

The River Church Community Spring 2009 Staffing Changes Frequently Asked Questions

What are the changes? When are they effective?

- Donna Miles' position as our receptionist and office manager will be eliminated as of May 1, 2009. We will no longer have a front-door or phone attendant after May 1.
- Dave Kwok's position as Director of Operations will be reduced to a half-time position as of September 1, 2009
- Krista-Dawn Kimsey's position as Celebration Ministries Pastor will be reduced to 75% time as of September 1, 2009.
- Kyle Guerrero's position as Student Ministries Director will be reduced to a half-time position as of September 1, 2009. His position after September 1 will have an increased emphasis on volunteer recruitment, development, and leadership in the ministry.
- Michelle Manley's position as the Small Group ministries pastor will be transitioning to a Pastoral Specialist role as of September 1, 2009. Michelle will continue to offer her pastoral gifts within the small group ministry but will no longer have responsibilities for the overall oversight of the ministry.

Who is in charge of the work vacated?

Angela Aviles will be the point person for determining how to manage the elimination of Donna Miles receptionist and office manager role. This will likely require the increased participation of volunteers in Sunday morning production and administrative tasks.

Dave Kwok's role has been split between operations, participation on the leadership team, and staff supervision. Going forward, the role will focus more heavily on operations with leadership team and supervisory responsibilities transitioning to Mark Phifer-Houseman and Brad Wong as needed.

Krista-Dawn Kimsey will be in conversations with her supervisor to determine how to streamline her role.

Going forward, the Student Ministry Director role will have an increased emphasis on volunteer recruitment, development, and leadership in the ministry. Pastoral care, events and activities in the ministry will be increasingly led by volunteer leaders.

With Michelle Manley released from a small group oversight role, Mark Phifer-Houseman will have overall responsibility for small group leadership. Mark has been

leading the small group staff team for the last six months and this transition will be a continuation of this leadership.

How did we decide how much to cut? How is the Board viewing next year's budget?

The Board and Brad have been seeking God's direction in prayer about these matters for the entire ministry year. Our intent is for income to match expenses throughout the next ministry year (MY10). We believe that the path towards that goal involves both wisdom and faith . . . the pursuit of sound financial counsel as well as a spirit of trust and sacrifice. We also want to keep in mind that our aim is not merely to make budget, but to advance the mission of the Kingdom of God. With that frame in mind, we are trusting that God will provide for an 11% increase in giving over this year.

How did you make decisions?

These decisions were very difficult to make. Our primary lens in making these decisions was to discern how to align limited staff resources towards the greatest equipping of the church body in ministry:

Two of the most heavily resourced areas on staff have been in operations and celebration ministries. While cuts in these areas are painful, we believe that with increased collaboration and volunteer participation, both of these areas of ministry can flourish in the future.

The reduction to Kyle's role in student ministries is very painful. Kyle has done a tremendous job in creating a positive, welcoming culture with our students. The painful reality is that the current scale of the ministry cannot justify a full-time youth minister role.

Michelle is a senior pastoral presence on our staff team. Michelle's role has increasingly been as a "pastoral specialist," providing insight, counsel, and intervention to coaches, leaders, and members in the small group members. The change in her role is a formal recognition and valuing of this movement. At the same time, the budget for Michelle's position has been reduced, which will free staff resources for ministry oversight elsewhere.

Did you consider making cuts to anything other than people? What about cutting the amount the church gives away?

The church's budget is comprised of four main areas: staff, facilities, giving, and ministry expenses. In previous years we have cut ministry expenses and there is little room to cut there. Our facility expenses are fixed, the cost of renting the space at SJSU and our ministry center. We did reduce our rent facility expense significantly when we moved to our new ministry center last year. The Board and senior staff have prayerfully considered reducing the 20% we give away. At this point, we do not feel release from God to reduce

that commitment. That meant that the only place left to reduce costs was in personnel. To that end, some of our staff took voluntary salary cuts.

Practically speaking, what does this change mean in terms of weekly giving required to have a break even budget for next year?

Before staff reductions, our weekly giving needed to average about \$28,000. With these changes, our weekly giving needs to average about \$24,000.

Do we anticipate more changes?

We believe that these cuts are sufficient to meet our goals for the upcoming ministry year (Sept '09 – August '10). However, transitioning full-time roles to part-time sometimes works more easily on paper than in life. Each of our staff who will be moving to part-time roles must decide how or whether that works for them and/or their families. We welcome your prayers and support as each of them wrestles with how God is leading them forward. Moreover, there remains significant uncertainty in our economic climate. How the church may need to adapt in the midst of these extraordinary times is a topic for much thought and prayer.

What do the changes signal? What does it mean for us all?

These changes signal a clarification that staff roles are primarily for the purpose of equipping the members of the church to do ministry. Members at The River will be increasingly invited into roles of participation in ministry. We believe that this is good news, that the church is stronger (and that participants grow more) when each person finds a place to participate in the mission of God. It also means that we need to be willing to let go of programs and services in which there are not sufficient volunteers to carry out the ministry.

How are people being taken care of?

Every staff member that is affected will be receiving the equivalent of salary and medical benefits through August 31, 2009. In most cases, this is because there will be no formal changes in the roles until this date. Donna Miles will be receiving a severance package.

We are also making available outplacement services through DBM, Inc. which includes career counseling, resume and interview help, and a variety of resources, seminars, and classes.

Finally, we live in the reality that the affected members of the staff team are our brothers and sisters in Christ and we are called to be a community that reflects God in how we care for each other. We are encouraging our staff to make their needs known to their small groups, their friends, and the church.

Is there any way to be of help?

Prayer: Please pray for the staff and the church as we transition into these changes. Pray for discernment for the affected staff as they consider career direction and look for other work. Pray for the remaining staff team that we would know how to lead well. Pray that our community would rally together for God's glory.

Patience: Please be patient with the staff team as we live into these changes.

Participation: This is our church. You may need to be a peacemaker for someone in your small group or friendship circle. You may be called upon to help with a financial, emotional, or relational need. Ask God how He might have you engage and participate in our community. Be open to the possibility that God may be calling you to step up into service or leadership in one of the impacted areas.

Where can I go with further questions?

Please feel free to contact Mark Phifer-Houseman (markph@the-river.org) our Pastor of Leadership Development or Brian Perronne (brian.perronne@lpfch.org) a member of The River's Advisory Council.