

The *Gist of It*

Notes from the Governance Task Force

Grace and peace to you! After a bit of a late-summer break, the Governance Task Force was back at work in early September, continuing to think through further pieces of the developing proposals for ministry leadership and governance structures here at Storrs Congregational.

In this issue of *The Gist of It*, we hope to continue to help you understand more about our developing framework through explorations of two important topics:

- *the ‘reserve powers’ of the congregation in the new framework; and*
- *more on distinguishing between “governance” and “ministry”*

We hope you find these pieces helpful, and you can expect to hear again from us within about a month! *Also, stay tuned for some upcoming opportunities for community conversation and dialogue—we’ll be announcing some soon!*

Being in touch with *Your* Governance Task Force...

We continue to be **eager** for your questions and quandaries, comments and concerns, fears and feedback, kudos and keep-up-the-good-works.... Please be in touch with any or all of us at any time—we’d also be happy to meet with you for face-to-face conversation and collaborative thinking!

- Sue Irvine: susanirvine0@gmail.com, 860-429-1456
- David Jordan: djeldredge40@gmail.com, 860-429-8909
- Stacy Malecki: rmalecki431@earthlink.net, 860-487-4538
- Bill Ross: bill.ross@business.uconn.edu, 860-498-0481
- Erin Scholes: erinrachel410@gmail.com, 847-507-1354
- Matt Emery: matt@storrscongchurch.org, 860-429-9382



The congregation's powers...

In our process as a Governance Task Force, we start with the big picture, and then work inward, fleshing out a new level of detail with each iteration.

You'll remember from our last issue of *The Gist of It* that we have drafted and refined an overall "Philosophy of Governance", which states the big picture of how we want governance and ministry to work in the congregation. The next level of detail, then, is to clarify the relationship of the congregation-as-a-whole to the Governing Board.

Good governance, we believe, requires *absolute clarity* about the assignment of powers and authority from the congregation-as-a-whole to the governing board (and thereby, the rest of the governance and ministry structure). This both protects the rights and authority of the congregation and gives the Governing Board the clarity needed to go about its work well, knowing that it has freedom within clearly-delineated boundaries.

When an organization speaks of "reserve powers", what that means is that the larger or higher-level body in a structure (the congregation, in our case) explicitly lays out the items that only it has the authority to do—these are the powers "reserved" by that body—and then explicitly delegates authority for all remaining items to some subordinate group (in our

proposal, the Governing Board). Whatever the higher body does not explicitly "reserve" is delegated to the subordinate body

In our case, we would thus clearly enumerate those actions that only the congregation itself (assembled in meeting) would have the authority to carry out. And we would explicitly delegate all remaining authorities to the Governing Board (which then can further delegate to staff, ministry teams, and so forth).

How much of this is a "change" from our current system depends on your perspective. Our *de facto* ways of operating mostly follow this concept, and our current bylaws here at SCC *do* state some explicit reserved powers of the congregation. But there is no single clear list of the congregation's reserved powers, and furthermore, there is no clear and explicit delegation of remaining authority to a unified governance structure. In fact, we even have in our bylaws the instruction that all "important matters" should be referred to the congregation for decision—language which is vague, open to disparate interpretations, and thus probably does not make for *good* governance.

We on the GTF firmly believe that a clear and explicit list of the congregation's reserved powers, coupled with the explicit delegation of remaining powers, is a key

component of our path to *good* governance .

We've explored what the congregation's reserved powers seem to be in our current system, and we've talked about what we might add, remove, or change.

Below you'll find our current draft of what we'd propose. Most of the list is carried over from our current system. Those things that are new or changed are marked as such, with notes below.

