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Introduction

In accordance with the Memorandum of Understanding dated March 8th, 2018, the UUA Central East Region submits this Governance Assessment to All Souls Church, Unitarian.

Preceding this document is the Bylaws Review dated October 25th, 2017. This assessment is intended to be a companion document to this document review. While many of the conclusions of this assessment are also contained in the document review, not every issue raised in the review will be discussed in this Assessment. In particular, we will not discuss issues that are not directly related to the congregational governance structure, such as the processes around Congregational Meetings. Several critical issues are raised by the review that the congregation will need to address.

The Governance Assessment process has three main components. First, what is the congregation's stated governance systems and how do those systems function in practice within the congregation. Second, what are appropriate recommendations to adapt this governance system to increase functioning. And third, what guidance can be shared on implementing any changes the congregation wishes to make.

For the purposes of this Assessment, Governance is defined as the processes and practices by which the congregation makes decisions together. This is intentionally a broad definition of governance, allowing for an expansive assessment of the congregation's decision-making practices.

Current Governance System Assessment

It is difficult to detail what kind of governance system is currently operative at All Souls Church Unitarian (ASCU), simply because that answer changes depending upon the level of Governance that is being discussed. While this is true to a limited

degree in many congregations, there is often a primary governance theory or system that is widely shared in the congregation. Through my observations and conversations with both current and historical leaders at ASCU, I have found at least two governance systems in operation, and possibly three. It is the conflict between these three systems, strongly operative at different levels of the congregational governance system that I find to be the root of a significant portion of the congregational governance challenges, confusion, and conflict.

In order to detail these multiple operative governance theories, I have to set a framework for the levels of congregational governance. In most congregations that practice Congregational Polity (where the congregation itself is the primary governance authority) there are often three levels of governance that exist, especially after the congregation grows beyond approximately 75 members in size.

Governance Level 1 consists of the elements of the congregation that are created by the Congregational Meeting. At ASCU, Level 1 consists of the structures of the congregation that are created by the congregation's bylaws. The Congregational Meeting is the primary governance authority at Level 1, and it creates elements that are directly responsible to the Congregational Meeting. At ASCU, these elements include elected Congregational Officers, the Board of Trustees, the Senior Minister, and the Leadership Development and Nominating Committee (LDNC). In some other congregations, Level 1 Governance may also include elements such as the Endowment Committee, or a subsidiary Board (say for a congregational day-school or a affiliated non-profit). What all of these elements have in common is that they are created by the Bylaws and they are directly responsible to the congregation. Sometimes an element may be created by the congregation's bylaws, but not be Level 1 because they are responsible to an entity other than the Congregational Meeting.

Governance Level 2 consists of the relationship between the Board of Trustees and the congregational element charged with the Operations, Program, and Administration of the congregation. The Board of Trustees is the primary governance body at level 2. In some congregations with Operational Boards, the Board of Trustees and the Standing Committees or Task Forces they create (that are directly responsible to the Governing Board and focused on supporting the Governing Board in its work) may make up the entirety of Governance Level 2. However, in congregations that have Governing Boards that have adopted a form of Policy Governance, or another structure of Strategic Board, there is the additional relationship between the Governing Board and the element of the

congregation to whom executive, program, administrative, and operational authority has been delegated. As the ASCU Board of Trustees has adopted a moderately conservative model of Policy Governance (which I will discuss in detail later in this assessment), the relationship between the ASCU Board of Trustees and the Executive Team is a Level 2 Governance relationship. At Governance Level 2, the Board of Trustees creates the structures and relationships through Governing Policy, just as the Congregational Meeting does at Governance Level 1.

The Board of Trustees is responsible to the Congregational Meeting for how well it is performing its duties, including how well governance is functioning at Governance Level 2.

