



A Strategic Plan for the Corvallis First United Methodist Church The 2006 Report*

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Highlights

- The congregation of the Corvallis First United Methodist Church is a **body of disciples** dedicated to bringing people into a living relationship with God, and with concern for the welfare and suffering of both members and non-members of the congregation. **As disciples, we** aspire to sustain the natural environment of which all people are a part. We intend to increase in number and better reflect the age, gender and ethnic background of the surrounding community. We commit to preparing ourselves for these awesome responsibilities with education, training, study and prayer.
- **Disciples** act both as individuals and through groups. A Program Ministries Council encourages, plans, establishes and coordinates all ongoing, temporary and experimental ministry efforts. **Disciples** at Corvallis FUMC feel a special responsibility for the welfare of neighbors in our community. We dedicate ourselves in both existing and new efforts to a Community Service Presence activity that will be coordinated by the Program Ministry Council. We rededicate ourselves to Social Justice activities of universal application, and to congregational reconciling and natural step policies. Existing outreach and mission activities of exceptional quality are national and international in scope.
- **As disciples at FUMC**, we will establish a spiritually rewarding home both for ourselves and for those who may come. A multigenerational approach will be used to provide education for the mind, worship for the soul, and care for those in need. Our small group ministry permits individual needs to be served efficiently and well.
- **Disciples** must concern themselves with the greatest “leverage” for their efforts. Attention will be given to the most effective use of a limited clergy and staff. A multigenerational financial stewardship program will match financial commitment with capacity for giving. The FUMC mission provides the criterion with which the worth of building and facility use will be measured. A group decision structure will be put in place that makes effective use of **disciple** time and effort and is transparent to any interested person.

Our Mission is to bring people into a living relationship with God, through Jesus Christ, that we may love the world as God loves the world. [The mission measures the worth of all goals, strategies, and activities in this report.]

Our Vision is to address, as disciples, human suffering, human need and a neglected habitat wherever these occur, and provide love, care, challenge and nurture to all we encounter. [The vision captures dreams and aspirations to be realized with the implementation of this report.]

*This 2006 report rests upon the 2005 strategic plan report prepared by the LRPC. That report includes a theological framework, demographic considerations, an operating framework for planning including a mission statement, policies, programs, activities and enabling resources for the Corvallis First United Methodist Church. The 2005 report in its entirety, and especially its theological base, may be found at <http://www.corvallisfumc.org/fumchome.htm>.

Goals and Strategies

Goals and strategies state how the Corvallis FUMC, as a collection of disciples, intends to further its mission and realize its dreams and aspirations. (Goals have a direct and positive relationship with the mission of the Church. Ideally they are stated so that progress toward their achievement can be measured. Strategies are less general than goals and are the means by which goals are achieved. Tactics are more specific and task oriented than strategies. Usually they are best decided in the context of specific situations. No attempt is made in this report to specify or recommend tactics.)



“...to bring people into a living relationship with God”

Numbers, knowledge, and leadership combine to determine the effectiveness of disciples. Goals 1–3 address these issues.

GOAL 1

Empower the congregation of the Corvallis FUMC, as a body of disciples, so that they may “bring people into a living relationship with God.” This is the fundamental purpose of the Church.

How can those who are members of the congregation (insiders) as well as others be brought into “a living relationship with God”? Certain issues are so fundamental they should not be addressed in an “either/or” context, as, for example, the size and nature of the congregation itself. People can be better assisted to “come into a living relationship with God” if they are members of the congregation. Therefore the capacity of the Church to serve its mission will be enhanced if its numbers are greater, and if it reflects the demography of the populace it serves. It will be even more enhanced in proportion to the degree to which God’s spirit inspires our hearts, minds, bodies and souls.

GOAL 2

Increase the number of people in the congregation by creating a Church environment that meets congregational needs and fulfills the aspirations of those who may come.

The 2005 report presents conclusive demographic evidence the Corvallis FUMC congregation does not mirror the Corvallis community. Young single people, especially males, are underrepresented. The same is true for some ethnic groups. Growth efforts will address, but not be limited to, these disparities. Worship/music programs, Christian education efforts, outreach activities, and Church policies affect both members and non-members who come. The controlling principle always will be “to bring people into a living relationship with God.” Growth, for the sake of growth, is not proposed here.