The Congregation's Reserved Powers, as currently drafted by GTF

Only the Congregation (assembled in a duly-called annual or special meeting) could:

- Elect members of the governing board and other officers of the congregation *
- Elect a Pastoral Search Committee
- Extend the 'call' to a candidate to fill a called pastor position
- Request the resignation of a called pastor
- Approve buying/selling/mortgaging property
- Amend/Revise the Congregation's Bylaws
- Approve the annual operating budget
- Approve capital campaigns
- Approve expenditures from 'off-budget' accounts in excess of \$10,000 **
- Adopt a vision of mission ***

* - This is *not* a change in "spirit", as the congregation currently elects leaders, but it does constitute change insofar as the congregation would be electing the members of a single, directly-elected Governing Board representative of the congregation as a whole, plus a few other officer positions (rather than the current election of all members of eight standing boards, three additional committees, wider church delegates, at-large members of the Church Council, and at least seven other officer positions).

** - Current bylaws and policy give no authority to the Council or any other body to make use of any amount of funds from off-budget accounts. This would allow some limited flexibility to the governance structures in this regard, while still retaining the congregation's ability to oversee and weigh in on major outlays. (The GTF is still discerning about the matter of how *budgets* legally function in non-profits and churches, and thus what is needed in regards to mid-year amendments of *on-budget* expenditures... more will be forthcoming on that.)

*** - This makes explicit the congregation's right to approve major expressions or statements of the congregation's mission, vision, and/or values... things such as a mission statement, major position statements (like the 1994 vote to become officially 'Open and Affirming'), and the like.

What would you add, subtract, or change about this list? In general, what should have to "come back to the congregation" for decision?

Governance vs. Ministry: Understanding the distinction

One of the keys the model we're pursuing as we explore governance change is to understand the distinction between *governance* and *ministry*. Much of the model is built around the belief that different types of structures and processes are called for to best address each of these two related, but distinct areas of a congregation's life. In simplest terms, *governance* is governing the life of the church, while *ministry* is living the life of the church.

Governance

Governance has to do with the ultimate oversight of the congregation as a whole, ensuring that it serves its mission. Major choices about goals and strategies, and deciding who will be responsible for implementing them, are both governance items. Governance requires *delegating* power to those who actually *do* the daily work, and holding them accountable for their performance. And it means seeing that the congregation's resources

and people are kept safe, and that the congregation lives in harmony with its own values. As Dan Hotchkiss puts it in his book, **"Governance is holding the whole institution and its work in trust, voicing its intentions, making its biggest decisions, and taking responsibility for its performance."** (pg. 65-66)

Ministry

On the other hand, ***ministry* is most of the rest of what we do as a congregation—achieving the inward and outward results we exist to achieve.** Anyone whose job it is to lead a program, teach a class, serve food, lead worship, or help visitors find a seat is part of ministry. So are the people who train others, write checks, sweep floors, and tune the piano. Ministry includes creating liturgies, curricula, visitation schedules, job descriptions, goals, evaluations, and many other long- and short-term plans. And it means making daily choices about money, time, and space. The ministry "staff" of the congregation includes ordained *and* lay, paid *and* unpaid, program *and* administrative staff. *Anyone* who is part of the chain of practical activities that constitute our work is part of our ministry. As Hotchkiss puts it, **"Ministry, to put it simply, is the active, 'doing' aspect of the congregation."** (pg. 66)





So, what difference does this distinction make?

One of the biggest differences the distinction makes is in what sort of group is best equipped for each area. Effective *governance* most often requires diverse, representative groups of people who sit around tables having orderly discussion. Now and then they may break into smaller groups to make sure everyone's ideas are heard and considered. Procedure is formal enough to make it clear when the group as a whole has endorsed something and exactly what it has endorsed. Somebody takes minutes, and when a decision has been made and written down, the essential work of governance is done. The best group for doing governance is diverse, patient, verbal, and at ease with abstract thinking and intangible work products.

The most effective group for doing ministry is different in almost every way. First, a ministry team needs to be *unrepresentative*: it only should include people who have a commitment to the particular task at hand. A ministry group begins with at least general clarity about the work to be done. It needs a leader who knows how to do it and

is willing to accept responsibility for training, supervising, and coordinating others to achieve a stated goal. Unlike governing bodies, which are usually elected, the selection of ministry groups is based on people's passion for the goal, with an eye to making sure group members have among them the gifts and time the particular ministry task or area will need.

But what does this look like here at SCC?

