

Mark: The Committee on Ministry Study Group Report was provided three business days before our Annual Meeting and elections. The Board of Trustees is not prepared to comment on it at this time. As a board, we got it after we drafted our letter to the congregation, and we haven't had time to discuss this report yet as a group.

Personally, as a member of this congregation, I feel that this report is seriously flawed both in terms of content and in the process used to prepare it. I'm sure that the folks who had input into this report had good motives, love for our congregation, and believed that timely publication was in the congregation's best interests.

Unfortunately, I believe that there are a number of factual errors and details that were incompletely researched. Providing complete and balanced background information to the congregation rather than just one small group's conclusions would be both more productive and more in keeping with our traditions of "A free and responsible search for truth and meaning and the right of conscience" and "the use of the democratic process within our congregations and in society at large."

Although the topics in this report are important for the congregation to consider, I think it is harmful for congregation members to see inaccurate facts and one-sided opinions presented as "truth." For the congregation to have enough information to make an informed decision, it's important to hear both sides. Our congregation members have a right to all the facts and make up their own minds as to their opinions.

I haven't had enough time to complete reply point-by-point, and will endeavor to do so after the Annual meeting. Consider this only a first DRAFT.

I wish that the process in preparing this report had been more open and included active participation by the board culminating in a congregational Open Forum prior to publishing a "final" report and recommending action. I would hope that we would follow that we can agree to plan such a process moving forward.

Foreword

Introduction

At the Congregational meeting of November 9th, 2008, the Committee On Ministry announced it would form a Study Group to look into a number of issues of concern being talked about and expressed in various ways by members of the Congregation over the course of the last year. The Study Group would report its findings to the Congregation at the January Annual Congregational Meeting.

A number of concerns were addressed. But, as these were too numerous to be presented in a single report, the Study Group decided to limit its scope to three areas:

Three Areas of Concern

1. A perceived change in the culture of the Board
2. Issue of transparency
 - a. Minutes
 - b. Fiduciary responsibility:
 - ByLaws requirements to report to the Congregation
 - Fiduciary liability
 - c. Structural Changes by the Board
3. Term Limits and our Congregational Elections 2009

and to frame its findings within the context of our Church culture as reflected in our ByLaws.

Of special note was that all of these areas of concern might have bearing on the upcoming elections on January 25th at the Annual Congregational Meeting. The Study Group therefore felt it to be important to deliver this report before the election, so that the Congregation could be better informed.

Mark: See my comments above. Inaccurate and one-sided information would be unproductive and disrespectful of the candidates and the election process.

General Comments

In writing this report, the Study Group wishes to set forth matters it feels need to be taken very seriously as topics for consideration by the Congregation in the months ahead and in the upcoming election. We firmly believe that all who have served this Church have done so with the best of intentions and were committed in their view that they have acted in the Church's best interests.

We wish to acknowledge the enormous amount of time and energy given by the Board Chair and the other members of the Board towards its endeavors, as well as the time and care given by those on the Nominating Committee; and to commend and thank all those who are willing to run for elected office, offering their time and talents.

The intention of the Study Group in presenting this report is to clearly inform members of the Congregation, not to criticize individuals. We have done our best to remain dispassionate, unbiased, and to base our findings on the written record.

An Overview of the Report

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The Report

I. Areas of Concern and Observations

1. A perceived change in the culture of the Board

a) With regard to its view of the Church as a not-for-profit organization, rather than a spiritual community:

Mark: Is Community Church of NY UU a spiritual community or a not-for-profit mission-based organization? Personally, I think it is not a question of "either/or" but of "both/and". Of course we are a spiritual community with a Senior Minister and other ministerial staff, a wonderful religious education program, and we provide important pastoral care and help people "grow their soul." But we also have something like \$40 million dollars worth of midtown Manhattan real estate that because it's well run and earns us significant income through guest house and facilities rental, we are able to fund our work furthering the mission of the church. We also have about a \$2 million annual operating budget, thirteen people on payroll, and manage something like \$12 million worth of endowment investments.