Strategy 2.1

A separate and distinct expenditure category will be established in the annual budget to accurately describe, advertise, and publicize Corvallis FUMC in the community. This outreach and evangelical material will be sharply focused to make clear what FUMC “stands for.”

Strategy 2.2

A Multigenerational Ministry concept will be used to identify and provide opportunities for spiritual growth that are meaningful for people of every age within the congregation, as well as for those who may come.

The fundamental purpose of Corvallis FUMC is to assist in bringing people into “a living relationship with God.” Certain basic needs in this regard are held in common regardless of age, circumstance, or membership in the congregation. Common activities may serve to unify the congregation and appeal to those who have not yet joined. For example, it may be possible to fashion programs that direct the attention of all generations to a common objective. Older teens might take younger children on a canned food drive for the South Corvallis Food Bank. Adults could then provide refreshments later. People of nearly every age can contribute to “clean-up days” at the Church.

Yet some spiritual requirements are age-specific. A multigenerational ministry identifies particular generational needs and fashions responses. In sum, the multi-generational concept will be used to fashion Church efforts ranging from music and worship activities on the one hand, to outreach and evangelical efforts on the other.

The small group ministry, discussed as Strategy 2.3 is an especially useful technique for addressing particular needs of different generations.

Strategy 2.3

A Church-wide Small Group ministry approach will be initiated to address the needs of particular groups within FUMC as well as of those who may come.

Small groups provide opportunities to discuss varying issues, be accountable, have connections, deepen spiritual growth, and offer mutual support in time of crisis. Their value arises from the bonding that occurs as common interests are pursued. A small group ministry may be an ideal way to address the particular needs of small groups. Quite apart from particular needs, small groups may provide for quality of communication and participation that may not be possible with greater numbers.

The development of a small group ministry approach at FUMC will make use of particular talents within the congregation. One such resource exists in the person of Brooke Collison who has

recently authored a book pertaining to the effective use of small groups entitled *Know and be Known*.

GOAL 3

Assign a high priority to the development of lay leadership in the work plans of assigned clergy.

Education and training takes many forms at Corvallis FUMC. Christian education is needed for children, youth and adults. Further, lay leadership and its development are of great importance to this strategic plan because many initiatives will require such leadership. Initially, at least, the Christian education staff will be part-time and will emphasize children and youth education. Numerous members of the congregation possess needed talents to lead Christian related education for adults.

Educational and training programs needed for leadership development have unique characteristics and need to be considered separately from traditional Christian education efforts. To be sure, they must have a theological component as well as material pertaining to Methodism. There also is a body of knowledge pertaining to how people become motivated to serve a cause, and how they must be equipped if that cause is to be served. Strategies and tactics for accomplishing this important work will be a major responsibility of assigned clergy of Corvallis FUMC.

Strategy 3.1

Position descriptions and work plans will emphasize the need for, and capacity to adjust to, emerging needs. The congregation will be informed about clergy and staff responsibilities so that realistic expectations of them will be formed.

These conditions place a heavy responsibility on the Staff and Parish Relations Committee. The need for lay leadership education, clergy and staff continuing education, and recreation and renewal for clergy and staff in the face of myriad Church responsibilities indeed loom large. Reference is made elsewhere in this strategic plan to this important issue.



“...to address human suffering, human need and a neglected habitat wherever these occur”

GOAL 4

Establish the Program Ministries Council as a part of the decision structure of Corvallis FUMC.

The Program Ministries Council currently operates on an experimental basis. Its principal purpose is to coordinate the many ministries of the Church. Some of these ministries are long lasting activities, others arise to serve an immediate need, and some are experimental in nature. The Ministries Council integrates and relates these diverse activities.

The Associate Lay Leader is Chair of the Ministries Council. Numerous Church policies must be interpreted or formulated as the Council addresses its responsibilities. Some of these can be resolved within the Ministries Council; other issues have general Church implications and may be sent to the Church Council. Many issues coming before the Council pertain to program and activity implementation. Both clergy and staff need to contribute to agenda setting and Council decisions.

GOAL 5

Establish a Community Service Presence activity as an initiative to be coordinated by the Program Ministries Council.

The 2005 Strategic Plan Report established a Community Service Presence activity as a Goal for two reasons. One reason was the congregation expressed by questionnaire response that it wished to be of greater service to the Corvallis community. The other was there were numerous existing Church ministries and projects of actual

and potential value to the community. At that time the Program Ministries Council was not operational. Because Goal 4 places the Council within the Church structure, it is logical to make the Community Service Presence Program a strategic responsibility of the Program Ministries Council.

