

# **Shepherd of the Sea Congregation Council Response to Submission of the Orama Team Strategic Plan Recommendations**

Submitted by Council President, Michele Dukes

## Attitude of Gratitude

"Council expresses deep and heartfelt gratitude to and recognition of the Orama Team, facilitated by Rev. Dave Nelson, for the thorough, enlightening, and inspiring Strategic Plan Recommendations.

We resolve to study the plan and discern a path forward following the training of Rev. Dave Nelson on Stages of Congregational Development, Principles of Strategic Planning, How Congregational Change Actually Happens, and Qualities of a Leader.

We give thanks for the Holy Spirit's involvement and pray for the Holy Spirit to guide us forward.

We further resolve to courageously support each other, SOS Staff, and all who SOS ministries touch and will touch by working through the challenges of transitioning SOS to a "Discipleship" congregation in order to further be God's Hands doing God's work in the world."

Motion by Michele Dukes; Seconded by Danielle Johnson

Unanimously approved by the Shepherd of the Sea Congregation Council

Saturday, January 11, 2020

## Approval of Receipt

"We [SOS Council] receive the Strategic Plan Recommendations report of the Orama Team. With open minds and open hearst, we will use the recommendations in guiding our planning and execution of strengthening, renewing, and furthering the mission of SOS. As the Orama team states, "With these recommendations and others, let us take what is already here in our community, offer it ALL to Jesus, and expect that our Lord will make of it not only enough but more than enough—an abundance right here in this place."

Motion by Dwight Daily; Seconded by Sandy Douglas

Unanimously approved by the Shepherd of the Sea Congregation Council

Sunday, January 12, 2020

## Implementation Expectations

We thank the Orama Team for their efforts in developing the recommendations. We thank the Congregation for their participation and support of this effort.

This Plan will be studied carefully and addressed by Congregation Council over the coming months to develop our short and long term planning.

## Adoptions

The SOS Congregation Council adopts the following specific items immediately:

- 1) Page 2 – Staff Expansion – 1<sup>st</sup> item
  - a. “Create part time visitation pastor position”
    - i. Position addition approved in November Budget Congregational Meeting.
    - ii. Position Description approved for “Visitation Chaplain”
    - iii. Hiring to proceed as soon as practical
- 2) Page 2 – Staff Expansion – 2<sup>nd</sup> item
  - a. “Create part time position for Pastor of Discipleship Ministries”
    - i. Position addition approved in November Budget Congregational Meeting.
    - ii. Position Description approved for “Discipleship Pastor”
    - iii. Hiring to proceed as soon as practical
- 3) Page 3 – Senior Pastor – Paragraphs 1-3
  - a. “Provide a 3 month sabbatical for the Senior Pastor (June, July, August 2020)...”
    - i. Approved by Council at Council Retreat.
    - ii. Communication to begin immediately
    - iii. Planning team to commence as soon as possible
- 4) Page 5 – Evangelism Team – last bullet item
  - a. “The new staff position, Pastor for Discipleship Ministry, will have primary responsibility for working with this team.”
    - i. Initiated per Item 2 above.
- 5) Page 7 – Food Pantry
  - a. “...urge continued support...and periodic review that may identify further growth...”
    - i. Adopted and in-progress

Adopted by SOS Congregation Council – Sunday, January 12, 2020

# **ORAMA TEAM**

## **STRATEGIC PLAN RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Introduction**

A diverse group of leaders from Shepherd of the Sea have worked for more than 100 days to prepare a set of strategic plan recommendations to the Congregation Council. Orama—the Greek word for “vision”—has been the true north of our conversations. We have sought to faithfully discern what God’s mission for Shepherd of the Sea is and what ministries we can strengthen, renew, and begin that will further that mission.

The Orama team has worked with a consultant for this process and has provided multiple opportunities for congregational engagement. The process began with a defined “listening season” during which the team carefully listened to voices and perspectives both within and outside the congregation. We have tried to craft recommendations that are clear, achievable, and measurable. The recommendations seek to both recognize and “recalibrate” ministry to the significant growth of the congregation over the past 8 years and to prepare the congregation for new growth and service in the years ahead. Some of the recommendations are immediate, and indeed already in progress, while others are more aspirational. We offer these recommendations for the approval of the Council at the January retreat and thereby complete the work of this team. We strongly believe these recommendations should be accompanied by a clear, consistent and redundant effort to familiarize the congregation with the proposed plan, its implications and hoped for impact.

