

Minutes

Kent United Church of Christ Special Council Meeting with Rev. Nayiri Karjian (via Zoom)

March 22, 2021

Present: Karen Carmany, Glenn Hanniford, Barb Hanniford, Donna Hess, John Hetrick, Sue Otterson (vice moderator), Jackie Peck, Jeff Roeger (moderator), Sally Saltzman, Julie Wallace, Barb Werstler, Pastor Amy (ex officio), Pastor Kim (ex officio), Rev. Nayiri Karjian (guest)

Jeff opened the meeting at 5 p.m. with prayer. He introduced Rev. Karjian, our Living Water Association general minister. Jeff commented that the association will hold a Spring Vitality Festival on April 24 with the theme of "Belonging. Building. Becoming."

Rev. Karjian said she would discuss why transforming governance was important and what it might look like, followed by time for question and answers. Smaller governance, she believes, frees people up.

She posed these key questions:

- What is the church's purpose and calling?
- Why do we exist?
- What is God trying to do with us and through us?
- How are we getting in the way?

Is our governance a barrier to doing ministry? She emphasized that we are doing ministry in the present and need to organize for now and not forever. Our bylaws have to match what we actually do.

Reasons for different governance include:

- To do ministry with direction, purpose, and intention
- To celebrate the gifts of people
- To clarify ministry, roles, function, and accountability
- To function as a holistic community, not with separate boards and committees with no common vision
- To respond to generational differences
- To recognize that we living in an 18-month change cycle
- To realize that faith questions continue changing
- To recognize that the church is a community unlike any other organization

She contrasted traditional (elected service) and innovative (gift-based service) structures. We need time for mission, vision, and direction. She suggests that we move to model that includes a visionary council and a leadership council. She emphasized that a church is not a democracy but rather a community and that we can walk our spiritual journey by serving. The model she recommends is inclusive and expansive.

The three functions/tasks of the church are governance, administration, and ministry.

Governance is the process which directs, oversees, and provides leadership. It looks at the big picture, sets goals and policies, evaluates, clarifies, and gives guidance.

Administration involves managing the church's resources and carrying out day-to-day, practical business, including preparing and overseeing budgets, putting policies in place, evaluating staff, and providing guidance

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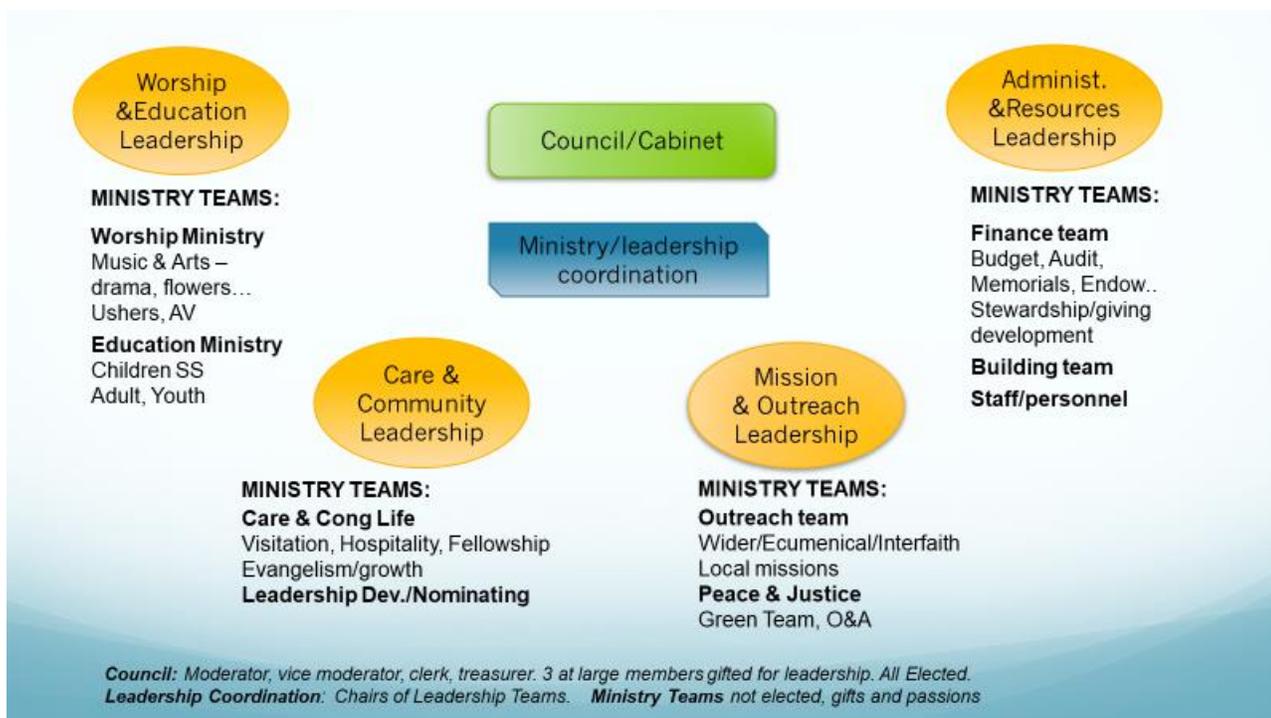
on daily administrative issues. Often staff members handle much of church administrative functions. The budget is actually our “ministry resource.”

Ministry implements the calling, vision, and mission of the church. Ministries have clear job descriptions. Ministries serve, visit, and care for the community and beyond; strive to fulfill the vision of the church through action; do hands-on work; and offer care, healing, inspiration, challenge, comfort, dignity, justice, and hope.

The governing body:

- Leads
- Guides ministry
- Does not only receive reports
- Ensures we have vision, mission, priorities, and directions
- Creates policies
- Evaluates ministries
- Partners with the pastor in leadership

The model she suggests for Kent UCC is similar to that shown in the slide below. She said that Orrville UCC is now moving to a model similar to this.



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She suggested that the Administration and Resources Leadership team members may be elected or not. Other teams would not be. Representation happens through the Ministry/Leadership Coordination. In a small church, the four leaders of each ministry team are on Council in addition to the church officers and perhaps one at-large member. In a church of our size, she recommends that Council include the four officers and three at-large members. In this model, the vice moderator would lead the coordination body. Communication would flow from Council to the coordination body via the vice moderator.

To move ahead, we would form a team of five members who would work with her. The plan would first go to Council, then to all ministries, then to the congregation via an informational gathering prior to voting.

Rev. Karjian shared examples where the model was successfully implemented.

She recommended that we would not write new bylaws until after we practiced the new model. She also suggested that we have written "ways of work" which would pair with the formal bylaws. That document could be more easily updated by Council as long as it matched our bylaws.

Pastor Amy noted that our strategic plan's main priorities are very similar to the four leadership team functions (Worship and Faith Formation, Care and Community, Mission and Outreach, Administration and Resources).

Officers need to have the big picture, Rev. Karjian said, although their roles may require more specific skills.

Each ministry leadership team would consist of five or so people, who would get reports from all ministry teams in their area. The total Leadership Coordination group could be 20 or so; they could meet anywhere from monthly to quarterly.

After our discussion concluded, Jeff thanked Rev. Karjian for the presentation and conversation. We will talk further about this at our next Council meeting.