

TCPC Staffing Model – Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

As of October 18, 2018

This document is an additional resource for understanding the Staffing Model changes that were approved by Session on October 8, 2018. This document is based on feedback, questions and concerns that Session, staff and other congregational leaders have heard from our TCPC family. This document is also to provide consistent responses to the questions/concerns that we have heard.

We will update this FAQ document as we hear more feedback and concerns. Please discuss your questions or concerns with staff and/or Session members.

Timing and Need to Close the Associate Pastor (AP) Position

1. Why did Session take this action now? We've operated with deficit spending before and why not now?
 - a. It is true that we have operated with deficit in hopes the next year would improve.
 - b. Along with membership and worship attendance the number of family giving units has been on a steady decline for a number of years. Session was aware earlier this year that there were a number of generous families who recently left the church due to life transitions - retirement, moving, and death, and Session was preparing for a smaller 2019 budget. New members are not able to replace the giving of established, generous members. Session was also aware that spending for personnel has been at higher proportion of budget than best practices for several years. For all these reasons, Session acted by forming a task force.
 - c. The Task Force Report and Session actions were intentionally sequenced to be completed and used as input to the Pastor Nominating Committee preparations to describe our church and what TCPC is seeking for a new Head of Staff (HOS). Session desired to be prudent and responsible and to take necessary action prior to calling potential pastors for the HOS position.
2. Why didn't Session share more information earlier? Why do we feel shocked by this change?
 - a. We recognize that our congregation has a range of feelings and reactions to this announcement. Some members were aware of the need for significant staffing change due to financial issues; however, others did not have this awareness.
 - b. Session is acting with staff to provide frequent, detailed, and transparent communications and opportunities to meet in forums to ask questions and provide feedback.
 - c. We tried to be open and transparent in our communications: Finance chair gave a verbal "state of the church finances" at the April congregation meet-

ing. He was very clear of our negative financial situation for 2019 and the steps Session had taken to address the issue. One such step was the forming of the staffing model task force. An April bulletin insert and e-newsletter article from Rebekah spoke to the steps Session was taking to address these challenges. The staffing model task force interim report issued in August implied that major personnel cuts were coming. The August update was a bulletin insert and was included in the e-news.

3. Does this mean that Pastor Todd won't be at TCPC after May 2019?
 - a. Yes.
4. Why does the model include Pastor Todd staying through May 2019? Why isn't the timing for Todd to leave at year-end and TCPC to pay him severance?
 - a. The task force considered different time frames and believed that keeping the AP position open through the 2018-2019 program year made the most sense. The approved budget has funding for the AP position through May.
5. What will Pastor Todd do from now until May 2019?
 - a. Session will work with Todd to develop an agreement for his remaining months that is consistent with Presbytery polity. We intend to provide him flexibility and support as he pursues his next call/opportunities. We hope and anticipate Pastor Todd will be able to retain many of his current responsibilities as he works on his transition.
6. Is this about Todd and his performance?
 - a. No. The staffing model change is based on positions that we can afford and not on individuals. The change is due to membership changes and the allocation of projected available funds to meet our needs. TCPC, like most other churches with our membership, can only support one ordained pastor. As stated in the model, TCPC has been on a slow decline in membership and worship attendance. We have been spending more (than best practices) as a percent of total budget for personnel for some time, and we needed to cut a significant portion of personnel expenses to be in line with best practices.
 - b. The Staffing Model task force was formed to address these concerns. This was a very difficult decision by the task force to recommend closing the AP position.
7. How are we going to care for Todd and his family during this transition?
 - a. Our church has a long relationship with Todd and this is a painful change in our church family -- Todd has built many close relationships, officiated weddings and funerals, and has counseled and walked with us through challenges in our lives. We have cared for pastors with difficult transitions before, and we will care for Todd and his family.
8. Can Pastor Todd "apply for" or be considered by the PNC for the new Head of Staff position at TCPC?
 - a. Refer to the Book of Order (G-2.0504a) "An associate pastor is ordinarily not eligible to be the next installed pastor of that congregation".

Financial Questions

9. Why is this reduction in pastors coming right after finishing the renovation? We were successful in raising money for the renovation – is this because we spent too much on a renovation or have too much debt to repay?
 - a. This action is not related to the renovation. The campaign for the renovation was to ask for funds over and above and separate from the operating fund to meet an important building infrastructure need. The renovation has benefited TCPC, and we are probably in a better place financially than we would have been if we were still in a rapidly deteriorating upstairs with major repairs that were increasingly expensive and necessary but would not add value.
 - b. The Stewardship campaign is asking the congregation to contribute money to debt repayment that is separate from the operating fund. This request is over and above the operating fund request. TCPC has been successful in the past in completing much needed renovations and servicing the debt by way of using separate funds.
10. If TCPC could raise the money to fund the Associate Pastor position, could we keep the position open and could Pastor Todd stay?
 - a. As stated above, the overall personnel costs have been running over the best practice ratios for years, worship attendance does not support having two ordained pastors, and a number of generous members have transitioned and won't be contributing in the future. If TCPC stewardship campaign results exceed expectations, Session will review the results and act accordingly.

Other Impacts to New Staffing Model

11. Why does the staffing model include new positions at the same time we are closing the Associate Pastor position?
 - a. The task force found the thriving churches that were visited relied on part-time professionals to resource ministries. Session believes allocating our personnel resources to support/grow high priority ministries through use of part-time positions will position TCPC for future growth.
 - b. The model includes two new part-time positions that are *not budgeted* with hopes that funding will be available to start at the beginning of the fall program year in 2019 for mission/small group ministry and for youth ministry.
12. How will we fill all those volunteer needs at TCPC?
 - a. We will need to find ways to reach out to our congregation and to find ways to match talents and interests with work that needs to be done at TCPC. Session will need to figure out the best way to engage those who are ready to fill the needs of our church. We will need your help and willingness to participate in the call for volunteers.
13. What does this staffing model change and transition indicate about the future for TCPC?

- a. TCPC has many gifted, caring and gracious members. We are located in a vibrant and growing community that provides opportunities to serve. Many of our friends and neighbors locate here facing transition and the challenges and opportunities that come with it. TCPC, like the community we are in, holds great promise and opportunities for us to serve our Lord. Our prayer and expectation is that the TCPC family will rise to this challenge as we always have, and continue to focus on serving our Lord as the body of Christ at TCPC.