The recommendations are organized into two broad areas. We thought about God’s mission in terms of the building up of the community of Shepherd of the Sea and reaching out, in Christ’s name, to serve and bless our wider community. And so, the recommendations are divided into two major areas: building congregational capacity and outreach to the larger community. We serve a vision that seeks to strengthen and prosper the community of Shepherd of the Sea so that it might more fully and effectively witness to God’s grace in our place.

Finally, these recommendations are presented mindful of the probability of a capital campaign to construct a new building. We believe these strategic recommendations should be thoroughly considered when developing the core rationale for a capital campaign.

## **CONGREGATIONAL CAPACITY RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **STAFF EXPANSION:**

- + Create part time visitation pastor position
- + Create part time position for Pastor of Discipleship Ministries
- + Expand Secretary position to full time
- + Expand the hours and expectations of the current part-time youth leader position
- + Initiate a PIT (Preachers in Training) ministry for lay people. Pastor of Discipleship Ministry will provide training leadership.
- + Initiate a training program for music ministry lay assistants. This program might mirror the PIT (Preachers in Training) program. These trained assistants will serve across the various music ministries and needs of the congregation.

The Orama team thoroughly discussed the option of recommending the call of an Associate Pastor. We felt the creation of several positions creatively utilized present personnel resources, provided more targeted ministry expertise, was financially more viable, and had the preferred support of the Senior Pastor. We recognize that this recommendation was discussed and supported by the Finance Committee, the Council, and approved by congregational vote. We believe this is the most productive way forward to support the larger congregational ministry and the strategic plan going forward.

In regards to the youth leader position, given the proposed expansion of our youth ministries below, a staff position to lead this vital area of ministry is of the utmost importance as we grow and reach more lives and families.

### **SENIOR PASTOR**

The Orama team was mindful of the significant growth of the congregation and its ministries and the increased demands placed on the Senior Pastor. The team was also openly supportive of taking steps to insure that the Senior Pastor feels supported and will continue in his call at Shepherd of the Sea.

- + Council appoint a small committee, with persons recommended by the Senior Pastor, to review and revise the Senior Pastor's position description. The new description should reflect the realities of congregational growth, the addition of staff support, changing roles, and should align

his ministry with the strategic plan. The revised description should be presented to the Council for approval and interpreted to the congregation.

+ Provide a 3 month sabbatical for the Senior Pastor (June, July, August 2020). The sabbatical should provide an opportunity for rest and renewal. This will allow the Pastor uninterrupted time to examine ministry models and best practices for leading congregations through the transition from “program churches” (SOS currently) to larger “discipleship model” churches.

Sabbatical leave is recommended every 5-7 years by the Synod. Pastor Brad has never had a sabbatical and its provision is part of his call contract at SOS. The team strongly feels sabbatical leave is in the self-interest of both Pr. Brad AND the congregation. It is the most effective thing a congregation can do to care for its pastor and increase the likelihood the Pastor will stay in the current call. Providing time for Pr. Brad to study exactly the transition SOS is navigating and returning refreshed is very much in the self-interest of the ministry and the strategic plan.

The education of the congregation regarding sabbaticals should begin as soon as possible and be thorough. A plan for covering ministries (and indeed developing certain ministries and leaders) should be presented to the congregation at the time the sabbatical is announced. Opportunities for questions and engagement should be provided periodically.

## **MUSIC MINISTRY**

+ Organize and support a group of 5-10 persons to lead worship and congregational singing at the 8:00 service. Utilize a trained music ministry lay assistant to help lead this group.

+ Host guest instrumentalists and vocalists at least once per quarter and then more frequently. In time the goal is to host guest musicians once per month at each service. The Music Director will assume primary responsibility for arranging this.

+ Develop a Musician Exchange ministry with local churches.

+ Fully develop a music center and choir space in the proposed new building.

+ Adult leaders partner with youth to develop a Creative Arts program. This program will fully utilize the space in the new building. This ministry will be varied, include fund raising events to support its work, and provide volunteer hours for students.

+ Develop a recruitment team to engage musicians for the contemporary service, particularly from outside the current congregational membership. Specifically encourage the youth to participate in this ministry. The goal will be to encourage enough persons so that Whosoever has a full rotation of musicians, singers and production teams.

- + Redundantly invite participation in and awareness of Whosoever within the congregation. Utilize all forms of communication on a regular basis to grow this ministry.
- + Develop a core list of praise songs to increase familiarity within the congregation and facilitate less rehearsal challenges. Create a regular plan for incorporating new songs and rotating familiar ones. Increase the awareness of the congregation having an opportunity to share its song preferences.
- + Develop an appropriate music budget to support the preceding recommendations.
- + In 2020 offer a special giving appeal to fully cover needed organ repairs and further support the broader music ministry of the church.

