



SAINT LUKE'S
YOUTH

SEARCH PROCESS DISCERNMENT GUIDE

I. A FRESH START

It's no secret that St. Luke's is in the midst of transition. From the new facilities born of our recent construction and capital campaign to multiple new hires on staff, it is an exciting time for the parish as we begin writing a new chapter in our parish's history. All of this transition can contribute to a sense of anxiety about the future, but it also opens the door for incredible opportunity.

St. Luke's is a parish known for— and, in some sense, defined by— its ministry to families and children; young families have driven the parish's identity since its founding in the middle of the 20th century. As a result, St. Luke's possesses an energy and dynamism (sadly) not typical of many Episcopal parishes.

Bryan Miller's departure as our Director of Youth Ministries marks yet another point of transition for us. Our hope in this search for a new member of our youth staff is to build on our firm foundation of robust family ministry to continue to grow the youth of our parish into strong disciples of Jesus Christ.

II. WHAT ARE WE LOOKING FOR?

Though Bryan occupied the position of Director of Youth Ministries, we have decided that perhaps it might benefit us to reconsider this role in light of the strengths of our current personnel and the needs of our ministry.

Instead of looking to hire a direct replacement for Bryan's role, we have begun to craft a less hierarchical and more collaborative structure for our youth department that actually better resembles the operation of our clergy staff (and is therefore a bit more consonant with the rest of our parish's office culture than before). As part of this new structure, certain duties would be shared among youth staff while other aspects of individual positions would focus more on an individual's strengths and passions in ministry. This structure is similar to how clergy operate at St. Luke's where, for instance, we all share duties of preaching, celebrating the Eucharist, and visiting people in the hospital, yet we each have a more specialized role in addition to these shared duties.

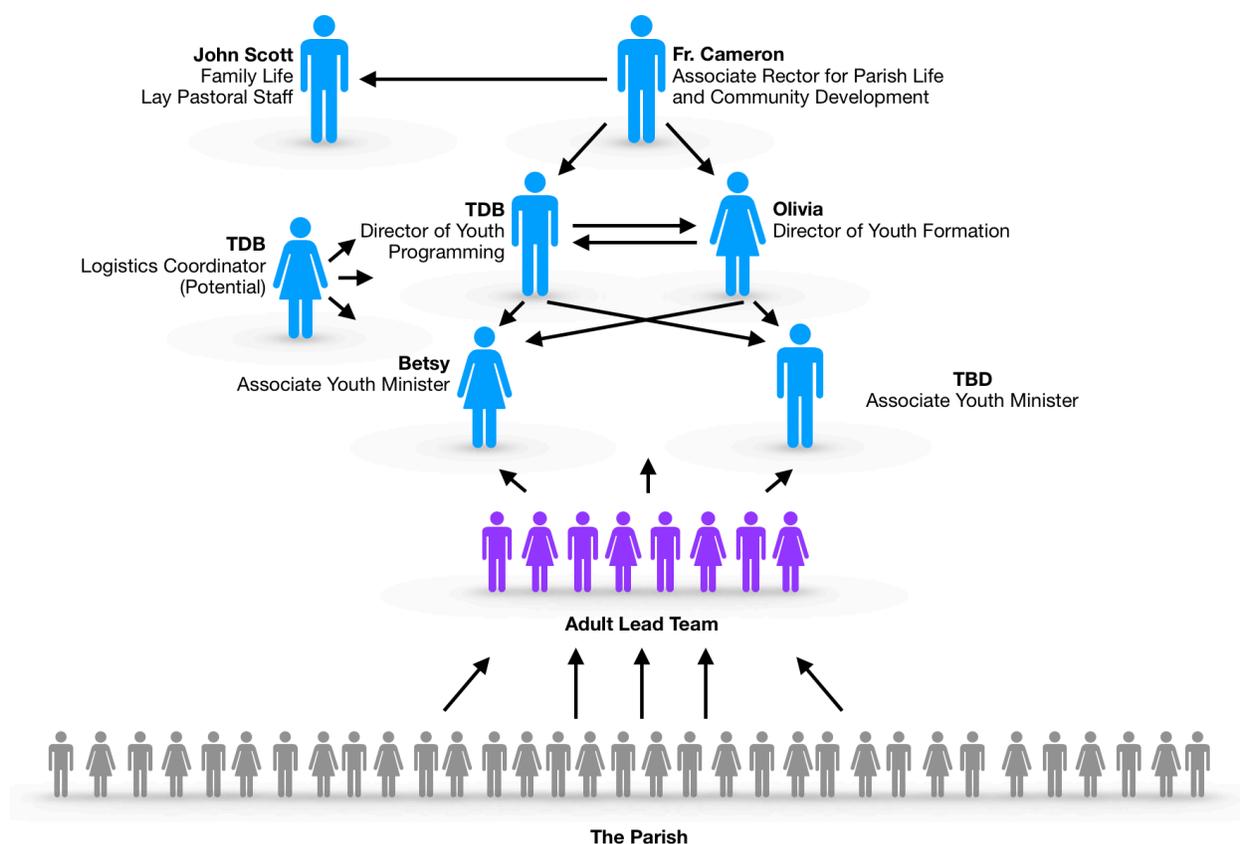
I (Cameron Nations) will continue to serve as the direct report for our youth staff, helping to support, empower, and lead the youth team in my capacity as Associate Rector for Parish Life and Community Development. Olivia's role would shift in title to the **Director of Youth Formation**. She would work in collaboration with our new hire, who would hold the position of **Director of Youth Programming**¹. (Look for a more exhaustive description of these positions in Section IV.) Both Directors would oversee two Associate Youth Ministers— one of these is Betsy Cobb, and the other is her male counterpart we have yet to hire. These positions could be supported by a part-time Logistics Coordinator. As with the vacant Associate Youth Minister position, funding is already budgeted and available for this Logistics Coordinator should we choose to search for one.