The Community Service Presence activity consists of multiple service projects serving the Corvallis community drawing upon traditional FUMC strengths. These include, but are not limited to, outreach and mission activities, outstanding music, relevant preaching, social justice, education and learning. Specific actual examples may include a Gay Men’s Chorus, a Block Party, cooking schools for low-income persons and school lunches. Clearly, FUMC facilities are well suited to expanded food service activities.

The Outreach Committee now engages in extensive and varied service and mission activities. The Youth participate in service programs in different locations. There are numerous international programs that stem from Corvallis FUMC. The United Methodist Women have a long history of concern for, and aid to, less fortunate people around the globe. Probably only a few within the congregation know of the full range of outreach and service activities currently underway at the Corvallis FUMC. Additional Community Service Presence activities will complement, but not replace, existing efforts.

GOAL 6

Establish Social Justice as a continuing, explicit ministry priority at the Corvallis FUMC.

Methodists have long had concern about social justice. Local conditions, state and national public policies, as well as international affairs, have commanded the attention of Methodists. Individual and small groups within Methodism are moved to express concern about forces and conditions they believe to cause human suffering and result in unmet needs. Yet society is complex, and the most humane course of action may not be immediately obvious. Methodist tradition requires its followers to use their brains. Obviously, "social justice" concerns of particular groups or individuals may not adequately reflect all views from within a congregation.

Strategy 6.1

Individuals and groups within Corvallis FUMC are encouraged to explore and express positions on matters of social justice. Discussion is welcomed on a wide variety of ethical issues. The congregation commits to providing a reconciling environment in which all opinions are valued.

Strategy 6.2

Expression of social justice positions by individuals or groups from within the congregations will not imply endorsement by Corvallis FUMC unless the congregation has voted to do so. The Corvallis FUMC has taken formal policy positions as a Reconciling Congregation and as a Natural Step congregation. The Corvallis FUMC has also formally affiliated with the Community of Welcoming Congregations.

Strategy 6.3

Social justice and ethical public policy issues will be an integral part of the education ministry for youth and adults. Groups responsible for educational program planning will welcome suggestions for educational activities from social justice groups from within the Church.

GOAL 7

Recommit the Corvallis FUMC to the principles and practices of being a reconciling congregation.

Existing policy welcomes all persons in full participation in the life of the congregation regardless of age, sex, racial and ethnic background, sexual orientation, marital status, or physical or mental condition, and devotion to the reconciliation of all persons as children of God.

There are many stereotypes and groupings that alienate people from one another. Liberal, conservative, Democrat, Republican, communist, socialist, capitalist, fundamentalist, evangelical provide only a few examples. A reconciling congregation provides a place where one's search for "a living relationship with God" is facilitated free from intimidation and condescension. Sources of alienation need to be identified, discussed and eliminated from speech and program.

Strategy 7.1

An annual plan will be developed to reflect what it means to be a reconciling congregation, and made visible to the entire congregation. The plan will specify responsibilities and actions to be taken. This will be an annual responsibility of the Reconciling Congregation Committee.

GOAL 8

Apply Corvallis FUMC Natural Step policy not only to FUMC practices, but to a "neglected habitat wherever it may occur." An educational program to that end will be established at Corvallis FUMC.

Christian Stewardship of the Earth is the Biblical basis for resource use and the Natural Step Program.

In Genesis we read that God created heavens and earth, plants and living creatures, and God saw that it was good. God created man and woman in his own image. God made a covenant with Noah and with his descendants, meaning with all mankind, and with the whole creation. God made man and woman for fellowship with God and in this fellowship God divinely ordained responsibility, namely the exercise the dominion (or responsible stewardship) over the whole earth.

From the above it can be concluded that God has given responsibility to humans to live in God's creation—the earth—in the image of God without degrading the creation. We are responsible to feed, shelter, and clothe our families and fellow humans in a world as God created it, with clean air and waters, productive soils, and environments in which plants, animals and "every creeping thing" thrive. We are responsible to use science and technologies to live in concert with the glories of creation. We are called to be stewards of the earth.

This biblical foundation for Christian people provides a basis for daily living and management of

communities and societies as responsible stewards in God's image. We need to remind each other of this responsibility. The "Natural Step Program" is one way of doing this.

