

February 28, 2022



Dear LEMC,

In light of our church's ongoing conversations about hiring, and a new pastoral structure, I know that many of you are curious about where I see myself in the midst of LEMC's future! I have felt so encouraged, supported, and prayed for by many, including Council and Joel, throughout this season of renewal and visioning – and I thank you, so much, for that!

I want to share how I have been sensing God's leading – and I trust that together, we can discern His will for us.

Those involved in hiring me at LEMC in the Fall of 2016 might recall that my original direction in becoming a pastor wasn't specifically aimed toward youth ministry. My sense of God's direction for my ministry life, was rooted around Jesus' words in Luke 4:18-19:

"The Spirit of the Lord is on me,  
because he has anointed me  
to proclaim good news to the poor.  
He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners  
and recovery of sight for the blind,  
to set the oppressed free,  
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor."

Two weeks before I began my Bible College degree in 2012, God impressed this Scripture on my heart, assuring me of his Spirit's presence in my life, and His desire to use me in His work!

In becoming the Youth Pastor at LEMC, I was excited about serving and focusing on youth. Youth are such a worthy group of people to love, serve and lead in faith! I have loved, enjoyed and been humbled to serve them here. I learned so much over the past five years that will continue to shape my life. I am so thankful for the youth here, and the team I've had the privilege to serve with at LEMC!

Over Jeff's sabbatical in 2019, I spent a week in more focused time of prayer. God spoke to me again through the Luke 4:18-19 passage, affirming this direction in my life, and affirming all I had learned over the previous years at LEMC already. Out of that time of prayer, I gained increased conviction in this: God's calling on me was directed towards the poor, broken, oppressed, blind and captives. If my role were to shift in the future, it would be important to God and to me, that it shift in the 'Out' direction: reaching new people who are in need of Jesus' work.

Let's fast-forward to the beginning of 2021, when I spent some time in prayer and reflection again. Out of that time, here's the affirmation I gained (a direct quote from my journal): I think God's

design in my life really is to focus on building communities of discipleship and mission... where training is in regards to “how do we make disciples?”, and to the end that lay people are equipped, bearing fruit, and multiplying.

These two priorities – **Mission and Discipling Strategies** – are passions God’s been developing in me all along. And I can give Him absolute, total praise, about the way He’s provided for me to grow in these skills!

At All Ontario Youth Convention a few years ago, the main speaker was a pastor from South Africa who was part of a multiplying movement of disciples. I was so inspired and encouraged to hear of something in action that in my life was mostly theory. I prayed (and cried), asking God for a mentor like that pastor... someone who knew how to multiply disciples, and could help me learn.

God didn’t send me to South Africa – but He did answer that prayer! Later that year, I was invited into a special opportunity with our denomination to participate in a two-year learning process with 3DM – an organization who specializes in helping believers shift from a delivery-focused ministry, to a development-focused ministry, where discipleship and mission can multiply among lay people. Can you believe what an answer to prayer this was? I get to meet weekly with other pastors, to grow as a follower of Jesus, and to grow in my skills to empower others in ministry!

When it came to imagining my way forward at LEMC, I kept growing in this conviction towards these two passions: If my role ought to shift, it ought to shift in a way that better liberates me to see communities of discipleship and mission. If my role isn’t to shift (if I were to remain as Youth Pastor), the same two priorities would direct how I would focus in that role.

Over the course of Joel’s work, Council’s work, the Townhall Meeting, and ongoing conversations with people from LEMC, I have seen affirmation that God’s hand has been leading me in this direction, and opening our church up to the possibility of a role focused on “scattered life” – empowering people for faithful and fruitful Christian living in daily life.

The two roles that have been presented by Council, with Joel’s guidance, have been: Co-lead Pastor of Community Life; and Co-lead Pastor of Teaching and Equipping. Through many conversations with Council and Joel, it seems that God’s purposes for me, and the affirmations I’ve received from many at LEMC, would most align with my shift into the Community Life role.

This role would enable a sharpened focus on developing groups, leaders, and believers, to be growing in faith and mission for everyday life. The “shared responsibilities” between the co-lead pastors, enable a broader leadership of LEMC as a whole, which also excites me!

It is my request to you, as the people of LEMC, to pray alongside me for God’s discernment, and express how you sense God’s leading, through a vote at the ABM, on March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2022.

Sincerely,

Carter

Pastor Carter Whyte