¹ These titles are not necessarily set in stone.

Thus, we will have eliminated the Director of Youth Ministries position, shifting its more managerial role to me, and created two new positions— **Director of Youth Formation** and **Director of Youth Programming**— that would have a shared stake in collaboratively running our youth program in a way much more in keeping with the general culture of our parish.

III. GO WITH THE FLOW

What might this new structure mentioned above look like? For those of us who consider themselves more visually-inclined, here's a diagram:



As you can see, there are three positions that we need to fill in order to run at full capacity. Each of these positions represents greater opportunity for impact and ministry in our community.

Certainly also worth noting is our support system that undergirds our youth ministry. We depend on the support of our Adult Lead Team and the whole of the parish. This is the foundation upon which all of our ministries stand, and we are grateful that this foundation remains so strong.

IV. PRIORITIES, POSITIONS & PROCESS

Our work with YMA, help from parent feedback, and a very productive employee review process in 2017 have yielded some wonderful insights into how to proceed with this search process.

The YMA renovation process gifted us with some great support systems in place (as noted above) that have served us well as we have entered this time of transition. The youth department is in good hands. Because things are in such a healthy place, we can afford to take our time and find someone in which we feel confident.

Some **priorities** we wish to find in a potential candidate are as follows:

- Works well as part of a team.
- Gets along well with students and enjoys building strong relationships with them.
- Takes their own faith seriously.
- Is willing to participate in things that matter to our kids— showing up at sporting events, school events, football tailgates, etc., etc.
- Possesses a vision for youth ministry as a true vocation, and understands the particular challenges that face us as a parish community.
- Has a desire to learn, grow, and challenge themselves.
- Expects excellence in ministry.
- Understands certain peculiar aspects of Episcopal worship (such as how to serve as an acolyte).
- Is willing to serve in other capacities in the parish, setting an example for our youth.
- Can communicate well with not only the kids, but also their parents.
- Thinks missionally— focused not only on who already comes to church, but on who might decide to join us.