Strategy 8.1

The Natural Step Committee will develop an educational program and inform the congregation how "Natural Step" addresses our biblical responsibility as "responsible stewards." Annual progress reports will be made to the Church Council.



"...to provide love, care, challenge and nurture to all we encounter (both insiders and others)"

The Corvallis FUMC has a special responsibility to love, care, challenge and nurture its own. Congregational care, worship services, music and educational programs address this responsibility as reflected in various goals and strategies.

Yet "love, care, challenge and nurture" cannot be confined to "insiders" (members of the congregation) if the Corvallis FUMC mission is to be served. Many of the following goals and strategies apply to both groups. Ministry may be an ideal way of addressing needs of particular age groups, even though small groups may be of value for purposes unrelated to age or generation.

GOAL 9

Corvallis FUMC will maintain and strengthen its already excellent and active congregational care program.

The existing congregational care committee provides exemplary service for many, including senior members of the congregation, many of whom are in the "shut in" category. Young families clearly have special needs. There is good communication among many in this group and, although not formally organized, they provide rapid response to the needs of individual families. Clergy also respond when informed of need in hospitals and elsewhere. The Corvallis FUMC has a long tradition of excellent memorial or funeral services with associated hospitality activities.

This worthwhile program will be strengthened by earlier identification of "out of the ordinary" needs, and transmitting this information promptly to

appropriate response groups and individuals in the congregation.

GOAL 10

The number and kind of Sunday worship services will reflect the interests and needs of those in the congregation as well as the interests and needs of those who may come.

Three Sunday worship services—except during the summer months when there have been two—have been offered at Corvallis FUMC for some time. This pattern will be continued in 2007. During the winter months, the 8:45 am service has reflected a contemporary motif, the 11 am service has emphasized a traditional orientation and the Sunday evening service has catered to needs of younger people including young families. Worship teams for each service are in places and functioning. This will be a continuing activity.

The Corvallis FUMC traditionally has been home to outstanding music and musicians. Music and worship are closely related, especially at Sunday worships. Even so, a great deal of music is provided at times other than at Sunday worship. And Sunday services are not the only time formal worship services are offered.

The following strategy offers a means for evaluating worship and music preferences of congregation members on a continuing basis.

Strategy 10.1

The clergy, assisted by the worship teams, will at least annually obtain information from the congregation and conduct a review regarding the suitability of various worship and music formats. Questionnaires, focus groups and comparable other techniques will be used to obtain such information. This will include a short report to the congregation summarizing the findings of the clergy and worship teams.

Implementation of the above goal and strategy should be undertaken in the knowledge that worship and music can unify and bond people as well as serve particular needs. The collection of information should ascertain if the pursuit of small group needs for any practice or format is at the expense of common interests and objectives.

Whether planned or not, a degree of experimentation is inevitable in music/worship activities (e.g., an early summer service). When

experimentation is anticipated, careful collection and analysis of information about reactions will add greatly to its value. An evaluation of costs and revenues may be a part of the annual review. There is no expectation that each service will be self-sustaining financially. Nevertheless it is important to understand the flow of resources from, or to, other programs related to each service.

GOAL 11

The Corvallis FUMC will offer a high-quality Christian Education program characterized by clergy and staff leadership that enables and empowers lay participation.

Educational needs include:

- Social justice related educational programs
- Children and youth
- Adult spiritual education
- Lay leadership education and training.

It is clear the paid staff alone cannot provide education for the multiple needs of the Church. Christian education for children and youth will be led by staff personnel. Lay people will need to contribute to adult education. As noted earlier clergy will have a special responsibility for lay leadership education.



**“Our vision is to address, as disciples,”
—enabling resources provide “leverage” for the disciples.**

The congregation itself, clergy and staff, building and facilities, finances as well as group decision-making and communication, all constitute enabling resources that can assist discipleship. The congregation, clergy and staff were discussed earlier, and are a special category of enabling resources. Attention is directed here to how buildings and facilities, finances and group decision-making can assist disciples to achieve their purpose.

GOAL 12

Any building or facilities use, internal or external, will directly or indirectly advance the mission of Corvallis FUMC to a greater extent than will any other use (from the 2005 report).

This goal establishes the basic philosophy for managing the Church buildings and facilities. Decisions based on this philosophy may pertain to either “inside” or “outside” uses and users.

