

East Shore Unitarian
Church
of Bellevue, WA

Next Steps for Staffing
January 2022

Rachel Maxwell, Consultant,
Stewardship for Us





Opening Words

“Ours is not the task of fixing the entire world all at once, but of stretching out to mend the part of the world that is within our reach.... We know that it does not take everyone on Earth to bring justice and peace, but only a small, determined group who will not give up during the first, second, or hundredth gale.

One of the most calming and powerful actions you can do to intervene in a stormy world is to stand up and show your soul. Soul on deck shines like gold in dark times. ...

There will always be times when you feel discouraged. I too have felt despair many times in my life, but I do not keep a chair for it. I will not entertain it. It is not allowed to eat from my plate. ...

In that spirit, I hope you will write this on your wall: When a great ship is in harbor and moored, it is safe, there can be no doubt. But that is not what great ships are built for.”

--Clarissa Pinkola Estes

Rachel Maxwell

- Unitarian Universalist for 30 years
- Lay Leader at Edmonds UU Congregation
- MBA in Sustainable Finance
- Founder of community funding platform
- Leads events on Money Value & Meaning
- Stewardship for Us
 - Five team members
 - UU serving UU Congregations
 - UUA endorsed
- Passionate about building sustainable, generous, UU congregations making their missions manifest in the world -- A world which could not possibly need them more!
- Contact info: Rachel@StewardshipforUs.com

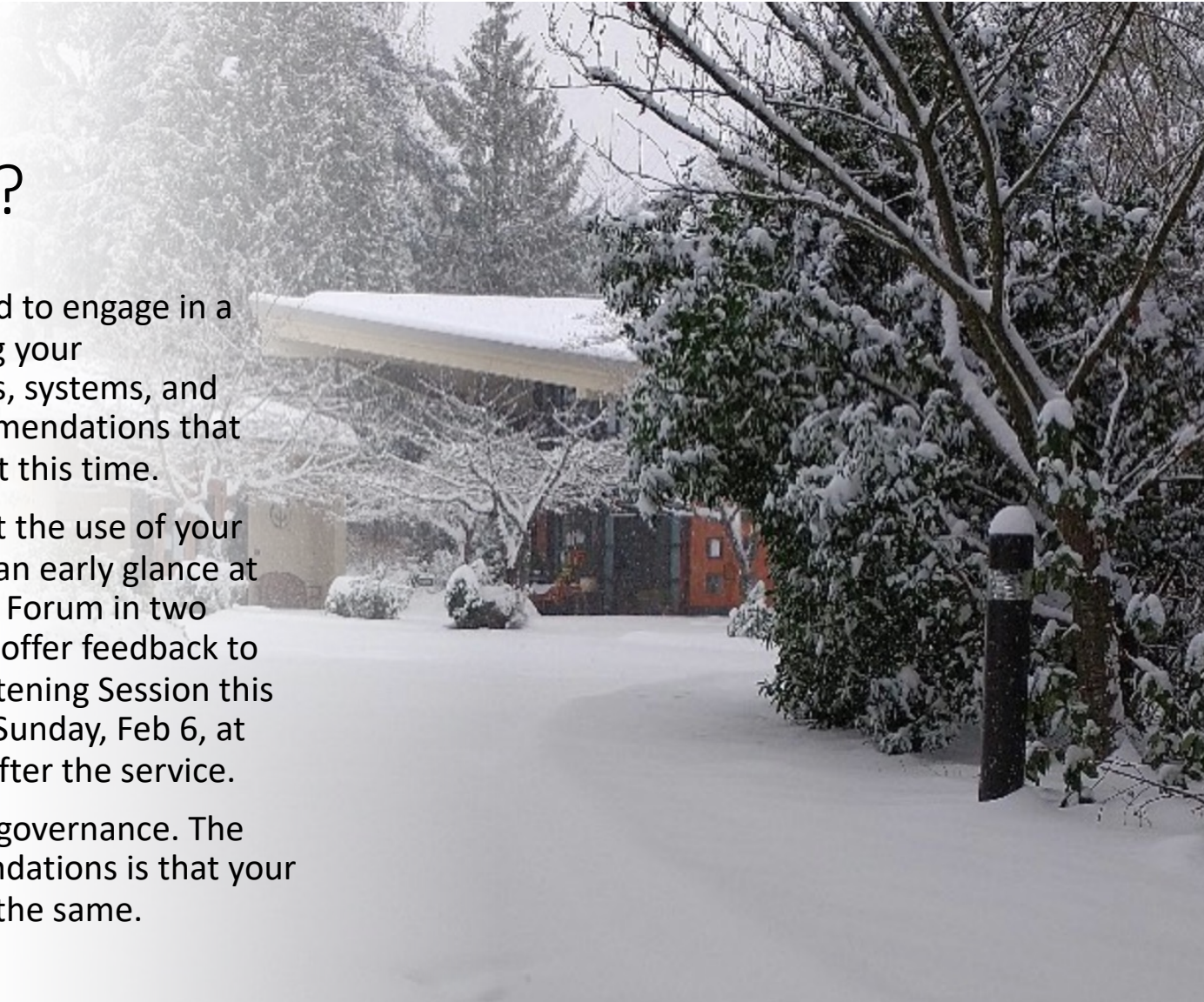


Why am I here?

I was invited here by your Board to engage in a Next Steps process, considering your congregational history, finances, systems, and culture to make staffing recommendations that would be appropriate for you at this time.

I know you will be talking about the use of your endowment funds and getting an early glance at next year's budget at a Finance Forum in two weeks. Other opportunities to offer feedback to the board will be at a Board Listening Session this Saturday, Feb 5 at 10 a.m. and Sunday, Feb 6, at coffee hour in the main room after the service.

