

## REPORT OF THE STAFFING MODEL TASK FORCE TO ALBANY PRESBYTERY

June 1, 2019

It's been a long time getting from there to here, and where we are is not the end of where we are going. Albany Presbytery charged the Staffing Model Task Force to develop and present both a model and position descriptions. Today's report deals mainly with the model. It leaves to the Personnel Committee the assignment of translating responsibilities into formal position descriptions.

Knowledge of where this presbytery has been, and how God has provided in the past, helped the Task Force to trust in God's continuing presence and care. We have envisioned how we believe God is calling this presbytery to move into the future. Therefore, we submit this report with confidence, trusting it to be in accord with who Albany Presbytery is today and can become tomorrow.

Excitement and hope have grown up among us as we were seeking to fulfill our tasks.

### TIMELINE OF ALBANY PRESBYTERY STAFFING TRANSITION PROCESS

(provided by Dan Rogers, Stated Clerk)

2013 Presbytery Membership 6,471 Basic Witness Support (actual) \$295,656.

May General Presbyter Cass Shaw resigned

Jun Presbytery created the Transitional Presbyter Search Committee

FALL Search Committee recommended the Rev. Shannon Vance Ocampo as Transitional Presbyter

#### 2014 – 2017

Shannon Vance-Ocampo created the Staffing Transition Team, many of whom were also members of the Personnel Committee.

Feb 2017 - Personnel Committee reported its recommendations to Presbytery. It kept revising them up through June 2017. **None were approved.**

Jun 2017 – Presbytery charged its Council with creating what became the Staffing Process Advisory Team (SPAT). SPAT was told to recommend a process and timeline, but not a product – e.g. not an actual staffing model.

2018 Presbytery Membership 4,781 Basic Witness Support actual \$206,315

8 mo's SPAT organized 2 retreats, a curated seminar, and numerous opportunities for conversation.

Jun Presbytery postponed a motion from the floor to create a job description and then search for a General Presbyter.

Sep Presbytery defeated the General Presbyter motion, held over from June.

SPAT recommended, and Presbytery approved, creation of a Koinonia Team.

SPAT reported its finding that Presbytery would be able to proceed toward a staffing model.

SPAT was discharged with thanks.

Personnel Committee made a report that included information on staffing models, and suggested a "hybrid" built around a 30-40 hr. Relational Presbyter.

Nov Personnel Committee recommended, and Presbytery approved, directing the Coordination Committee to form a Staffing Model Task Force (SMTF), charged with presenting both a staffing model and position descriptions by March 2019  
Personnel Committee created the position description for a P-T Chaplain.  
(The Chaplain position was later filled.)

### STAFFING MODEL TASK FORCE PROCESS

Members: Michael Burkley, chair; Reilly (for Personnel Committee); Alexandra Lusak (for COMAC); Lynne Hardy (at large); Kate Kotfila; Tom Gregg (for Budget & Finance); Ted Wright (for Mission Committee)

Studied the history of documents and recommendations

Engaged the Synod Executive for input

Engaged other presbyteries

Engaged newer and younger members of Albany Presbytery for input

Offered time in presbytery meetings for discussion

Took into consideration Budget & Finance recommendations

Considered options including:

- Sharing staff with other presbyteries
- Dissolving, dividing, and/or combining Albany Presbytery with other presbyteries
- Having a F-T Presbyter, P-T Stated Clerk, Chaplain, Communications Manager, Secretary, and financial services under contract

Worked to clarify why Presbytery needs staff – e.g., which functions are necessary and most helpful

Michael Burkley led the team; Ted Wright acted as scribe, synthesizing meeting discussions.

### CONTEXT and CULTURE

Albany Presbytery has frequently asked a group of its members to come together and consider how we live into a preferred future. The Flipping Task Force preceded the SPAT. It introduced technical changes, such as the way meetings are organized (generative, strategic, fiduciary). It also sought to encourage transformational change. In the midst of its work, the General Presbyter resigned (2013). With Cass Shaw's departure, focus shifted from transforming the presbytery to staffing for a transformational presbytery. The difference may seem subtle, yet... ***could it be that the reason we have not been able to agree on a model for staffing is because what we really want is a different model for presbytery?***

In recent weeks the Staffing Model Task Force experienced a growing sense that Albany Presbytery may be nearing a Kairos opportunity for transformation. Though the model we recommend is merely one element of this, it's one which can support or inhibit all the rest.