Governance Level 3 consists of the relationships between the element to whom executive, program, administrative, and operational authority has been delegated by the Board of Trustees at Governance Level 2, and all of the elements of the congregation who are engaged in the operations, program, administration and ministries of the congregation. At ASCU, executive, program, administrative, and operational authority has been delegated to the Executive Team, which currently consists of the Executive Director and all called minsters, including the Senior Minister. The Executive team would then set what I call Operational Policies to form and structure the governance relationships between the Executive team and all of the program, administrative, and operational elements of the church. This would include all church employees and contract ministers, but it also includes all members and friends of the congregation who are engaged in the ministries, program, and operations of the congregation as volunteers. This would include all operational and program committees and teams, such as committees and teams in the areas of justice, religious education, hospitality, etc. One of the dynamics of Policy Governance congregations in particular is that the Executive (in this case the Executive Team) is expected to be held accountable for the performance of all of these operational, program, and administrative elements, whether they are volunteer or staff. This often leads to a more directive style of Executive leadership than other congregations without Policy Governance experience.

I am taking a lot of time in this Governance Assessment to detail these three levels of Congregational Governance, because the first point I wish to raise in this Governance Assessment is that the different roles and responsibilities that individuals hold at each level of governance seem murky and unclear at ASCU. This lack of clarity seems endemic in the congregational system. To highlight that, let me share three examples that I have observed.

First, and the most obvious, is that many congregants are confused between their governance roles and responsibilities at Governance Level 1, and their governance roles and responsibilities at Governance Level 3. This is an inherent challenge in congregational governance systems that does not exist in other governance systems, because in most corporations, non-profits, and academic institutions the primary operational, administrative, and program actors (in most of these kinds of institutions these would be employees) are not also members of the primary governing body of the institution. It is also either not the case or more limited the case in other religious traditions who do not practice congregational polity, because the Primary Governing Body is either outside the congregation or more limited than the entire congregational membership (such as in the Catholic or Presbyterian traditions).

And so, it can be confusing for congregation members to receive direction from the Executive Team, or from congregational staff members at Governance Level 3, when at Governance Level 1 the same Executive Team (and by extension, congregational staff members) report to them as the Congregational Meeting. "Why is Rev. Hardies telling us what to do, doesn't he work for us?" is a near exact quote from one of my conversations with congregation members, highlighting this confusion of role and responsibilities at different levels of congregational governance.

The general solution for this kind of congregational role confusion for congregation members is two-fold: education and buy-in by congregational members to the congregation's operative governance theory. The congregations that are able to gain the most clarity at this endemic role confusion develop a culture where congregations expect that they provide direction when they are functioning in their Governance Level 1 roles (during meetings of the Congregational Meeting) and yet are more responsive to direction (or at least more partnering with the Executive) when they are not attending a Congregational Meeting.

Education is not enough to make this shift, in my experience. Congregation members need to build a core belief and trust in this theory of the separation of responsibilities within the congregation. In my conversations with members and leaders at ASCU, I find that there is a lack of both understanding of this theory of how the decision-making process in the congregation should work, but also a level of reactivity to the theory when it is discussed. That reactivity and lack of understanding has at times been a very difficult obstacle for the Executive Team in

meeting the operational, administrative, and programming objectives of the congregation.

Another form this lack of clarity on roles and responsibilities has taken at ASCU is the confusion between the Senior Minister's role and responsibilities at Governance Levels 1, 2, and 3. That the Senior Minister (not any called minister, however) has roles and responsibilities at every level of congregational governance is not uncommon, and it is in my judgement normal and healthy. What has been challenging at ASCU is the confusing and sometimes contradictory ways these roles and responsibilities interact with one another.

The Senior Minister is called (elected) by a vote of the congregation and is directly accountable to the congregation through the Congregational Meeting. However, because the Board of Trustees has adopted a moderately conservative understanding of Policy Governance at Governance Level 2, and the Senior Minister is a member of the Executive Team, the Senior Minister also has a level of accountability to the Board of Trustees. This dual accountability has created a circumstance where accountability of the Senior Minister, and by extension the Executive Team, can be difficult for the Board of Trustees to implement. Such accountability is an expected and required aspect of the healthy functioning of any Policy Governance system. Simply put, Policy Governance has as a core assumption that the Board of Trustees can terminate the employment of the Executive. When the Senior Minister is a large part of the Executive Team, this necessary authority that is fundamental to the functioning of Policy Governance is lacking. This lack creates a difficult relationship between the Senior Minister and the Board of Trustees as it seeks to exercise accountability over the Executive Team.