I was not asked to review your governance. The assumption in these recommendations is that your governance model will remain the same.



What is the Next Steps process?

Gather information about your congregation

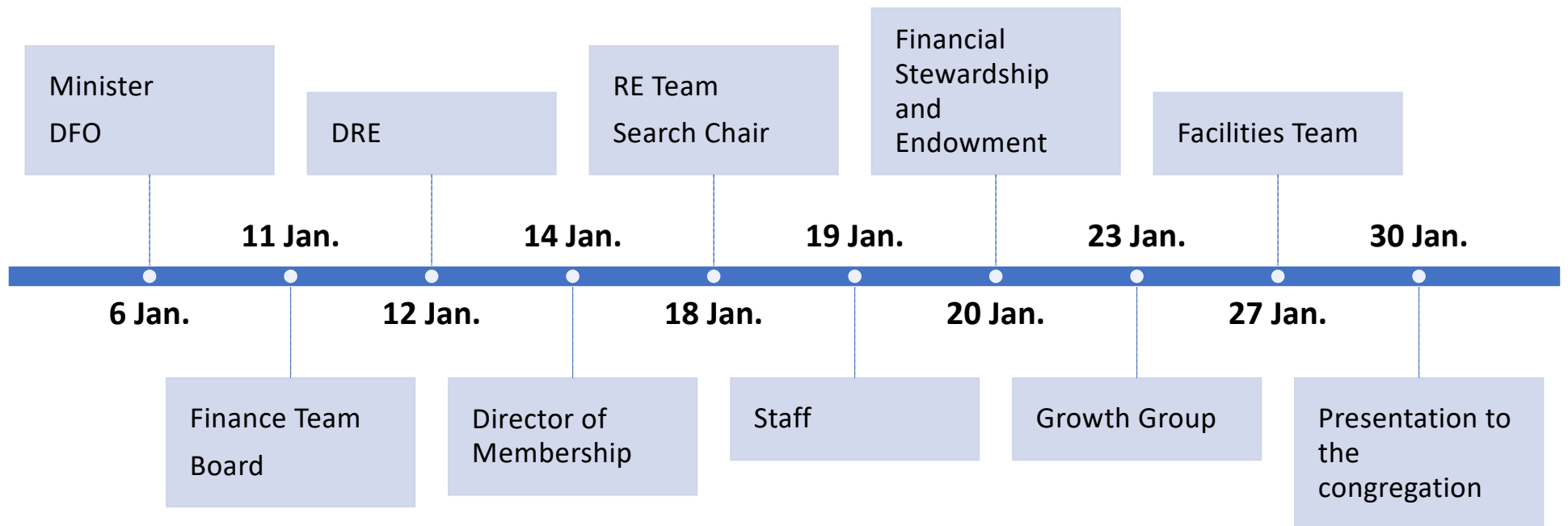
- Review your history, finances and structure and other documents
- Face to face meetings with staff and lay leaders

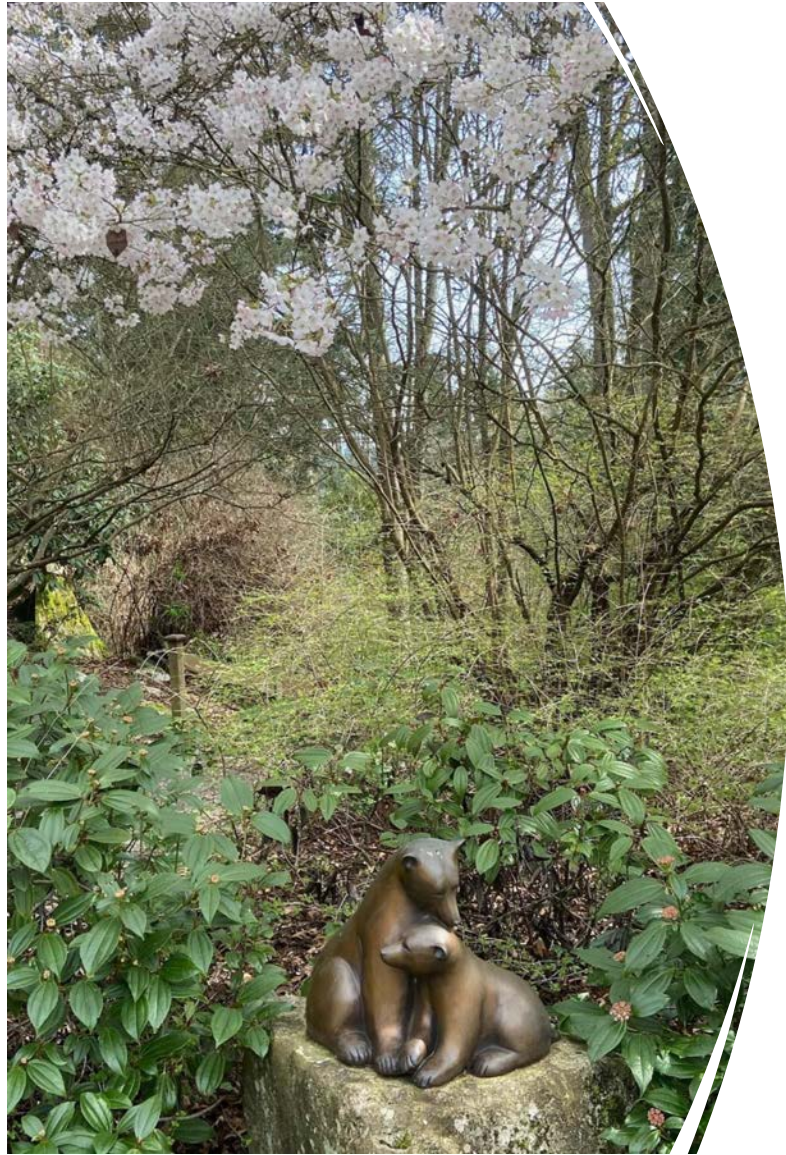
Provide reflections and recommendations:

