

Missional Opportunities

Hello my friends,

For the last few weeks, as Parish Council we have been reflecting on our life together and in what ways we need to expand in order to begin building capacity for mission in our community and neighbourhood. There are two areas of ministry that need immediate leadership development.

First is the Mandarin speaking community. There is no doubt that this is a necessary ministry in our church and local community. Our neighbourhood has a high Asian population. A large proportion of this population are Mandarin-speaking. From the many conversations I have had with the Mandarin speaking pastors in our local community it is clear that in our church context, we are very poised for this kind of ministry. However, the reality is that we need a specific kind of leadership for this ministry to grow and flourish. This is why we are proposing to employ a part-time Mandarin speaking Lay Pastor (25hrs) for this position not later than March 2022.

Second is the community work. In the past few months, we have been exploring and discerning together through conversations what might God be calling us to. It is clear to us that there is a lot happening in our community (notwithstanding the lockdowns). It would be valuable to have a Community Pastor come on to the pastoral team to support and encourage the practical outworking of our vision statement. From the start of my employment there was a stated desire for a team approach to ministry. This team recently has consisted of the Parish Council, the Mandarin speaking Lay Pastor, Office Administrator and the Minister. In the past we have had a Children Youth and Family Coordinator. Some may ask why we aren't seeing a proposal for a Youth Pastor; the reasoning is because we are in a season of regrowth and rebuilding. To do this well, it would be worthwhile to have this support in looking at the needs of our community, the programs we run as a community, how we are outreaching and how we are enabling our vision statement in real time as a community.

There is a significant need for pastoral care in our current community. There are also many responsibilities of being a cooperating parish. While it is vital for me to be intimately involved in all aspects of ministry at St Johns, it is not feasible that growth can happen if I am also to be the one implementing all of the strategies and approved ministries as the outworking of our community. The Community Pastor would work closely with me as the Minister, but also with the Mandarin Lay Pastor and any other roles that the Parish Council deems necessary to be added in the future.

The proposal for this position would start with a part-time position that has potential for growth in the future. An initial start for this position would be 15 hours per week. A yearly review of this position would also be instituted to determine successes and challenges and hour suitability.

Overall Responsibilities

The Community Pastor will be the practical implementation of “Being the Gospel to all People.” The role will be responsible for the organisation, support, training and vision of the churches varying intergenerational and inter-cultural ministries as well as the organisation for outreaching events in the community.

Following this development in our conversations. The Parish Council has decided to apply to the Northern Presbytery for a significant funding for these two positions. The application closes on the 12th November 2021 and we should receive a decision thereafter. Would you please join us in prayers as we wait on the outcome of this application.

Blessings,

Jeff Odhiambo