

Church Governance and Structure Overview

As the UUCP is committed to democratic principles and processes, the Congregation of the Church is the ultimate authority for determining the structure, function, and future of the Church. Much of this authority is delegated by the Congregation to the elected members of the UUCP Board of Trustees (Board), who set the vision and course for the Church, oversee financial matters and staff, set policy, and make other decisions about the functions of the Church.

Much of the work of the Board is carried out through committees. A committee is a small group with authority over a specific aspect of the Church's activities. A committee is expected to remain in existence for an indefinite time, though its membership can change as needed. Moreover, committees themselves come into and out of existence and change over time. While committees may have their own written procedures and best practices, a committee cannot set church policy; only the Board can do that.

The Operations Committee is only convened when needed and addresses the routine day-to-day operations of the UUCP to save the time and logistical difficulties of convening the entire Board. While the Operations Committee functions under the authority of the Board, the Operations Committee is not an ordinary committee because it can make decisions and take actions on behalf of the entire Church. For example, the Operations Committee can address non-routine matters and speak on behalf of the Congregation in times of emergency. However, they cannot authorize or change church policy, hire or fire employees, or spend UUCP resources beyond the approved budget.

The Board, Minister, Operations Committee, and other committees carry out much of their work through task forces. A task force is a small group formed to carry out a specific charge. A task force is not expected to remain in existence once its specific charge has been completed.

The Lay Pastoral Ministry Team, Committee on Ministry, and Small Group Ministry are overseen by the Minister.

While most UUCP activities are overseen by one of these governing bodies, the UUCP also supports many small groups and activities that do not fall underneath this formal governance structure, and which can be considered activities of the Congregation.

A schematic of the Church's structure is shown below.

