

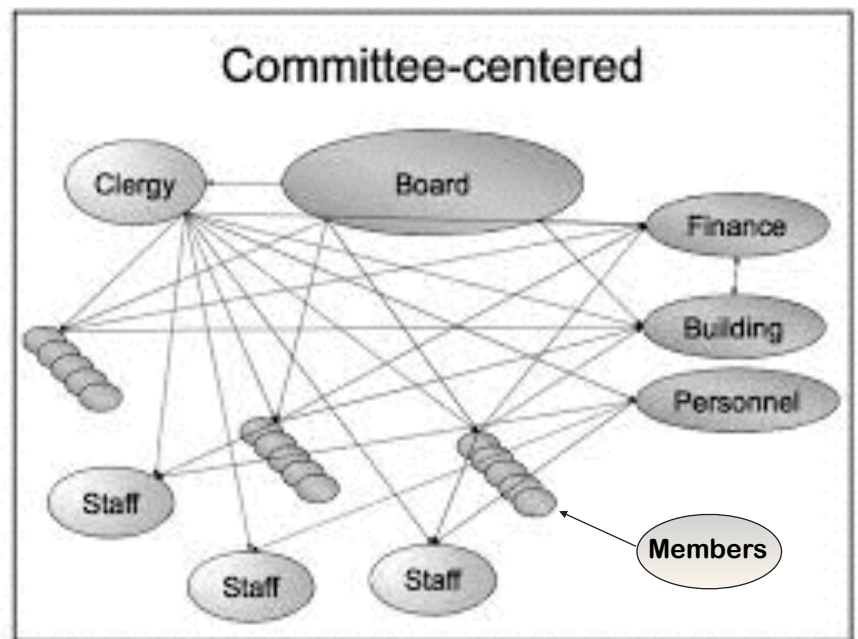
# PARTNERSHIP GOVERNANCE WEEKLY UPDATE

## Week 2: Organizational Structure

Hi all - welcome back to the Weekly Update on Partnership Governance! This week, we'll be thinking about the essence of this system of governance — Partnership — and how that is reflected in the organizational structure we will be evolving towards this year.

### Current Complexities

One of the key advantages of Partnership Governance is the clear, explicit relationships between different volunteer, staff, and Board groups. Under committee-based governance (what we have currently), it isn't always clear who is responsible for what, or who is accountable to whom. The lines of responsibility are often quite complicated. If any of you happened to see the organization chart that was on the wall in room 122 a few years ago, you might remember the tangled spaghetti that represented connections between different groups in our Society. If not, here's an image from Dan Hotchkiss's book on Partnership Governance that illustrates our current model and demonstrates the same thing. As you can see, our current system is extremely complicated.



This has a real impact on our Society. Imagine that a congregant has a good idea for a way to engage with the community. Who do they take that idea to for implementation? Does it go to the Board? To the Staff? To a particular Committee? Currently, the right answer may be all three. This can significantly hinder innovation and growth.

### The Advantages of Partnership: Governance and Ministry

One of the strengths of Partnership Governance (PG) is that it encourages a very clear organization structure, with direct lines of responsibility and connection between the different groups who work within the Society to implement our Mission. In particular, the key difference between Partnership

Governance and the committee-based model is the way that tasks at the Society are divided. PG divides the work of the Society into two areas: Ministry and Board. The two exist in partnership with each other, but do not duplicate each other's work.

**Ministry Teams**

Ministry Teams are the groups in the Society that do the work of implementing the mission. We have many different names/categories for these groups.

Just a few examples: The Care Team, the RE Council, the Celebrations Committee, the Social Justice Council, the Membership Committee. All of these groups are composed of people working together in our Society to implement our mission. Yet currently, they're all called different things. Certainly this is confusing for newcomers. And perhaps for even some long-term members as well!

In Partnership Governance these groups, whose work and function would not change, would transition to be being called "Teams."

The other evolution that would take place for these Teams, is that they would work in close partnership with the Minister and the Staff. The lines of responsibility and accountability lead only to the Minister and Staff, not the Board. Here also there is not really a dramatic change. To choose two examples: The RE Council works extremely closely with the DRE, and Celebrations Committee with the Minister. In Partnership Governance, these relationships are affirmed and made explicit in the organizational model. You can see these relationships outlined in Figure 4.3 at the left from Dan Hotchkiss's book, *Governance and Ministry*.

Figure 4.3  
COMMITTEES AND TEAMS



**Board Committees**

On the other side of the Society's work, is the Board. In Partnership Governance, the Board's job is set goals for the ministry, and define policies that enable its implementation. The only Committees that exist in the Society are those that are either subsets of or groups directly accountable to to Board. In the model the Board is adopting for its operations, there will only be a very few standing Committees: One key committee will be the Governance committee, a group that will serve as a "watchdog" for Partnership Governance - to help us know what we're doing right according to our policies and to help the Board get back if it goes astray from those policies.

Implementation

What might this mean in practical terms? Let’s go back to our Congregant with a good idea. Instead of having to go to the Board and Staff and Committee, instead they would take it to the most appropriate team or staff member. Or maybe a staff member has an idea they want to implement. Then they would work most closely — in partnership — with the ministry team most directly responsible. The Board would not be involved in these kinds of decisions.

There are many benefits to this model. Primarily, efficiency. It frees up the energy of the Board for thinking ahead. It enables teams and staff and congregants to do the things they want to do to advance our mission without Board interference, as long as those ideas are consistent with our policies. It will enable the Board to make long-term future plans, and see that those plans are brought to life.

For a Quick Guide to the two halves of Partnership Governance, see the infographic at the right.

So that’s it for this issue’s in-depth look at Partnerships Governance. In the NEXT ISSUE, you can look forward to learning more about (drumroll)...Planning and Policies!

Thanks so much for you attention and for all you do for the First Unitarian Society of Ithaca!

Laura Free  
President of the Board of Trustees

# BOARD WORK



VERSUS

# MINISTRY WORK

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HOW ARE THEY DIFFERENT  
IN  
PARTNERSHIP GOVERNANCE ?

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BOARD	MINISTRY
	
The Board oversees the long-term goals and mission of the Society.	The Ministry puts our goals and mission into action
Its purpose is to think ahead and plan for the future.	Its purpose is to create programming and engage in service that enable us to Connect, Inspire, and Engage
It also sets yearly goals for the Society to help guide the implementation of our mission and vision.	It implements those yearly goals through the work of the Society.
Board work is confined to these few specific tasks.	All work that is not specifically designated to the Board, is Ministry Work.