Renting buildings or facilities to others will advance the Church mission only if the activities are congruent with our mission and the income earned can advance the Church mission more than an internal use. The Corvallis FUMC does not aspire to become a landlord, and, indeed, is hampered from doing so by law. The decision structure of the Church should provide a means for selecting an internal use pattern that will make the maximum contribution to the Church mission.

Strategy 12.1

In cooperation with the Church trustees and business manager, a lay person will be recruited to provide leadership for building

and facilities use. Responsibilities will include promoting, overseeing and developing guidelines for building and facilities use (from the 2005 report).

Strategy 12.2

A Buildings and Facilities Use Committee will be created to advise the lay building and facilities use person identified in 12.1 above. This committee will include a member of the Trustees, a clergy person, the youth director, the hospitality coordinator, the office manager, and the weekly custodian (from the 2005 report).

GOAL 13

Establish a visible and viable financial stewardship program to examine and establish an ethic of giving for the support of the Church for people of all ages and circumstances within the Church.

Benton County has the highest per capita income and the lowest unemployment rate in Oregon. There is no evidence Corvallis FUMC members are less well off financially than the population of Benton County generally. Data reveal that pledges, as a percentage of the church membership, have declined for at least the past two decades. On the other side of the ledger, total per capita giving has improved markedly beginning in 2002. Since 2002 giving has been not only for the operating budget but also in response to two capital fund campaigns.

The above evidence and recent experience suggests that giving capacity is present in the Church. Yet the above information raises question

about the health of the stewardship ethic in the Church.

The establishment of an active and continuing stewardship program will improve information flow concerning Church finances. It will also help create a financial support ethic in the Church. There is substantial biblical justification for making this subject a part of the Christian education program. People of all ages should feel a responsibility to provide financial support for the Church.

Financial management is concerned not only with the level of support, but also with the degree of certainty of that support. The failure of many to pledge current budget support vastly complicates financial management at Corvallis FUMC.

Strategy 13.1

A multi-generational, small group ministry approach will be used to establish and implement a financial stewardship program. The responsibility of all ages to help with financial support of the Church will be emphasized. One objective of strategy 13.1 will be to reverse the trend of declining pledges as a percentage of Church membership. This approach may include a careful and anonymous study of how members currently allocate their discretionary income and how the Church fits within that allocation.

GOAL 14

Design and implement a group decision-making system at Corvallis FUMC that reflects the following criteria.

- **The distinction between policy formation and implementation is recognized and respected. (Tactics for distinguishing between policy formation and implementation may be found in: Hotchiss, Dan, *Learning from Non-profits*, Alban Institute.)**
- **Authority and assigned responsibility are in alignment.**
- **Transparency—any member of the congregation may learn the status of any subject pertaining to the mission of the organization.**
- **Conformance with United Methodist Church discipline unless otherwise specified by Corvallis FUMC policy(s).**

The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church orders the senior appointed pastor “to be the administrative officer of the local church and to assure the organizational concerns of the organization are adequately provided for” (P 340.3, 2004). The Discipline also states (P 252) the Church Council shall provide for planning and implementing a program of nurture, outreach witness and resources in the local church. The Discipline does not require that the Lay Leader be the Council Chair although that is the practice at Corvallis FUMC. This practice is consistent with the primacy of the laity in determining Church policy. Appointed pastors are members of the Council. Either the Council Chair or the senior pastor may call special meetings of the Church Council, according to the Discipline (P 252.3).

It is consistent with the Book of Discipline and Corvallis FUMC practice for the lay leader, as chair of the Church Council, to have principal responsibility for the formation of local Church policies. In a parallel fashion the senior pastor has principal responsibility for the implementation of Church programs and policies (P 304.3). Consistent also with these principal responsibilities, this alignment of responsibility and authority suggests the lay leader and the senior pastor jointly confer when Church Council agendas are decided upon.

The Program Ministries Council operates in a parallel fashion to the Church Council. The Associate Lay Leader is Chair with responsibility to coordinate the various ministries of the Church. Assigned clergy may be involved in agenda setting with voting rights.

The complex relationships specified by the Methodist Discipline, and local Church decision practices make a formal decision structure necessary if the criteria stated earlier are to be met. Strategy 14.1 is advanced to this end.