- Presentation to congregation:
 - Data
 - Current state
 - Next steps and recommendations
- Written report for the Board within two weeks



Review of Next Steps Meetings



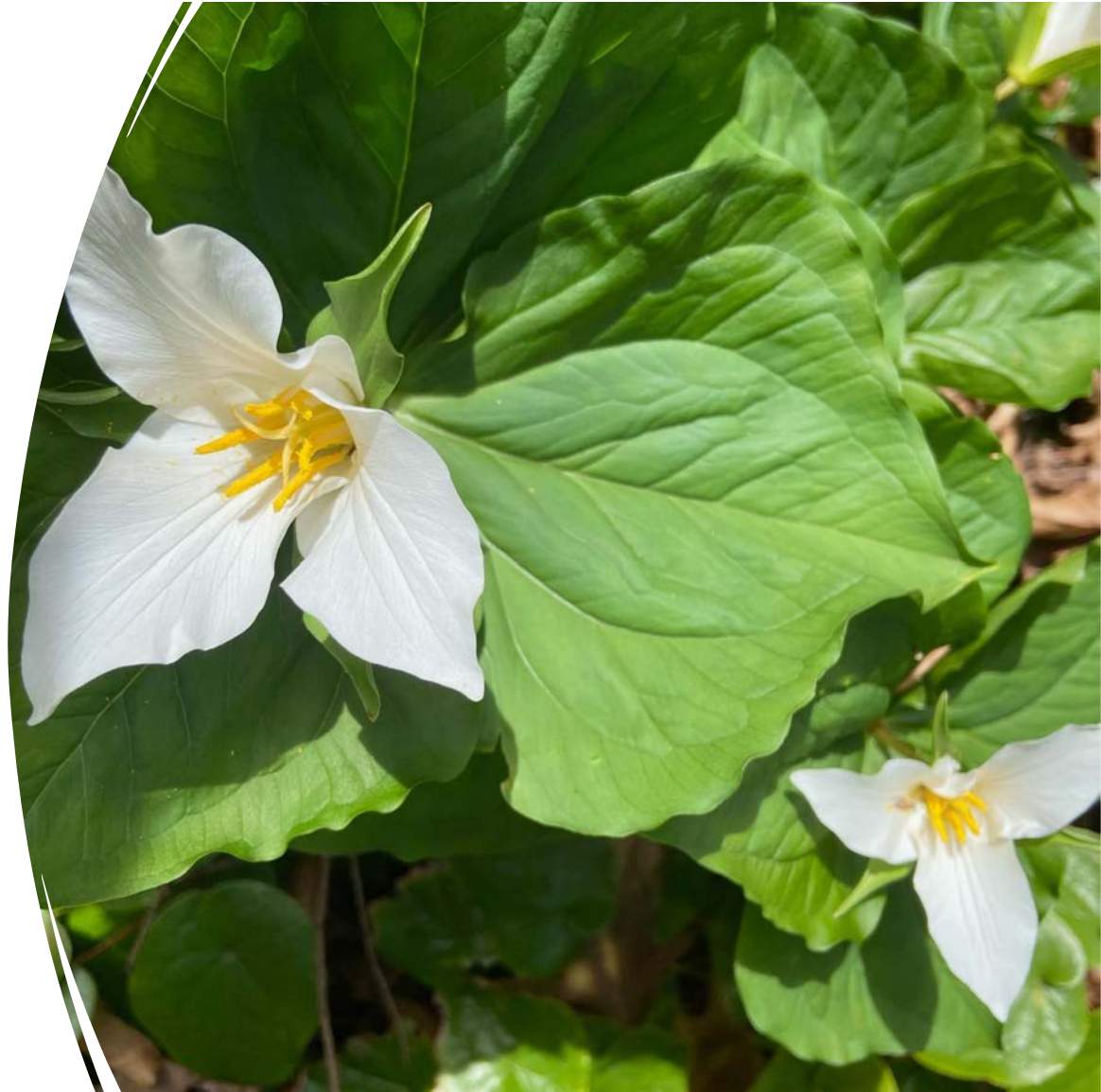


Observations Blessings

- Powerful mission you are committed to
- Dedicated caring lay leaders
- Large, beautiful, well cared-for campus in an excellent location
- Great music and faith development programs
- A sizeable endowment with flexibility about its use
- Generous annual giving

Observations Challenges

- Culture of scarcity
- Traumatic staff departures
- Budget out of balance
- Late-stage pandemic burn out
- High expectations of a new minister's ability to make change
- Staffing model from a different time in your history



ESUC by the numbers

(as reported to the UUA in early 2021 so they're FY 2019/20 figures)

357 members

198 pledging households

190 average Sunday attendance (pre-pandemic)

54 enrolled in RE

\$607,424 pledge income

Average pledge \$3,068

Total Operating Expenditures \$1,173,108

Current Year \$643,414 from 208 households

Comparisons: Using UUA Data reported in early 2021

Of the 36 congregations with between 330 and 390 members you:

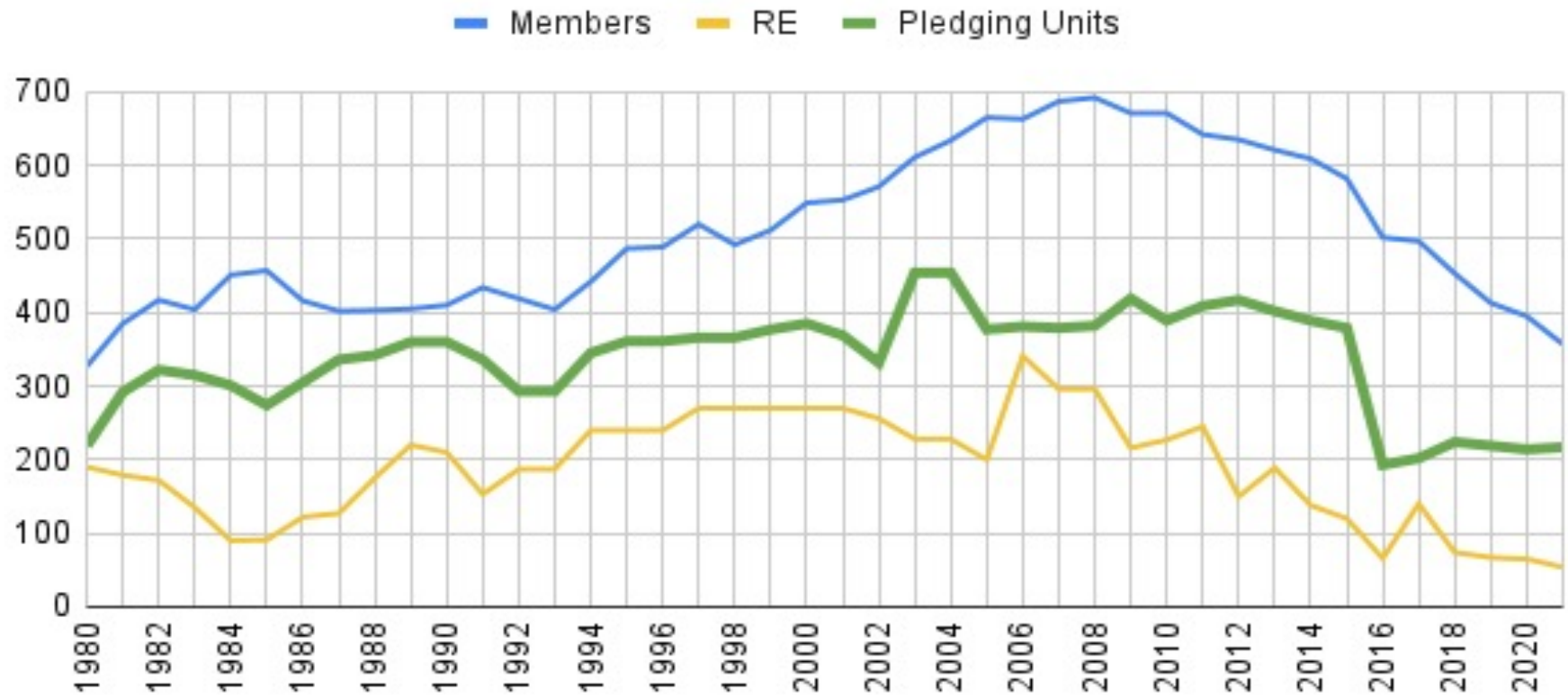
- Have the HIGHEST total annual pledging income and highest average pledge
- Have the 9th largest endowment
- Are 18th in RE enrollment
- Rank 27th in number of pledging households

Of the 20 congregations in the Puget Sound region you:

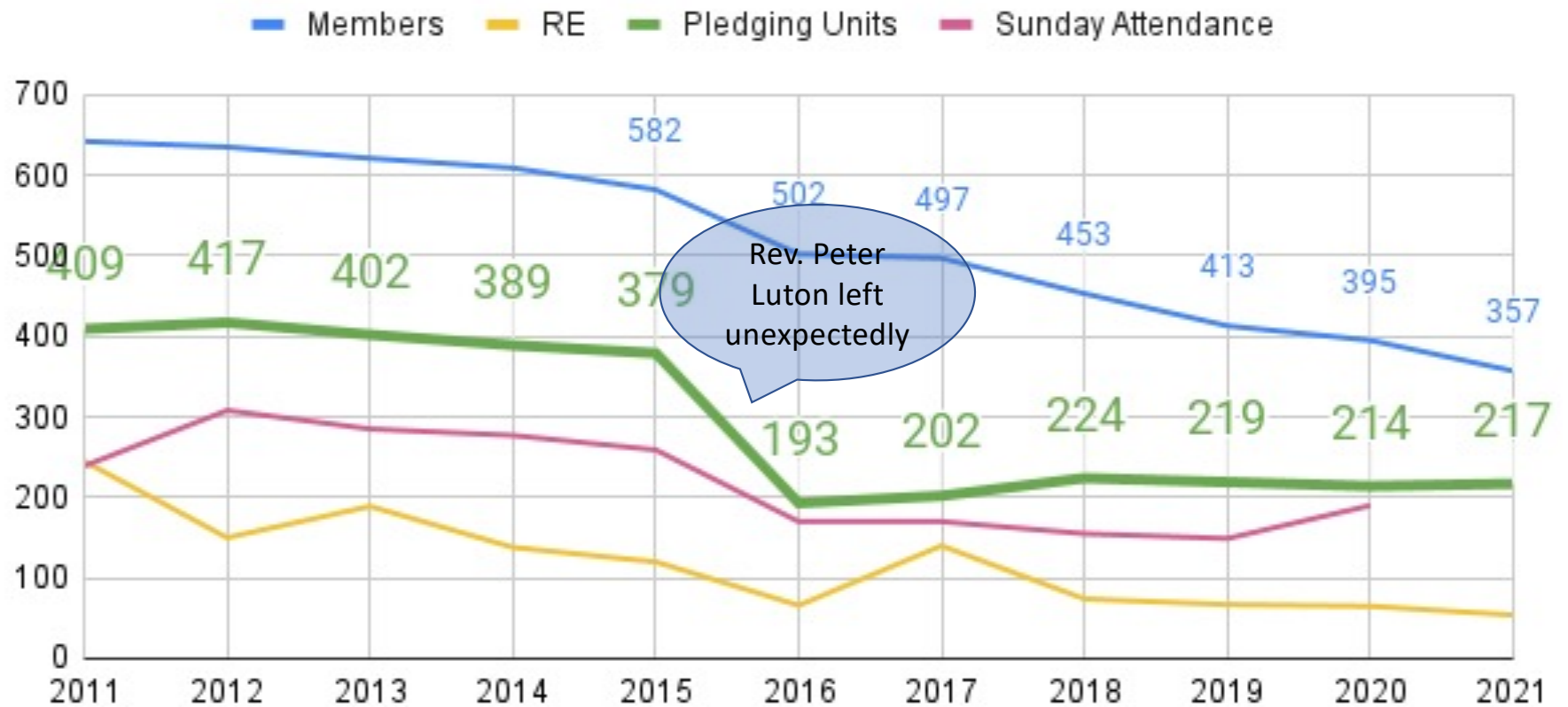
- Have the 2nd highest pledging income
- Are the 4th largest in number of members
- Rank 6th in number of pledging households

