

Restructuring the Staff at The Chapel

A Letter from your Senior Pastor and Executive Pastor

Paul Sartarelli, Senior Pastor & David Fletcher, Executive Pastor

This is rather long letter, so you may want to go get your cup of coffee. You may be here a while.

13 Pastors

In 1980's, The Chapel had a little over 3,000 adults in worship each week. The staff photo shows 13 pastors on staff back then. To name a few, Knute is there, looking as chipper as ever. Bob Schneider had a full head of curly hair. Wes Hartzfeld looks the same today as then! Paul is wearing "shades" and looking really hip (*that is David talking*). Eloy is tan as ever!



The 13 Chapel Pastors in about 1988

The point of the photo is that God worked through only 13 pastors back then. That staff accomplished great things and saw tremendous ministry. Hold onto the thought that God did great things through that staff ...

A Cruise Ship or a Battleship?

While you are thinking about those 13 pastors in 1988, let us introduce another thought. Sometime we may think about the church as if it is a cruise ship:

- Do I like the music?
- Do I like the captain?
- Do I want to cruise on this liner again?



View the video at <http://www.vimeo.com/1986489>

Though we mean well, it becomes easy to think about what I can get out of "church." While church is certainly a place where I get encouraged and blessed, if I'm not careful, it can become a place to only get my needs met and be comfortable.

Another way of thinking about the church is as a battleship:

- Is the ship on a clear and noble mission?
- Does the captain submit to a higher authority?
- Are the members equipped to succeed?

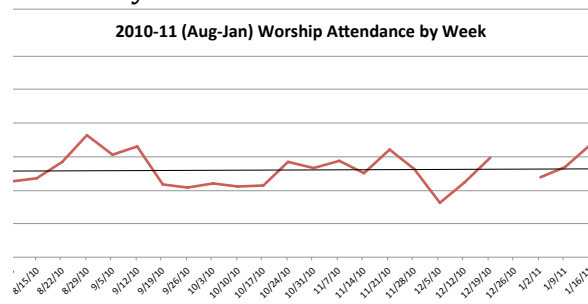
Now this is just a metaphor, so don't take the points too far, but it does change the perception of the church. Are we more interested in our comfort? Or are we more interested in the spiritual battle around us? By the way, you can see a video of this [here at http://www.vimeo.com/1986489](http://www.vimeo.com/1986489). David's friends at Watermark Church created this concept ten years ago and it helps us get a "call to arms." Now is a time for action!

There are several points of these two illustrations. First is that God can work through a smaller staff. He did in the past and he will in the future. Second is that the size of our staff is not the determining factor to great ministry at The Chapel. Great ministry is meant to be done by the entire congregation! We all need to decide to be on the battleship. Now, let's talk about the implications of these things.

Prayer as a Base

Throughout the month of February, many have prayed and talked together about our finances and staff restructuring. We prayed with the pastoral leadership team for hours on a Saturday a few weeks ago. We prayed as a Trustee Board in a specially called meeting. We called the congregation and the staff to prayer. We communicated to the staff and congregation from the pulpit on two occasions, in several emails, with the trustees in Adult Bible Fellowships, the bulletin and many other ways. **Thank you very much for praying about wisdom for the decisions and for how to lead this church.** We have felt the strength of your prayers.

The need for the restructuring is due to a decline in attendance. Five years ago, we had 6,000 adults in worship. Today we have 4,500 adults in worship and 1,500 children and youth every Sunday. There are many causes for the attendance decline—and The Chapel is addressing each of them. Our pastoral staff grew to almost 30 pastors, making a total of 154 full and part-time staff. We were fully staffed, perhaps even overstaffed, for a church of 6,000. Now with a vibrant church of 4,500, we are overstaffed. From the chart, you can see that attendance for the fall has stabilized.



Though not easy, we have sought God's wisdom in a challenging situation. In close discussion with our Trustees, we are trimming more than \$760,000 from our staff budget. This is painful because we love each member of this staff. Yet we must

balance our budget. We must be good and careful stewards of the resources and offerings The Chapel is given. We solicited ideas from all staff and held many meetings. We looked at many options of how to do this.

