

The purpose of our student ministry department is *to affirm and foster full participation in the life of Christ Community Church by helping students build meaningful, intergenerational relationships in a variety of environments within and beyond student ministry*. Simply put, we want students to fall in love with Jesus and his church.

This purpose guides us and recently led us to ask if we we're doing anything, intentionally or unintentionally, that would hinder a student from developing a life-long love for and commitment to both Jesus and his Church. One area that stood out was our staffing structure.

Previously, we have staffed a single pastor over each stage: Middle School, High School and College. This meant that throughout a student's most formative years, they would have (at best) three different pastors in three different environments. These transitions did not encourage longevity in the church and caused us to dream about what it would look like to take a team approach where we could provide students with more connection points with more student ministry pastors over a longer stretch of time. We Imagined a team of pastors that could share ministry, lead out of their strengths, lean on others' strengths and provide students with many times more than any one person could.

After months of thought, prayer, research and collaboration, we concluded that we could provide students with a healthier church experience by shifting to a team model. With that said, we would like to introduce you to the St. Charles Campus student ministry pastoral team.

**Bobby Jackson** – *High School & Outreach Pastor*. Bobby has been on staff for nearly six years as our Outreach Pastor & Hub Director. In addition, he has written and developed our [re]group program as well as our Student Service & Leadership Team. Bobby is a strong communicator with a real gift for developing creative and effective events.

**Bex Rowland** - *High School & College Pastor*. Bex joined our staff in August as the college pastor but brought with her a passion for high school students and strong gifts of teaching and discipleship. Her recently earned MDiv. from Gordon Conwell will serve our team well as she teaches and leads the team in developing content and curriculum.

**Elias Zavala** - *Middle School & Worship Arts Pastor*. Eli has been at Christ Community for 2½ years in a very similar role. Over that time, God has developed some evident pastoral and leadership gifts in Eli that we are excited to see employed as he oversees the Genesis program at St. Charles.

**Marcilyn Rowan** - *Middle School & Girls' Pastor*. Marcilyn began working with Genesis as a Judson University practicum students 3½ years ago and joined our staff this fall after two summers on our leadership staff for Camp Commotion. Marcilyn has a passion for middle school students (girls in particular) and very strong administrative gifts that will serve the ministry well.

**Pete Sutton** – *Student Ministry Lead Pastor*. Pete has been our middle school pastor for nearly ten years and had led our department for the past three. His passion for students, families and the church coupled with nearly 20 years of youth ministry experience will be a great resource for each department and campus that our student ministry serves.

While each pastor has responsibility over one primary and one secondary environment, the team approach will enable us to use our greatest gifts across ministry and campus lines. Students will experience teaching from a variety of gifted teachers. Volunteers will be equipped by a variety of leaders, all with different and unique leadership gifts. Each pastor contributing in an area of strength.

The benefits of this approach are many. Here are a few:

- Pastors are able to use their strongest gifts in various environments, which means students get the best of our team for their whole time in student ministry.
- Students have multiple pastors tracking with them for a longer stretch of time providing the opportunity for longer, deeper relationships within the church.
- Transitions from Middle School to High School to College are not so abrupt; new spaces have familiar faces.
- Each ministry has a male and female pastor to address the unique needs of each gender.
- When staff changes occur, the ministry rhythms remains stable.
- Regional student pastors can be equipped and provided with greater opportunities to grow.

Additionally, each person that considers Christ Community Church his or her faith family has a role to play on our team. All followers of Jesus are Spirit-filled ministers ([1 Peter 2:9-10](#)) whom God has uniquely created and blessed with talents and gifts to serve him. These various gifts – utilized together – allow us to accomplish our mission of glorifying God and making disciples. This means that we're better together and that we need the differences that each one brings to the table to effectively serve God.

All of this is very important when we consider the team-nature of our Student Ministry. We have a tendency to think that the paid staff is responsible for the “real work” of ministry - all the hard and significant work – while the volunteers merely help here and there. This is simply not true.

According to [Ephesians 4:11-13](#) one of the main roles of a pastor is “to equip his [Christ’s] people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up.” It’s best to think of the Student Ministry pastors and paid staff like assistant coaches. They are responsible – under the ultimate Coaching of Jesus – to train, inspire, equip, correct, encourage, and organize God’s people for ministry so that the church as a whole can grow into maturity. In other words, the role of the pastor is to prepare you to engage fully in ministry.

An important implication follows from this: there is no such thing as a small role, paid or volunteer, on the Student Ministry team. Everyone is responsible to do his or her part by the Spirit’s power so that God will bring students into conformity to Christ and into community with his church. We invite your prayers and participation as we strive together to *affirm and foster full participation in the life of Christ Community Church by helping students build meaningful, intergenerational relationships in a variety of environments within and beyond student ministry.*