## TECHNOLOGY

- The Secretary will coordinate the development of an expanded tech team to implement the following recommendations and meet additional needs as they arise.
  - Enhance the online presence of Shepherd of the Sea to increase visibility in the community and attract new partners. This includes a revamp of the current website as well as expanded use of current social media platforms. Both the website and social media allow for the ability to promote new and existing programs and events to current partners, those who haven't joined yet and the community as a whole.
  - Opportunities to reach shut-in members as well as snowbirds that found us on vacation by livestreaming every Sunday/Wednesday as well as holiday services via Facebook Live (or similar platform).
  - Build on the expansion of the tech team used to operate the video/sound booth during services. This team could also be responsible for setting up the live stream and taking other images/videos during services.
- A dedicated team of adults and responsible, tech-savvy youth to have access to SOS Facebook and Instagram accounts.
- Eventually a redesign of the website to incorporate high-quality photos and videos of ministry in action. The site should allow for sharing of events directly to social media and via email.
- Enhanced wifi for the sanctuary and new building to allow for live streaming.
- Utilize text applications to allow for reminders to individual ministry groups/youth/entire congregation (Remind, GroupMe etc.)

- Organize a “Technology Night” for anyone that has questions about accessing SOS website/social media and setting up text ability for group chats.

### **SMALL GROUP MINISTRY:**

+ The congregation council, in consultation with the Senior Pastor, appoint a small team to develop recommendations for significantly expanding small group ministry in the congregation. As congregations grow numerically it is imperative that small group ministry expand to provide more intimate and relational ministry experiences.

The small group ministry team will explore and pilot various ways to create small groups, particularly the idea of “affinity groups”.

+ Create small “Koinonia” groups in the church. These groups are easier and less intimidating than the “whole church” for veterans and other target groups to access. Establish SOS “partners or shepherds” in these groups to guide new partners into the community of faith.

+ Develop a new member assimilation program. This may be part of the work of an expanded evangelism team to be trained by the Pastor for Discipleship Ministry.

### **EVANGELISM TEAM:**

This recommendation is to both respond to the significant growth at SOS. It also seeks to develop practices to help the congregation reach out even more effectively, welcome new people more intentionally, and accelerate growth.

+ Develop and train a team of leaders to serve as an evangelism team. This team would work to develop a “protocol” for engaging people new to the congregation from first contact to joining.

+ This team will explore ways to reach out to people in the community, engage new residents, and raise the profile of SOS.

+ This team will work on best practices for welcoming visitors, follow up efforts, encouraging associating with the SOS ministry, revising new partner orientation, and assimilation into the life of the congregation.

+ The new staff position, Pastor for Discipleship Ministry, will have primary responsibility for working with this team.

## + **COMMUNITY OUTREACH RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **MINISTRY WITH SENIORS**

- + Develop a Senior News section in the SOS newsletter
- + Utilize all forms of communication to announce ministry opportunities
- + Assign partners in ministry to make regular contact (phone, email, visits) with shut-ins including bringing the sacrament.
- + Partner with congregational youth to create a “nerd patrol” to assist seniors with communications such as smart-phones, computer set-up, email, face-time etc.
- + Create a network of congregational members to provide transportation for seniors to church services, medical visits, and congregational and community events.
- + Partner with the Parish Nurse Ministry of Saint Peter Lutheran-Southport (a broad signature senior ministry program) to develop a plan for a broad ministry with seniors (including financial and estate planning, insurance assistance, medical needs, healthy life practices, socialization, and other identified needs.) A senior ministry coordinator (not a staff position) be identified and trained and work in partnership with the Parish nurse to further this ministry.
- + Assist the elderly in evacuations during hurricanes and other natural disasters. Work with other Churches not in evacuation zones to determine if they can shelter some of the elderly evacuees. Work with the Lutheran camps to determine how they may assist in sheltering the elderly evacuees. Recruit volunteers to drive evacuees to designated locations and to assist them in clean-ups upon return to the area.

### **FEEDING MINISTRIES**

#### **COMMUNITY LUNCH**

- + Work with area Churches to get others to take a turn with preparing the meals for all those in need. Ideally, if we can get more area Churches involved we can expand the luncheons to two days a week.
- + Add Additional Elder Fairs to the Community luncheons to assist the elderly in choosing the right Medicare Programs for their needs, providing assistance with Medicaid, disability and Social Security, legal concerns, etc. is beneficial for the seniors. Advising seniors of existing programs designed for them such as Neighbor to Neighbor car rides, etc. Expand the role of the



Parish Nurse at the Community Luncheons to provide additional testing or vaccinations such as pneumonia, shingles, etc.

