnel Committee report to Church Council and includes updated personnel guidelines for corrective action that specify who is involved in discussions. Further work is needed to develop guidelines about how and when this information is shared.

Leadership Staff Parish Relations Committee (LPRC): We recommend incorporating “best practice” recommendations for LPRC from “Sure Foundations”, a publication of the UCC denomination. Sure Foundations states: “The particular relationship between a pastor and congregation should be tended deliberately, so the ministries of both pastor and congregation complement each other and further God’s grace in the world”. The recommendations include

scheduling time for ministers to meet individually with the LPRC and standard processes for documentation.

Grief associated with a major pastoral transition: Significant staff changes including Peter Ilgenfritz, pastor for 25 years; David Anderson, business manager and member of leadership team for 22 years; and Erin Lovejoy-Guron, communication manager, produce anxiety in the whole system. It is important to understand how that is manifest in the decisions made during a time of significant change.

Assessment of our progress: It is essential that there be a rigorous evaluation one year after implementation of these recommendations to assure that we see this as a process journey and not just a destination of a “fix”.

Respectfully submitted February 7, 2020 by Staffing Proposal Committee: Ellen Naden (chair), Beth Bartholomew, Ed Coleman, Tim Croll, Mary Sue Galvin, Margaret Stine, Jan VonLehe, Todd Smiedendorf (staff liaison)