This list is of course not exhaustive by any means, but rather serves as a starting point that helps guide and direct our discernment.

Positions:

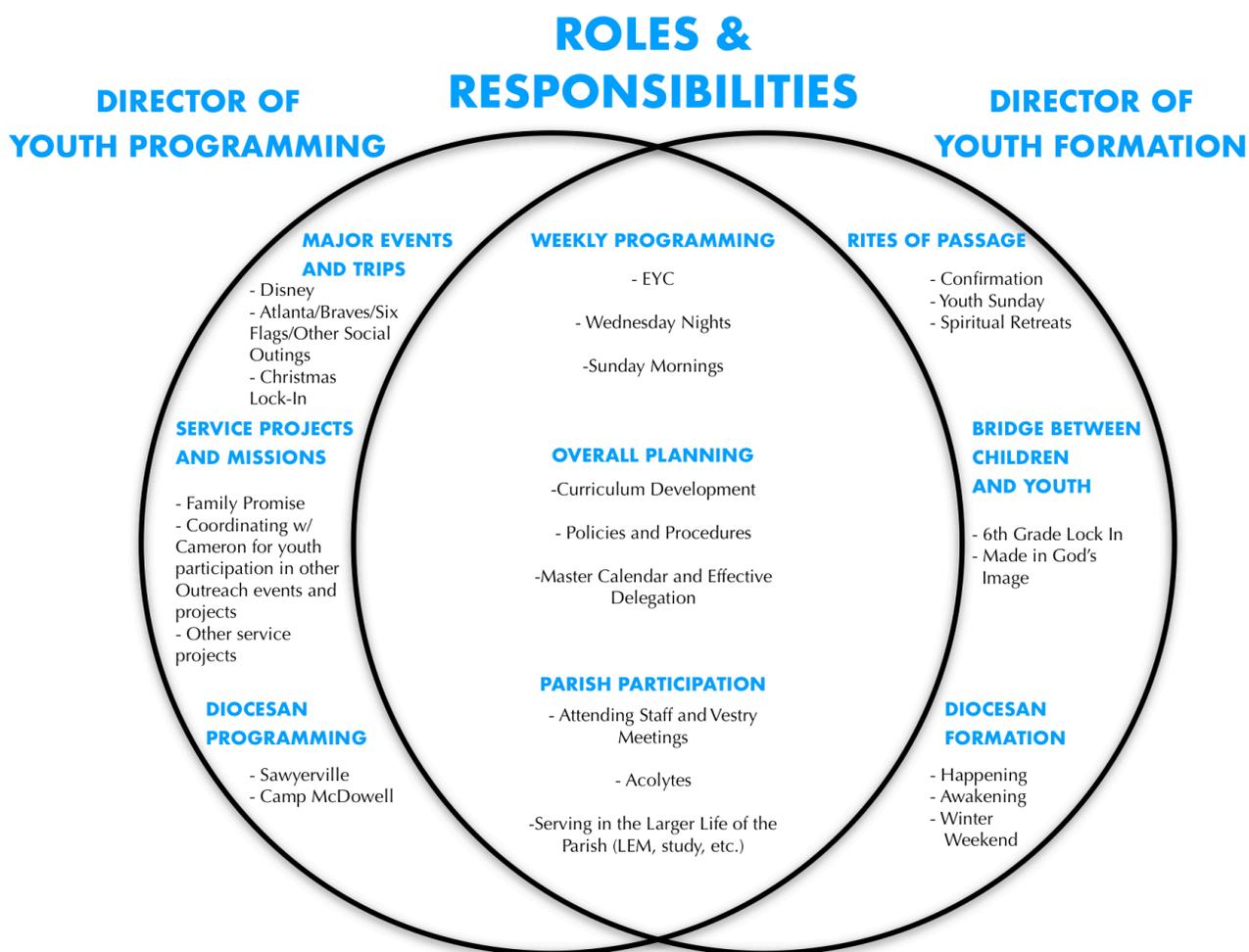
As I mentioned above in Section II, here's a more detailed look at how these two new positions would be differentiated from one another. These descriptions are not meant to serve as a comprehensive job description, but rather to give the committee a better idea of how these two positions might complement one another and how this new staff configuration might encourage greater collaboration.