We had to restructure and make many hard decisions. We had to realign people and positions. We asked for sacrifice from every department and every position was examined (even Paul's and David's). We did a challenging analysis of great people that we love, within the context of a limited budget. We took into account many factors.

Public and Private Issues

We want to share appropriate information with our congregation. We are not going to share confidential information about any individual. We love Christ and our staff, and so won't do that. Yet, in a desire for you to know about this church that you love, we want to tell you about this restructuring.

Another reason for sharing is that we want to prevent gossip. "Did you hear about so and so?" "Well I heard that ..." The reason that the Bible talks so much about gossip is that everyone is prone to do it. We think that gossip is unfair to our staff and to the congregation. We are asking that you not attribute motive or read more into what we will say. Gossip, especially at this critical time, would be very damaging to our church.

Overview of Changes

Let's begin by sharing an overview of the changes. We are downsizing 16 positions and not going to fill another 6 vacant positions. We had three people voluntarily retire and others voluntarily ask for a reduction in pay. We are restructuring departments and realigning 15 people.

We solicited ideas from many people about how to do this restructuring. We looked at many options and considered every suggestion given to us. In this process, we had to make extremely hard decisions. We had to realign people and positions. We asked for sacrifice from every department and every position was examined. We did a challenging analysis of great people that we love, while realizing that we have a limited budget. We took into account many factors in the decision for each person.

On Tuesday, March 1, we had confidential discussions with the four pastors who lost their positions. On Wednesday, March 2, we had discussions with all other staff members. Later that afternoon, we had a staff meeting and explained all the changes. On Thursday, March 3, this note is being published for the congregation. On Sunday, March 6, Paul will share a few things from this note before the messages on each campus.

We are sorry for the pain that these changes will bring to our displaced staff members. There will be challenging times ahead for them and their families. Yet, a big challenge can be met by a big God! We have tried to be very generous with

severance, for our administrative staff and especially for our pastors. Also, we are praying for their next steps. We have lined up an Akron firm to lead a seminar on outplacement issues for all affected staff. For the full-time pastors, we also enlisted a national leader in staffing and giftedness to help them determine their next steps.

Renewed Emphasis on the Spiritual Life

Our guiding principle for the restructuring was “Let us renew our focus on the spiritual life. Let us reemphasize our spiritual DNA of worship, community and mission.” In other words, this means:

- Exhilarating Worship
- Discipleship by all members
- Connection in Community
- Mobilizing for Missions

Ephesians 4:11-15 talks about the role of church leaders:

So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ.

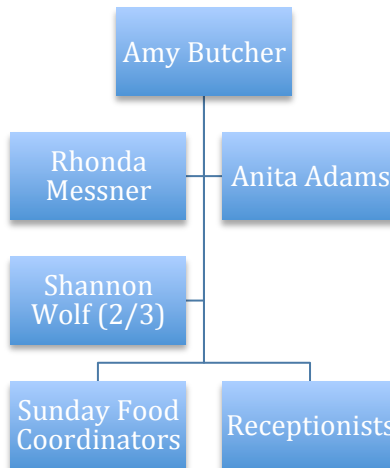
We want the entire congregation to be “equipped for works of service.” One beginning example is that we want our Sunday bulletin to be more focused on the core of spiritual life. We want the bulletin to have:

- Weekly information about ABF’s, discipleship groups, home groups and how to grow as a Christian.
- Pictures of our children’s and youth ministry, so that all of us can see the next generation growing in Christ.
- More stories and pictures of missions, so that we can fully participate in what God is doing in Akron and around the globe.
- Longer features about Camp Carl.

All of us need to help by sharing the stories of what God is doing in and through us. We need to share our ministry photos with the communications folks, so that they can share them with the rest of the congregation. You see, this kind of change is not about “them doing more work.” It is about “us helping one another.”

Changes in the Senior Team Office and Campus Management

Sacrifice begins at home. Paul and David began in their own office. We decided to not have two administrative assistants, but to share one. We will sadly say goodbye to one of our campus managers, Sandy Gamby. Four other part-time people were downsized, _____ and three other vacant positions. The new organizational chart for our campuses will look like this:



Rhonda will be in Green, Anita in Wadsworth, Shannon in Akron. Amy will be the senior campus manager, working with all the campuses.