Conclusion: You are VERY WELL resourced!

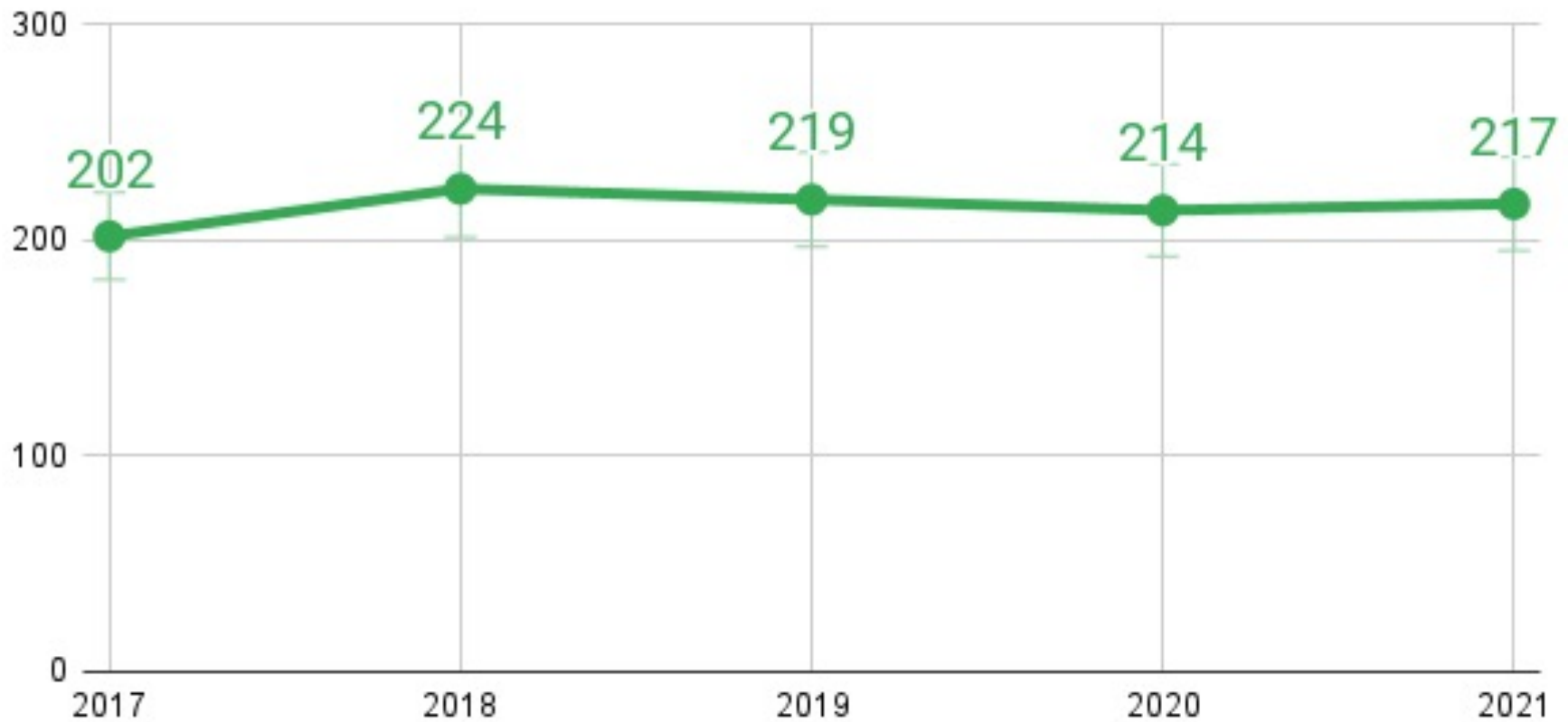
UUA Historical Data on East Shore since 1980



Closer Look – East Shore for the Past 10 Years



East Shore Pledging Households Stable for Past 5 Years despite the pandemic



Am I worried about your finances? No.

- You show consistent congregational engagement and giving over five years
- You have the highest pledging income in the UUA for your size
- You have hundreds of thousands of dollars per year in rental income
- You have a strong endowment

What I'm worried about:
You feel you don't have *enough*.

This is a spiritual, not a financial, issue.





Q: What is the purpose of a congregation's staff?

