

Community Life Council Meeting
Discussion on Governance Task Force Proposal
Dec. 13, 2016

In attendance: Chair Achsah Carrier, Jen Larimer (VP), Michelle Benedict, Elizabeth Breeden, Patsy Swindler, Lara Gastinger, Sally Taylor, Alex McGee

Sally led the discussion, introducing the Governance Proposal and soliciting feedback from the LC Council.

Sally summarized the major points of the proposal: streamlining the Board (downsizing from twelve Board members to seven), changing the terms of board members, limiting the consecutive years of board service to 6 years, establishing a Policy Review Team to expedite making or revising policies, changing the name of the Leadership Development Committee to Nominating, and changing the scope of that Committee to focus on nominations, while dropping the leadership development function from its portfolio. The changes that will most impact the CLC is the change in how policy changes would happen. The Policy Review Team will be required to get input from the congregation, councils, committees etc. within a 90 day period. Once all the input is gathered the Board would vote on the proposed policy.

Elizabeth raised the issue of “free meeting space” for committees and the temptation of congregants to create new groups/committees in order to have access to free meeting space. Sally pointed out that this was a policy issue and would be dealt with by the Policy Review Team and was not a part of the governance proposals. Now the use of space is controlled by the DAF. Elizabeth Breeden expressed her concern about whether the staff had sufficient support since Worship, RE and Administrative Councils are not functioning and the proposal is not recommending reinstating them. There was concern that the lack of councils for worship, administration and religious education encouraged the creation of silos, groups that operated without connections to the rest of the church community. This places a responsibility on the staff members associated with these areas to make sure that this does not happen. We also need to make sure that the needs of the entire community are considered rather than focusing on the needs of the small groups/committees within the congregation.

During the discussion of the length of time that it presently takes policies to be processed and approved Elizabeth raised the issue of the Emergency Policies which have been under discussion for two years and still have not been approved. Sally pointed out that this was not part of the Governance Proposal.

The group discussed the appropriateness of creating Coordinator positions for those activities which do not require monthly meetings: Snack, Coffee Servers, Greeters, CareNet, Soup Kitchen for example. It was agreed that groups, committees and coordinators should continue to turn in annual reports since church history is being kept largely through these annual reports, and that the congregation needs to have a way of seeing the totality of church life annually.

There was also concern about volunteer training and support under the new regimen. We need to think about how this will take place and how congregants will be trained and encouraged to take leadership positions. We also need to assure that our values are reflected in our actions and policies.

Lara Gastinger suggested that a chart comparing the present governance system with the proposed changes would help congregants who like her were intimidated with documents that were as wordy as the governance proposal. (see below for the chart created in response to this request).

The council members were thanked for their suggestions and comments.

Respectfully submitted,
Sally Taylor

Summary of Proposed Changes in the Governance System, Spring, 2016

Present Governance System	Proposed Governance System
Board of twelve members + 3 Staff members	Board of seven members + 3 Staff members, more nimble board, increased responsibilities for board members, faster decision making
President-3 year term, Pres. Elect, Pres, Past Pres.	President- 2 year term, renewable once
Executive: Pres. Elect, President, Past Pres., Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Minister	Executive: President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Minister
6 At Large Board members, 3 year terms, nonrenewable	3 At Large Board members, 2 year terms, nonrenewable, eligible for other board positions
Vice President in charge of council system	Vice President in charge of council system and chair of the Policy Review Team
No limit to consecutive board service	Maximum 6 years consecutive board service
Executive Committee required to meet once a month	Executive Committee not required to meet but responsible for agenda for Board meeting, meets as the discretion of the President and Secretary
Policy change procedures lengthy and unclear.	Policy review team arranges feedback on proposed policies and policy changes within 90 day period. Clear responsibility for process.
Policy proposed through councils.	Policy proposed by committees, councils or anyone in the congregation to VP.
VP responsible for guiding policy changes	Policy Review Team-VP + 2 board appointed non-board Members responsible for guiding policy changes
5 Councils: Community Life, Social Justice, Administrative, Worship, Religious Education, last three no longer function	2 Councils: Community Life, Social Justice. Other councils could be established by the Board if desired, Staff members assume responsibility for coordinating groups/committees in their areas of responsibility
Leadership Development Committee responsible for recruiting congregation elected positions	Leadership Development Committee responsible for recruiting congregation elected positions and if asked by the President for recruiting board appointed committees and positions including council chairs
Leadership Development also responsible for leadership development including identifying and training of	Leadership Development not responsible for leadership development and the committee name changed to Nominating

volunteers	Committee
Lots of Committees and Groups	More reliance on Coordinators of activities rather than committees and groups.
Lots of face to face meetings	Reduced number of meetings, more reliance on alternative methods of decision making and information sharing