Worship

We want to see one worship leader as the pastor in Green. To accomplish this, we made several changes. We downsized two people: _____. In addition, we will not fill an open position for a tech person. One person asked for a voluntary reduction in pay. We consolidated positions into a new worship pastor role that will be hired to lead both 9:00 and 10:40 services in Green.

It is difficult to lose a pastor and this decision was challenging for us. Yet, we saw that by the consolidation of positions, we could best serve the Green congregation.

Children's Ministry

We continue to move forward with Janice Kelley, our decisive and insightful Kid's Ministry leader. She has created a department that kids love. Many kids have brought their non-Christian parents back to church because of our children's ministry. Yet, we asked for sacrifice from every department and so we are letting one worker go, _____. Also two people voluntarily reduced their salary.

There has been great growth in the Kids Ministry. Janice reformatted the summer day camp (not to be confused with Camp Carl). It used to be called *Camp Straight Street* and now will be called *Camp Kafi* (*kafi* means *fun*). They are sending out 30,000 invitations to this. The Stow-Munroe Falls school district is going



to email the invitation to all parents on their list. For the first time in 5 years, the Green School District is going to allow us to give the invitation to all kids. It will also go to kids in the following districts or schools:

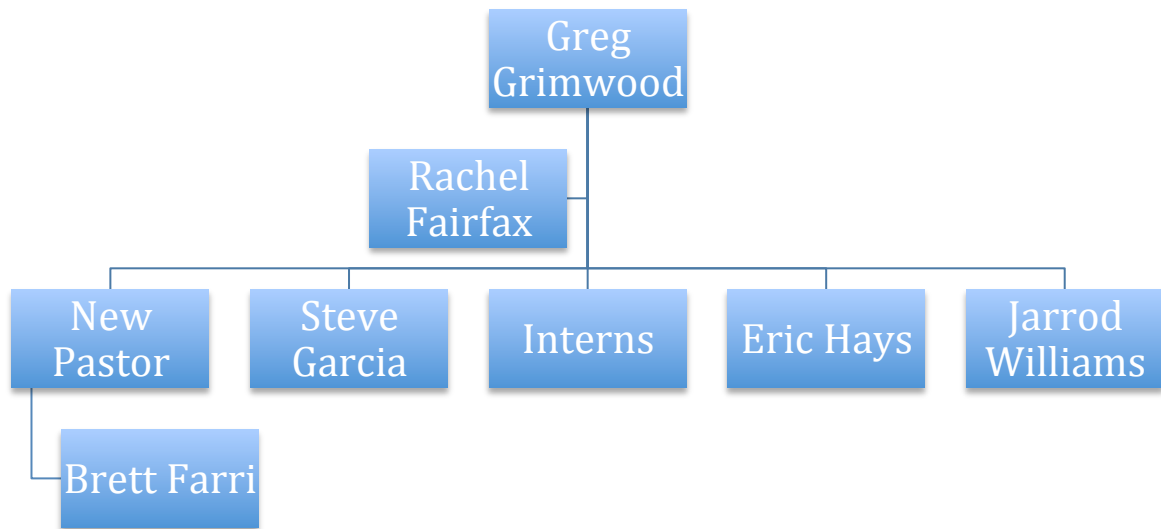
- Springfield
- Akron Public Schools
- Norton Schools
- Chapel Hill Christian North & South
- Marlinton
- Field Schools
- Coventry Schools

And, how about this: Fox's Pizza is going to allow the flyers to go on their pizza boxes! What a great effort by the Kid's Ministry Team for a fantastic summer for kids!

Youth

In our Youth Ministry, we have asked Greg Grimwood (from our Wadsworth campus) to be the leader of this area. He will refocus our strategy to go and reach students through the vehicle of dynamic incarnational communities. He will also work on new ways to minister to parents. _____ is going back to school and will be on our staff until December. So a search for a new Youth Pastor for Green is underway. We want to see an outstanding youth program!

Also, we are not replacing one intern who left in January and have repositioned Julie Davis into the Community Department. The Youth Ministry now reports to Brian Kunkler. This change was done in January. Brian is a member of the Pastoral Leadership Team. He is the dynamic leader of our college ministry (more about that later).



