



Executive Summary Proposed Bylaws

- Project Timeline 2019 – 2021
- Proposed Changes/Highlights
 - Church Council Governance and Ministry
 - Executive Committee of the Church Council
 - Senior Pastor and Pastoral Staff
 - Church Officers
- Recommended Next Steps

Governance and Bylaws Committee Timeline

DISCOVERY & RESEARCH

May – December 2019

LEARNING

May – September

- Church Council approves motion to form Governance and Bylaws Committee
- Studied: “Governance and Ministry: Rethinking Board Leadership” by Dan Hotchkiss
- “Inside the Large Congregation” by Susan Beaumont (photo of Plymouth Church on the cover)
- Roberts Rules of Order
- UCC General Synod
- Bylaws of other UCC churches of similar size

LISTENING

October – December

- Interviewed and surveyed Ministers, staff, lay leaders, and recent past moderators
- What works and what doesn’t in the existing bylaws?
 - How are decisions made and by whom?
 - How do bylaws affect your ability to do your job?
 - How is information provided to Church Council; board and committee members; congregation?
 - Is your board managing its responsibilities as defined in the bylaws?
 - What would you change?

DEFINE & DISCERN

January - June 2020

DOCUMENTING AND INFORMATION GATHERING

Perception and reality

What are the differences between the perceived practices and the actual practices?

- How are decisions made and by whom?
- How is transparency defined in the decision-making process?
- Where can decision-making be streamlined to accommodate today’s fast-changing environment?
- What makes most efficient use of time and talents?
- How can accessibility be strengthened so information is available on a timely basis to all members?
- Where does record-keeping need to be revised and updated?
- What is the greatest impediment to agility?

DRAFT, REVIEW, COMMENT

July 2020 - April 2021

FEEDBACK LOOP

Drafting has been a recurring process for nine months with Ministers, staff and members providing review, comment and feedback.



Input led to revisions in each succeeding draft, guiding the process of review, comment and feedback for a total of five times.

- Summer/Fall 2020: Ministers, staff and past moderators
- December 1, 2020: Lay leaders
- February 23, 2021: Church Council and the Congregation
- March 7; 15 & 18, 2021: Congregational Zooms for member feedback
- March 21: Received written member feedback to PlymouthBylaws@gmail.com
- April 20, 2021: Proposed Bylaws distributed to members
- April 27, 2021: Proposed bylaws on the agenda for Church Council meeting

Church Council Governance and Ministry

Subject	Current	Proposed	Why?
Structure and members	<p>VOTES</p> <p>(1) Moderator, chair (1) Moderator-Elect (0) Senior Pastor</p> <p>Boards</p> <p>(2) Benevolences (2) Christian Education (2) Christian Social Action (2) Christian Stewardship (2) Deacons (2) Membership (2) Music & Fine Arts (2) Spiritual Growth (2) Trustees (1) Member-at-Large (1) Women’s Fellowship</p> <hr/> <p>22 votes</p>	<p>VOTES</p> <p>(1) Moderator, chair (1) Moderator-Elect (1) Senior Pastor</p> <p>Boards</p> <p>(1) Benevolences (1) Christian Education (1) Christian Social Action (1) Christian Stewardship (1) Deacons (1) Membership (1) Music & Fine Arts (1) Spiritual Growth (1) Trustees (2) Members-at-Large (1) Women’s Fellowship</p> <hr/> <p>15 votes</p>	<p>Best practice for a church our size is to streamline.</p> <p>Too large to be nimble.</p> <p>More focus on Plymouth ministries.</p> <p>Add congregational representation per request of members.</p> <p>Recognize the importance of the position of Senior Pastor with a vote on Church Council and Executive Council.</p>
Member-at-Large	One member-at-large, representing the Congregation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add a second Member-at-Large • Staggered two-year terms • First-year member will serve as the Church Council Secretary • Second-year member will serve on the Executive Committee 	<p>Feedback from members recommended an additional position because of its importance.</p> <p>Feedback from Lay Leadership recommended specific duties.</p>
Board of Deacons exemption	“A member and that member’s spouse or domestic partner are not both eligible for board membership at the same time.” (From current bylaws language)	The spouse/partner of a person on the Board of Deacons can serve on another board or as an officer, if they choose. (Double household exemption)	<p>Challenging to fulfill annual 10-member recruitment.</p> <p>Specifically requested by the Board of Deacons.</p>

Church Council Governance and Ministry (cont'd)

Subject	Current	Proposed	Why?
Religious education	<p>Board of Education covers birth thru 6th grade. (There is no mention of Confirmation in current bylaws.)</p> <p>Board of Spiritual Growth covers an unspecified audience.</p>	<p>Expand the curriculum, programs and activities to include birth to 6th grade, middle school and high school. New board name: Board of Christian Education for Youth and Families.</p> <p>Focus and enhance the original “those who seek” approach and new board name: Board of Spiritual Growth and Adult Education.</p>	<p>Expand the existing programs to cover all ages (aligns with strategic plan).</p> <p>Education is a life-long learning process.</p>
Linking committees to boards	<p>Some committees and other groups are not linked to a board, so they carry out important responsibilities outside the current governance structure.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transition into Ministry • Stephen Ministers • Youth Executive Council 	<p>All committees and other groups will be linked to or aligned with a board and reviewed annually for purpose and progress.</p> <p>An organization chart will be maintained and available to members.</p>	<p>Ensure record-keeping includes all groups.</p> <p>Ensure a clear and accurate picture of ministries so members can find volunteer opportunities.</p>