The strategies does not require a marked departure from the existing decision structure (described in the appendix). Nevertheless the adoption of Goal 14 and its implementation strategy 14.1 hold prospect for improving group decision making at FUMC. If successful, significant staff and lay time and energy will be released to advance the Church mission.

Strategy 14.1.

Establish a Church decision structure that provides for a Church Council together with an Agenda Committee, a Program Ministries Council, and a Steering Committee.

- The Church Council, chaired by the Lay Leader, meets at least quarterly. The Lay Leader and the Senior Pastor will be standing members of an agenda committee that may include others as agreed to by the standing committee members. The Church Council is concerned primarily with policy and major program formation and initiation. Assigned clergy to the Corvallis FUMC are members of the Council with voting rights. Other staff are members without voting rights. They are present at Council meetings to provide information about Church activities and programs for which they have responsibility.
- The Program Ministries Council, chaired by the Associate Lay Leader, is concerned with coordination of the various ministries of the Church. This includes standing, temporary and experimental ministries. Assigned clergy are members with voting rights. At least one lay person from each ministry area will be a member of the Program Ministries Council. The Program Ministries Council meets at least quarterly, but may meet more frequently.
- The Steering Committee, with the Lay Leader as chair, assists with the coordination and implementation of Church policies and programs, as well as management of the Church's resources. The Steering Committee interprets Church Council policies if the Church Council is unable to do so. Meetings are at least quarterly. Membership includes the Lay Leader, chairs of all standing committees, two representatives from the Program Ministries Council in addition to the Associate Lay Leader, and assigned clergy and staff. Staff are members without voting rights.

The recognition in principle of the distinction between policy creation and its implementation is of fundamental importance. In practice policy creation and implementation may merge, or develop at approximately the same time. Even so, they can be distinguished in principle, and can be considered separately if the parties involved are conscious of the need to distinguish between them. The recognition of the lay leader as leader for policy formation, and the senior pastor as principal administrator assists in keeping the two separate.

Recognition of the distinctive roles of the lay leader and the senior pastor will also assist in bringing authority and responsibility into alignment.

Transparency can be achieved by making available the agendas and minutes of the principal decision-making bodies of the Church: Church Council, Program Ministries Council, Steering

Committee. Any member of the congregation can then learn what items have been considered, and, if considered, how decided.

To Summarize:

- The membership of the Church Council includes members of the Steering Committee, the Program Ministries Council, appointed clergy, and staff, the lay representative to the annual conference, two lay leadership team representatives, a young adult representative and a youth representative.
- The membership of the Agenda Committee for the Church Council consists of the lay leader and the senior pastor. They may appoint additional members.
- The membership of the Program Ministries Council includes the Associate Lay Leader (chair), appointed clergy, the Education Director, and representatives of all continuing, temporary and experimental ministries including natural step and reconciling congregation.
- The membership of the Steering Committee includes the lay leader (chair), the associate lay leader, appointed clergy, Church Council secretary, Chairs of Trustees, Staff and Parish Relations Committee, Finance, Long Range Planning, Building Committee, Building Manager, and two ministry representatives. (Ministry representatives will be appointed by the Associate Lay Leader and may be chosen on the basis of the Steering Committee Agendas.)

Figure 1 shows the relation of clergy and staff, at-large representatives, Program Ministries Council, and the Steering Committee to the Church Council with its agenda committee.

Appendix 1 provides a description of the existing decision structure of the Church.

