

First Presbyterian Church Rightsizing Task Force Recommendations

An ad hoc task force appointed by the Session has conducted a comprehensive review of the governance structure of First Presbyterian Church (FPC). The objective of the task force was to design and propose a revised leadership structure to improve the organizational effectiveness of the Church, enhance the outward focus of church leadership and better deploy the membership in the Church's ministries.

A healthy congregation is focused on ministry and missions. Our church family needs a governance structure that enables our mission:

We the members of First Presbyterian Church, by the grace of God, exist to make disciples of Jesus Christ by – LEADING people to Jesus Christ, LEARNING about our faith, LIVING a Christ-centered life and LOVING our neighbor through ministries of service and compassion.

Task Force Process

The task force thoroughly reviewed the current structure and referenced the following resources in its deliberations:

- PCUSA Book of Order – 2015/2017 edition
- Consultations with the Presbytery of Tropical Florida
- FPC Bylaws – last revised May 21, 1997
- FPC Policy Manual
- FPC Procedures Manual
- The book *Inside the Large Congregation* by Susan Beaumont
- Published research on the effectiveness of small vs. large boards

The task force identified several issues surrounding the current structure, including the following:

- The current structure and organization are not in total compliance with the latest Book of Order.
- Lines of responsibility and authority are often confusing to many people.
- The Church Bylaws are out of date and need to be revised.
- The large membership of the Session and Trustees often leads to inefficient and unnecessarily time consuming meetings.
- The sizes of the bodies contribute to an inward focus of discussions.
- Much of the work of the Session and Trustees is redundant or duplicative.
- There is confusion and muddled lines of communication between the various committees and staff members.
- Staff is often reticent to assume responsibility, due to a tendency toward micro-management by committees.

The task force conducted a survey of active elders, trustees and deacons to gather opinions about the current organizational structure and solicit views on modifying the structure. The principle results of the officer survey are summarized below:

- Regarding the current organizational structure:
 - 42% disagree/strongly disagree that the present structure uses time effectively
 - 54% disagree/strongly disagree the present structure is conducive to candor in discussing issues
 - 61% disagree/strongly disagree that the present structure facilitates accomplishing our goals.
- 85% responded that the boards were too large.
- 56% say our structure is a hindrance to effectiveness.
- Multiple comments about the same people always rotating between committees and boards.
- Multiple comments that the present structure is redundant between session and trustees.

The task force circulated preliminary conclusions to the Session, Trustees and Deacons. Two separate meetings were held to review task force findings and preliminary recommendations. Feedback and input were requested, received and considered by the task force. The task force received thoughtful individual input and recommendations from the following individuals during the process:

Carol Ripley	Chris Ure
Greta Taylor	Mike House
Steve Williams	Barbara Hollowell
Maggie Michael	Dianne Osborne
Nick Sakhnovsky	Herb Clark
Ross Bridger	Marcos Caro
Larry Davis	Warren Craven
Barbara Sabin	Kathy Craven
Dee Harris	Bruce Weihe

Task Force Conclusions

The Task Force has recommended broad changes in the church organizational structure. The rationale centers on the following broad concepts:

- Organizational research in recent years has proven conclusively that smaller leadership groups are generally more effective than larger ones.
- Additionally, research has shown that large groups often result in an inward focus, as contrasted to true Church outreach and service.
- Further, board members recruited with a focus on constituency representation are often recruited for the wrong skills.
- Smaller groups will engender more candor and open discussion of important or sensitive issues.
- Micromanagement of staff functions would be reduced. Conversely, strategic leadership would be improved.
- The number and length of meetings would be reduced, leading to better efficiency and effectiveness.
- Redundant energies could be absorbed and redeployed elsewhere in more vital church ministries.
- Lines of staff authority and responsibility would be better clarified.

Recommendations

The task force has concluded that the following broad outline of a leadership structure is appropriate for FPC.