The answer to this challenge also cannot be that the Congregational Meeting will exercise accountability over the Senior Minister for the executive, administrative, operational, and programming responsibilities of the congregation, simply because the congregational meeting does not meet often enough to hold that accountability effectively, nor can the entire membership of the congregation dedicate the time and effort necessary to understand the complexity of a large congregation that is a required understanding to such accountability. While Congregational Polity does allow all congregation members to have a voice in the shared vision and purpose of the congregation, the congregational meeting is only minimally effective as a structure of accountability. It can be successful in providing appropriate accountability and oversight of the Board of Trustees but

providing appropriate accountability of the Executive is more than I judge any Congregational Meeting can effectively do.

The only effective answer to this challenge of role and responsibility is also two-fold: to create as much clarity as possible for the role of the Senior Minister within the congregational governance system, and to develop covenantal agreements with the Senior Minister for the areas where the roles and responsibilities cannot be clearly defined. This will be discussed more fully in the recommendations section of this Assessment.

A third manifestation of this culture of lack of clarity about governance roles and responsibilities at ASCU is the lack of clarity created in having a large number of Congregational Officers who are not themselves members of the Governing Board. The ASCU Bylaws state, in Article VII, Section 5, that there are 6 Congregational Officer positions that have Governance Level 1 authority, the same level of Governance Authority shared by the Board of Trustees. A strict reading of this Bylaws would indicate that each of these elected positions, particularly in the areas for which that position is directly responsible, has an equal or greater authority in those areas to the Board of Trustees.

The inherent potential for conflict in this formulation should be obvious, and indeed a review of ASCU governance history points to many occasions where such conflict has occurred, and even more instances where the Board of Trustees and Congregational Officers have been unclear as to where one's authority began and the other ended, and spent significant time and energy managing through such murkiness.

Also, the inclusion of these Congregational Officers as non-voting participants (but not officially ex-officio members) of the Board of Trustees has made for an effective Board size that is far larger than is usually recommended for effective governance. The recommended board size based on group dynamics is between 7-11 members/active participants. While a recent bylaws change allows the Board of Trustees to meet under certain circumstances without all of the Congregational Officers present, this structure is unwieldy, and creates significant confusion as to the roles and responsibilities of the Board of Trustees in the congregational governance system at ASCU.

While my primary assessment of congregational governance at ASCU is this endemic lack of understanding, clarity, and "buy-in" about the roles and responsibilities of the congregation's governance, there are a few other points I feel it is also important to make. Each of these points also directs back to the primary issue of this lack of clarity and understanding in governance.

The first of these secondary points is that shifting nature of the relationship between the Senior Minister and the Board of Trustees at ASCU. Through my conversations with past and present congregational leaders, as well as with the current Senior Minister, one of the patterns that became clear is that the relationship between the Board of Trustees and the Senior Minister has fluctuated significantly over time, and through different ministries. I have identified three different primary patterns in this relationship, operative at all three levels of congregational governance.

The first pattern, and the one that seems to be in operation now, is that the Board of Trustees sees its primary role in the relationship at holding the Senior Minister accountable for their Executive role, both as part of and beyond the Executive Team. The Board of Trustees has been in this pattern of relationship for at least the last three years, the time period in which I have been actively consulting with members of the Board of Trustees on issues of accountability of the Executive. This is also the primary pattern of relationship that is built into the structures and assumptions of most conservative implementations of Policy Governance. I believe that this pattern holds sway at the moment in the relationship both because of an effort to more fully implement Policy Governance in the practices of the Board of Trustees, but also because as the congregation has grown and gone through a recent successful Capital Campaign and building project, the role and responsibilities of the Executive Team has seemed to increase beyond any existing patterns of accountability between the Board of Trustees and the Executive team.

However, historically, I have seen two other patterns at play in the history of the congregation, and even during the ministry of the current Senior Minister. The first of these, the overall second pattern is one of a

sense of partnership between the Senior Minister and the Board of Trustees in the ministry and religious leadership of the congregation. This pattern appears most often in the first couple of years of a new ministry, to the best of my explorations. It appeared in the initial years of the ministry with the current Senior Minister, and I was also able to see it in the relationship between the Board of Trustees and much of the ministry of the Rev. A. Powell Davies, and in the early days of the ministry of the Rev. David Eaton. Though I could not completely verify it, I believe I saw this pattern in the early days of the ministry of Rev. Dan Aldridge, but it appeared to be fairly short-lived, due to congregational reaction to the more directive nature of Rev. Aldridge's ministerial style. I believe this pattern of partnership between the Board of Trustees and the Senior Minister has roots back into the history of the congregation, and that legacy often seems to be contrasted with the patterns of accountability that the relationship is currently functioning in.