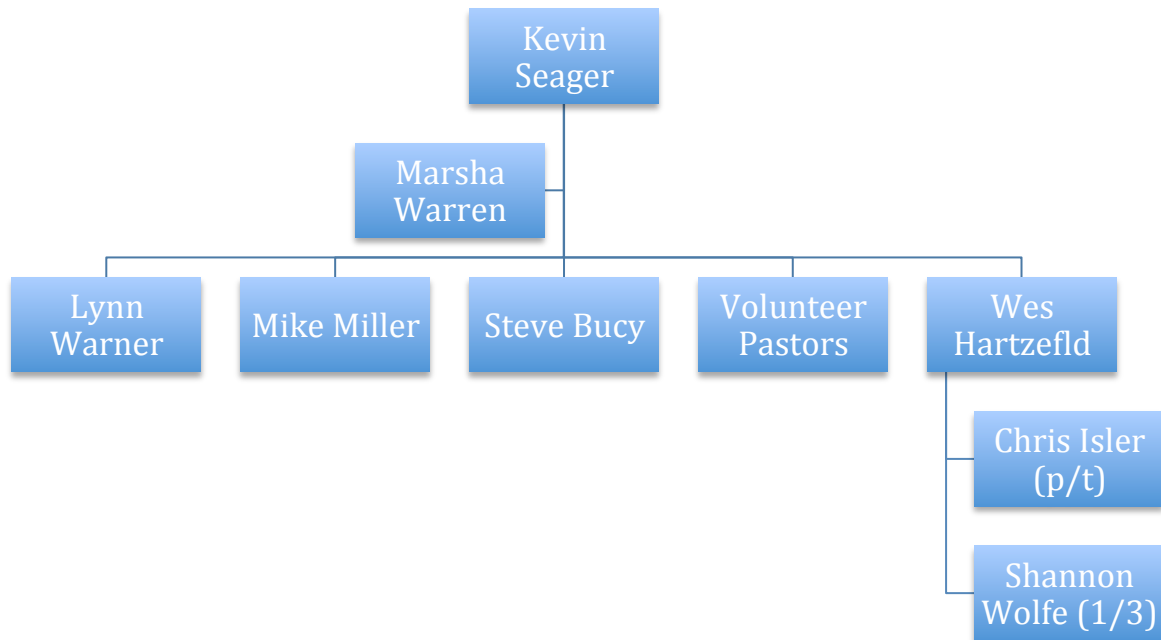
College & Young Adults

In this area, we will not replace one intern who is moving away. As mentioned above, Brian Kunkler is the Pastor for this area. The Thursday night college ministry is a strong missional community where evangelism and discipleship are very alive. This spring has seen the largest semester meetings ever!

Care & Seniors

We merged our Care Department and Seniors Department. We downsized three part-time pastors, _____. We also let go of an administrative assistant, _____. _____ is retiring for the second time, the first one was from his business life. Yet, _____ has agreed to volunteer time at least until December in this vital ministry. _____, our leader in Women’s Ministries, is also retiring and we are working on how to fill this position.

We asked Kevin Seager (from the Wadsworth campus) to take the lead in this area. Lynn Warner from the Seniors Department joins this new area, and Marsha Warren will be the administrative assistant.



Community

This area is receiving some major changes. We are giving a new emphasis to this department: *A passion to be spiritually connected and disciplined.*

This area will contain our Campus ABFs & Home Groups, Wednesday Night, Equipping, Mens & Womens. We merged the Sports Department with Community and asked Dale Saylor to lead the new area.

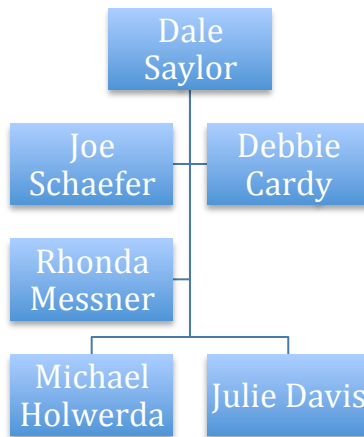
We want tables each week in every foyer, making it easy for members and newcomers alike to get connected in spiritual growth. We want new guests and seekers to be able to discover how to get involved and grow. We want information about neighborhood Bible studies to be easily accessible. Look for lots more information in the bulletin about spiritual growth!

