

The Messenger

July 13, 2016



SPECIAL EDITION — FCCG BOARD REFORMATION

What have you heard?

Have you heard that the board is being changed? Have you heard that wild and crazy things are going on? Or have you only heard rumors and are wondering what is happening?

Well, there are some changes in the wind for our board. Over the last couple of years some board officers and ministers have been hearing concerns and comments about our board: the number of members, the way meetings are run, the times and agendas and questions about purpose and... well, you get the idea. So a Bylaws Reformation committee was formed to look into the issues. After study and discussion, the committee sent out a survey to ask the congregation about their feelings and ideas on the topic. The responses they received confirmed the need to make some changes (**Survey Results, pgs. 2, 3**).

And because this is a Disciples congregation, we know that any big change must be made in consensus. That is, we need to talk together about the issue, consider together, pray together, think together, and decide together. So that is what is happening.

One question that was asked at the July 10 Board meeting was, "Is this happening because we couldn't get a quorum at the regular board meetings?" Answer? No. While it is true that it has sometimes been difficult to get a quorum (the number needed to conduct official church business), we feel that the surveys bear out that this is only a symptom of deeper issues: feelings of frustration with board processes, lack of understanding about the board's purpose, a sense that the board needs to change to better serve our changing congregation, a desire to make sure that ALL voices are heard.

The Board met on July 10 to hear the report and recommendation from the Bylaws Reformation committee. The recommendation was this: "We recommend that for a period of one year, beginning January, 2017, the current board delegate its powers to a smaller board, this number to be decided by the current board." The board discussed the recommendation and shared suggestions and concerns (**Board Discussion About Smaller Board, pg. 4**). Note that this would be for a trial period. The current bylaws would remain in effect, and the current board would still exist. The smaller board would meet and conduct church business.

Next, the Bylaws Reformation group gave an initial suggestion for the makeup of this smaller board (**Initial Suggestion of Positions on Smaller Board, pgs. 5,6**). The board discussed this list and made suggestions for changes, voicing their ideas and concerns for both the people to be on this smaller board and ways to implement the changes (**Board Discussion about the Initial List of Board Positions, pgs. 7,8**).

All of the information available to the board is available to you. Your voice and ideas are important—and needed—in this conversation. There will be a called board meeting on Sunday, August 7th, at 11:30 after Sunday School. At this time, the board will meet to approve (or reject) the recommendation for a smaller board. If the smaller board is approved, then the board will discuss and possibly approve the membership of the new board. If we need more time before making decisions, then we will take more time.

Please add your voice to this conversation. Talk, pray, share, discuss. If you like, you may send your thoughts to me at judygrasham@gmail.com, to Rev. Tanguay at casey@fccgarland.org, or you can drop written messages in the box outside the church office. And don't be afraid! The Holy Spirit of God is in our church family, and Jesus is our King. All will be well.

*[Survey Results]***Results of Bylaw Reformation Survey 2016
First Christian Church Garland**

A survey was developed and sent to the congregation on June 16, 2016 to collect responses from the congregation regarding the current board structure and function. The survey was sent via email and posted on the church Facebook groups. Printed copies were provided to Sunday School classes. It was advertised in *The Messenger* and church worship bulletins. About one-third of the current active membership of the church completed a survey (approx. 50 people). The results were reviewed, analyzed and discussed by the Governance Task Force. This is a summary of those results. Particular attention was given to comments and themes that were repetitive (mentioned in multiple responses). The listed summary results is in no particular order.

1) What was liked and valued about our current structure?

- Representation
- Democratic
- Lay-led leadership
- Consensus
- Opportunity for involvement

2) What was challenging or troubling?

- Decisions are made prior to board meetings. There is no discussion at board meetings.
- Hard to get people to fill positions and participate
- People stay in positions for an unlimited time
- Communication is lacking and cliquish
- There is a lack of time to consider and process issues
- Too many people to work effectively
- Reports/agenda should go out ahead of time
- Meeting frequency and time

(continued on page 3)

[Survey Results—continued from page 2]

**Results of Bylaw Reformation Survey 2016
First Christian Church Garland**

3) What is the purpose of a church board?

- Make decisions
- Transact the business of the church
- Provide guidance and plan
- Set the goals and mission
- Oversight of committees
- Deal with big issues/big picture, not micromanage

4) Ideas and Suggestions?

