

THE PACE SHEPHERDING MINISTRY

Guntersville First United Methodist Church (GFUMC)

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AGENDA

- Describing and Defining PACE
- How to launch a PACE ministry
- How to manage a PACE ministry

THE NEED

Every church member needs to be connected and cared for but the Pastor alone can't meet that need in a large church. When PACE started at GFUMC in Jan 2004, the congregation included 1100 active members in 450 families

THE BIBLICAL BASIS

John 21:15-17:

In Jesus' final instructions to Peter at the close of the Gospel of John, He says: "Feed my lambs"; "Take care of my sheep"; "Feed my sheep".

Exodus 18:

17-18: *(Jethro upon observing Moses trying to serve all the people says) ...what you are doing is not good. You and these people who come to you will only wear yourselves out. The work is too heavy for you; you cannot handle it alone.*

24-25: *Moses listened to his father-in-law and did everything he said. He chose capable men from all Israel and made them leaders of the people, officials over thousands, hundreds, fifties and tens.*

1 Peter 5:2-3:

Paul teaches the elders among the church, or the mature laypersons, to shepherd the flock – Be the kind of shepherds you ought to be, nourishing the flock and taking care of it the way God wants you to; not because you have to, but because you want to; not because of the salary you receive, but because you're eager to serve and help others. Don't lord yourselves over those who have been put under your care, but be an example to them.

PACE

- A shepherding ministry
- Shepherds are church members called to this ministry
- Shepherds receive support from the Pastor and staff
- Each church family member is connected to a Shepherd.
- Shepherds in turn connect to the PACE Ministry Director, the Pastor, and other church ministry directors and staff. Through these member-to-Shepherd-to-Pastor/staff connections, member needs and joys are effectively communicated, and church care provided.
- PACE by no means replaces any other ministries, or closes any other avenues of communications between members and pastors and church staff; PACE instead is a systematic and thorough way of insuring everyone in

the church is caringly connected and that no one falls through the cracks.

THE VICTORY

When church family members become better connected and cared for, they are more inclined to participate in church worship, Bible study, and Christian service, all of which spells victory in their spiritual growth, development, and relationship with Christ.

THE P IN PACE

- Prayer is the P in PACE
- Every person in the family is prayed for every day by name!
- Each Shepherd has 3 to 5 families and they commit themselves to praying for each person by name in their care each day
 - Many Shepherds in fact now consider themselves blessed because of the spiritual growth they have personally experienced through their PACE prayers
 - Shepherds quickly learn their daily prayers with Jesus about their sheep come naturally
- Every person in our GFUMC church family is prayed for every day by name! Today that is 1400 people.

THE A IN PACE

- Available is the A in PACE.
- Each shepherd is simply available for his or her sheep in times of joy as well as times of need.
 - We love hearing about joys and do want to hear about them.
 - And when there are needs, a shepherd is available to listen and help make connections to our pastors and staff. Of course, the pastors and church staff are always available as well. Shepherds do respect wishes for privacy.
- Our PACE shepherding ministry is here because as a church family we want to insure each church family member is connected, and cared for, regularly.

THE C IN PACE

- Contact is the C in PACE
- Each PACE shepherd contacts each of their shepherded families each week.
 - It may be with the wave of a hand at church, a phone call, an email or a letter.
 - Each family is contacted weekly by a church family Shepherd who cares about them.
- As a church family body we want to stay connected. While members may see many fellow church members in a week, there is one person, their PACE shepherd, who tries specifically to make contact with them. It's kind of a caring "warmlines" specifically to them. This Contact and availability is especially invaluable during times of

illness, hospitalization, or in times of sorrow as our pastor and church staff want to know and respond.

THE E IN PACE

- Christian Example is the E in the PACE ministry

- In many ways summarizes the PACE shepherds' actions of: daily Prayer for his sheep; continuous Availability to his sheep; and the weekly contact the shepherd tries to maintain with his sheep. Consistent Examples in a ministry dedicated to connecting with, and caring for, each of our church family members.

- Each shepherd by the grace of God tries to exemplify the love of Christ to their shepherded families that God has blessed them with

- Please pray with us that the Example of our shepherds and our church also serves as a witness of God's love to those in need of Jesus

PACE AT GUNTERSVILLE FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

- Active and effective for three years now. Membership has correspondingly grown over 25%. Evangelism is bringing people in; PACE is helping to keep them in.

- Three years ago, 90 shepherds served 1100 church members in 450 church families. Today, 3 years later, 125 shepherds minister to about 1400 members in 600 families

- Guntersville First United Methodist is blessed by PACE.

- Our Pastor is blessed knowing that the congregation is being personally cared for, as well as knowing, via the shepherds, where the congregational needs and joys are.

- Our shepherds are blessed as their prayer life improves and they see their shepherding benefit their sheep.

- Most importantly, every single church member is blessed by this caring and healing ministry. Their name is raised to God each and every day. They are blessed by the caring and encouraging relationship they build with their shepherd.

- PACE provides an essential foundation of congregational care and connection upon which membership grows, and church members worship more, study scripture more, and serve more.

STARTING A PACE MINISTRY

Outline:

- Five guiding assumptions
- Leadership and management
- Sizing the ministry
- Initial communication about the ministry – the call for shepherds and preparation for the members
- Shepherd training
- Linking shepherds to member families
- Final steps to launch

FIVE GUIDING PACE SHEPHERDING ASSUMPTIONS

- There is a need for this ministry
- God has called the church to meet this need
- Laypersons can give pastoral care
- Church members will accept care from their peers
- There are a gifted group of committed persons that will hear and answer this call

LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

- The Pastor should prayerfully consider what person should lead and direct PACE, and then support that person as the PACE Ministry Director.
- The PACE Director, after prayerful consideration and acceptance to the call, will develop a plan and program by which to implement PACE.