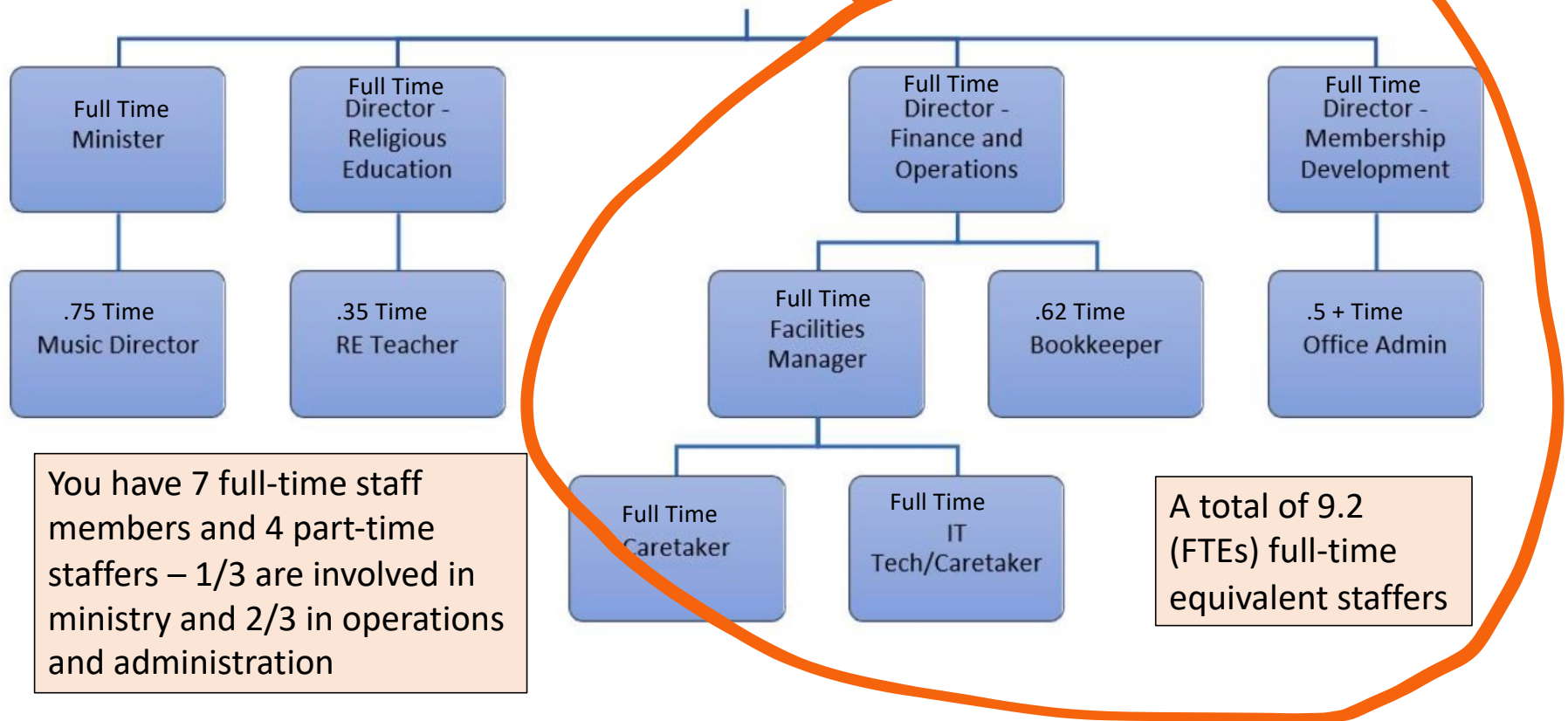
A: To engage, enlist, and inspire the members of the congregation to live their UU values and make the mission manifest.



Your Mission

We practice love, explore spirituality, build community, and promote justice.

Your Current Staffing is Operations Centered



You have 7 full-time staff members and 4 part-time staffers – 1/3 are involved in ministry and 2/3 in operations and administration

A total of 9.2 (FTEs) full-time equivalent staffers

What would a
Mission-
Centered staff
model look like
for East Shore?

How might it
change you?



EAST SHORE UNITARIAN CHURCH
We practice love, explore spirituality,
build community, and promote justice.

Just an Example: The Unitarian Church in Westport, CT

**NOT
YOU**

\$1M in operations expenses

371 Members

178 Pledging Households

\$500k Pledging income

\$4M endowment

Income comes from pledging, fundraisers, special gifts and
a "modest endowment contribution"



