

S+trategic ransformation

Frequently Asked Questions

These questions were initially posed by members of the congregation who participated in the congregational forum held in September 2006.

Why are we reorganizing?

The main reasons to reorganize are to:

- Streamline the governance of the church to better suit a Discipleship model of congregational life
- Allow more people to participate in ministries (instead of pre-established committees), and according to their own time constraints
- Decentralize decision-making to enable new ministries to emerge
- Encourage congregation-wide spiritual growth and use of spiritual gifts.

Will this result in the elimination of boards/committees?

Possibly, however most of the existing boards and committees will be represented in the new structure either as:

- a ministry team
- part of the Stability Triangle, which includes the Administration and Operations (A&O) team (formerly Trustees), the Church Staff, and the Human Resources (HR) team;
- part of the Church Board (replacement for Executive Council).

Note that the term *committee* will be eliminated, and replaced by *team*. This reflects movement from more rigid, hierarchically-structured church governance to more fluid, decentralized church governance.

What is the timeframe and process?

The original plan was to vote on a new structure at the January 2007 Annual Meeting, but transformation details were not sufficiently flushed out to meet this aggressive target. We will make incremental changes throughout 2007 with tentative plans for a final congregational vote on new By-Laws at the January 2008 Annual Meeting.

Progress will be communicated throughout 2007 using forums, small group meetings, mission moments, the Beacon, and the church website.

What happens next?

During the first part of 2007, the congregation will be engaged in discussion of the overall transformation process, and more specifically core church values and bedrock beliefs. This will form the foundation for the Strategic Transformation Team to develop boundaries (see below) later this year. At the same time, detailed operations of the Stability Triangle will be developed by the three constituent groups.

Boundaries – what are they?

One of the major transformations resulting from the discipleship model will be a move from centralized decision-making to a more decentralized model. The current church governing structure requires requests for new ministries to progress through an approval cycle from one or more committees to Executive Council. This process is out of alignment with the enabling ideals of a discipleship church, and is also quite cumbersome. To address this, we will develop boundaries within which all ministries will operate. Boundaries are based on our congregational identity (core church values and mission) and seek to define policies that govern the behavior of leaders and participants.

Boundaries define areas beyond which our ministries should not go. In other words, boundaries give permission for all ministries that fulfill our church values and mission. Identifying and communicating boundaries allows our congregation to take risks, seize opportunities, and experiment with creative ideas.

Any new ministry which falls within these boundaries will be encouraged to take shape and be eligible for funding from the church budget.

What will the Stability Triangle do?

The primary purpose is to grow, equip, and deploy ministers. This is a management function with a missional purpose. The Stability Triangle is therefore, primarily focused on day to day management of the church. There are three functions which form the Stability Triangle:

- The **A&O** (Administration and Operations) team has responsibility for stewardship of the building and grounds, church finances including endowment, Stewardship education and the annual campaign.
- The **Staff** has responsibilities for worship, Christian education, pastoral care, and coordinates all ministry teams.
- The **Human Resources** team has responsibility for the church personnel function, and coordinating pastoral relations, spiritual gifts discernment, leadership development and support, plus church communications.

What will the Church Board do?

The Church Board will have the following primary functions:

- Act on behalf of the congregation on business matters
- Provide a strategic focus for the church
- Continuously develop and evaluate boundaries
- Lead the development and evaluation of church program priorities (vision, mission) on behalf of the congregation
- Ensure the budget has been developed to meet church program priorities
- Take the "pulse" of the church and be accountable to the congregation on how we are doing.

How will the new Church Board be formed?

This is still being developed, but our initial thinking is that the Church Board will consist of a moderator, the past moderator, members at large, the treasurer, the clerk, and Stability Triangle team chairs (A&O Chair, Senior Pastor, and HR Chair). The clerk will be a non-voting member.

The slate for Church Board members will be developed by the HR team, with input from the staff and congregation, and based on spiritual gifts, commitment to the discipleship church, leadership ability, and other related factors. The slate will be approved at the Annual Meeting.

Who will be officers of the church and how are they elected?

This has not yet been fully defined. The nomination and election process will probably be similar to that for the Church Board. We believe that 3 year terms, renewable one time, with staggered starting points are appropriate. Officers of the church will be defined to meet our legal obligations. All officers will be approved at the Annual Meeting.

What is the process for identifying and pursuing new ministries?

One of the goals of transformation is to be a permission-giving church. Rather than obtaining permission for each new idea through a series of committees, permission is granted freely so long as the idea falls within the vision statement and core values of the church.

The goal is to develop a simple, responsive, nurturing process. The initial new ministries process will be formulated during the course of 2007 to include: the steps to form a new ministry; how to allocate initial (and subsequent) funding given budget constraints; how to measure accountability to ensure we are being good stewards with limited resources; overall coordination across all ministries and to integrate all needs within the budget.

How is Leadership and Spiritual Discernment for ministry teams performed?

New member classes, adult Christian education, and a spiritual gifts discernment process offer a good starting point. In addition, a budget now exists for leadership development to help cover the cost of educational conferences and training.

Throughout 2007, the staff and Human Resources team will be developing the initial process of how to discern spiritual gifts, how to identify leaders, and how to continuously develop/support leaders.

How will transformation progress be communicated?

As indicated above, communications with the congregation will include congregational forums, small group meetings, worship service mission moments, and the church newsletter and website. New member orientation will be updated to reflect the transformation.

How does this transformation compare with what is happening in other churches and the denomination?

Paul Nickerson, Massachusetts UCC Association Conference Minister for Evangelism, Mission, and Justice met with us to discuss our progress. Like author Tom Bandy, whose model we are emulating, Paul believes that transformation such as we are envisioning is essential for churches to thrive in the future.

From his work in the conference, he notes that we are “ahead of the curve”. Few other churches are where we are in this process. Much like the shift to a Discipleship model, we expect the transformation to be an *evolutionary* process, not a *revolutionary* one.

We invite all church members to take an active role in the Strategic Transformation process, ask questions and make suggestions. If you are interested in participating on the Strategic Transformation Team in any capacity, please contact the church office.

Members of the Strategic Transformation Team include: Margi Goetz, Steve Grant, Steve Groff, Rich Kumpf, Pat Mormann, Rick Schaub, Tom Targett, Ron Yates, and Pastor Phil Bauman.

The United Church of Christ in Medfield, 496 Main Street, Medfield, MA 02052

Rev 031207