SMTF has been reflecting on Presbytery's history and culture, including those "Insider/Outsider" perceptions previously noted by SPAT. We have found hopeful signs in several developments undergirding the common life: a new Koinonia Team, a new part-time Chaplain position, an improved web site, and willingness on the part of several committees to push ahead using their own gifts, with less dependence on staff. Our current staff, though leaner than before, may actually be offering us a clue as to what will prove helpful going forward.

Presbytery has recently downsized the equivalent of one full-time executive position. It has dispensed with the former physical office. Steps like these may encourage constituents to think about the presbytery less in terms of “*Them*” (a central corporate entity making policy, enforcing rules, taking money, intervening to solve problems) and more in terms of “*Us*:” an association of disciples united by a theological tradition, God’s love, and Christ’s mission. After all, “*them*” are over us. “*Us*” is simply... us.

Another significant component of Presbytery’s identity is the ongoing decline in church membership and corresponding increase in median age. About 50% of Presbytery now consists of small congregations, tilting toward gray hair, concerned with issues of survival. No central entity is going to fix-their problems. Often, such churches find it difficult to accept authority viewed as coming from above – or sometimes, even to ask for advice. But when Presbytery is “*us*” – all in this together; seeking God’s guidance together, depending together on God’s provision – churches and leaders may discover resources through networking and sharing. Presbytery could return to John Calvin’s model of a ‘company of elders’ – with shared responsibilities, shared leadership and mutual affection.

So, what structures and staffing will most encourage this to happen? (And SMTF fully recognizes that transformation involves more than structure and staffing. Its deepest requirements are spiritual.) Our recommended approach will return the work of this presbytery back to the presbytery. We need not look for an Executive to cast vision, or connect us to the wider church; nor to provide pastoral care, nor to coordinate the work of committees. *We* the presbytery can take responsibility for doing these things ourselves.

- We can authorize our NWC pastors to keep before us new ways to envision the work of the church (*e.g. Lucy Harris, Michael Plank, etc.*)
- We can authorize our global partnership leaders and global advocates to keep before us global concerns and denominational resources (*Kathy Gorman-Coombs, Ted Wright, etc.*)
- We can authorize those who are connected to the wider church to keep before us the work and resources of Louisville. (*Kathy Jones, Donna Jackson, etc.*)
- We can authorize our gifted coaches to help local congregations (*Tim Coombs, Chris Garrison, etc.*)
- And we can mobilize our retired ministers of Word and Sacrament, and ruling elders, to encourage and mentor, to keep doing things they love to do. (*More than 30% of our ministers of Word and Sacrament are retired.*)

### IMPACT OF SIZE ON STAFFING

Most churches in Albany Presbytery have either plateaued in size or been in decline for decades. But Presbytery has continued to function as if it were a mid-sized presbytery! We have reduced staff hours, but we have continued to utilize structures of the presbytery we once were. ***Smaller is different from larger. That difference is qualitative, not just quantitative. Smaller enterprises have different ways of functioning.***

***We need to identify and appropriate the strengths of ‘small.’*** We need to listen to our small-church sessions and pastors when they speak of the Church as more like an organism than organization, more relational than legislative, more of a sense of group ownership (where everybody pitches in) and less of the anonymous opting-out. Small churches depend less on executive leadership. With or without a pastor, small churches can find creative ways for the Word to be preached and sacraments to be administered. They can maintain mutual encouragement on the journey. Small churches have fewer hoops to jump through when a new idea is considered. They can be quicker in making decisions.

**“Less is actually more.”** Professional visionaries and experts are not needed as much as folks who can enhance our coordination and communication. Once we factor in cost considerations, that case becomes even clearer.

**SO THEN, WHAT SHOULD BE THE ROLE OF PRESBYTERY STAFF?**

*Bridge the gaps* – where we need continuity, but lack persons with the requisite skills or training to accomplish urgent or important tasks.

*Fill the cracks* – Identify, and direct attention to, places where people, projects and/or responsibilities may threaten to, or actually are, falling through cracks, which would result in a need for remedial attention.

*Facilitate high tech/high touch* – Use technology to help reduce distance, support relationships, and improve the effectiveness of mission.