The other pattern I have been able to discern, and the third overall, is a pattern of enabling between the Board of Trustees and the Senior Minister. The clearest expression of this pattern existed during a previous ministry where it was known in the congregation and even the community that a minister was behaving in ways that would only be described today as ministerial misconduct, having poor relationship boundaries with members of the congregation and community. While I was only able to hear firsthand accounts related to one particular ministry, such patterns become deeply rooted in a congregational system, and are easy for a congregation to return to.

I name all three of these, because I see a relationship between these patterns of relationship between the Board of Trustees and the Senior Minister. The pattern I have discerned seems to go like this:

1. The congregation calls a charismatic minister who has a large public presence, and the relationship with the Board of Trustees is built upon an understanding that the role of the Board of Trustees is to help that minister be as effective and successful as possible.

2. During the relationship it becomes apparent that the minister, while excellent at some areas of ministry, is less skilled in other areas. The Board of Trustees transitions to helping to manage some of those areas where the minister is less skilled, and eventually to managing the congregational and community reactions to those areas. In at least one historical case, the areas where the minister was less skilled including an inability to maintain good professional ministerial boundaries between the minister and congregants.

3. Dissatisfaction with the areas where the minister is less skilled eventually leads to Board Members being elected who view their role as holding the Senior Minster accountable. This shift in the basic expectations of the relationship between the Senior Minister and the Board of Trustees creates a pattern of suspicion and distrust that continues to grow over time and becomes debilitating for the congregation. Amid the relationship patterns of suspicion and distrust between both the Senior Minister and the Executive, complicated by the overall murkiness of roles and responsibilities, the leadership of the congregation feels increasingly "stuck" and "antagonistic".

It also must be stated that ASCU was an early adopter of the system of Policy Governance as it was coming into the awareness and practice of Unitarian Universalist congregations. John Carver's book Boards that Make a Difference the first attempt to translate a Governance System developed for corporate governance into the non-profit sector (but not initially for churches) had been published in 1990. The dismissal of Rev. Aldridge in 1998 due, in part to a sense of a lack of accountability, a directive style of leadership and the conflicts with leaders that arose from that style, coincided with the beginning of a movement within Unitarian Universalism towards adapting and adopting this style of corporate and non-profit governance within congregations. Much of the implementation of this Governance Level 2 system occurred during the Interim Ministry of Rev. David Keyes, leading the current Senior Minister, Rev. Hardies, to begin his ministry as this system of Level 2 Governance was just taking root. My assessment was that the primary motivation for the adoption and implementation of policy governance at

ASCU was in reaction to the previous two called Senior Ministers, for very different reasons.

As ASCU was an early adopter of Policy Governance, within the first ten years of the publication of <u>Boards that Make a Difference</u>, the early patterns that were set were on the more "conservative" end of the spectrum of understandings of Policy Based Governance in congregations. The adoption occurred before later efforts to adapt and moderate the principles of Policy Governance for congregational settings, particularly for congregations that have a high expectation of congregational involvement in Governance Levels 2 and 3 decision-making.

I believe that the key to whether or not a governance system will be effective in a congregation lies in how well that governance system reflects the culture of the congregation. What was clear in my review of how Policy Governance came to be adopted in the ASCU congregational system was that it was implemented more for its expected ability to address a problem in the relationship of the Board of Trustees with the Senior Minister, more than as an expression of the congregational culture around governance. That the current formulation of Policy Governance has not been as effective as might have been hoped in addressing the issue of accountability between the Senior Minister and the Board of Trustees is both an expression of some of the limitations of more conservative (early) implementations of Policy Governance in congregations, but also I believe an expression of the cultural expectation at ASCU for congregational involvement in leadership decision-making at Level 2 and Level 3 of congregational governance.