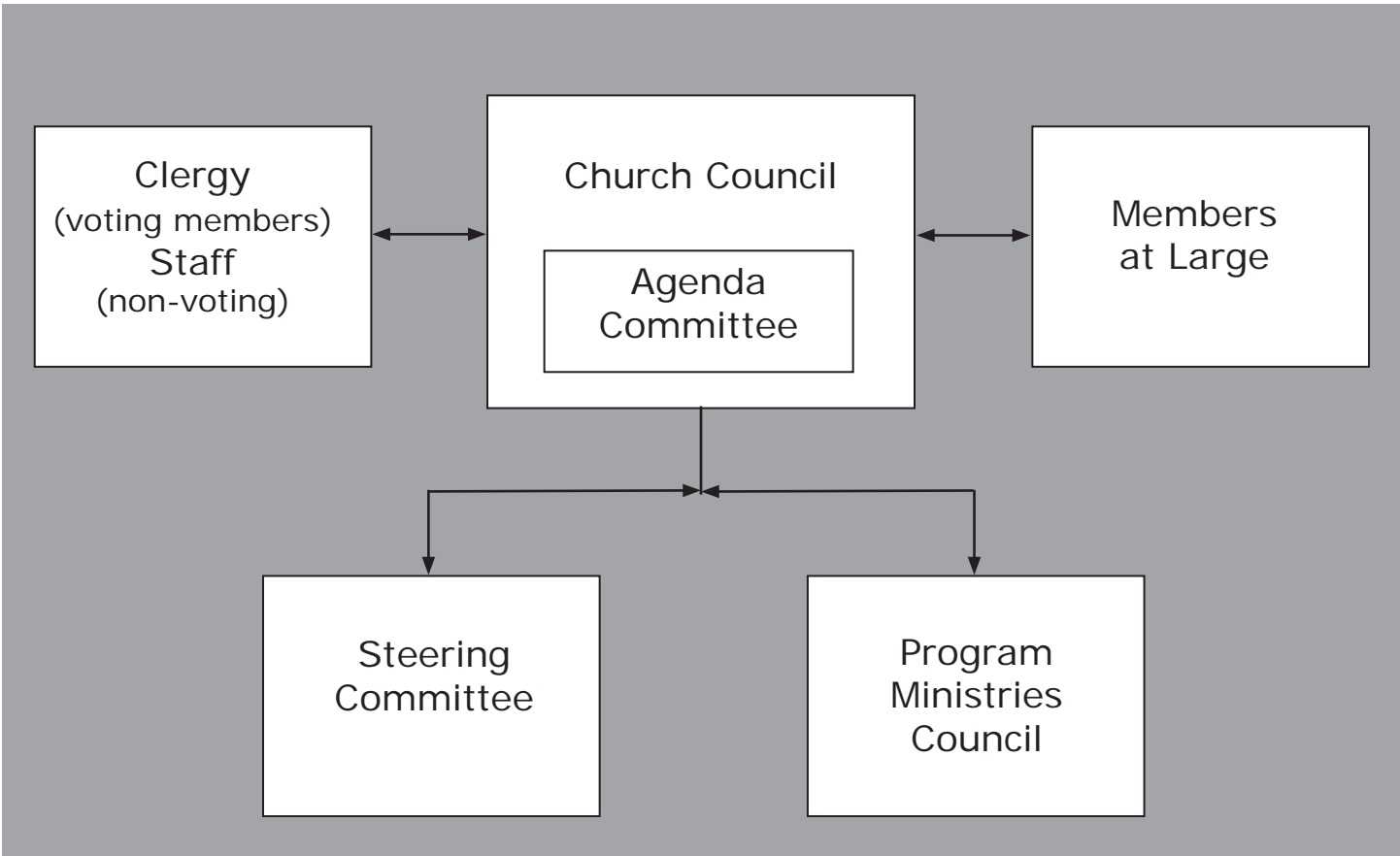


Figure 1. Relation of clergy and staff, at-large representatives, Program Ministries Council, and the Steering Committee to the Church Council with its agenda committee.

Appendix 1

Church Council and Steering Committee Structure Corvallis FUMC, March 8, 2006

2001 Reorganized Church Governing Structure

In Jan 2001 FUMC adopted our organizational structure of Church Council and Steering Committee. This new structure replaced the previous Administrative Board and Council on Ministries. After two years this structure was to be evaluated by the Church Council.

One of the purposes of the reorganization was to reduce the time spent in meetings, in hopes of facilitating more time for ministry. "Minimize the machinery, maximize the ministry" was Pastor Bert Scott's slogan for the change. Our new structure was similar to a structure that was being used at First Church Salem. Bert wanted the Church Council to be a visioning and policymaking group, not just a group that heard committee reports.

The Church Council was to meet quarterly, and the Steering Committee was to meet the other eight months of the year. Previously, the Administrative Board and Council on Ministries had each met monthly.

The thirteen member Steering Committee was to serve as the executive board of the Church Council. Council representatives from both administrative committees and core ministry teams serve on Steering Committee. Core ministry teams have two at-large and one youth representative on Steering Committee to provide a better balance between administrative and ministry/program members.