Coordinate these goals with the Senior Ministry proposals we have made earlier in this document.

## **FOOD PANTRY**

+ This is an existing ministry providing over 1,000 meals per month. We urge continued support for this vital feeding ministry and periodic review that may identify further growth in capacity as community needs increase.

## **MINISTRY WITH YOUTH**

+ Partner with the Healthy Concepts non-profit (Lisa Melendez—president and congregational member) to develop a joint SOS-Healthy Concepts after school ministry with area children. Healthy Concepts is an established community non-profit working with communities to help youth combat bullying and improve self-esteem in a safe and nurturing environment. SOS has already begun a working partnership with Healthy Concepts.)

+ The Council will convene a Youth Ministry Team to develop a strategic plan with a three-fold foundation of “Fun, Service, and Learning.” This plan is to include proposals for staffing and budgeting for growing these ministries.

+ Propose to the Finance Committee a budget to support the after school program and the strategic plan recommendations of the Youth Ministry Team.

+ Work with area businesses, youth programs, and other potential partners to respond to youth in crisis.

## **MINISTRY WITH VETERANS**

+ Host two “Community Days” per year to make veterans aware of services and organizations that can be of help. Include the VA Clinic and other veterans organizations, including Hospice Care as many of our veterans are aging out.

- + Establish and strengthen connections with the Veterans Café in Socastee.
- + Partner with area churches to seek out and arrange visitation with veterans who are isolated, lonely, and in need. Implement this ministry much like a shut-in ministry of the church.
- + Sponsor a major Job Fair annually at SOS. Enlist employers to come and seek out individuals who may be assets to their business. Make employers aware of specific job skills possessed by many veterans and offer job skill training for others.

## **MINISTRY WITH LGBT COMMUNITY**

+ Create the ability to Host coastal business guild events at the church. It would serve as a free location for any events or activities. We can makeover the narthex or fellowship hall to accommodate any needs of the meeting. (Tables, chairs, tablecloths, audio, video) We have the kitchen available so catering or having dinner at these events will also not be an issue.

+ Work on the website and social media platforms to include an LGBT slide, resources, and contacts for pastor or someone else to call to talk to. This ties directly into the counseling idea and “Safe Spot” initiative.

+ Sponsor counseling for LGBT kids (families included) We currently work with a counseling facility and have a counselor on premises of SOS once a week. We could potentially grow this.

Host an annual event on national “coming out” day. This could even be put on and promoted by our youth group. We could also post flyers around town at the businesses in the coastal business guild, as well as at the karate studio and other business partners in the community. That way we can reach the kids who may need the support from such an event. Have a parking lot event with some games and maybe a food truck or two, bake sale to support the church. invite some business from the coastal business guild to come down. Make it a family friendly event that showcases our inclusiveness and invite those from the community to either be a part of it or just to see that we are truly an ally.

## **EVALUATION:**

We suggest the Congregation Council consider utilizing these strategic recommendations as the basis for establishing 2020 goals. We think the Council process of evaluating its goals on a regular and consistent basis is excellent and if applied to these strategic recommendations will enhance the likelihood of their successful implementation.

## **FINAL WORD**

The Orama team has been blessed to share a discernment process together and offer these strategic plan recommendations to the Congregation Council. We are happy to assist further as the Council may desire.

We offer these recommendations full of faith that our God is powerful and is with us today and in the days ahead. The miracles of Jesus mostly follow a blessed pattern. Whether it is on a hillside where there is nothing to eat or at a wedding reception where the wine has run out or at the very last supper among friends, the miracles of Jesus follow this pattern:

See the need

Take what is already present in the community

Give it ALL to Jesus

Jesus makes not only enough but more than enough—an abundance.

A boy on the hillside gave what was already there—a few loaves of bread and some fish. The wedding guests used the jars of water already in the hall. Jesus' friends used the bread and wine present at a last meal. And they gave ALL of these present gifts to Jesus.....not some but ALL. And Jesus made of them an abundance. In one case Jesus made enough to feed 5,000 with baskets left over. In another case He made the best of wine for all the guests to drink. And at the Last Supper he made an enduring gift of the presence of His very body and blood.

We humbly suggest that SOS follow the same pattern. With these recommendations and others, let us take what is already here in our community, offer it ALL to Jesus, and expect that our Lord will make of it not only enough but more than enough—an abundance right here in this place.