We are both a spiritual community and a not-for-profit mission-based organization, and our board needs to behave operationally that way.

In observing the use of terms as 'Executive Director' when discussing the position of Church Administrator, and 'CEO' (later modified to "c.e.o.") for the Chair of the Board, some church members have voiced concern. These observations are supported in Board minutes:

- o 'CEO' Details: Draft Board minutes of May 13, 2008 note the Board agenda item to present a "Bylaw amendment to reduce perceived ambiguity allowing the Chair to act like a CEO" ("skipped" until next meeting); May 28, 2008: Motion to

present this matter [now referred to as "to make Board Chair's ceo powers phrasing similar to other officers"] at the November Congregational Meeting with the letter from the Church's legal counsel, defeated. None of this was reported at the Congregational Meeting of June 1, 2008.

Mark: One of the problems I inherited was the differing opinion of what exactly the role of the Board Chair was, is, or should be to best serve our congregation. Because the Senior Minister and the consensus of the Board disagree as to the facts, we have talked about this matter at perhaps half a dozen board meetings and requested a legal opinion on this matter.

I would guess that most UU Congregations have a Board Chair who is the congregations' "President" and it is certainly the terminology used through the UUA and our district and at General Assembly. Carver Policy Governance requires a "C.E.O.". The UUA has adopted policy-based governance for the UUA and the Metro NY District. Andrea Lerner, our Metro NY District Executive has recommended to me that Community Church NY UU might benefit by moving toward policy-based governance. There is great variety in UU and other spiritual communities as to who the CEO is: in some, it is the senior minister, some the Executive Director/ Administrator (common in the Jewish world), some the board chair, some the board collectively.

According to our ByLaws and Robert's Rules, our Board Chair at Community has limited executive responsibility. The reference in our ByLaws to chief executive officer is not a title, and does not confer wide-ranging executive or administrative duties or responsibilities to the Board Chair.

Mark: That's not what our lawyer said on March 26. In reference to "Motion 2" that "The Board Chair is empowered to act on the Board's behalf between meetings." Attorney Paul M Godlin's faxed answer said that "the Chairperson of the Board is the chief executive officer of the Church, but that section does not deal with the Chairperson acting between meetings" and said the Chair's ability to act covered under general powers of a Chairperson of the Board concluding that "motion # 2 does not conflict with the by-laws but is unnecessary." Our attorney also concluded, "It may be prudent for the motion to be put before the entire Congregation."

The Board appropriately requested that the Board Chair stop using CEO as a title.

Mark: The statement that "The Board appropriately requested that the Board Chair stop using CEO as a title" is a factual error.

There was never any board request. I chose to stop because some folks said it looked personally pompous; my goal was (and is) the best operation of the congregation, not personal status.

o 'Executive Director' Details: Board Chair Report to the Congregation of November 9, 2008 with regard to the hiring of a "Business Administrator." This is not a title that appears in the ByLaws, where the position is referred to as "Administrator" and in Church communications as "Church Administrator." Again from the November 9th Board Chair's Report: ". . . our new structure is closer to that of an Executive Director of a mission-based not-for-profit."

Mark: The Board, the Personnel Committee and the Recruiting Task Force all consulted the UUA Recommended Compensation and Corresponding Job Description Capsules for various levels of "Administrator" and there was a broad concensus (perhaps even a unanimous opinion) that what would best serve our needs was what was described as "Business Administrator"

<http://www.uua.org/leaders/leaderslibrary/compensation/19315.shtml>

Business Administrator

Manages the administrative and financial matters of the congregation with a high degree of independence and fiscal responsibility. Typically empowered to sign contracts, negotiate insurance programs and develop financial plans. Advises the governing board on a wide range of financial matters at a strategic level. Supervises other administrative staff. Typically requires significant business experience and a degree in business administration with at least five years of managerial or significant professional employment in a religious organization.

