

## Pastor's Report

### December 19, 2019

#### Some numbers from 2019:

- 4 baptisms
  - Summer Kaleh, Henning Coffel, Alden Coffel, Derek Ingram
- 3 youth began Confirmation class
  - Lucas Nihlean, Fiona Olufs, Jackson Olufs
- 6 new households as members – comprising 14 people
  - Madsens, Olufs, Bensons, Hortons, Kalehs, Andrea Swehosky,
- 7 households who were already members becoming more deeply engaged in the life of the congregation – taking on leadership roles and responsibilities beyond Sunday mornings
- 35 visits to homebound, 35 to hospitalized, 14 about membership and increased involvement
- 12 one-on-one conversations with key community leaders
- 5 funerals and/or memorial services this year
  - Jerry Rische, Vera Coffman, Layne Jungmann, Ernie Chalfant, Anne Boyle
- 24 frequent attenders of Evening Prayer at Lake Travis Independent Living (Avg attendance of 14)

#### Pastoral Goal Evaluation:

Here are my reflections on the goals I had for my ministry with Spirit in the Hills this year.

#### Worship:

- More people involved in worship planning and worship leadership
  - During the worship volunteer training sessions, we had a total of 14 new volunteers added to and included in worship leadership. We have also been involving the entire worship and music team instead of just myself, Sharon, and Jacquie in worship planning. I have seen effective accomplishing of this goal.
- Keep changing instrumentation and inviting more musicians and singers to provide support for congregational music or special music
  - We have included more musicians and are continuing to include and develop a larger music ministry including our kids choir. I think this goal has also effectively been accomplished.
- Worship Workshop
  - I intended to hold a half-day worship workshop to teach the parts of worship and brainstorm creative and engaging ideas for liturgy and worship. This was not accomplished.

#### Outreach, Invitation, and Welcoming:

- Welcome visitors well and make good on our commitment to accompany them on their faith journey.
  - We have redone our guestbook and connection cards as well as improved our new member process. We have welcomed several households as new members and have 3 more households who have joined but have not yet been welcomed as members in worship.
- Goal to redo the website:
  - Our website redo is done. This helps serve as our front door to the world.
- Help us grow in diversity and truly live out our saying, ALL are welcome.
  - Many of our newer members and regular visitors are of a variety of ages
  - We have continued to include new voices in leadership
  - Hosted an interfaith gathering as well as Partners in Hope meal that included many who do not attend church and offered a welcome in Spanish as well as English
  - I feel that we did some wonderful work accomplishing this goal.

- Some of my continuing education in 2019 and hopeful continuing education in 2020 also is in the area of this goal.

A better defined and filled church structure that aligns with our vision and values:

- There is still plenty of work to be done, but I think some good progress was made in sharing responsibility and empowering others to make decisions and lead areas of ministry. This conversation is ongoing among council and other leadership and has been affirmed as a need through the Dream God's Dream Sunday School

Leadership

- Shepherd the congregation through significant leadership transitions
  - I feel like we are moving through and to a good spot. Our officer positions and council have been filled with strong and capable leaders. We communicated well with each other and the congregation throughout the process. Not without its difficulties, but overall I feel this has been accomplished well.
- Guide congregational leadership in discerning, setting, and achieving goals aligned with our congregation's overall mission.
  - Excellent Annual Roadmap retreat and great progress and checkins made toward those goals.
  - New leaders and leadership structures in response to some of these goals like mental health ministry and congregation garage sale
  - Budgeting process has also been a big win with regard to planning, goal setting, and envisioning what the next year might bring.
- Lay the groundwork for a larger visioning conversation in 2020
  - I feel like we have had several conversations among different groups in the congregation that have prepared us to do this work. Some examples are below.
    - Future Facilities
    - Children, Youth, Family Ministry
    - Dream God's Dream
    - Canoeing The Mountains Book Study

**Other Year End Reflections**

Future Facilities Team

- Fantastic work this year, especially as the first several months seemed like more of the same – looking but not finding. We accomplished the council goal of closing on a property and it is a fantastic one that we are already working on – even as we continue to wait for final permit approval from the county. We continue to give thanks to God for this new step in our congregation's life and look forward to what things God will strengthen and what new ways will come about that we can share God's love in the community and world.

Staff

- We are celebrating the end of over a decade of service by Sharon French as our volunteer Choir Director. January will be an occasion to continue to celebrate as well as have some conversations to help us determine the path forward in terms of our choir and what we might be looking for in a choir director.
- We continue to give thanks for the ways that Lynette Lawson and Jacquie Tomhave share their gifts as members of our staff. They are passionate about helping us live into our mission and share God's love as we seek to involve all the members of Spirit in the Hills in this mission and ministry. Hoping to complete annual evaluations with each of them in January.