Just an Example:
The Unitarian Church
in Westport, CT

**NOT
YOU**

3 Full Time Paid Staff:

- Senior Minister
- Minister of Music
- Director of Social Justice and Tech Lead

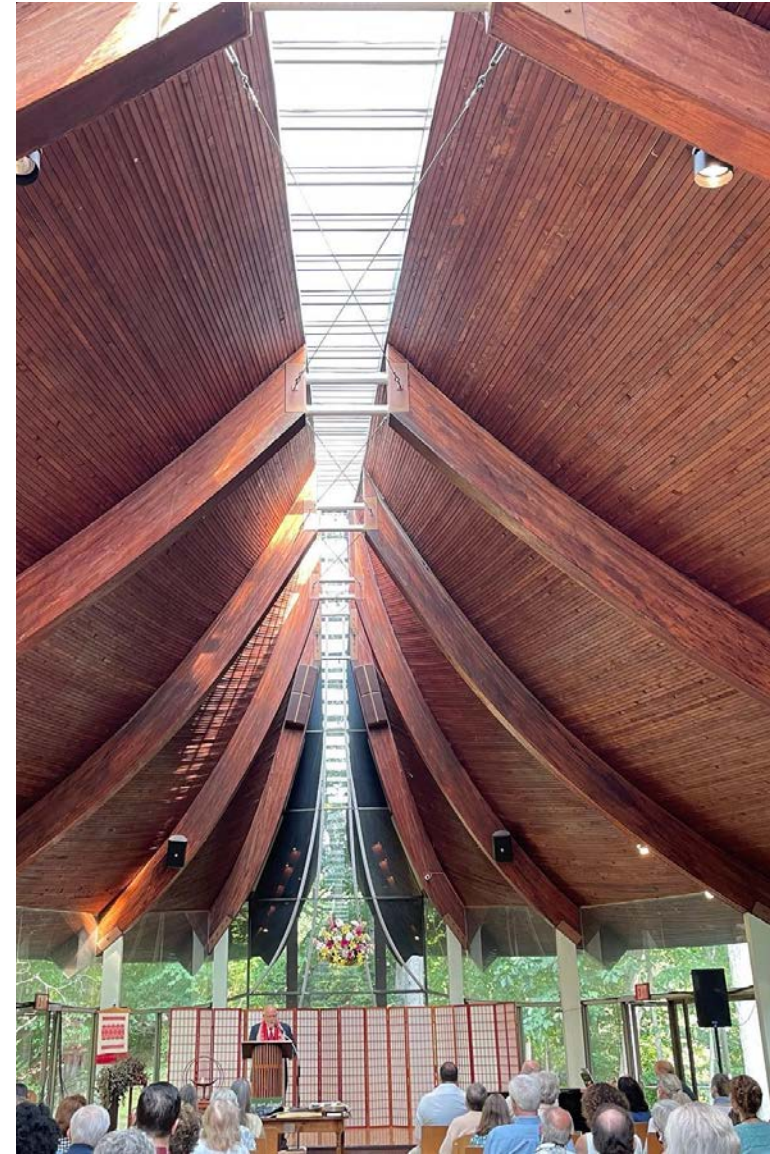
**7 – 9 Part Time Paid Staff:
(3.15 FTE)**

- .5 Lead for Family and Children Faith Formation
- .5 Lead for Youth Faith Formation

- .25 Tech Specialist
- .2 Lead Primary Teacher
- .2 Lead Upper Elementary Teacher
- .75 Administrator
- .75 Accountant

Volunteer Staff: (1.5 FTE)

- .75 Community Minister for Pastoral Care
- .75 Lead for Congregational Engagement

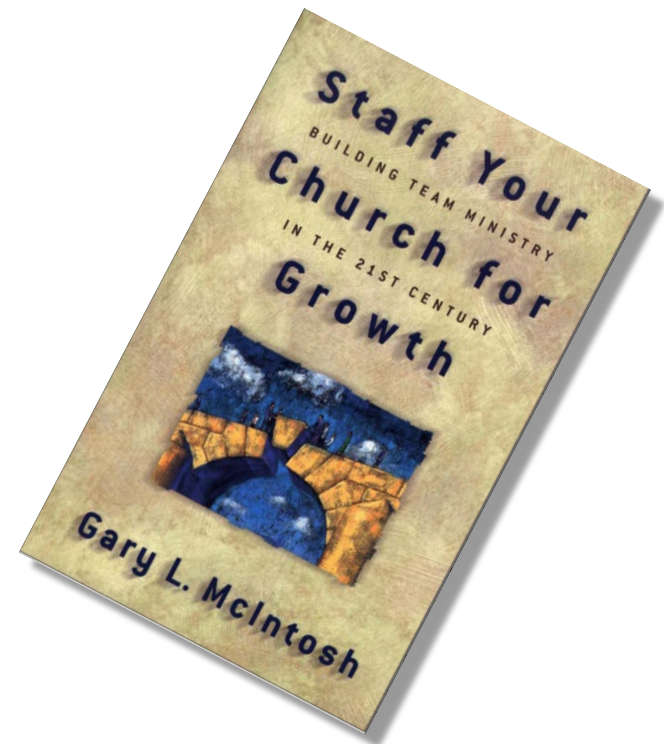


Classic Method to Determine Size of Staff:

Maintenance Staffing = 1 Full Time Program Staff Member (ie Minister, DRE, Music Director) per 150 people who show up on a Sunday morning

Growth Staffing = 1 Full Time Program Staff per 100 people attending on Sunday

PLUS: 1 Full Time Admin Staffer for the first Full Time Program Staff member and and additional .5 FTE for each subsequent Full Time Program Staff member



Classic Method for East Shore:

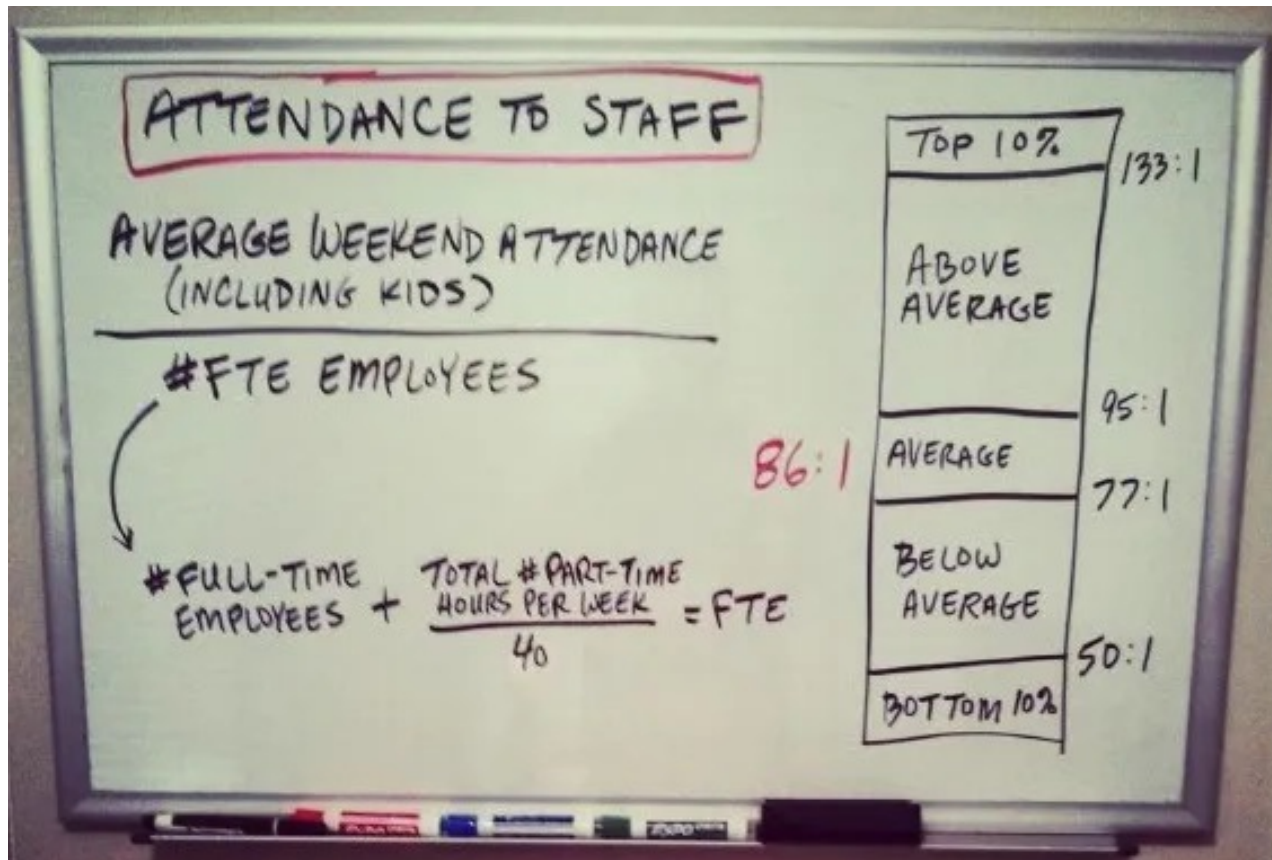
East Shore reported an average of 190 people on Sunday mornings pre-pandemic

$190/100 = 1.9$ Full time Program Staff Members

+ 1 Admin for 1st Program staffer and .5 for the second one

East Shore Growth Staff = 3.5 FTEs

REJECT



Ratio Method
Staff per Person
on Sunday
Average church:
76:1
East Shore: 22:1

**If it were
average, East
Shore would
have a staff of
2.5 FTEs**



You are probably
over staffed.

Even if we know you need more staff than those
measures would suggest, you're so far from them that it
is reasonable to conclude that you are over-staffed.

What's the problem with too much staff?

Paul
Alexander,
Unstuck
Group says:

Do any of
these
look
familiar?

Over staffing is a big deal in churches because it's usually an indicator that:

1. The church has become Insider Focused

Typically an overstaffed church is paying people to do ministry and run programs to keep long-time people in the church happy.

2. The church has a Poor Culture of Volunteerism

There is a direct connection between staffing and volunteerism at churches. Generally the more a church spends on staffing the less likely attenders are to serve.

3. The church has Stopped Growing

There is also a direct connection between staffing and church growth. What we've discovered in our research at the Unstuck Group is that the more a church spends on staff the more the rate of attendance growth slows.



What's right and right-sized for East Shore?

Mission Focus:

- Practicing Love
- Exploring Spirituality
- Building Community
- Promoting Justice

What ministries serve to foster and develop *your* ability to make this mission real?

You need a staff model that will help you understand the level of abundance you live in, encourage your spiritual growth, and is right-sized for who you are today.



Mission Centered Staff ESUC NEED to have:

Ministry Staffing:

- Minister (Full Time)
- Director of Faith Development (Full Time)
- Director of Music Ministry

Operational Support Staffing:

- Congregational Administrator (Full Time)
- Accountant/bookkeeper or contract accounting services
- Caretaking for grounds and buildings services or staff



Mission Centered Staff
ESUC NICE to have:
(and you have the funds to have it)

Ministry Staffing:

- Associate/Assistant Minister
(Maybe focused on Justice work)
- Youth, Young Adult, or other Faith
Development Staffing

Operational Support Staffing:

- Multi-Platform Tech and/or
Communications/Media Staff
- Office Assistant/Rental Coordinator



If you decide to reduce your staff

- Live your values
- Be transparent, kind and just
- Provide severance and unemployment benefits
- Provide recommendations even before you're asked



Recommendations

- Move to a Mission and Ministry centered staffing model
- Reduce your total FTE count of staff members
- Continue your work to build a culture of compassion, community and collaboration
- Forgive yourselves and each other because we all make mistakes
- Understand your new minister is not there to rescue you but rather to be ministry *WITH* you


Focus on growing *Mission!*

Closing Words

Our history is always with us. Across organisms, offspring receive a maternal inheritance, DNA: strands of instructions, twisted together and reaching into the future. What is the secret tucked in the folds of tiny parts of cells? How does that legacy keep us alive? We are each and all holding a gift of humanity, fragile, wrapped in tissue. We are connected by those gifts, generation after generation, failure after new attempt, dream upon dream, creation from disaster. I know. You're just not sure— about your place, about this time, about what, if anything, is possible. Just try to remember that people have built splendid new futures from much less than the magic and the bequest of life that you now hold. The world is waiting for your gifts – an invitation. Do not blame yourself for being wonderful. There is no shame in this. You must, instead, expand, and, understanding the destiny of your inheritance, the here, the now, the you – you must fly.

-- Rev. Theresa I. Soto



A large group of people is gathered in a dimly lit room, likely a church or community center, for a candlelight vigil or prayer service. The room is filled with people, many of whom are holding lit candles, creating a warm and communal atmosphere. The lighting is soft and focused on the candles, with some light coming from large windows in the background. The overall mood is solemn and reflective.

We practice love,
explore spirituality,
build community, and
promote justice.

Thank you for all you ARE and Do!