To achieve this, we are repositioning several staff in a “task force” array. This means that we will have several senior leaders in this area, under Dale’s direction. The Pastoral Leadership Team will even give the vision and strategy for this area, asking Dale to carry it out.

The following people have been repositioned to this area:

- Julie Davis—all of Julie’s time will be in this area as a coordinator of ministry
- Rhonda Messner—two-thirds of her time will be as an administrative assistant.

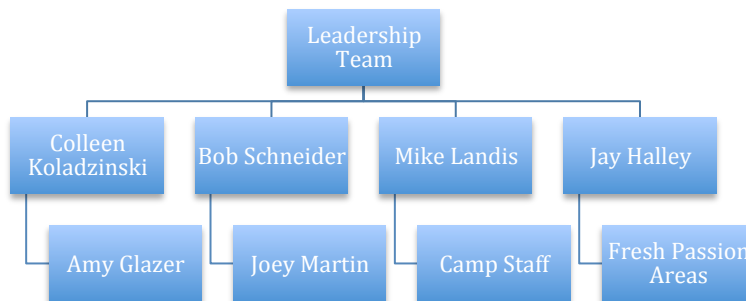
The challenge of restructuring is that we had to let go of staff. We have downsized _____ and one vacant intern position. We love these people and will miss them.



Missions & Camp Carl

We have merged Local Missions & Benevolence. We asked Colleen Koladzinski to lead this new area. We asked Jay Halley to lead our Fresh Passions area of Missions.

The challenge was that we downsized _____ and reduced the hours of Joey Martin. _____ is retiring.



Communications

Two people voluntarily reduced their hours. We also trimmed the hours of _____.

Facilities and Hospitality

We downsized one facilities worker, _____. We also want a renewed emphasis on excellence on Sundays for food, rooms and assistance. During the week, groups may need to get their own coffee and bagels. Groups will need to sacrifice by asking a member to stop by a donut or bagel shop and buy their own

refreshments. You may be asked to make your own coffee too. We are asking everybody to pitch in!

Some groups will be asked to help set up their rooms. For example, we may ask a Men's Study to have two people come a few minutes early and set up the chairs. Then, when the group is over, clean up the room and take out the trash. Again, we are asking everybody to pitch in!

Also, some non-church groups might not have an event here. This May and June, we are having five high schools have their graduation here. They are paying something for the room use, but not the full cost. Suppose that each group cost the church a net of \$500. We need to ask, with five groups, is that the best way to spend \$2,500 this year? Perhaps we should take that money and spend it in local ministry in a different way. These are the kinds of questions that we will ask.

Finally, with an aging campus, some of our buildings need on-going attention. Our standard is a "spiritual hospital." This is not a museum or a country club. When you go to the hospital, you want state-of-the-art equipment. You don't want a heart-lung machine that is twenty years old. You want a new-looking IV pump for your medicine. It's okay if the halls have some scuffmarks from a gurney being used that week, but you want it clean! The same is true at church. We need state-of-the-art equipment for our ministries—but we want to use that equipment every week.

We dream of a place where in the future Gary Glosner, our facilities director, might tell us:

"We had another Friday night activity with the Jr. High. They had plenty of parents involved and supervising the ministry. But, instead of 100 kids, they had 150. Those kids who don't know Christ can be pretty hard on our facility, well as a matter of fact, all the kids are. They broke three tables! But, many made spiritual decisions that night. That is what ministry is about!"

Wouldn't that be great. That is what our faculties should be about!

Conclusion

We didn't promise a short letter! But, to say all of this in a worship service would have taken the entire service—and that is not proper. Our worship gatherings are primarily for worship.

As you can see, The Chapel is on the move. Exciting ministry is happening. Restructuring was necessary to balance our budget, but God has helped us focus on our core spiritual ministry.

We are deeply and sincerely saddened by the transition of staff members. Yet, we believe that God will work all things for good. Will you pray with us to that end?

You may have lost a favorite administrative assistant or pastor. We know that is difficult. Yet, pray for their next steps. Encourage them in Christ. Know that Christ's kingdom will be expanded wherever they serve.

Thanks for your partnership in this ministry and for being ambassadors for Christ!

Faithfully yours,

Paul and David