## Organizational Structure

- We have built on our work sharing responsibility and empowering decision making from these leaders and team members. It is great to see them acting and then sharing information and only referring large questions to council. This was especially tough and all the more impactful in a year with significant leadership transition among the council and officers of the congregation.
- As we enter into a year where we will be spending more time discerning God's vision and strategizing for the years to come, we will hope to continue to refine our organizational structure as well as help define some helpful processes that share leadership, encourage participation, and free us up to live into our vision and values while stewarding well the gifts that God has given us and striving to share the life and love of Christ in our world.
- Also building on momentum we saw at the end of 2018, and somewhat out of necessity as some of our congregation's lay leaders needed to step away from some responsibilities, many of our members are leading by example in mentoring, training, and equipping others to step into new roles. They're being successful as they invite someone to do something with them, continue to give them advice, but then give them space to make it their own. Let's keep this going!

## Mission, Vision, and Values

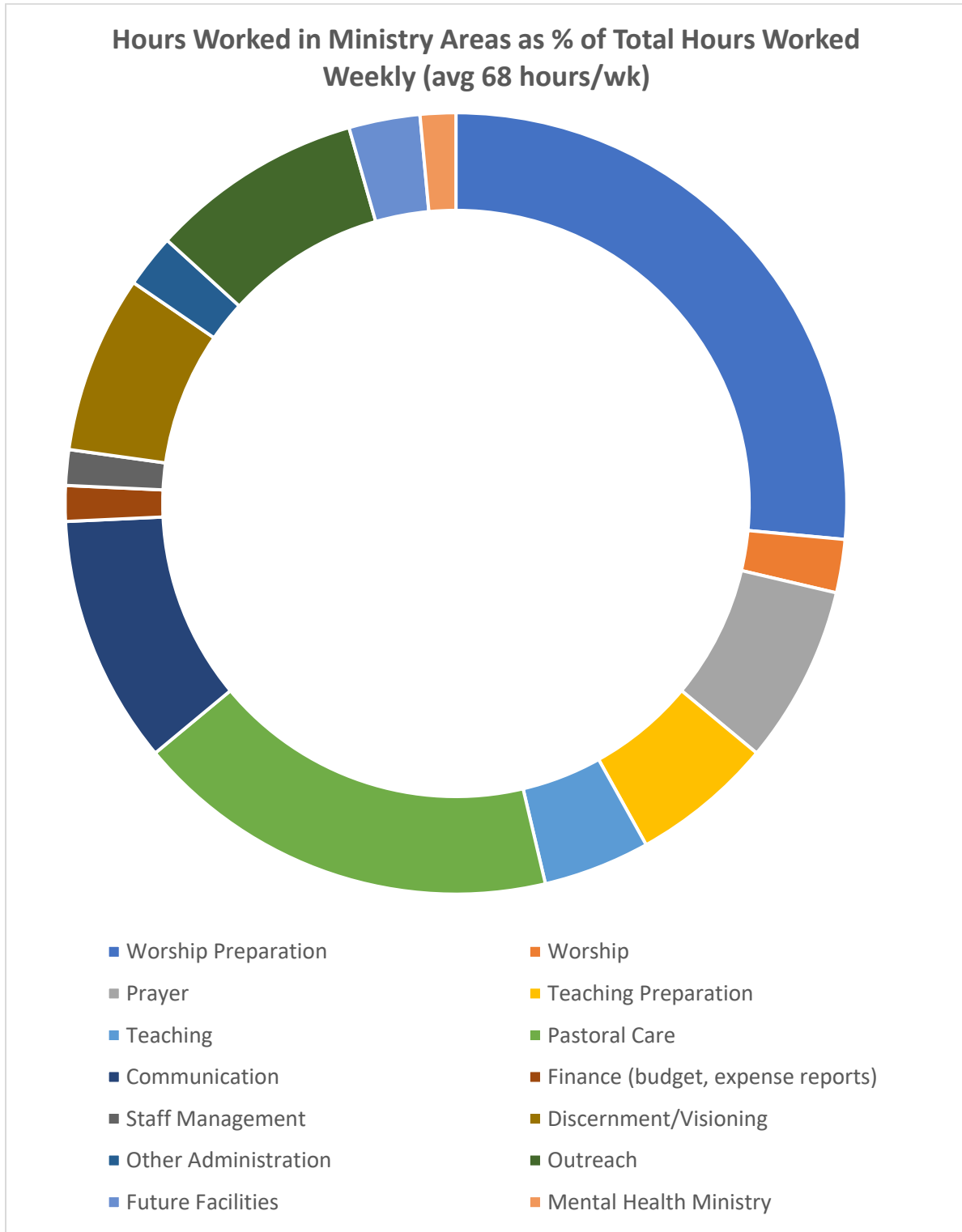
- I love the work on annual values the council has been doing, I think in 2019 we can do an even better job of articulating our goals and values to the congregation so that it is motivating for more and more of us
- We have laid the groundwork have some visioning conversations as a congregation during the coming year. Either to reword, or simply to articulate what our mission and vision are as God's people at Spirit in the Hills in this place at this time.
  - Centered, Inspired, Sent.
    - Connecting, Equipping, Serving.
      - Worship. Spiritual Growth Opportunities. Ministry Teams. Having Fun Together.

