

**Piedmont Community Church
Children's, Youth and Family Ministries Task Force
Report to the Board of Trustees
December 5, 2022**

Introduction

It is with excitement and anticipation that we submit this report to you concerning the findings of the Children's, Youth and Family Ministries Task Force. We appreciate the trust that you placed in us to evaluate the present state of our church's ministries to children, youth and families and to make recommendations as to the future of these important ministries.

The model of Children's and Youth Ministries (hereafter referred to as NextGen Ministries) laid out by Consultant Kerry Persichitte in her report is fresh and exciting. Although implementing such a model will require a significant investment of time, energy and financial resources by PCC, we are confident that the investment is vital for our children and families and crucial for the future of our church. We acknowledge that any church is facing strong headwinds (both internal and external) today to develop and implement a program such as NextGen. However, we agree wholeheartedly with the Mission Study Team that these ministries deserve to be the number one priority of Piedmont Community Church at this pivotal time in its long history and confident that by your endorsement of our recommendations our church can have a thriving NextGen Ministries in the coming future.

Although some of the ideas expressed in this report may seem to be redundant to those found in Kerry's assessment, we think it is important that you hear the excitement we feel after months of meeting together. In this report, our goal is to highlight those aspects of NextGen Ministries we find particularly important and to emphasize the recommendations we embrace most strongly.

HIGHLIGHTS OF NEXTGEN MINISTRY

Continuity of Vision and Model of Ministry from Birth to High School Graduation

One of the aspects of the NextGen model we think will benefit our ministry to children and youth is the continuity of the model of ministry from birth to the time a teenager graduates from high school. Intentionally determining what our church wants to specifically see developed in our children spiritually, mentally and emotionally during the entirety of their experience at PCC will produce stronger, healthier people and disciples. Establishing and celebrating milestones of such faith community milestones as baptism, first communion, confirmation and others will help these events to be more meaningful and impactful in the lives of students and their families. Cooperation and teamwork between Children's and Youth Ministries staffs will enable children to navigate important transitions, such as moving from elementary school to middle school and middle school to high school. In our present model of ministry, there is very little interaction or teamwork between our Children's Director and Pastor to Youth.

Emphasis on Partnership with Parents

Parents often feel ill-equipped to talk to their children about their Christian faith. Additionally, it is easy for parents to feel like they are all alone in the task of raising a child in the church, especially in the secular culture in which we find ourselves. Another aspect of the NextGen model is its emphasis on importance on partnering with parents in the spiritual development of their children. We feel that developing a community of parents who share life together during the years of raising children is also a very important element of NextGen Ministry.

Physical Environment

We enthusiastically endorse the vision of transforming our Christian Education Building into a “cool, fun place” for our children and youth to hang out. One of our members grew up attending Sunday School in our building; it doesn’t really look any different than when she was a child. Physical environments are so important to today’s generation of children; they live in a very visual culture. We are excited about our Christian Education building being an inviting, comfortable space.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Staffing

Perhaps the most important decision regarding the future of NextGen Ministries at PCC centers around staffing. We agree with Kerry that the best staffing model is to have a NextGen Lead (Family Pastor or Director) with a NextGen Coordinator and Pastor or Director to Youth. As members of the church, we are also aware of the financial as well as political considerations of such a bold hire. If hiring NextGen lead is not possible, we strongly recommend that a full time Director of Children’s Ministry be hired. We also recommend that Leslie Quantz be kept on our staff in the NextGen Coordinator position. Leslie’s knowledge of the church and community will prove to be invaluable to either the NextGen Lead or Director of Children’s Ministry. Developing our NextGen Ministries will be a significant undertaking, adequately staffing for the ministry is crucial.

We also recommend that a full-time assistant is needed in the Ministry to Youth. The safety protocols are changing the nature of youth ministry. Having 2 full-time staff for youth seems to be essential to following the new protocols. We also feel that having staff members of both genders is important

Our goal is to add staff as our ministries grow. The nature and speed of growth will determine staffing needs so it is difficult to produce a plan. We endorse Kerry’s recommended model of Lead NextGen Pastor with a Director for Children and Director for Youth is our ultimate goal.

Future Youth Ministry Model

We had significant discussion surrounding our present model of ministry to youth, especially regarding the Mexico Trip and the priority which is given to this event.

Almost unanimously, we feel the Mexico Trip is a very important event both for our church and community. We greatly appreciate what the trip does in the lives of both youth and adults. We have heard talk in our church community questioning the value of the trip and we want to clearly communicate that we feel it is very worthwhile.

Interestingly, the growth and present priority of the trip was a result of the declining numbers of kids in our children's programs "feeding" our youth ministry. Out of necessity, the Pastor to Youth began changing the top priority from church youth to unchurched youth because such a small number of students were graduating from our children's program into our youth program. COVID exacerbated this trend as our children's program almost became non-existent for almost 3 years. The outreach to youth outside our church is to be commended.

However, as the children's ministry begins to grow and "feeds" a higher number of students into our youth program, the priorities and nature of our youth ministry will need to change. Our hope is that we will be able to retain the Mexico Trip *and also* develop a more traditional youth group model. We believe this changing of priorities can begin with our current Middle School ministry which is growing and presently numbers around 20. It is beyond the scope of our work to determine what this new model will exactly look like but we see the need for a more traditional youth group model in our church.

Use of Facilities

One of greatest assets is our building. As parents of both young children and teens, we are aware of the dearth of groups supporting parents and children in our immediate area. COVID 19 brought the end of many play groups, parent support groups, Mommy and Me groups and other similar organizations. We also recognize the need for meeting spaces for all kinds of groups serving children and their families.

The need for after school care also is very present in our community.

We recommend that we think creatively about the use of our buildings and how they can be used to effectively reach out to our community.

We also recommend that our church considers establishing a pre-school which is part of church's ministry, with the Director being a member of the church staff. Such a school can be a constant source of feeding new families into the life of our church. We realize that beginning such a school is a very sensitive issue and must be dealt with carefully.

New Worship Service Targeting Families and Younger Generations

Although we all appreciate and even love our present worship service, we realize that it may not be attractive to younger generations who are not yet part of our church. We recommend that our church considers a new worship service that might have greater appeal to families and youth.

The structure of Sunday morning programming must prioritize the families we are trying to reach. We also discussed the possibility of a Sunday evening service with programming for children and perhaps a dinner. We are not making specific recommendations for a new service but feel strongly that establishing such a service is an important key to reaching unchurched families in our area. We realize that such an undertaking requires substantial resources of time and money and may not be possible in the immediate future.

SUMMARY

We acknowledge the years of work which will be required to accomplish all that is recommended in this and Kerry's report. Unfortunately, ministries to children and their families have not been a priority at PCC for many years. Establishing the ministries discussed in our reports will require an all-out effort of our church. Funding such programs and staffing will require substantial financial resources. Developing a thriving NextGen Ministry in our East Bay culture will not be easy. However, we feel strongly that these ministries are very important and essential to the future of our church.

Members of the Task Force: Erik Baysinger, Erin Gore, Margaret Hiller, Blaire Jahn, John Meyjes.

Staff: Scott Kail, Leslie Quantz, Steve Schibsted