

Congregational Forum Script
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SLIDE 1 Love

My friends, Love is the spirit of this church. Love is at the center of our cherished values.

But how do we put this love into action? Specifically, how does the Board of Trustees balance the needs of our pluralistic congregation while still respecting each person's right for recognition, safety and worth? This is what we wrestle with every month as we create a system of governance that will support our congregation and the values we hold dear.

Today, we want to give you an update of where we are in our governance work. This work of putting our values into action is important, and has never been done in this congregation before, in this comprehensive way. As we move forward, we hope that you will continue to ask questions, engage in respectful dialogue, and consider participating in this work in the future.

Let's start with a short review.

SLIDE 2 Introduction

When Rev Margret started her ministry with us in 2019, we had a one-day congregational retreat to set goals for the years of developmental ministry. As a result, three goals were identified: to create a Culture of Trust, Culture of Abundance and Culture of Connection. Those goals have been the driving force behind all the developmental initiatives over the past nearly 5 years.

The Board came to understand that development of a Culture of Trust would be supported by a clearer governance model. Governance is the way the Board holds the church in trust, puts voice to the congregation's intentions, and takes responsibility for its performance.

You could also say governance is the way we describe How the church works.

So in 2021, after much research, the Board set out to institute a governance model that would define relationships of responsibility, authority and accountability. We call this governance model Leadership by Policy.

SLIDE 3 Leadership by Policy – Board and Staff

In Leadership by Policy, the Board’s job is Governance: this includes 1. creating policies that state a values-based intention for how we do our work; 2. oversight of processes to keep us compliant with laws and our own ByLaws, and 3. staying in conversation with the congregation about strategic direction, all based on our shared mission.

The Staff’s job is Management of daily operations, informed by the policies created by the Board and procedures created by work Teams (formerly called committees).

SLIDE 4 Leadership by Policy - Congregation

The Congregation’s job is not too different from what we do now: Elect the Board, Work in Teams, along with staff, to do the daily work of the church. There is also now an intentional effort to have the Board and Congregation in dialog about strategic goals that are driven by our mission. You’ll hear this dialog called Open Questions, Listening circles, or other names. We just had one Open Question session in January which gave us a chance to consider how we nurture all generations in our spiritual community. Your passion for spiritual growth, social and environmental justice, and a healthy future for our community is still what drives our operations.

SLIDE 5 The Board has been busy

So that’s the review and overview. What has the Board been doing this year? In addition to holding congregational conversations, hiring a new

minister, practicing oversight and completing our yearly tasks, the Board is growing into the system of Leadership by Policy. Whew!

SLIDE 6 – Philosophy of Governance

We now have a statement to share with you called our Philosophy of Governance. This brief statement describes the Board’s overarching view of how the church works. The first part of the statement says “Governance at UUCCH is characterized by clarity, competence, and accountability. The congregation elects a Board of Trustees to serve as its governing body and calls or contracts with a Minister to serve as its spiritual, program, and administrative leader.

SLIDE 7 – Philosophy of Governance Part 2

The statement continues...members, staff and leaders at all levels of the congregation are expected to abide by the congregational covenant, communicate and respect boundaries, and to practice open decision-making, healthy conflict management, and mutual support in their respective roles.

SLIDE 8 – Philosophy of Governance Part 3

The statement finishes with: By governing in an intentionally strategic way, the Board makes it possible for paid and volunteer staff to create, maintain and monitor the programs by which we live into the congregational mission and vision.

SLIDE 9 – Philosophy of Board Roles

So what does it mean to have a Board governing in a strategic way, with clarity, competence and accountability? While fulfilling the specific roles and responsibilities spelled out in the ByLaws, the Board intends to govern primarily by: discerning and promoting the long term mission, vision and well being of the congregation; setting goals and making strategic choices; creating, updating and publishing written policies to guide the congregation’s ministry; and monitoring and evaluating outcomes and the congregation’s leadership, including the Board itself.

SLIDE 10 – Philosophy of Minister Roles

What does it mean to have a minister serving as spiritual and administrative leader, helping to create & maintain the programs by which we live into our mission and vision? While fulfilling the parish ministry roles of leading worship and pastoral care, the Minister is given authority and responsibility to lead and supervise the paid staff, and, in collaboration with the staff, to organize and support the ministry teams in fulfillment of the mission, guided by Board policy and stated goals.

SLIDE 11 – Collaborative Leadership

This division of Governance and Ministry Roles looks like this picture. This graph is from the book Governance and Ministry that we use as a guide for our work. What's important to notice is how the work of the church is divided. The Board is focused on Governance. The Board's policy work is supported by Advisory Committees. The Staff is focused on Ministry. The staff and teams support each other in their work. And the foundation of all the efforts is the congregation. Notice that the Board is no longer at the head of several super committees. This new model is less top-down and more collaborative – and ultimately empowering.

SLIDE 12 - Committees

So on the Governance side, the term Committee will now be reserved for elected or appointed groups. The Leadership Development and Nominating Committee, the Endowment Committee, and the Board's Advisory Committees. The Advisory committees help the Board develop new policies, revise old policies and set priorities of action. The Board has decided to form 4 Advisory Committees. These are Governance, Human Resources, Finance, and Infrastructure. These standing committees will report to the Board.

SLIDE 13 – Teams

The Ministry of the church will be carried out by the Staff and Teams, just as it always has. The Teams are what we used to call Committees.

You'll recognize these names: Finance, Arts and Aesthetics, Racial Justice, LFE, Property, and Many more. These teams of volunteers (us!), guided by the Policies, work with staff to carry out our mission. Each team will likely have a covenant, and possibly a set of procedures, to help guide their work as well.

