

# Fairfax United Methodist Church

## Proposed New Church Governance Structure

During 2016, the Church Council adopted a new Strategic Plan for FUMC. As part of that approval process, the Strategic Planning Team was tasked with researching and recommending a new governance structure, which will enable the church to better reach out to our community and fulfill the goals of the new Strategic Plan.

During the research and discernment process, the Strategic Planning Team reviewed current United Methodist literature and articles about the governance structures of churches who were achieving their preferred futures. In addition, we spent an evening with a local pastor from the fastest growing United Methodist church in Virginia, Christ Church. Rev. Speight's insight and wisdom were tremendously valuable to our subsequent meetings and recommendations.

Included below are significant excerpts from our research and study:

The following passage from "The Inside Out Life" by Rev. Dalton Troy Rushing held great meaning in focusing our thinking:

*The United Methodist Church is structured to be lay-driven, and this is a very good thing. Unfortunately, in our zeal to include as many people as possible in church leadership, **we often hold the church back.** Not only this, but the system we use for ordering our churches has, at times, actually prevented the laity from participating on our mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.*

National leaders in Congregational Excellence and Vibrant Church Initiatives are seeing churches experience new levels of success in their mission, thanks to streamlined Accountability Leadership. The concept of a single board elected by the charge conference caught fire through the Vibrant Church Initiative.

Dr. Jesse Brannen states, "We have all been waking up to the fact that, for decades, churches and committees therein have generally been consensus driven and not always focused on the mission." He continues, "We now are realizing that decisions in this model of church governance are not very timely, if they happen at all, and that multiple committee structures often create bottlenecks and dysfunction."

According to The United Methodist Book of Discipline, the matter of governing structure is a matter between the local church, the pastor, and the District Superintendent. There is wide latitude to convene a structure that:

- Has clear lines of authority, so that everyone knows who is in charge of what

- Privileges decision-making above simple reporting, so that God's people can move forward in ministry
- Empowers laity to do the work of making disciples rather than sitting in long meetings
- Empowers the pastor to attend the work of the Word, Order, Sacrament and Service.

In recommending a new governance model for FUMC, we see great value in moving to a simpler structure of a Single Board Model. The new structure is designed to enable our church to share the good news of God's love to our community as we build on our guiding ministry pillars of Worship, Mission and Learning, which are outlined specifically in the 2016 Strategic Plan. In addition, the Administration pillar was added to address the operational processes of the church. All of our work leading to this recommendation was centered on prayer, study, discernment and reflection.

We hope you find the following proposal exciting and through it you see significantly more opportunities for our church to make disciples of Jesus Christ and achieve a preferred future. It is important to note that throughout the discernment process of defining this governance model, our Senior Pastor initiated and maintained excellent communication with the District Superintendent, who has encouraged this work.

To fully implement this model with fidelity, a Senior Leadership Team was added, which is currently prevalent in many churches. The Senior Leadership Team:

1. Is accountable to the Church Leadership Team
2. Meets regularly to ensure communication and coordination between the Strategic Ministry Pillars and the Church Leadership Team
3. Meets regularly to ensure the guidance, planning and direction of the Church Leadership Team is implemented by the Strategic Ministry Pillars
4. Manages staff.

The addition of a part-time Executive Director is essential to the success of this governance model. The Executive Director will work with numerous staff members as assigned by the Senior Pastor and will oversee the Strategic Ministry Pillars of the Strategic Plan.

For part-time and full-time hires, the Senior Leadership Team, in direct coordination with the Church Leadership Team, shall create a search committee for each position. The Senior Leadership Team will make the new hire recommendations. All new staff must be approved by the Senior Pastor and the Church Leadership Team.

The Worship, Learning and Mission Ministry Pillars shall be responsible for prioritizing, organizing, recruiting, promoting and the implementation of each ministry area. The Administrative Pillar is responsible for the administrative areas of the church, led by the Director of Administration.

Within the Strategic Ministry Pillars, the Lead Volunteer will facilitate the Strategic Ministry Pillar meetings (Worship, Learning or Mission). Team members may come from unassigned applications or may be recruited by the lead volunteer or staff.

The Church Leadership Team connects responsibility and authority with accountability, promotes church unity, functions on a high level of trust, facilitates quick decisions and is driven by mission fulfillment. The Church Leadership Team becomes the Lay Leadership Committee, the Finance Committee and the Staff-Parish Relations Committee. No staff other than the Lead Pastor will participate on the Church Leadership Team. Rotating seats will be tied to 3 year terms. The original team will be maintained for two years at which time, 3 members will rotate off the team. The Lay Leadership Committee will determine the classes of the nine members to ensure efficient rotation.


Church members wishing to become a member of the Church Leadership Team will follow an application process, which will include a Spiritual Gifts Inventory. The Senior Pastor as Chair of the Lay Leadership Committee will work together with the current Lay Leadership Committee to select the original team who will be confirmed by a special charge conference.

# Fairfax United Methodist Church

## Governance Model

**Strategic Ministry Pillars**  
Executive Director

**Worship**



Lead Volunteer  
Staff  
Team Member\*\*

**Learning**




Lead Volunteer  
Staff  
Team Member\*\*

**Mission**



Lead Volunteer  
Staff  
Team Member\*\*

**Administration**



Church Administrator  
Administrative Staff  
\*

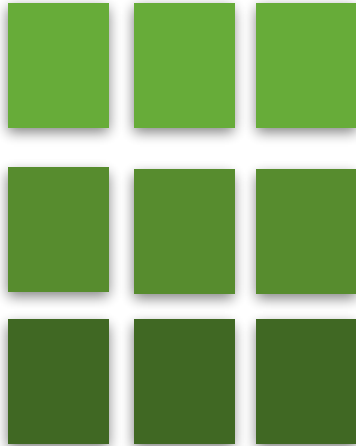
\*Trustees, Property, Endowment/Gifts & Memorials, Stewardship, Strategic Planning Committee, Visioning & Feasibility Team for Community Life and Worship Center (CLWC)

\*\*Team members may come from unassigned applications or may be recruited by lead volunteer or staff.

**Senior Leadership Team**

Lead Pastor  
Associate Pastor  
Executive Director  
Church Leadership Team Chair

**Church Leadership Team**  
Chair



**Rotating Seats**  
3 Year Terms

Church Leadership Team nominated by the Lay Leadership Committee and approved by the annual charge conference will include: Chair, Lay Leader, Lead Pastor, Chair of Trustees, Treasurer, Representatives for SPRC, Finance, a Lay Member to Annual Conference, UMW, UMM, Young Adult & Youth.