

—Dave Hedgepeth education director

What do we feel God is calling us to do that maybe would not get done if we were not here?

"They need to determine the skills they are looking for in the next pastor. Do they want a powerful preacher, a powerful counselor, someone who can raise money ...?"

"The development and training of a leadership pool is critical." Also the church is seeking to "recreate its close bond" with its sister congregation in Preston.

"And there's the nitty gritty involved in addressing areas of conflict and bringing about healing, so there's a sense of unity and a sense of affirmation and acceptance among members."

Conflict resolution is part of the formal education of an interim pastor. Johnke spent 20 days training in San Francisco. About his informal, lifetime training — there's about 20 books there.

Cheyenne provided practical experience and a testing of techniques. But a basic asset, optimism, has much to do with his 17 years in the pulpit in Bloomington, Minn.

The way the flock there "stepped up" to provide resources and relief during an economic downturn gave

humorous and easy going, but there's definitely the feeling that time is valuable."

The ticking of the clock and can be relaxing, or not. Johnke knows he is at his best in a "non-anxious" mode. He speaks likewise of a church's being less "uptight" and recognizing that it "belongs to Jesus Christ, and that we can let go of some of our anxiety."

"Healthy self-care for me was a difficult thing," he continues. "Learning to step back and trust that God would take care of some things and Frank wouldn't have to take care of them was a big step for me."

"I've discovered in healthy self-care how much I can receive from the folks around me. It's awesome to recognize from the youngest to the oldest members of the congregation there is so much wisdom, so much joy, so much love that others have to extend."

Expressions of this feeling can be heard at the end of services when members ask each other "Can we keep him?" The answer is, God knows.

"I do trust God to have something in store for me," Johnke says.

"If I really keep my wits about me I may recognize what that is. It may be that the next chapter in my life will be going back to serving a traditional ministry. It may be another interim. But that's two years down the road. Now I take it a day at a time and trust that it will all work out."