

OCC GOVERNANCE AND LEADERSHIP

Background: The Governance and Leadership Working Group consists of David Hoppock, Gail Mead, Susan Russell, Roger Samuelsen, Craig Taatjes, Carl Walker, and the senior member of the pastoral staff.

At the onset of the re-envisioning process, one of the possible outcomes was “a new organizational structure providing opportunities for fellowship and spiritual growth”.

Beginning with a review of Anthony B. Robinson’s chapters “Who Shall Lead Them” and “Let’s Get Less Organized” and continuing with visits and research into other churches (including Fresno, San Mateo, and Berkeley), the working group has brainstormed potential governance approaches and structures over the course of a number of meetings. Dan Hotchkiss’s book Governance and Ministry: Rethinking Board Leadership has also been a source of inspiration as ideas have become more concrete. The conversations have resulted in a set of governance guidelines, which has been endorsed by the Church Council, and three alternative governance structures.

Governance Guidelines:

Strategy

- Relate leadership structure, goals, and programs to OCC Vision Statement.
- Assume shared-ministry with pastors, staff and others in the congregation.
- Seek openness, transparency, and inclusiveness.
- Create strong communications effort to assure work of the governing body and others is known to all.
- Accommodate balance between (1) creativity and continuity, (2) flexibility and stability (3) short-term and long-term goals and projects.

Tactics

- Focus responsibilities and operations of governing body on long-term goals and projects rather than day-to-day operations.
- Provide leadership training and mentoring for those assuming leadership roles.
- Encourage short-term, project-oriented initiatives and task forces so long as initiatives adhere to Vision Statement.
- Consider fewer members on governing body and shorter terms of office – with provision for renewals - in response to current-day time constraints and obligations.

Touchstone

- Bring joy and fellowship into all deliberations.

Governance Structures: The Governance and Leadership Working Group is looking forward to sharing the structural models outlined on the back of this introduction with the congregation. Any formal restructuring may well draw from aspects of all three models. The goal is to be responsive to the Governance Guidelines and the recommendations of the other working groups. A forum has been scheduled on September 15, 2013, to discuss the models and solicit feedback.

Status quo plus model (based upon structure enacted at OCC in 1972 and modified incrementally over the years)

- Leave the existing 7 commissions in place, with some slight modifications (such as terms of service or size of commissions).
- Leave the responsibilities of the Church Council largely in place, but introduce refinements in the interest of improving accountability, transparency, and efficiency.
- Add a structure for short-term projects, e.g. ad hoc task forces or interest groups.

Ministry model (based upon the recent experience of UCC churches in Berkeley, Fresno and San Mateo, and on observations by Robinson and others, e.g. “The work that was asked of congregation members in earlier times, participating in running the church, has been changed in this new time to a calling of congregation members to be engaged in ministry themselves, not simply to manage the church’s ministry and the clergy’s ministry”.)

- Create a small group of ministries, such as:
 - ~ Spirituality
 - ~ Justice and mercy
 - ~ Resources
 - ~ Outreach
 - ~ Worship
- Maintain a governing body to undertake long term planning, enact policies, and provide oversight of personnel, financial, facility, and other administrative functions.
- Leaders of the ministries would have a defined role of shared ministry with the pastoral staff. The ministries would be hands-on, working ministries, not just advisory boards.
- Ministries would be small (4-5 members) but could add “task force” members to address targeted, short-term issues.

Elders and projects model (based upon “out of the box” thinking by the Governance and Leadership Working Group in the interest of maximizing flexibility and creativity in changing times)

- Create a “council of elders” to take responsibility for in-depth, long-term issues and the keeping of the church vision.
- Within the council, create an operations board with responsibility for financial and other resource issues.
- Create a structure for project-based ministries. Anyone could start a ministry and recruit members for it. A project-based ministry could last any length of time and then disband in favor of another idea (“pruning and planting”). Examples of projects:
 - ~ Caring for our elders at the holidays
 - ~ Church organ refurbishing
 - ~ Ancient paths to spiritual formation
 - ~ OCC, meet FCCB (inter-church fellowship)
 - ~ Mentoring and membership (for new members)