Congregational Administrator

Responsible for a broad variety of functions for the smooth operation of the church program with minimal guidance by a business manager or minister. Manages office procedures, facilities, schedules, purchasing, preparation of budgets, and bookkeeping services. Will be skilled in office applications for computers. Will supervise other administrative staff in the absence of a Business Administrator. Prepares reports and recommendations to governing board and minister. Contacts people internally and externally to gather information. Knowledgeable about the organization and its policies. May prepare payroll, accounts payable, and record revenue.

Office Administrator

Responsible for a variety of operations for the administration of the church program under moderate supervision. May perform most of the functions listed above, but likely to require guidance. Often performs the duties of an Office Assistant. Will be skilled in current office applications for computers. May supervise other staff and/or volunteers.

Some Church members voiced their concerns about these issues at the June 1st and November 9th Congregational meetings.

b) With regard to comments of the Board Chair in his report to the Board of November 19, 2008, which the Committee on Ministry and some church members found somewhat alarming:

"A true democracy is like alcoholics anonymous, where there aren't really any leaders just trusted servants acting on the group consensus. But American and our congregation are more like republics, where [elected] citizens make their own choices based on their personal intelligence, information, and ethics and not necessarily the consensus view of their constituents. The most important, bold work can never be achieved just through popular consensus or 'by committee.'"

Mark: it was substantially misquoted and taken out of context. I think it is really important to read the correct quote in its full context. A more complete excerpt is below and the full original report is attached to Board Chair's Report to the Congregation for January 25, 2009.

A true democracy is like alcoholics anonymous, where there aren't really any leaders just trusted servants acting on the group consensus. But America and our congregation are more like republics, where

citizens select leaders who work for the good of those citizens, but those leaders make their own choices based on their personal intelligence, information and ethics and not necessarily the consensus view of their constituents. The most important, bold work can never be achieved just through popular consensus or "by committee."

Let me repeat this. I feel that our job as elected leaders are NOT to act based on the group consensus but to act for the best interest of our congregation and mission, which is a lot more work.

If my fellow trustees, both elected and ex-officio staff, have any doubt that my intent, efforts and motivations are anything less than to support the best interests of our congregation and mission, then I should resign as your chair. I really mean this.

Our Board of Trustees is the shared leadership of this congregation, If my fellow congregation members, have any doubt that the Trustees intent, efforts and motivations are anything less than to support the best interests of our congregation and mission, then we should ALL resign as your Trustees – yes, really!

You should then elect people you do trust to lead you, and then you need to really support those people to be our shared leadership – to follow their leadership into the future.

I'm sorry if I sound like a drama queen. If you do have confidence in and support of me as board chair and of our leadership as trustees, then you need to support our leadership, if not, we need to change it. We simply can't waste hours wordsmithing our minutes, rehashing the we need to work on the important matters of revitalizing our congregation.

You notice that I said that our Board of Trustees is the shared leadership of this congregation, and I wanted to be clear that I wasn't showing any disrespect for the valuable and vital roles that other lay leaders, committee members and chairs serve. We're lucky to have their insight and input. Finance Committee, Personnel Committee, Buildings and Grounds, even our business administrator all have important jobs to do to advise, recommend and consult with the board.

2. Issue of transparency and responsibility of the Board to report to the

- Congregation discussions of important matters. Examples:
- § Minutes: The Board's new Minutes Policy, adopted September 24, 2008, does not seem to reflect the spirit of the ByLaws relating to duties of the Board (Section 7.3 "The Board shall provide . . . reports at all regular meetings of the Congregation, covering . . . all important discussions and decisions of the Board which have taken place since the last regular meeting of the Congregation").
 - o Decision to not report vote tallies in the minutes of the Board (April 23, 2008 and May 13, 2008).
 - o Board agreements (see Board minutes of May 28, 2008) to retroactively "strip out the discussion" re Board minutes of April 23, 2008 and May 13, 2008, having previously decided to table approval of those minutes until that May 28th Board meeting.