Originally the Steering Committee was given authority to make decisions, with the Church Council later ratifying these decisions. The minutes of Steering Committee meetings were quickly sent out to all Council members, thus keeping them informed of motions passed and reports given. When this procedure was followed all Council members had the opportunity to respond to any issues of interest. The votes taken at Steering Committee were, for the most part, those items of business that could not wait until the next Council meeting.

The Lay Leader and Pastor were responsible for setting the agendas for Council and Steering Committee meetings. These agendas were to be sent to members before the meetings, so all would know in advance the proposed content of the meetings. Those who wanted items to be put on the agenda were to notify the Lay Leader by a set

date prior to the Council meeting.

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In recent years, these procedures have not been followed, so members of the Council have often not known what actions the Steering Committee has taken. Sometimes, Council member have not been sent reminders of upcoming meetings. Also, agendas have not been sent to members in advance, nor minutes always sent to members in a timely fashion, nor promptly filed in the Minutes Notebook.

Ministry Teams

In the reorganization, the ministry teams were divided into two groups: administrative committees and core ministry teams. Administrative committees functioned as they had in the past, with members being chosen by the Lay Leadership Team (formerly Nominating) for a three-year term. Core ministry teams were each assigned a staff member, and that staff person, along with the laity on the team, were to do their own recruiting. There was no set length of service for core ministry team members. Also, a process was designed whereby lay-led ministries could enter into a covenant with the Church Council for a specific purpose, thereby becoming a Covenant Ministry Team. A brochure/application was printed that explains the details of how to become a Covenant Ministry Team.

Core ministries are those areas of ministry that the Church Council deems to be essential to the mission of the Church. The original teams were: Outreach: Mission and Social Concerns, Evangelism, Congregational Care, Stewardship, Adult Education, Children and Youth Education, Reconciling, Children and Families, Youth Ministry, Music, Worship 8:45, Worship 11:00, and Worship 7:00. Not all of these core ministry teams are active at this time.

Looking Forward

Recently, there has been much confusion regarding the governing and decision-making policies and procedures of the church. Communication, always problematic, has been especially lacking. Therefore, to help us improve the structure and function of our church's governing system we offer these questions and suggestions for consideration:

1. The staff member for each core ministry team should be responsible for reporting to the Church Council, on an annual basis, the status of their assigned teams. How are they doing? Are they still active? If not, what has happened to them?
2. The Church Council should then follow through on this information, deciding what teams we want to have, and how to support or revive them. The Council should take into consideration our reduced clergy staff as we decide how many core ministries we will be able to support. We should also consider where groups such as Active for Peace and Justice fit in. Should they become a covenant or core ministry? What is the procedure for evaluating/renewing/ending a Covenant Ministry Team?
3. What should be the focus of the Church Council? There are certain tasks assigned to the Council by the Discipline, such as establishing a budget. What are the other tasks mandated by the Discipline?
4. Is the current governing structure basically sound, if we actually follow it? How could we change it to make it better? Or do we want to start over with a new structure? Is there an optimal size for the Church Council?
5. What are the roles of the Church Council and the Steering Committee? How often should each group meet?
6. How are decisions made? Who makes them? What decisions require approval by Church Council/Steering Committee? What decisions are made by staff and clergy alone, or by ministry teams or administrative committees? What does "ratify" mean in the context of the Church Council ratifying decisions made by the Steering Committee? Does this work?
7. The Clergy are non-voting members on Church Council and Steering Committee. A decision was made to make the new Business Manager non-voting. What would be the advantages and disadvantages in having all or some of the staff members be non-voting? What are the philosophical reasons to have staff be voting or non-voting? Does one need to be a member of the church to be able to vote on Church Council?

8. Once we establish our structure and practices, we need some kind of booklet for new members of Church Council, laying out the procedures and duties of the Council.
9. What should be our procedure for choosing our two core ministries representatives to Steering Committee? (Initially all the core ministry team representatives got together and choose among themselves the two people who were to attend Steering Committee.) How is the one Steering Committee representative chosen from the three Lay Members to Annual Conference? Julie Monk selects the youth representatives for Steering Committee and Council. How is the Young Adult Representative chosen for Council? (Initially this person was selected from the Young Adult group, which no longer exists.)
10. What happened to the Communications team? Do we need to resurrect it? Among other things, it was responsible for getting information to people outside the church and to those coming into the church for the first time.
11. How do we effectively communicate within the Council, as well as to the congregation at large?

—Barb McKernan, Dianne Dunfield