In Albany Presbytery this translates into certain core functions for staff:

- Official record-keeping: rolls, minutes, authorizations, monitoring terms of office, etc.
- Communication: correspondence, notifications, web site, electronic meetings, etc.
- Financial management: invoices, payments, accounting, reporting, auditing, etc.
- Pastoral care for people in leadership. (This may or may not prove to be a long-term staff function, but it’s needed at the present stage of transformation.)
- Administrative coordination: providing resources to committees, initiating process improvements, monitoring compliance, providing financial oversight, supervising the rest of the staff, etc.

<b>STAFFING DESIGN RECOMMENDATION</b>
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Therefore, we recommend:

- 20 hrs/wk for Administrative functions**
- 20 hrs/wk for Stated Clerk functions**
- 20 hrs/wk for Secretarial and Communication functions, in one or two positions**
- 10 hrs/wk for Pastoral Care functions**
- Contractor(s) for the financial services**

**CONCERNS TO BE ADDRESSED (if this design is implemented)**

SMTF anticipates questions such as these:

- How will we avoid staffing only for maintenance, and not for growth?
- In the absence of an Executive, how will vision, inspiration, and/or leadership arise?
- Who will inspire and resource congregations toward greater missional lives?
- Who will provide training and re-training for elders, and Ministers of Word and Sacrament?
- How do we avoid Presbytery’s leaders burning out?
- How will the recommended model affect Presbytery’s current employees, and what are proper ways to deal with that?

## **ALBANY PRESBYTERY STAFFING MODEL, WITH MINISTRY RESPONSIBILITIES\***

***These positions are not necessarily discrete!***

*Under right circumstances, one or more positions could be combined.*

### **Administrator – 20 hours\*\*** *[In the sequence of filling positions, this should come first: by Dec. 2019.]*

Responsible to:

- Coordinate work of presbytery committees, as an ex-officio member of the Coordinating Committee
- Provide references, counsel, and conduct background checks pertaining to clergy in transition
- Offer training, resources and strategic support to congregational leaders and members
- Serve as chief administrative and programmatic liaison to Synod, General Assembly, and their constituent entities – e.g., be a liaison with regard to opportunities, resources, and requirements.
- Serve as staff liaison to the Trustees, Budget/Finance, CCDV, Mission, Leadership Development (CPM) and Personnel committees
- Monitor financial agreements and performance
- Motivate, develop and supervise non-Clerk presbytery staff; oversee the work of independent contractors

### **Stated Clerk – 20 hours\*\*** *[Second in sequence to be filled: by March 2020.]*

Responsible for:

- Official correspondence – re ecclesiastical business
- Lists and record-keeping – minutes, rolls, statistics
- Notifications – re presbytery meetings, reviews of Session minutes, deaths of presbyters, etc.
- Official reports, if and when requested by Synod or General Assembly entities
- Meetings of presbytery – invitations, arrangements, docket preparation, advice on procedure
- Interpret the PCUSA Constitution and Albany Presbytery Standing Rules
- Provide training to Session clerks
- Serve as staff liaison to COMAC and the Committee on Representation/Nominations
- Functions specified in the Book of Discipline

### **Chaplain – 10 hours** *[Third in sequence to be filled.]*

- Ministry description remains the same as at present.

### **Communication Manager – 20 hours\*\*** *[Fourth in sequence to filled.]*

*Personnel Committee, experience, and finance will together determine over time if 20 hrs is the optimal size for this workload, and can determine whether it's one position or two. Presently, it's two, but the Task Force envisions one.*

Responsible for:

- Document production, and/or proper confidential disposal
- Electronic communications: Website, E-News, Email blasts, Surveys, Feedback loops, Chatrooms, etc.
- Registration for events
- Visual projection at meetings of presbytery
- Routing voicemails and paper communications where they should go

### **Finance Contractor** *[Already filled, unless there be compelling reasons to change.]*

- No change in responsibilities

- Supervised by Trustees and paid for out of income from investments.

**Staffing cost under this arrangement should approximate the current \$162,000.**

\*We look to the Personnel Committee to fine-tune these responsibilities into position descriptions, taking into account compliance with employment laws.

\*\*Staff positions can include developing a team responsible for aspects of the position, while supervised by the staff person.