Mark: As a board, we have many mechanisms for communication with our congregation members. Our Quarterly meetings and this report is one of them. Another mechanism for our communications is through the (mostly) monthly "Community Connections" with our "Board Briefs" section. Our Board meetings are always open to our members, so you can observe our process first-hand. So many of you have done so over the last many months. These meetings are often on the fourth Wednesday of each month, but they move sometimes to step over holidays and accommodate quarterly meetings. You can sign-up on our website to get e-mails with Board Chair's Report to the Board of Trustees and our minutes, once they are accepted.

It's important to understand that the minutes are a legal document of the official business of the church, and not a mechanism for communications.

I have attached to my Chair's Report our official minutes policy at the end of this report, so folks can understand that the board's rationale behind adopting this policy and why it is the right choice.

Historically, board minutes were taken by a paid staffer. When we moved to the higher level "Business Administrator" position description we wanted the Administrator to be "at the table" as part of our church leadership, not as a clerical worker. Ideally a staff executive assistant would fill this role, but with our current need to tighten our belts, this function is going to have to continue to be done by volunteers for the next few years, which is another reason

shorter is better.

§ Fiduciary responsibility:

o Timely Reporting and Treatment of Unbudgeted Expenditures and Budget Adjustments (ByLaws Section 13.3): Non-reporting at the November 9th Congregational Meeting of unbudgeted operating expenditures, despite the

Senior Minister's requests for Board "transparency and accountability."

There were considerable expenditures about which reporting and proper accounting are essential and remain incomplete. There is no implication of missing funds, but the ByLaws are quite specific about the limited ways in which the Board can adjust the budget.

Attempts are being made to address some of this retroactively by the Board Treasurer and by the Chair of the Finance Committee, but the larger issue is that details were ignored by them and by the Board for many months.

o Fiduciary Liability: Lack of proper and timely authorizations from the Congregation or the Board consistent with the ByLaws for various expenditures over the past year.

§ Structural changes by the Board:

1) Ending the supervision of the Administrator by the Senior Minister: There was no discussion with the Congregation and no reporting at the appropriate time to the Congregation about the Board's discussion of changes (March, 2008) in the duties and responsibilities of these two critical positions. These positions impact on the day-to-day life of the Church, and result in the Senior Minister no longer supervising the Administrator. Training and skills in Church Administration are part of the credentialing process for all UU Ministers in the UUA. However, the Board has now assumed this responsibility. The Board informed the Congregation at the June Congregational Meeting after this change was imposed.

It did not inform the Congregation that the vote was only 4 in favor (a majority at that particular meeting, but clearly not a majority of the whole Board; this fact was reported by the Senior Minister in his Report to the Congregation of 6/1/08), nor had the Board invited feedback from or discussion with the Congregation after the change took effect.

Mark: There was (and is) broad consensus for this motion on the board. It was discussed over many board meetings. The actual vote was taken at a sparkly attended board meeting (we were having two a month for a while). Had we taken the vote with the full board, the counts would have been even more in favor.

Daine: Counted votes as a routine practice and added discourse contradict the letter of Robert's Rules and the spirit of it, as has been pointed out repeatedly. Counting votes is used primarily where various constituencies are served, such as in the US Congress. Otherwise, counting votes is divisive for a Board who stands together on issues decided, as is recommended by UUA leadership practices, for what else could be the purpose for reporting dissent. Separating out particular members for subsequent retribution or penalty is unfair, and reporting individual explanations for dissent would be unwieldy. By its nature, Robert's Rules is not consensus building, but rather it is a means of getting just far enough in discussions to act (vote).

In this process, the Personnel Committee, with responsibilities in this area, was not consulted. Also, the Board did not invite feedback from the Committee on Ministry regarding the issue.