Some new things that took place this year and seem to be giving life to the congregation and inspired by the Holy Spirit:

- Online Book Group
    - People who may not be able to engage in something like this otherwise experienced new connections, stronger relationships, and learned and grew in faith and love.
  - Mental Health Ministry
    - Participation of new leaders and some leaders who haven't been actively engaged in leadership lately, organized some good events, lots of community response and encouragement, responding to a need of the community and world (and members of our congregation)
  - Opportunities to worship in small group settings with adequate time for sharing and reflection
    - Lenten worship, Breaking Down Walls vigil, worship experiences with Ministry Teams, Evening Prayer
  - Garage Sale
    - Led by members of the congregation, for a cause, opportunity to meet community members
  - Conversations and program planning with children, youth, and families
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I like to share how my time is generally allocated throughout the year with all of you. This is important because it helps you see where your resources are at work, gives you a glimpse of some of what takes place day to day and week to week, and helps all of us take a look at how my time and the congregation's resources are being prioritized, allowing us to check if this is in line with our goals and expectations.

This chart is given for your information based on the average of three weeks (one in May, one in September, and one in November). Time spent in meetings that relate to one of the ministry area categories is included as an average in that category (i.e. meeting with the Treasurer would be included in the Finance category). Continuing Education time was also allocated into the ministry area it fit in.



**Here are some descriptions of the categories you see:**

**Worship Preparation** includes sermon preparation, getting ready for the week ahead, and also some long-range worship and sermon planning and preparation (like planning the How To Be A Neighbor series). While **Worship** refers to Sunday morning worship and any other worship activities that might have occurred during that week (LT Independent Living, Lenten Wednesdays, etc.). Both of these together account for my time spent on worship and music.

**Prayer** is time spent praying for our ministry and its members. Much of this is done on my own while some includes praying with groups and with members of our prayer chain.

**Teaching Preparation** is any planning and preparation done for a weekly teaching activity or long-range planning for an intensive series, while **Teaching** is the actual time spent teaching in a week. Much of this teaching takes place at Adult Sunday School and Thursday Bible Study with the rest being Confirmation, Baptism prep, First Communion, or any additional teaching like the Online Book Group. These two, along with prayer and some aspects of pastoral care and communication account for my time spent on Spiritual Growth.

**Pastoral Care** is any and all activities of caring for the spiritual needs and tending the personal spiritual growth and wellness of members of Spirit in the Hills. This includes hospital and home visits, conversations had during office hours, phone calls, letters, emails, and text messages related to the ministry of pastoral care.

**Communication** encompasses time spent working to communicate with the congregation, council and ministry teams. Everything from daily emails that pertain to the ongoing life of the congregation to my weekly devotion (which could also be considered a “teaching” task) and monthly newsletter, as well as any promotional communications I am involved in or work to coordinate with the Communications Team, as well as managing the congregation’s web presence.

**Finance** is mainly the time spent reflecting on the budget, preparing for the next year’s budget, and keeping track of and turning in expense reports and mileage. Much of this happens monthly in practice.

**Staff Management** is time working through staff schedules, connecting and evaluating, that isn’t directly related to a ministry area but more about relationships, schedules, expectations.

**Discernment/Visioning** is time spent in prayer and scripture and conversation discerning the future of Spirit in the Hills both short-term and long-term, reflecting on our goals and values, coming up with events and ideas that align with those things and help us listen to the Holy Spirit among us.

**Other Administration** includes tasks that are primarily administrative and don’t fit into a ministry area category.

**Outreach** is time following up with visitors, meeting with community members and leaders, inviting, having a presence at Chamber of Commerce meetings, serving in the community, and working with our Outreach team.

**Future Facilities** is time spent weekly checking in with the Future Facilities Team and doing work and planning for our new space.

**Mental Health Ministry** includes the time I spend weekly on our 2019 Annual Roadmap goal of learning what it means to be a better resource (and becoming a better resource) for people in our congregation and community with mental health challenges.