

Church Governance for the Future
Report of the
Committee on Church Governance
Presented to Church Council
First Congregational Church of Branford, UCC
February 20, 2019

Background

In 2017, FCCB engaged in a Situational Support Consultation (SSC) process to assess the state of the church through independent interviews with 57 church members and friends. The process results were presented to the congregation in October 2017, providing information for the membership to use as it experiences another transition.

Key findings of the report indicate that church membership, attendance, and financial support have seen substantial decreases over the past decade. These have significantly impacted the church's ability to continue as it has in the past. Member numbers dropped from 740 in 2006 to 374 in 2016. Currently there are approximately 325 FCCB members. Attendance for Sunday services went from an average of 221 people in the pews in 2006 to an average of 81 in this church year beginning in August 2018. Revenues were down by nearly 67%, while expenses have only reduced by about 12% from 2006 to 2016. And, pledge amounts continue to decrease each year.

The membership base provides the volunteers who are responsible for governing the church and producing most of its programs, projects, and activities. According to UCC information, approximately 10% of a church's membership can be expected to volunteer for these important roles. The current board and committee structure of FCCB requires approximately 120 volunteers to fill all the positions, 37% of the membership. Currently, only 55 of the 120 positions are filled for 2019.

The SSC Report recommended that FCCB "right-size" its governance structure to provide realistic volunteer opportunities for its members, utilizing the 10% of membership guideline as the desired target. To do this requires FCCB to review its current board and committee structure, assess its value and viability, and develop a more reasonable, workable organization to focus on effective and rewarding opportunities for members to engage in the governance and mission of their church.

In response to the SSC report recommendations, the FCCB Church Council appointed the *ad hoc* Committee of Church Governance (CCG) in June 2018 to accomplish the following charge.

Charge

The *ad hoc* Committee on Church Governance (CCG), as appointed by the FCCB Church Council, is charged with evaluating the current number, purpose, and membership of standing boards and committees of FCCB in light of the reduced size of church membership and reduced church attendance. The CCG will report back to the Church Council no later than November 30, 2018, with its recommendations for a new governance structure. These recommendations may include a trial period, to be determined, before the FCCB Bylaws are amended (Article V, Section 12) to reflect the new governing structure.

Proposed Church Governance Structure

Church Governance

The First Congregational Church of Branford, UCC, shall be governed as defined in its Articles of Incorporation, Article IV, recognizing that governance of this Church is vested in its members. The membership shall elect a Church Board to act on its behalf on all appropriate matters between meetings of the Church membership. The Church Board shall not act on matters specifically reserved for the membership as defined in the Articles of Incorporation or Bylaws.

Church Board

The Church Board of the First Congregational Church of Branford, UCC will serve as the elected executive governing body of the church. It shall be comprised of the following eleven (11) positions:

- Moderator
- Moderator-elect
- Clerk
- Treasurer
- Discipleship Team Representatives (2)
- Operations Team Representatives (2)
- Worship Team Representatives (2)
- Senior Minister (*non-voting*)

The Discipleship, Operations, and Worship Teams serve as the Governance Teams of the church and shall be comprised of five members elected by the church membership. The team members shall serve staggered two-year terms, with three members elected one year and two members the next. A team member may be elected to two consecutive terms, then must wait one year to be eligible to be elected to that same team again.

Each team shall elect two representatives to serve on the Church Board as voting members. One of these representatives shall serve as Team Leader.

Terms for the Moderator and Moderator-elect are for one year with the Moderator-elect expected to assume the office of Moderator at the end of one year. The Moderator may not serve two consecutive terms.

Terms for Clerk and Treasurer are for three years. They may serve two consecutive terms, then must wait a minimum of one year to be eligible to be elected to the same position again.

Church Board Responsibilities:

- Representation of the membership by articulating mission and vision
- Long-term and short-term strategic planning
- Establishment of written church policies and goals
- Delegation of authority to staff and teams
- Monitoring progress toward goals, holding staff and teams accountable
- Ensuring that all reports, filings, and historical documents relating to the operation of the church are correct and up to date
- Oversight of affiliated organizations

Governance Teams

Three standing governance teams will ensure the effective and efficient ongoing delivery of the Church mission, programs, activities, and operations through the involvement of member volunteers. The teams will address the three major functions of the Church: Worship, Discipleship, and Operations.

The congregation shall elect five (5) members to lead each team to achieve their identified goals through programs, projects, and activities. To do this, the teams will recruit and direct volunteers to accomplish designated tasks. Examples include: organizing and promoting mission opportunities, creating and implementing the

stewardship campaign, serving communion, delivering flowers, and organizing work days, among other activities. The desired outcome is to reduce the number of members committed to ongoing roles and to increase opportunity for volunteers to engage in specific, targeted, time-defined actions to advance the mission and operation of the Church.

Discipleship Team *shall encourage and help the congregation to develop in its Christian faith.*

Responsibilities:

- Educational opportunities
- Active involvement with the church, the community, the nation, the world
- Giving of time, talent, treasure
- Long-term and short-term planning

Operations Team *is responsible for providing leadership in the areas that directly relate to the ongoing operations of the church.*

Responsibilities:

- Physical assets
- Investment and utilization of the Endowment Funds
- Financial operations of the church
- Personnel policies
- Long-term and short-term planning

Worship Team *will attend to the spiritual interests and needs of the church.*

Responsibilities:

- Consideration of all aspects of worship service
- Assistance in the administration of the sacraments of Baptism and Communion
- Aid in the pastoral care of the congregation
- Assistance in receiving new members
- Appointment of an *ad hoc* search committee to recommend a new minister
- Maintenance of the church membership roll and submission of recommendations for changes to the Board
- Long-term and short-term planning

Tentative Implementation Steps

November 28, 2018	Initial progress report to Church Council
January 16, 2019	Update to Council; target February for initial presentation
February 20, 2019	Report Presentation to Church Council; <i>upon acceptance</i> , then
March/April 2019	Conduct two or more church informational sessions to present the CCG's recommendations to the membership
May/June 2019	Call a special meeting of the congregation for approval/rejection of the CCG proposed governance structure; <i>upon approval</i> , then
June 2019	Bylaws Committee begins review of existing bylaws in order to amend as needed to assimilate the new governance structure with goal of having congregational vote at the 2020 Annual Meeting
September/October 2019	Facilitated discussion(s) involving current (and past) volunteers to determine how to integrate the priority activities of the various committees into their respective Governance teams
November 2019	Bylaws Committee presents initial draft of recommended changes to Council for review, discussion, and modification
November/December 2019	Nominations Committee identifies/recruits a slate of nominees to fill the five members of each Governance Team and the four officers of the Church Board
January 2020	Hold 376 th Annual Meeting of the FCCB to approve revised bylaws and elect the initial leadership under the new governance structure
February 2020	New governance structure in place and operational