So, now we've explored more about what "governance" and "ministry" each are in the life of a congregation—at least in concept. But what does that mean more concretely?

On the next few pages, you'll see a table that we prepared as we on the GTF collected together as wide a range as we could come up with of the activities, tasks, authorities, and responsibilities that are currently happening around SCC. Then, for helping further our own understandings, we went through and determined whether each of these was largely a matter of "governance" or of "ministry". And we thought perhaps you, too, might find it helpful...



Governance vs. Ministry:

What's that look like *now* at SCC?

Who's doing it now:	Activity	Governance or Ministry?
275th anniv. comm't	Organize Celebration	Ministry
Call-to-Care	Care Partners	Ministry
Call-to-Care	Christmas Caroling	Ministry
Call-to-Care	Keeping in Touch	Ministry
Call-to-Care	Loaves and Fishes - soups and meals	Ministry
Call-to-Care	Out and about: Mid-week and weekend	Ministry
Call-to-Care	Prayer Shawl ministry	Ministry
Bd of Christian Ed.	Adult - special topics	Ministry
Bd of Christian Ed.	Adult Sunday School	Ministry
Bd of Christian Ed.	CAFE Storrs	Ministry
Bd of Christian Ed.	Junior Pilgrim Fellowship	Ministry
Bd of Christian Ed.	Senior Pilgrim Fellowship	Ministry
Bd of Christian Ed.	Vacation Bible School	Ministry
Bd of Christian Ed.	Women on the Way	Ministry
Bd of Christian Ed.	Sunday School for Children & Youth	Ministry
Church clerk	Maintain records of meetings	Governance
Church council	Adopt safe church policy	Governance
Church Council	Implement safe church policy, including fire drills and background checks	Ministry
Church council	Adopt / establish policies as appropriate	Governance
Church Council Chair	Convene Council Meetings, Official signatory for the congregation	Governance
Church Growth	Welcoming Activities	Ministry
Collectors	Maintain Accounts Receivable	Ministry
Collectors & Counters	Sunday Collections	Ministry
Congregation	Act on issues referred to it by Council, Senior Minister, or by member petition	Governance
Congregation	Adopt SCC Defining Statements, i.e. Vision	Governance
Congregation	Amend/Revise Bylaws	Governance
Congregation	Approve "off-budget" expenditures (Major Projects, Erickson, etc.)	Governance
Congregation	Approve annual Budget	Governance

Who's doing it now:	Activity	Governance or Ministry?
Congregation	Approve buying/selling/mortgaging property	Governance
Congregation	Approve Capital Campaigns	Governance
Congregation	Call Minister(s)	Governance
Congregation	Elect Officers & Committee Members	Governance
Congregation	Elect Pastoral Search Committee	Governance
Congregation	Request Resignation of Minister	Governance
Deacons	Welcome new members, maintain membership records	Ministry
Deacons	Worship Policy	Governance
Deacons	Advent decorations	Ministry
Deacons & Perm. Diac.	Prepare & serve communion	Ministry
Deacons	Coordinate flags for old cemetery	Ministry
Deacons	Deacon presence at memorial services	Ministry
Deacons	Devotional materials in lounge	Ministry
Deacons	Flowers for Sunday services	Ministry
Deacons	Heritage Sunday	Ministry
Deacons & paid staff	Coordinate & train liturgists	Ministry
Deacons	Picture directory	Ministry
Deacons	Refurbished hearing devices	Ministry
Deacons	Maintain service supplies	Ministry
Deacons	Video for Sunday services	Ministry
Deacons	Wrap and deliver flowers after worship	Ministry
Fellowship	Church Dinners	Ministry
Fellowship	Fellowship Hour & Hosts	Ministry
Fellowship	Greeters	Ministry
Fellowship	Summer dinner	Ministry
Fellowship	Ushers	Ministry
Finance Board	Budget oversight, Financial oversight	Governance
Finance Board	Budget Preparation	Ministry
Finance Board	Establish financial policies	Governance
Finance Board	Perform internal auditing	Ministry
Finance Board	Establish investment policy	Governance
Finance Board	Review Financial Statements	Governance
Finance Board	Fundraising	Ministry
Finance Board	Investment Comm't recommendations	Ministry
Finance Board	Memorial and Special Gifts Committee recommendations	Ministry