- Decrease size of board
- Find ways for all voices to be heard
- Provide training for leaders/congregation
- Increase/improve communication
- Encourage spiritual content
- Decrease number of meetings
- New leaders to sign covenant commitment

Overall Summary of Primary Themes/Issues:

- Size of board
- Communication
- Education and Training
- Meeting times, frequency, agenda
- Decision-making process
- Basic structure (consensus, lay led) is OK

[Board Discussion About Smaller Board]

Recommendation of Governance Task Force 2016:

Recommend for a period of 1 year, beginning January, 2017, the current board delegate its powers to a smaller board, this number to be decided by the current board.

- Chair
- Vice Chair
- Elder Chair or Representative
- Deacon Chair or Representative
- Trustee Representative
- Ministry Representative from Each Ministry (currently 14 ministries)
- Elder Emeritus
- Secretary (to be selected from the board)
- Treasurer (Recommend that this is Stewardship Chair)
- Ministers (ex officio)

List of current ministries/committees:

1. Executive
2. Personnel
3. Safe Church
4. Worship
5. Christian Education
6. Evangelism
7. Membership/Caring Groups
8. Fellowship
9. Outreach
10. Stewardship
11. Property
12. Publicity
13. Christian Men's Fellowship
14. Disciples Women's Ministry

[Initial Suggestion of Positions on Smaller Board]

Board Meeting July 10, 2016
Small-Large Group Discussion
Governance/By-Law Reformation

There were approximately 36 members and 2 ministers present for this meeting/discussion.

1) Initial thoughts/suggestions about the suggested list of board positions/number.

GROUP 1:

- o Add a member at-large.
- o Should not allow any one person to hold 2 positions.
- o Provide Adult Sunday School class representation.

GROUP 2:

- o Liked the general proposal.
- o Concerned that it doesn't provide opportunity for younger generations to be represented/involved.
- o Like idea of members at-large.

GROUP 3:

- o Still processing the information.
- o Like Sunday School representation.
- o Concerned that younger generations will not be represented.
- o Proposal of about 21-30 people.
- o Question, Is the issue that we can't get a quorum at board meetings?

Answer: "No, that's just the effect/symptom of other issues, not the cause."

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[Initial Suggestion of Positions on Smaller Board; continued from pg. 5]

Board Meeting July 10, 2016
Small-Large Group Discussion
Governance/By-Law Reformation

GROUP 4:

- o Add 3 at-large members (or another #) that really want to serve.
- o Like overall proposal.

GROUP 5:

- o Like smaller board but concerned if it is really representative of congregation?
- o Same ministry chairs serve consistently from year to year. There should be term limits.
- o Nominating committee would have an easier task
- o A representative from each ministry committee could attend meetings rather than requiring Committee Chairs.
- o Would it need to be the same person/representative each month or could it change from meeting to meeting?
- o How is this currently happening with ministry chair selection?
Answer: whoever is asked and whoever accepts.

GROUP 6:

- o At-large representative.

GROUP 7:

- o Streamline ministries. There seems to be overlap in many ministries or ministries that are not currently functioning.
- o Sunday School representation.

[Board Discussion About the Initial List of Board Positions]

Board Meeting July 10, 2016
Small-Large Group Discussion
Governance/By-Law Reformation

There were approximately 36 members and 2 ministers present for this meeting/discussion. Initial thoughts/suggestions about the recommendation itself to delegate its powers to a smaller board:

GROUP 1:

- o Agree that the current board is too big.
- o Concerned that too small of a board will not provide good representation.
- o Communication- information/reports to be published and available prior to board meetings to enable people to process and bring concerns to the meeting.
- o Seems to be meetings too frequently. Are monthly Cabinet meetings really needed?

GROUP 2:

- o Agree that the current board is too big.
- o Should not be one person with multiple positions on the board.
- o Idea to have the board be representative 10% of current congregation.
- o Elders and Deacons need to have a better understanding of their board.
- o Concern that it may be easier for one dominant personality to control with a smaller board?
- o Need to email/provide reports/information prior to board meeting.

GROUP 3:

- o Excited about the possibility of a small board.
- o Like the idea of a trial year.
- o Needs to be representative.
- o Need to have a cross-section of the congregation represented.

[Board Discussion About the initial List of Board Positions, continued from page 7)

**Board Meeting July 10, 2016
Small-Large Group Discussion
Governance/By-Law Reformation**

GROUP 4:

- o Like the idea of a smaller board.
- o It will be more responsive, easier to manage and improve communication.
- o Question about need for 2 boards during the trial year and how to go about this?

GROUP 5:

- o Like the idea of a trial year.

*** END ***