

BOARD ANNOUNCEMENT: New, Adapted FUSIT Structure
September 8, 2022

Due to a confluence of events last Fall: grieving and healing from the resignation of Rev. Margaret and recovery from the short tenure resignation of Rev. Tony, the Board of Trustees needed to make several decisions to bring stability and resilience to our church. Our leadership model has been very dependent on a singular, full-time minister for both managing operations and the spiritual guidance of our congregation. Our Partnership Governance model established the minister as the “Partner” with the member-elected Board to run the church. Without the minister partner, the Board needed to construct new bridges with staff and teams for last year’s operations. As the year unfolded, we learned yet again that the strength of our community is you, our members. Many of our congregation teams, in collaboration with dedicated staff, created a pathway of inspiring Sunday Celebrations and strategies for gathering safely back in our Sanctuary.

To identify a pathway forward, the Board connected with the UUA and with you through congregation conversations. The Board learned from the UUA that for 2022 and the near future there were few settled ministers in search and fewer interims in 2022 and the prospects for the immediate future looked dim. While this was not great news, it alerted the Board that we needed to think outside the box to create operations systems without a singular, full-time minister, as described in our Partnership Governance Policies. And without a UUA minister pool to draw from, the Board created a Ministry Fulfillment Committee with the freedom to investigate other wells of talent to provide spiritual leadership for our congregation.

We are pleased to report the results of that work and our pathway for governance and spiritual support for the coming year.

Operations Structure: A new operations structure has been developed that is designed to work when we don’t have a single minister or in periods of transition and will stay in place to support our ministers when we have them. The Board has created two partners to support or take over the roles of the single minister when one is not present.

The attached [organization chart](#) shows the Congregation as the source for the organization. The Congregation elects both the Trustees and the Nominations Committee. Under our adapted (without a minister) structure the Board appoints two partnering teams. One for managing operations including administration and the other to guide the ministry works of the church. Both are composed of one staff member, one Trustee, and two members who have 2-year term limits.

As stated in our bylaws, the Board of Trustees has ultimate authority and oversight for all FUSIT activities. But in this adapted structure (without a single full-time minister), the Board delegates authority and responsibility to its partners: staff, Operations Administrative Team (OAT), and Ministry Visioning Team (MVT) for day-to-day operations and activities. The Board then can focus on goal setting, planning, budgeting, policy setting for broad guiderails for staff, OAT, and MVT to work within, and monitoring/evaluating activities and our direction.

The Operations Administrative Team (OAT) is tasked to oversee the administration of the church operations. It will serve as a supervisor to the paid staff members and review their work annually. It will also be responsible for recommending the hiring and firing of paid staff members, should the need arise. It will also oversee spending and make budget recommendations. The Ministry Visioning Team (MVT) is tasked to

guide and coordinate the work of the ministry by overseeing programming, ministry teams, and affinity groups to bring to life the annually developed, Vision of Ministry.

The Board of Trustees holds open hybrid meetings each month. Currently these meetings are scheduled for the third Wednesday at 6:30 pm and physically held in the parlor but can be viewed on the published Zoom link.

OAT and MVT meet monthly and send a representative to participate in the monthly Board meetings. The current members of Operations Administrative Team are Michelle Waffner (Administrator), Walt Peck (Treasurer and ex-officio Board member), Rod Howe and John Gaines. The current members of Ministry Visioning Team are: Emily Richards (Director of Congregational Life), Peaches Gillette (Associate Director of Congregational Life), Nancy Miller (Board member), joAnn kowalski, and Don Rakow.

Spiritual leadership will be inspired by our newly hired Congregation Life Staff. We are pleased to report that our Ministry Fulfillment Committee has identified three local women who will share the role of Congregation Life Staff. They are Emily Richards (Director of Congregational Life), Rev. Peaches Gillette (Associate Director of Congregational Life), and Rev. Janet Shortall (Pastoral Care).

The attached organization chart refers to Committees. Committees are appointed by the Board and serve in roles described within our bylaws which are to advise the Board. Committees are Finance, Personnel, Endowment, Governance, and Communication Policy which is an Ad Hoc committee.

The attached organization chart also refers to Teams. The Ministry Visioning Team may create Teams that function to inform and support the Ministry work of the Society. Some teams shall exist through the years and provide continuity and means for fulfilling the ministry mission of the Society. Others are set up temporarily for special needs. Current teams, some with staff support and others without are: Religious Education, Adult Religious Exploration, Celebrations, Music, Small Group Ministry, Social Justice Council, Way Forward, Outreach & Engagement, Hospitality, Anti-Racism, Healthy Congregations, Aesthetics, Care, and Transition.

The attached organization chart refers to Affinity Groups which are ad hoc gatherings of folks with common interest. Current affinity groups are Diner's Club, Men's, Women's, House Band, UUUU, Environmental Interest.

The attached organization chart also refers to Staff: which includes Emily Richards (Director of Congregational Life), Rev. Peaches Gillette (Associate Director of Congregational Life), and Rev. Janet Shortall (Pastoral Care), Stephanie Ortolano (Music Director), Michelle Waffner (Administrator), Loretta Heimbuch (Ass't Administrator) Rachel Seymour, (Sexton) and to be filled RE Assistant, Childcare Coordinator, and Choir Director.

We are pleased to announce this new structure for FUSIT. We are ever hopeful for a good year and offer a degree of humility that we will need to work hard to grow into this vision. We ask your support and welcome your feedback, concerns, and questions.

Sincerely,

FUSIT Board of Trustees: Don Barber (President), Therese O'Conner (Vice President), Valerie Graves (Clerk), Walt Peck (Treasurer), Nancy Miller, Margaret Nichols, Dick Kurtz