Reflections: Structural changes by the Board

- a. The Board took this action without consultation with the Congregation. That the Study Group feels the Senior Minister is amply qualified to retain this supervisory role is not the issue. For such an important question, the Study Group believes the Board should have involved the Congregation in the decision-making process through consultation and open discussion.
- b. This action was taken in spite of the recommendations of William Zelazny in his Report on Organization and Staffing at Community Church of New York (March, 2007), which clearly supports retaining the results of Board Resolutions of the 1980's, by which the Administrator is in charge of daily operations, works on goals set by the Board, reports monthly to the Board, and receives supervision from the Senior Minister. It also ignores the similar perspectives presented by Metro NY District Executive Andrea Lerner (4/23/08) and UUA Large Church consultant Stefan Jonasson (9/15/08).
- c. This action ignores the Board's own Annual Plan presented to the Congregation in January, 2008, which did not include significant structural changes.
- d. This action ignores Board promises to the Congregation on March 30th that it (the Congregation) would be involved in Assessment and Planning.

- e. This action has serious implications with regard to reducing its effectiveness in goal setting and policy making in that the Board is now directly involved in the micromanaging of day-to-day operations.
- f. This action gave no role to the Personnel Committee, in effect disempowering it from one of its Board-assigned responsibilities.
- g. Not consulting the Congregation in this action does not honor the spirit of the ByLaws. Section 7.3 requires the Board to provide "reports at all regular meetings of the Congregation, covering what [it deems] to be all important discussions and decisions of the Board which have taken place since the last regular meeting of the Congregation, and the Congregation shall have the authority to deliberate upon, and make decisions with respect to such of the matters as it [the Congregation] deems advisable."

2) The Membership Coordinator position has stirred the concern of the Committee on Ministry and among some members of the Congregation.

- The Board submitted a ByLaws amendment (March 30, 2008). In this amendment, the omission of Membership Coordinator in the definition of Ministerial staff meant that Membership Coordinator was classified as non-Ministerial. The Board described this proposed amendment as intended to "clarify administrative staffing accountability and empower Ministerial work." The Senior Minister, however, had reported that the Board's proposal would undermine ministries of lay empowerment that he had created and nurtured.
- The Board Chair did not provide opportunity for prior discussion, clearly not in keeping with the spirit of the ByLaws.
- The amendment proposed by the Board was amended by the Congregation on June 1st.
- The amendment was submitted for vote at the November Congregational Meeting, The Board's memo to the Congregation on this complex issue, distributed at the November Meeting, as well as the language of the amendment itself, which some found ambiguous, created confusion amongst church members. The Congregational action appropriately left the ByLaws as they were, rather than making them overly specific. Greatly concerned with many confidential and sensitive pastoral issues, lay empowerment, and the spiritual nurture of church members and their gifts, the Membership Coordinator's relationship to the Ministry is of great importance to the Congregation. This is a topic that calls for discussion and much Congregational input regarding any decision to place it into the realm of non-ministerial and therefore administrative classification, subject to Board supervision rather than that of the Senior Minister.

3. Term Limits: Our Congregational Elections 2009

- An apparently new (since this is not known to have taken place before) interpretation of the Church ByLaws, regarding term limits with respect to the election of members of the Board, could result in the rotation ad infinitum of the same individuals on the Board.

- The ByLaws clearly state term limits as follows:

(Section 6.2) "The Chairperson of the Council, Treasurer and Clerk shall be elected at the Annual Meeting for staggered three-year terms or until their successors have been elected. They shall not be eligible for more than two consecutive terms until the expiration of two years after their second consecutive term."

(Section 7.2) "The terms of the trustees-at-large shall be staggered, with three of them being elected at each Annual Meeting for three-year terms or until their successors shall be elected. They shall not be eligible for re-election after two consecutive terms until after the expiration of two years after their second consecutive term."

It is clear to the members of the Study Group that the intent of term limits is to increase participation, invite a diversity of opinion, and generally contribute to the electorate's ownership of its governance.

- Until now, these ByLaws have always been taken to mean that if a Board member has served in any capacity on the Board for two consecutive terms, he or she shall be ineligible to serve on the Board until two years have passed.

- Now, in the election to take place today, January 25, 2009, there is a candidate who is running for election who will not have had two years off the Board before serving on the Board again, should that person be elected.

- Two other candidates for the Board (one running on petition and one nominated by the Nominating Committee) are seeking different positions from those they currently hold, and could conceivably continue for years beyond the two term limit if elected now and then re-elected, unless the ByLaws are amended.