Who's doing it now:	Activity	Governance or Ministry?
Finance Board	Conduct annual pledge canvas	Ministry
Historian	Maintain archives	Ministry
Library Volunteers	Library	Ministry
Minister (Sr.)	Supervise & Evaluate staff, Manage Day-to-Day Operations	Ministry
Minister (Sr.)	Graphic design work, website oversight	Ministry
Ministers	Baptisms	Ministry
Ministers	Campus Ministry	Ministry
Ministers	Confirmation	Ministry
Ministers	Funerals and Memorial Services	Ministry
Ministers	Pastoral visitation	Ministry
Ministers	Weddings	Ministry
Ministers & Director of Music Ministry	Plan & preside at worship services	Ministry
Music Bd.	Music Director Search Committee	Governance
Music Bd & Dir of Mus.	Adult Choir	Ministry
Dir. of Mus. Min.	Accompany worship services & other events on organ and/or piano	
Music Bd.	Carillon Concert	Ministry
Music Bd.	Children's choir	Ministry
Music Bd & Dir of Mus.	Handbell Choir	Ministry
Music Bd.	Special Musical events	Ministry
Music Bd & Dir of Mus	L Cameron Johnson competition	Ministry
Music Bd & Dir of Mus.	Lessons and carols	Ministry
Music Bd & Dir of Mus	Worship music	Ministry
Nominating	Develop nominations for elected positions	Governance
Office Admin (with stud. ass'ts & voluntrs)	Day to day office functions & publications production	Ministry
Office Admin	Interface with weekday church guests, incl. food pantry clients, space users, contractors, etc.	Ministry
Outreach	Coordinate WAIM activities	Ministry
Outreach	Promote OCWM and special offerings	Ministry
Outreach	Food distribution	Ministry
Outreach	Soup Kitchen	Ministry
Outreach	Special giving	Ministry
Outreach	Coordinate mission-service engagements	Ministry

Who's doing it now:	Activity	Governance or Ministry?
Outreach	Coordinate issue advocacy & education, such as social justice film series, letter-writing campaigns, etc.	Ministry
Parish Piecers	Quilting	Ministry
Pastoral Relations	Supportive circle with minister(s)	Ministry
Personnel committee	Oversee personnel reviews, make personnel recommendations	Governance
Properties	Contracting for major projects	Governance
Properties	Contrating for repairs	Governance
Properties	Minor/routine repairs and maintenance	Ministry
Properties & Volunteers	Buildings & Grounds Workdays	Ministry
Sexton	Day-to-day cleaning, maintenance, & building setup	Ministry
Treasurer & Bookkpr	Managing Accounts Payable	Ministry
Treasurer	Managing investments	Ministry
Treasurer & Bookkpr	Maintaining financial records & reports	Ministry
UCC Delegates to Conference & Association (tgthr with	Represent Storrs Cong. Ch. UCC at wider church gatherings	Governance
UCC UConn liaison	Advise UCC UConn	Ministry
UCC UConn liaison	Assist with UCC UConn ASB Trip	Ministry
Webmaster	Routine website maintenance	
Women's Fellowship	Layettes/Healthkits	Ministry
Women's Fellowship	Memorial receptions	Ministry
Women's Fellowship	Spring Fair and Christmas Bazaar	Ministry
Women's Fellowship	Women's Fellowship: Covenant to Care for Children	Ministry
Women's Fellowship	Women's retreat	Ministry

Questions??

We know you have questions and concerns...

But we won't know what they are unless you get in touch with us!

So, please, be in touch with us *now*...

**the sooner we know your confusions, kudos,
quandaries, or complaints,
the better and more responsive
we can be in our work...**

**which will make for a better future
for
Storrs Congregational Church UCC!**

Storrs Congregational Church UCC
2 North Eagleville Rd.
Storrs Mansfield, CT 06268

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

NON-PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
US POSTAGE PAID
STORRS, CT 06268
Permit No. 33