The **Director of Youth Formation** would be primarily responsible for any rites of passage (Confirmation, Youth Sunday), would coordinate spiritual retreats, serve as bridge between our

parish's children's ministry and our youth ministry (Created by God, 6th Grade Lock-In), and would act as the St. Luke's point person for diocesan youth formation events such as Happening.

The **Director of Youth Programming** would primarily handle other major youth events and trips such as youth lock-ins and Disney, plan and coordinate service projects and other mission initiatives/trips, and act as the St. Luke's point person for diocesan youth programming such as Sawyerville.

Responsibility for weekly programming, overall visioning and planning, and an expectation of base-level of parish participation would extend across both positions.



Our hope is that these shared roles would facilitate the growth of deeper and more meaningful relationships with our kids by allowing for more actual face time between our youth staff and our youth. This team-based approach to ministry reflects our parish's commitment to colleague support and the kind of relational/incarnational discipleship we hope to foster. We want St. Luke's to be

known as a place where deep spiritual transformation can take place in a safe and open environment.

Process:

How will the search process proceed, and what role will the interview committee play in the hiring process? Here's a brief overview:



Rich will help us gather candidates for the position. Though Rich will act as the primary contact, the gathering of candidates will be a collaborative process. We may choose to post the position publicly in the future, but initially this process will explore known channels.



Any potential candidates will be referred to the interview committee for vetting and review. This careful work of discernment adds a valuable perspective crucial to our hiring a strong and able candidate.



The interview committee will use the designated questions and accompanying questionnaire to assess the candidate and pass their feedback on to Rich and Cameron. This review process will give us a common language for assessing and discussing our prospective candidates.



We will schedule meetings to debrief these interviews and share feedback amongst the committee about the interviews.



When we have who we consider to be a serious candidate, we will schedule time for the candidate to interact with a selection of our students.



Once we feel we have found a good fit, we will put together an offer letter and Rich will make the final hire.



Hooray! We now have a new member of our Youth Staff!

One note: **Please do not contact any potential candidates on your own.** We are of course happy to take recommendations (and in fact welcome them!), but in order to avoid wires getting crossed we would greatly appreciate it if Rich was the one to make initial contact with potential candidates. Furthermore, due to the fact that many (if not all) of our candidates will already be employed at other churches, we also ask that members of the committee **not** make contact with the candidate's colleagues or with persons who attend the candidate's parish. We want to be sensitive to the pastoral and professional difficulties that might arise if word gets out regarding a candidate's potential departure to join us here at St. Luke's.

V. PRAY. DISCERN. SERVE.

The most important thing throughout this process has nothing to do with lists or job descriptions or spreadsheets or flow charts or interviews— important though these things are. Rather, the most important aspect to this discernment process is **prayer**.

The task before us is not merely to fill a job posting, but to help choose someone who will pastorally support and lead our youth in their faith formation; we seek someone who can help grow our own children into robust disciples of Jesus Christ. Our kids matter to us. Our faith matters to us.

The only sure foundation for a successful search process is intentional, prayerful discernment. It is important that we pray for guidance and wisdom, for patience and humility, for hope and joy. It is important that we ask God to search our own hearts, helping to reveal those places where our own judgment might be clouded or impaired. And finally, it is important that we bear in mind that the process is not an end in itself, but rather a means through which the Holy Spirit might work to bring us the person we seek.

All this work we do in service to God, who calls us forward in mission as members of the Body of Christ, the Church. It's a wonderful thing to be embarking on this journey together!

A Collect for Guidance (from BCP pg 100)

Heavenly Father, in you we live and move and have our being: We humbly pray you so to guide and govern us by your Holy Spirit, that in all the cares and occupations of our life we may not forget you, but may remember that we are ever walking in your sight; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen.
