

Dear Member,

The Bylaws Revision Committee has met regularly for the past years with the goal of designing a more relevant governance for Salem United Church of Christ. The Committee looked at other church governments and discussed how to streamline our Council and Boards to enhance volunteering experiences for our members.

The Pandemic has delayed our ability to hold a congregational meeting to vote on this proposal, so we had scheduled several town hall style meetings in August 2020 seeking input and ideas from all members of Salem. Those who were not comfortable with attending a meeting in person, were invited to submit questions and comments in writing, via email, or by phone.

All input from members were reviewed and resulted in implementation of some changes.

This is a condensed comparison of our current government and the proposed changes.

Current Bylaws	Proposed Bylaws
Council: 27 members from Trustees, Board of Programs, Elders & Deacons	Council: 8 members with one representative from each of 5 boards & 3 at large members
4 Boards	5 Boards
Trustees – responsible for property, budget, personnel, and finances	Property Board – Responsible for all property, including cemetery & parish
Board of Deacons – responsible for worship related duties	Finance Board – Responsible to manage all finances, financial reports, stewardship & budget
Board of Elders – responsible to assist Pastor, confirmation, communion & membership	Board of Elders and Deacons – Combines duties of Deacons and Elders
Board of Programs – Manage special programs & fundraisers	Personnel Board – Responsible for all personnel policies & decisions
	Community Life Board – Mange special programs & fundraisers and oversight of Bereavement Committee & Community Café
	At large Council Members – Elected from members of the Congregation who are not members of any Board

What does this mean?

We recommend moving to a representative form of government. By reducing the number of members on the Council, volunteers can focus their efforts on areas that most interest them, and reduce the time spent in meetings. Members interested in serving on the Council would now have the option to serve as “At Large” members of the Council, without the added responsibility of serving on a Board.

The Trustees have multiple, unrelated responsibilities, which would be redistributed, so they may be overseen by members with more direct expertise or experience in those areas. For example, a Trustee may have strong skills in building maintenance, but no experience in finance or personnel, and vice versa. Now, members can provide more strength to critical needs. It also made sense for Deacons and Elders to combine, and within that Board, members can still focus on their areas of expertise. Although some Boards have added responsibilities, with less time spent in meetings, our volunteers can devote more of their precious hours to improving the service of Salem.

Committees will remain, but some minor changes to their structure and selection are proposed.

Due to the complexity of the Endowment Fund, no changes are proposed at this time, but may be revisited in the future.

If approved at the October 17, 2021 Special Congregational Meeting, the fall of 2021 will begin the transition process, with implementation in January 2022 at the Annual Congregational Meeting. Please make every effort to attend the Special Congregational Meeting.

Thank you to all members of this Committee, past and present for your dedication!

Pastor Jeremy Lopez

Charles Gilinger

Richard Pickelhaupt

Diane Meholick

Gretchen Librock

Ellen Christy

Thank you, members, for your thoughts on this very important matter.