

Summary of Congregational Conversation
Governance Task Force
Jan. 22, 2017

In attendance: Sally Taylor, Bev Thierwechter, John Anderson, Sharon Biaoocco, Susan Bremer, Sarah Jacobs, Katherine Maus, Joe McNally, Kit McNally, Sallie Kate Park, Shirley Paul, Wendy Repass, Adam Slate

Sally Taylor welcomed attendees and stated that this congregational conversation is the last meeting to solicit comments before the Task Force prepares to present the Governance Proposal at the February Board meeting. At that time, the Board will take over responsibility for planning for the proposal's presentation at the May TJMC Annual Meeting, as well as implementation. The Task Force will encourage the Board to have an up or down vote on Bylaws changes at the Annual Meeting, rather than taking up individual changes one at a time.

Sally described major aspects of the proposal, using the Summary Chart, which compares the current governance structure and proposed changes from that structure. Bev and Sally noted that pertinent documents (the proposal, proposed Bylaws changes, Summary Chart, summaries of discussions with stakeholder committees and congregational conversations) are posted on the TJMC website.

Adam Slate suggested that the names of Task Force members be listed in the Governance proposal.

Katharine Maus asked about the pros and cons of smaller Board size and whether the smaller size was consistent with TJMC church size and research conducted by the Task Force. A UUA consultant and our research on churches of similar size confirmed that the smaller size is workable, more efficient, and allows the Board to focus on issues of the day, as opposed to trying to fill vacancies – a big job for Boards of large size. In addition, the current TJMC Board has found that the smaller size (due to current vacancies) has worked well for them. The Task Force will also note that volunteer recruitment is another issue that the Board needs to address.

Sharon Biaoocco asked whether the Task Force had recommendations on changes to the duties of the two functioning Councils (Social Justice Council and Community Life Council). The answer was no, because the Task Force considers such a review the responsibility of the Board.

Shirley Paul asked whether fewer Board members meant increased responsibilities for Board members and therefore could cause volunteers to be hesitant to go on the Board. Sally said that having a two-year term for the President (instead of a one year Presidency) actually allowed the President to gain expertise in the first year that could make the second year easier. However, it would mean that at-Large

Board members would have responsibilities, rather than, in some cases, just being present at the Board meetings. The Vice President would have increased responsibilities because the VP would now be on the Policy Review Team. Bev noted that leadership development would become even more important and that is something that the Task Force will highlight in its presentation to the Board.

Wendy recognized the emphasis on flexibility in the proposal and praised the need to recruit fewer volunteers, as well as streamline operations. Sally noted that the proposal also promotes the idea of having less meetings, if other options will get necessary tasks accomplished efficiently. The proposal also encourages the Board to have some group review the entire list of committees, to see if some can be eliminated or their functions can be done more easily by a single coordinator.

There was general consensus that needs change over time and the proposed governance model seems a good one for now, but the governance structure will need to be reviewed periodically (maybe every ten years?), to ensure that it serves TJMC well in the future.

Attendees complimented the Task Force on its recommendations.

Summary submitted by Bev Thierwechter