- Session – a body of ordained elders responsible for leading the ministries and administering the affairs of the Church. The task force recommends the initial membership be established at 21. The Church Bylaws would be revised to provide for a Session membership range of 18-24, with the Session determining annually the exact size of the membership within those parameters. Elders would be elected by the congregation for three-year terms, with one-third of the elders rotating on and off each year.
- Deacons – a body of ordained church members dedicated to serving the Church’s need for compassion, witness and service to the congregation. There would be at 30-45 deacons elected by the congregation. The Deacons’ ministry would be under the supervision and authority of the Session.
- Church Staff – The staff would be responsible for the day-to-day operations and financial management of the church and the deployment of the church’s resources through its various ministries. The staff would function through an administrative structure designed by and reporting to the pastor, who in turn reports to the Session. The staff would work with the various committees and ministry teams, which will serve in an advisory and consultative capacity.
- Nominating Committee – a body drawn from and representative of the congregational membership, as prescribed by the Book of Order (G-2.0401). The task force recommends that the nominating committee include at least two elders currently serving on the Session, including one who would serve as the chair of the committee. The pastor shall serve as ex officio and without vote.
- Committees – A limited number of committees would provide guidance and counsel to the church staff in the governance and administration of the church. Committees would be approved by the Session and would comprise members from throughout the congregation (not necessarily elders or deacons). The chair and co-chair of each committee would be occupied by sitting elders.

Designated standing committees would include the following:

- Christian Education
- Congregational Nominating
- Finance
 - Audit sub-committee
 - Budget sub-committee
 - Building and Grounds sub-committee
 - Investment sub-committee
 - Stewardship sub-committee
 - Scholarship sub-committee
- Membership
- Mission
- Personnel
- Worship and Music

The Finance Committee would essentially replace many of the functions currently administered by the Trustees. The committee would provide oversight for the Church’s assets, including property

and investments, as well as other financial and managerial matters delegated by the Session. The chair of the Finance Committee would be a member of the Session and serve as president of the corporation. Membership of the committee would be appointed by the Session and selected based on an assessment of financial management and fiduciary skills and expertise. The Finance Committee would report regularly to the Session.

- Ministry Teams – Active teams led by church staff and comprising members of the church at large. Ministry teams are the very heart of the church and ensure a vibrant church life and congregational service. The principle ministry teams include the following:
 - Children’s Ministry team
 - Youth and College Ministry team
 - Adult Ministry team
 - Senior Adult Ministry team
 - Pastoral care Ministry team
 - Happyland Ministry Team

The above organizational structure has been designed with a fundamental objective of motivating widespread involvement of the lay membership in the church’s mission and administration. The goal is a reduction of time and effort spent in internal meetings and an expansion of the Church’s fundamental ministry.

Updated bylaws have been drafted for approval by the Session and submission to the congregation for a vote.

The organizational structure would be documented in the Church’s operations manual, which would further define the responsibilities of the Session, Deacons, Nominating Committee, Committees and sub-committees, ministry teams and the church staff. The operations manual would establish guidelines for the administration of these leadership areas and outline reporting and communication responsibilities.

Transition Plan

Transition to the revised organizational structure would begin in early 2016, immediately following congregational approval of the revised Bylaws.

Members of the Session who have been elected for the 2016, 2017 and 2018 classes would continue to serve through their elected terms.

Following adoption of the revised Bylaws, a number of new Session members would be elected to bring the total to the recommended 21 members.

The task force recommends that elected members of the Trustee board be considered by the Nominating Committee for ordination as Elders and members of the Session, as vacancies occur.

The current elected members of the Trustee board would serve on the Finance Committee through December 31, 2016, to the extent they choose to do so. Each of these members also would be assigned to one of the Finance sub-committees. In the event a current Trustee may desire to serve on another standing committee in lieu of the Finance Committee, that appointment would be accommodated. New

appointments in 2017 and beyond would be made as necessary to maintain the Finance Committee and sub-committees at desirable levels.

Corporate officers who have been elected for 2016 would continue to serve through December 31,2016, when new officers would be elected for 2017.

Implementation Steps

- Session approval of the revised Bylaws on February 26th.
- Mail/email revised Bylaws to congregation on Monday, February 29th.
- Worship service announcements of Bylaws proposal and availability for small group discussions – March 6th, 13th, 20th and 27th.
- A congregational meeting will be called to approve the revised Bylaws on April 3rd.
- Subsequent Session approval of supporting operating procedures consistent with the Bylaws.

Task force members:

Jennifer O’Flannery Anderson
Paul Greenman
Kathy Mayers

Keith Cobb
Mary-Alice Denny
Steve Shelton