- On the sample ballot that voting members of the Church received in

the mail, no mention is made of any current service. One could be misled into thinking that a candidate, seeking what is labeled as a first term on the Board, has not served on the Board for two years prior to the election, when this is not necessarily the case. The Study Group urges voting members to read the biographies of all candidates very carefully.

- For the Board Chair to call this ByLaws situation a "legal loophole" to be taken note of (Report to the Board of December 17, 2008), does not reflect the spirit of the ByLaws. The Board Chair writes, "The next question is if this legal loophole serves the best interests of the congregation." The Study Group feels that it does not.

Mark: Our problem is not that folks want to say in service too long, it is that we don't have enough lay leaders who are able and willing to serve. We are a volunteer association. Our bylaws term limit chairs of committees to five years, but in the past, we have found it difficult to find folks willing and able to serve, so we have let them continue. It would be better to have new leadership, but it would be far worse to have someone untrained for the mission critical position of Treasurer. I personal hope, and again it's just me talking, not the board or any other group, would be that Eve Hazel would consider serving on the Finance Committee, perhaps even as chair, and might consider being the next Treasurer in three year's time.

II. Acknowledgements

The Study Group wishes:

- First to acknowledge once again the good intentions of the contributions of the Board's Chair and other Board members, as well as the time and care given by those on the Nominating Committee.
- To commend and thank all those who are willing to run for elected office, giving of their time and talents. The purpose of this report is to set matters out in the open; matters that this Study Group feels need to be taken very seriously as topics for consideration by the Congregation in the months ahead and in the upcoming election.
- To recognize and commend recent efforts being made by the Treasurer and by the Chair of the Finance Committee to rectify the record regarding expenditure authorizations to be consistent with ByLaws, while encouraging vigilance on the part of the Congregation. As the Senior Minister has repeatedly warned Board members at its meetings since his return from sabbatical, there are real dangers of personal liability for Board members regarding adherence to ByLaws

in fiduciary matters.

- To thank the Senior Minister for his attention, as demonstrated in his reporting at Congregational meetings, to the powers and responsibilities given the Senior Minister under Church ByLaws regarding his or her duty to "bring... to the Congregation's attention any matters that seem pertinent to the general welfare of the Church" (Section 12.5).

III. Recommendations and In Closing

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Recommendations:

In the view of this Study Group, ByLaws changes and/or Congregational resolutions (the more immediately helpful choice) need to be proposed and voted on. The Study Group's recommendations follow, but they are only that. It is the members of the Congregation who must decide how to proceed.

Ø 1. Given that the minutes of the Board have in years past reflected discussions of important matters, and that this has served to give those members of the Congregation who are not able to attend Board meetings as guests an opportunity to acquaint themselves with the work the Board is doing and is considering doing, the Study Group recommends that the Congregation vote on a proposed Directive such as:

"The Congregation directs the Board to revisit its newly revised minutes policy and to alter it to include the reporting of all Church-related discussion and the reporting of vote tallies."

Mark: Again, minutes are NOT intended as a method for communication. They are a legal document of the business action of the church and should be as brief as possible to achieve this need. Important matters discussed but not acted upon should be reported to the congregation (as per our bylaws) but this is not the place to do them. Please read the actual Board Minutes Policy (it's on page 22-23 of the Board Chair's Report for 1/25/09).

Ø 2. Given the lack of consultation with the Congregation, and that no vote of the Congregation was taken regarding changes in the duties of the Senior Minister and the Administrator, we strongly recommend a Congregational Resolution such as: "That the Board Resolutions of the 1980's regarding the day-to-day supervision of the Administrator by the Senior Minister be reinstated

until such time as the issue can be fully debated by the Congregation and a vote taken clarifying the issue."

Mark: Again, Section 7.3 of our bylaws states "the Board shall have general supervision of the affairs of the Church. The Board shall have custody and control of all property and funds of the Church, shall conduct the business affairs, shall supervise the management and administration of the Church, it being understood that the conduct of worship services and pastoral duties are reserved to the Ministers."

