

Executive Summary

1. Children, Youth and Family Committee

2. April 13, 2023

3. Topics discussed

- Congratulated and welcomed Emily Gold in her new role as Children's Ministry Assistant. Emily will be working 10 hours per week assisting Joanne with birth-3 programming, including family connections and baptisms.
- Spent the rest of the meeting discussing Becca's resignation and asking questions about the role, responsibilities, etc. so that the committee has a clear picture of the role, as it exists today, as we plan for the future. While more detailed notes than normal, I feel it is important to share the entirety of that conversation with the Board.
 - Describe the main "buckets" of the position and what percentage of your time each one takes up.
 - Middle School - 49%
 - High School - 49%
 - College - Age 39 - 2% (not originally part of the job)
 - Changes seasonally and difficult to always give what's needed to one group during intense times for another group
 - What are the blessings of the position? What have you enjoyed most?
 - Middle school - their inquisitiveness, being there as they "try on" news things, including personal faith
 - Speaking grace into parent's lives
 - High school - developmental growth
 - Ability to be real with people & show up with them through all times of life
 - It's a treasure to be trusted with kids hearts & thoughts
 - Being part of a CYF team is a gift, and doesn't exist in many congregations due to size
 - What are the challenges of the position? What keeps you up at night?
 - Church as a whole is expected to be everything to everyone
 - Families believe Amped "should be" fun, but there are so many heavy things on kids' hearts and minds - it can be hard to shift into "fun" mode when a child has shared something really heavy on their way in.
 - Challenging to make space for all of the different needs of the youth in the congregation
 - Personal health & balance can be difficult, given the demands of the position as it exists today
 - Over the last 3 years - worked over 50% of weekends and 30% of evenings
 - This ministry includes a lot of events, requiring pre-planning and post event follow up. Expect 4 hours of followup after events - thank yous, clean up, summaries, etc.
 - Pressure to always be available to youth - late night texts, calls from kids in need
 - Families increasingly turn to staff for issues that are traditionally pastoral care, due to the relationships that have been created. Recent examples - significant amount of time spent in conversation with parents regarding their child (eating disorders, bullying, teen issues). People go to who they know and trust, and in our case the staff have created tight bonds with kids and families, so that is where they are turning. Staff don't always have the training, experience or tools needed to handle pastoral care. How can we provide support in this role?

- Once you are their youth director, you are always their youth director for life - reference letters, calls for advice, weddings, etc. - This is joyful, but time consuming. It is a privilege to be invited into lives, but not traditionally thought of as part of this role and time is not built into the role to allow for this.
 - How has the staffing of CYF changed over time?
 - Congregation has gone from 5 pastors to 3, plus a few hours of Joe's time
 - At one point in time staffing for CYF included:
 - Pastor of CYF
 - Director of Middle School Ministry
 - Director of High School Ministry
 - Director of Youth Ministry + supplemental support staff (some were PT positions)
 - One paid position to oversee Madison church school and a different person to oversee Verona church school
 - Paid subs to fill in for church school when someone was out of town or unavailable
 - Paid position to oversee Spark Night
 - 3 positions in youth music
 - Support staff to schedule volunteers, create materials, prep supplies, arrange baptisms, etc.
 - There were more participants in CYF ministry at the time when staff levels were higher, but the work itself has not changed. Planning Amped curriculum, activities, retreats, etc. is the same effort, whether you are planning for 120 or 200 students. A high school trip entails the same planning whether you are taking 20 or 40 kids.
 - How has the position changed since you started?
 - Providing much more pastoral care. Mental health challenges are prevalent, and access to care is limited. Kids and families are turning to church staff to fill that need.
 - Staffing levels impact ability to create relationships. Laura used to be part time support for Becca, but since she has left that role, Becca has both roles to fill.
 - Historically, some of CYF was volunteer driven, but culturally we have shifted to a more staff driven model. This is not sustainable.
 - Pastors historically created their own Amped curriculum, but staff now use other resources and craft that curriculum, which is then developed and delivered by the pastors
 - Consolidation of Amped from one night instead of two - very helpful for staff and easier for families who kids in multiple grade levels
 - Pastor Chris was originally supervisor, now Sarah is the supervisor
 - What impact has COVID had on the kids and how has that impacted this role?
 - During COVID the role mainly focused on relationship building and very little programming and saw an increase in HS youth group participation. Participation dropped back off once they went back to school and sports.
 - Again, mental health challenges are more prevalent, placing a very large need on CYF staff that they aren't necessarily trained to handle, nor have time to address. But, no one wants to turn away a child or family in need of support.

- Youth at all levels are less mature and lacking social skills historically typical for their age group. Requires much more effort to engage them, and to teach them how to engage with one another,
 - Current Numbers - How many middle schoolers are in Amped? High schoolers engaged in youth group? Young adults in 20-30 ministry?
 - MS - 102
 - HS - 70
 - College - 25 (students in active engagement with staff)
 - Young adults - 49
 - If you could recommend a staff structure for this area of ministry, what would it be?
 - Administrative support for CYF; can also serve as float to fill in during absences
 - Consider the load placed on this position; is it too much for one person?
 - Would you recommend any changes in programming?
 - Need to provide continuity for the youth during this transition
 - Consistency of Amped should remain as is - it's a staple of the church
 - High school ministry would benefit from being held every week
4. Items of importance/concern for the Board of Directors
- The CYF committee is thankful to have Sarah step back into CYF full time as we prayerfully consider how we structure this role in the future. But, we all have concerns for Sarah and her ability to manage her current role and the CYF role. Some activities and ministries are going to need volunteer leadership, or be put on the back burner for now. We want to ensure that Sarah remains supported and is not burned out by the increasing demands.
 - There are 5 congregations in the South Central synod with job postings for full time youth directors. We do not expect this to be a quick transition and are very committed to taking the time to get this right.
5. Requests for board direction - None
6. Requests for board approval - None
7. Attachments - None