SLIDE 14 – What we are doing

As you've heard a couple of times now, one of the key roles of the Board is to create comprehensive policies to guide the ministry activities of the church. Policies are value-based intentions about how our work is done. In partnership with our Governance Advisory Committee, we have been creating a more comprehensive framework for our Policy manual, reviewing existing policies, such as our policy on Facility Use/Rentals; and creating new policies to fill in gaps in our processes, such as how we Care for our Property.

SLIDE 15 – Policy Manual Sections

This is the framework for our Policy Manual – the major sections from our table of contents. As you can see on the slide, we make an effort to state our values and how those values are then reflected in the work that we do. I've already discussed the Board and Minister/staff roles. The Care for People section is where we have safety & security, care for staff and care for congregants. The Care for Finances section is where we have purchasing, fundraising and financial controls, among others. Care for Property is where we have insurance and facilities use, among others. And the communication section is where we have policies on social media and statements of public witness, among others. We are making progress on each of these sections, but please understand that some of the subsections are still very much under construction.

SLIDE 16 – New way of thinking

So to summarize, we are progressing with the transition to Leadership by Policy. You may hear the Board refer to Policy updates/changes, congregational conversations, or work of the Teams. We understand

that it may take some time to get used to this new framework and new terminology. We're all learning together!

Going forward, If you bring an issue to the Board, the Board and Minister will work together to ask, "Is this issue a strategic issue, policy issue or procedure issue?" In other words, does the Board need to consider a change in the way we think about why the work is done – a change in goals, strategy, or even mission? If so, then a congregational conversation may be needed. Is the issue already addressed by our policies, or will we need to look at a policy change? If the Board needs to look at a policy, we'll enlist the help of the appropriate Advisory Committee. Or will the staff and teams handle this issue as part of how the work is done – a change in procedure? If the issue is procedural, we will let you know that you are free to address the issue within your Team and/or with your staff support person.

SLIDE 17 What can Congregation (YOU) be doing - Learn

So what can You be doing? Well, here it is (gesturing to audience): Thank you all for coming today! Learning about what Leadership by Policy means is important as we co-create the future we want for our church. The Board is working hard, and we are committed to bringing you along as we all learn together.

SLIDE 18 What can Congregation (YOU) be doing – Value

But more importantly even than learning about the way the Board is shifting governance is thinking about the way we want to put our values into action. For those of you who participated in the Open Question in January, **Thank you!** As we consider the needs of all generations, how will we demonstrate Pluralism, Generosity and Love, 3 of the 7 values in the UUA's values statement? How will we be accountable to each other and to our community as we work to be a beacon for our neighbors?

As we adapt to our changing internal and external environments, remember that transformation takes time. The Board hopes that we will

all learn together in peace as we consider the strategic choices we make in our new ministry. Give yourselves and your fellow congregants the gifts of patience and grace.

SLIDE 19 What can Congregation (YOU) be doing – Serve

For those of you on Teams, and especially those in leadership positions, **Thank you!** Your passion puts our love into action and it fills my heart.

The Board is in the final stages of establishing the Advisory Committees. If you have expertise in one of the 4 areas: Infrastructure, Governance, Human Resources or Finance and want to work at the policy level, we encourage you to let the Board know. For those of you already appointed, a **very special Thank you!**

As policies get put into place, we'll need to start documenting the procedures we have that describe the daily work we already do. Your team may be asked to start this in the future, so you can be thinking about it. The Board has to do this too! Eventually we'll have a completed Policy Manual and several Procedures Handbooks.

Lastly, you may remember that when I spoke to you in July after I became President I said that I am only a place holder. What I meant is that every year Board members roll off and new ones need to be elected. If you like the idea of having big conversations and helping guide the future of UUCCH, please talk to a member of the Board or LDNC about how you might join the elected leadership.

SLIDE 20 Vision of the Future – Leadership by Policy

The Board is excited about Leadership by Policy because it 1. Puts our values into action; 2. Creates a system with a clear path to mission-driven work; 3. Uses the strengths of our existing community; and 4. Supports our goals of developing Cultures of Trust, Connection and Abundance.

This work is also important to the creation of a stable system with clarity and accountability that will foster a healthy relationship with our

new minister. Rev Posa recognizes our commitment to this governance evolution, understands the process and will support our work to develop healthy church cultures.

SLIDE 21 Vision of the Future

The Board's vision of the Future is that UUCCH will be a healthy covenantal congregation whose governance supports the relationships and mission-driven work of the congregation, where leadership focuses on the mission and strategic direction developed in partnership with the congregation, and where people feel empowered and confident to grow into their best selves and carry out their passion-driven service.

SLIDE 22 Acknowledgements

We owe a HUGE debt of Gratitude for Rev Margret's gifts that she has brought to our church. We have relied on her passion, training, intelligence, strength and love for the past 5 years. We have only a few short months left to learn from her before we have the privilege of sending her on to her next phase of life. Please let her hear your thanks [applause]

We also owe a HUGE amount of thanks to the Governance Advisory Committee. They have put in countless hours studying, debating, word-smithing and holding the Board accountable for the intentional process of creating Leadership by Policy. Will any of those on the GAC please stand? Please let them hear your thanks [applause]

Lastly, the Board wishes to thank YOU all – for your passion, commitment and service. We are YOU and with all of our voices and all of our visions, we create our wild, generous, abundant future together.

SLIDE 23 – QUESTIONS?