If the congregation wishes to change this, it should be done through our normal process of bylaw amendment. Legally neither a congregational or board resolution may contradict a bylaw.

In my opinion, the prior board resolutions that delegated day-to-day supervision made it functionally impossible for the board to fulfill this duty effectively. The Trustees have a legal duty to uphold the bylaws. If we want to have the Senior Minister in charge, then that's what they bylaws should say. Many UU Congregations have that sort of wording. In many ways we are not like other UU congregations and our bylaws reflect this.

Ø 3. Given the largely confidential and sensitive pastoral nature of the issues handled by the Membership Coordinator, the Study Group recommends that a resolution be proposed to allow the Membership Coordinator to continue as program staff under ministerial supervision, rather than as administrative staff monitored by the Board, until such time as a different conclusion may arise from Assessment and Planning with Congregational action. Such a Resolution may read:

Ø "That the position of Membership Coordinator be allowed to continue as program staff under ministerial supervision, rather than to be changed to administration under Board control, until such time as a different conclusion may arise from Assessment and Planning with Congregational action."

Mark: At the April 23, 2008, the Board approved hiring a temporary (acting) Membership Coordinator for one year as the board and the congregation conduct our Strategic Planning and Congregational Self Assessment process. Personally, I'm very happy with the job that Valerie Lynch is doing, and it is my hope that we don't make any permanent changes, one way or the other, under after we have completed Strategic Planning and Congregational

Self Assessment process, which could be six months to over a year from now.

Ø 4. This Study Group feels strongly that it is in the spirit of the ByLaws regarding term limits of Board members that a member be permitted to serve a maximum of two full consecutive terms on the Board in any capacity, after which two years must elapse before that member is again eligible for service. We recommend that a ByLaws amendment be proposed as soon as possible clearly enunciating such.

Mark: I think the real question isn't if term limits are a good idea, but one of better lay leadership development and engagement. A chronic problem for us has been finding qualified folks who are willing and able to serve.

A common "best practice" for every position of lay governance to have someone "in training" who could grow into the job – often this is a vice-chair. Probably the most challenging and "mission critical" volunteer job we have is that of Treasurer. Not only do we have a \$2 million annual operating budget, because of all our congregational restricted funds, our financial process and reporting and particularly complex and frankly quirky. To grow into treasurer, someone should service at least one year on the Finance Committee, help with the budget preparation at least once. This person would probably have served elsewhere in the church first. Winifred has the experience and knowledge necessary, and has been willing to volunteer the 10 hours each week this job requires.

In Closing

The overall concern of the Study Group has been adherence to Community Church ByLaws, to the implied covenant we all hold with each other as members, and the implied covenant we hold with those members we have elected into positions of trust. These covenants, though not named as such in the ByLaws, are the essence of Article 3: Purposes. This section of the ByLaws calls for honoring the mutual trust we have in one another with behavior that is respectful both in word and deed. Doing so is essential to the healthy workings of this Church; not doing so results in discord, distrust, and division. The Study Group recommends a thoughtful, inclusive, participatory planning process, appropriate to our religious values, before major changes are made.

Mark: I would like to echo this. "The Study Group recommends a Thoughtful, inclusive, participatory planning process, appropriate to our religious values, before major changes are made."

We must keep in mind that it is crucial to remain vigilant when it comes to important matters that affect us all. An objective perspective is essential to our health as a democratically based self-governed Congregation. That is why we are reporting to you, the voting members.

Respectfully submitted,
Committee on Ministry Study Group Participants
Vincent Daniele, Chair
Anna-Lisa Hafgren
Sam Kerns
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John Washburn
Additional Resources: Rev. Bruce Southworth, Senior Minister
Janice Marie Johnson, Director of Lifespan
Religious Education

Mark: Again, the Board has not yet had an opportunity to review and discuss this document. All comments are mine personally and should be considered in DRAFT form at this time. I felt with was important to share at least raw information ASAP.