SIZING THE MINISTRY

Count the flock and figure out approximately how many shepherds are needed.

- Determine the number of members to be shepherded. Organize them by the number of family units.
 - (i.e. the Smiths are 1 family unit with 4 family members – husband and wife and 2 children)
 - (criteria for determining if a family unit to be shepherded should consider if their actively attending)
- Decide upon the number of Shepherds needed.
 - (criteria: Each shepherd should have between 3-5 families of their choosing.)

INITIAL COMMUNICATION ABOUT THE MINISTRY

(The call for shepherds and preparation for the members)

Contemplate who might be a good shepherd, may have spiritual gifts that would be a good attribute, and who may answer the call to be a shepherd. Make a list. Call the people on the list. Explain PACE.

The Pastor simultaneously from the pulpit over the course of several weeks lays out the Biblical and need basis for PACE and puts out the call for shepherds. Use the bulletin and newsletter to explain PACE to the congregation and call forth shepherds. Make a PACE pamphlet and hand out in bulletin.

PROVIDE SHEPHERD TRAINING

Set two Shepherd training dates and include those dates in the bulletins and newsletters. Set two dates so that if a prospective Shepherd cannot attend one, they could attend the other.

Training should be give by the Pastor, or PACE Director only if validated by the pastor's presence. (*The GFUMC PACE training video is available as an example of a new/prospective shepherds training session*)

LINK SHEPHERDS TO MEMBER FAMILIES

- Develop member roll of active members and prospects. Develop a fact sheet on each family to include member's names, address, phone number, birthdays, worship services, Sunday School classes, and any other valuable ministry or class information that would make it easier for a shepherd to make a contact.
- Allow Shepherds to choose their sheep; works well if done as part of the training event. On the list/roll of

members, write the shepherds name by families chosen – give the shepherd the family fact sheets.

FINAL STEPS TO LAUNCH

- Set a date for PACE to officially begin within one or two months from the time of the training sessions.
- After Shepherds and families are matched, explain PACE once again to the congregation through pulpit, newsletter, and bulletin.
- About one month before PACE begins, send a form letter to each family explaining: the date when PACE will begin; what PACE is; why PACE is needed (So that the members of the church will feel connected and cared for – so that none fall through the cracks); and that their shepherd will soon be contacting them to begin PACE.
- Inform Shepherds that they are to contact their families in advance of the start date to introduce themselves as a shepherd and to explain PACE and why PACE is needed.
- 1 or 2 weeks prior to the official start date, have a Shepherd's consecration Sunday where the shepherds come to the alter and the PASTOR consecrates their ministry – acknowledges their commitment and launches the program.

THE FIRST MONTH OF PACE MINISTRY

- PACE Director receives and organizes weekly reports from the shepherds. Some Shepherds may report every other week. PACE Director makes follow up calls to the Shepherds not reporting. A spreadsheet is a good tool for checking off whether a report was received.
- Any significant reports, concerns, good news stories are passed on to the Pastor (remembering rules of confidentiality.)
- Shared prayer requests are placed on the prayer chain and bulletin prayer list.
- Pastor visits are initiated promptly

DURING THE FIRST YEAR OF PACE MINISTRY

- One month after program start, assess if more shepherds are still needed and put out another call for shepherds as needed.
- Provide new shepherd training as new shepherds are added.
- Twice a year provide a celebration and equipping luncheon for Shepherds. Provide continuing information on relevant issues and allow for questions and answers from Shepherds to Pastor.
- Mid-year, send out a questionnaire to shepherds asking for their assessment of the overall PACE ministry.
- $\frac{3}{4}$ into the year – begin preparations for the next shepherded year.
- PACE Director should write regularly about shepherding and PACE in church newsletter

MOVING INTO SUBSEQUENT YEARS OF PACE MINISTRY

- Ask shepherds if they will recommit to another yearly term and if so ask them if they want to keep their sheep or have new ones assigned. If not, thank them for their ministry through the end of the year.
- Assess the number of new shepherds needed for the next year.
- Put out another call from pulpit, newsletter, bulletin
- Train the new shepherds.
- PACE Director should write regularly about shepherding and PACE in church newsletter (*At any time when new shepherds are needed, put out the call for, and train, new shepherds.*)

ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS

- When communicating with prospective shepherds, keep the emphasis on:
 - Prayer is simple
 - Availability is simple
 - Contacts are simple. At church, by phone, by email, by card/letter. I.E. don't have to take a pot roast. Pastors will visit members in the hospital, but shepherds certainly may visit as well if possible.
 - Reporting in is simple.
- A Shepherd can take 1 to 5 families of their choosing (first come, first serve on the family assignments.) There is also a need for special shepherds to take new people that no one knows yet.
- The Pastor and PACE Director are always there for the Shepherd – for support and to answer questions.
- When Shepherds learn of a members need and the member consents to let the shepherd share that need with others in the church, the Pastor and church ministries are there to respond to the need. The Shepherd is the connection to the trained and focused staff and ministries who will respond to the needs.
- Shepherds, don't expect responses from all families – but it is the right thing to contact them so they feel connected.
- When the second year rolls around, bear in mind relationships take typically 2-3 years to develop and shepherds should not feel discouraged if not much contact yet. GAL 6:9 tells us – “Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Shepherds may not see the effects their PACE actions are having on their sheep.”

CONCLUSION

I am thankful that you are considering PACE for your church. PACE is truly a blessing to all. It is love and Prayer touching every single member in your church family daily. Members are blessed. Shepherds are blessed. For large and growing churches, it helps insure all members and their needs are served; a task to great for a single pastor.

“Feed my lambs”; “Take care of my sheep”; “Feed my sheep”.