Executive Committee of the Church Council

Subject	Current	Proposed	Why?
Structure and members		<p>VOTES</p> <p>(1) Moderator, chair</p> <p>(1) Immediate-past Moderator*</p> <p>(0) Moderator-Elect</p> <p>(1) Senior Pastor</p> <p>(1) Chair, Board of Trustees</p> <p>(1) Chair, Board of Deacons</p> <p>(1) Chair, Board of Membership</p> <p>(1) 2nd-year member-at-large</p> <p>(0) Director of Operations and Finance</p> <hr/> <p>7 votes</p> <p>* Add another year to this top lay leader position</p>	<p>Senior Pastor gets 1 vote recognizing importance of senior executive role.</p> <p>These 3 boards oversee church finances, the worship experience, and member recruitment and retention.</p> <p>Add 3rd year to Moderator’s term for continuity.</p> <p>Member-at-large (2nd year); congregation’s representative.</p>

Executive Committee of the Church Council (cont'd)

Subject	Current	Proposed	Why?
Nomination process	<p>Nominating Committee not active in nomination process.</p> <p>Church Council responsible for slate of board nominees.</p> <p>Moderator-Elect historically nominated by the Senior Minister, Moderator and Moderator-Elect.</p>	<p>Sunset the Nominating Committee.</p> <p>The revised nomination process is clearly defined with all positions open for nominees by members.</p> <p>The Church Council and the Executive Committee will prepare the slate of nominees; the Executive Committee will nominate the Moderator-Elect.</p>	<p>Adds transparency to a historic practice.</p> <p>Acknowledges inactive role of Nominating Committee.</p> <p>Offers clear process for members to nominate top position.</p>
Independent Standing Committees	<p>Important committees with informal relationship to overall structure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit • Personnel Committee • Long-range planning committee of past Moderators 	<p>Formalize procedures for meetings and minutes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit Committee • Human Resources Committee (formerly Personnel Committee) • (new) Advisory Committee (long-range planning committee of past Moderators) 	<p>Enhanced transparency.</p> <p>Stronger link to the Church Council via the Executive Committee.</p>

Senior Pastor and Pastoral Staff

Subject	Current	Proposed	Why?
Pastoral titles	Sr. Minister, Associate Ministers, TiM Ministers	Change titles to Pastor from Ministers	At the request of pastors, recognizing all believers are ministers and some are ordained to a pastoral ministry.
Plymouth's Senior Executive	Senior Minister and CEO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sr. Pastor remains Plymouth's senior executive and staff leader with a vote on Church Council and on the Executive Committee. • Can hire and terminate employees, in accordance with HR procedures and in consultation with the Executive Committee and Human Resources Committee. 	Interview with former Senior Minister requesting clearly defined duties.

Senior Pastor and Pastoral Staff (cont'd)

Subject	Current	Proposed	Why?
2013 Bylaws Amendment for internal candidate	Bylaws allow for an internal candidate to be considered before launching a national search.	Both internal and external candidates will be considered; an internal candidate will not be given first or preferential opportunity.	Specific to a past situation.
Senior Minister search committee	Twelve members organized by the Board of Deacons. Nine members, one appointed by each board, and three more selected by the committee. Committee names chair, vice-chair and secretary.	Senior Pastor search committee of seven members; proposed by Church Council, nominated by self, or by others, and members from the congregation. Selected by Executive Committee and Moderator (or designee) will serve as non-voting chair.	Opens up nomination process to all members. Smaller number allows greater flexibility.
Interim Ministerial staff	Not currently defined in bylaws	Include provisions for Interim Pastors	Needed update. Formalizes process.

Church Officers

Subject	Current	Proposed	Why?
Church Clerk	Church Clerk position is the Secretary of the Plymouth Corporation, assigned to take minutes at Congregational Meetings, and to keep member records.	Sunset Church Clerk title and assign duties to new position and title of Church Secretary.	Confusion about title, assignments, and record-keeping duties.
Church Secretary	Secretary of the corporation is assigned to the position and title of Church Clerk.	The newly titled position of Church Secretary will serve as the Secretary of Plymouth Corporation. Responsible for minutes at Congregational Meetings; maintain and preserve records; make accessible to the membership.	Recognition of need to retitle position and define duties, including need for transparency, accountability, and preservation of records.
Church Treasurer	Elected by the Board of Trustees (but cannot be a Trustee) and can serve no more than four one-year consecutive terms.	Sunset the position. Strict accounting and control procedures in place.	Recommended by the current Treasurer and Board of Trustees. Current checks and balances are effective so position unnecessary.



Recommended Next Steps

- Determine how many boards and committees, at what size and composition, are needed for Plymouth to thrive in the future.
- Review composition of church boards, committees, and groups to align board ministries with the 2020-2025 strategic plan.
- Establish and maintain a new Governance Policies and Procedures Manual to include specific information from the Proposed Bylaws; better suited to a manual and allowing flexibility with updates.
- Establish annual training for Lay Leadership on governance structure, procedures, and Roberts Rules of Order.
- Review Plymouth's Employee Handbook; update as needed.
- Establish regular, timely review of Bylaws no longer than five years.