

Transition Update - November 2020

Transition Leadership Committee (TLC) members Aubrey Fitzke, Diane Poots, Stacey Warner, Dan Loven-Crum and Tracey Halvorson have been meeting frequently with Countryside leaders, staff, and groups, as well as outside Countryside advisors, experts, and references. We developed a hybrid model of leadership that encompasses the priorities identified in the feedback we have received. At the October meeting of all Boards, we shared the Interim Model of Collaborative Leadership. Collaboration was the key priority that we heard from both staff and Countryside members. This model and the job description were approved unanimously by Church Council at their October meeting, and will be submitted, with our updated church profile, to our conference minister for approval to post on the UCC website.

Our new Interim Associate Minister of Worship and Congregational Care will be responsible for leadership of worship and our interim discernment process leading to assembling a search team and calling our new settled pastor. This person will also lead our worship planning, music and arts, A/V and pastoral care areas. In this interim leadership model, we also prioritized our existing staff resources, especially Rev. Dr. Chris Alexander and Dan Loven-Crum, and although a new voice will lead worship and discernment, we expect the voices and talents of both Chris and Dan to be strong influences in the planning and implementation of both worship and the discernment process. Chris, as the Interim Associate Minister of Engagement and Formation, will lead our Tri-Faith Initiative partnership and faith formation, through work with youth and family ministries, Center for Faith Studies, member engagement, and representing Countryside on the Tri-Faith Initiative Board. Dan will act as the Interim Director of Vision and Stewardship, lead our financial stewardship and growth, and oversee operations, visioning, Countryside Foundation, and staff development. Chris and the new minister will share equally in administering the sacraments of communion and baptism, and officiating at weddings and funerals.

It is important to know that this is the interim model for collaborative leadership at Countryside. We have taken great time to discern the three main public facing responsibilities the Senior Minister position has led in the past, and divide those evenly among the three leaders. We intentionally choose the two main distinct areas of leadership and responsibility for each individual leader, to not overload any one of the three leaders, but allow all three to have input in every area. This model will continue to be a work in progress throughout our interim time. The discernment process will be our opportunity as community to evaluate how this model fits us, and decide what changes, if any, need to be made before the search committee is formed.

We are excited for this new opportunity that God is leading us to, and we ask you to continue to share feedback with us and keep us and our leaders in your prayers.

Joy and peace,
Tracey Halvorson and the Transition Leadership Committee
tlc@countrysideucc.org

Questions & Answers

Question: How will salary be structured?

We are leveling the salary playing field among the Leadership Team, to allow for expectations among these three to be similar regarding time commitment, responsibilities, workload, and leadership expectations.

Question: In a collaborative setting, who has the final say?

In a collaborative leadership team environment, each of the three leaders will be fully responsible for decision making “final say” within their area of expertise. They will do this in collaboration with the other two leader’s input and help, where appropriate. Also, a new Leadership Relations Committee will be available to help if the decision comes to an impasse, and they are unable to resolve it themselves.

Responsibilities need to be stated specifically, not generally.

Each leadership position will have a clear job description. There is a fair division of the responsibilities needed to lead Countryside among the three members of the Executive Leadership Team, with advice and oversight for them by the Leadership Relations Committee. This model will be fine-tuned as we move forward, based on input from these three leaders, the Leadership Relations Committee, Church Council, staff and Moderators.

Interim Designations

To be clear, the Interim designation in each job title in our Interim Model of Collaborative Leadership is a reference to the interim nature of both this collaborative leadership model, and the job title and responsibilities of our three leaders during our interim period. Chris and Dan themselves aren’t “temporary” interims for anything but their job titles and leadership roles. They will continue as staff beyond the interim period, as their job descriptions are defined by the congregation-wide discernment process.