It is also important for me to say that the adoption of Policy Governance by Unitarian Universalist congregations also occurred prior to our religious movement's growing awareness of the impact of white supremacy culture upon our society and upon our congregations. As the derivation of Policy Governance comes through institutions (corporations, non-profits, academia) that are also steeped in unacknowledged impacts of white supremacy, it is not surprising that we have a growing awareness of the ways that Policy Governance,

particularly in its early, more conservative forms, both manifests and codifies these elements of white supremacy culture.

I am not yet prepared to share a full exposition of the ways in which Policy Governance as a governing system is imbued with aspects of white supremacy culture, as that awareness is still growing, and I am not sure that I (as a white male) am the right person to make that assessment. I will say that I believe that there are governance systems that are based in some of the principles of Policy Governance, yet significantly adapted for congregations, that lessen the influence of white supremacy within the governing system. One of the recommendations I am making in this assessment is to move towards one such governing system.

Another note is that, for a moderately conservative implementation of Policy Governance, the current Governing Policies are reasonable, if lacking in significant ways in defining the nature of monitoring reporting. It is clear that successive boards have had different expectations of what monitoring reporting the Executive Team should be providing to the Board of Trustees. As such, the Executive Team has never been able to get into an effective "rhythm" of providing the Board of Trustees with effective monitoring, because the standards of the Board of Trustees on the key Level 2 responsibility of monitoring have changed significantly with changes in Board membership.

For monitoring to be effective, it must become regular. Regular patterns of monitoring do two things. First, it makes providing the necessary reports and data far easier for the Executive because the formats and expectations remain the same from reporting period to reporting period. Second, it gives the Board of Trustees data that is comparable over time, to be able to see trends and patterns. While it is perfectly appropriate for a Governing Board to change monitoring requirements, it should do so knowing the difficulties that such changes cause for the Executive, and how that will impact its own set of data for comparison and analysis. The Board and the Executive need to regularize the monitoring reporting and stick to it unless the need for a change is relatively high.

The difficulty around getting into regular and effective patterns around monitoring has negatively impacted the relationship between the Executive Team and the Board of Trustees, and this has created a "feedback loop" of a need for more effective monitoring. This leads to more changes, more difficulty, and more tension in the relationship. There is a need to set a monitoring standard, and to stick with it for a period of time for this relationship to settle.

Lastly, I feel the need to make a statement about Governance, that applies to all congregations, not just to ASCU, and it also comes from our growing awareness of the impact of white supremacy upon Unitarian Universalist congregations. No governance system, no matter how well designed, will legislate away all of the challenges of human relationship. In any congregational governance system, there will be places where the "system" cannot solve the need for covenantal agreements about how we are in relationship with one another. At best, a governance system helps you to choose intentionally where relationship needs to be formed based in covenantal agreement more than through the bylaws or policies.

A covenantal agreement is a commitment made between people in light of a larger vision, mission, or reality to which they have chosen to be accountable. For the Hebraic peoples, they had chosen to be in covenant with one another, and accountable to God. It is my belief that in Unitarian Universalism, many of the covenants we make in relationship with one another are held accountable by our shared vision for a better world, and the role our faith movement and congregations play in making that better world happen.

And so, there will be places in any governance system where the relationship challenges cannot be "legislated" away. I see the potential for a few of these places in the ASCU system. One would have to be a covenantal agreement that members share that they will hold their different roles, responsibilities, and authorities at different levels of congregational governance appropriately. Another might be (in accordance with one of the recommendations I am making) a covenantal agreement between the Senior Minister and the Executive Director how they will manage a dual relationship that I believe to be unavoidable, and

which has a long informal history at ASCU. Another might be a covenantal agreement between the Board of Trustees and any congregational officers who are not formally members of the Board of Trustees.

Wherever these covenantal agreements may lie, it is important to realize that they are an essential part of any congregational governance system… perhaps even more essential than the bylaws and policies. The purpose of the church is not governance. The purpose of the church is the transformation of the world. Governance is good when it frees the congregation to do just that.

Recommendations

1. **Adapt the congregation's Policy Governance model towards a Governance and Ministry model, as expressed in the book Governance and Ministry by Dan Hotchkiss.**

Governance and Ministry, as a congregational governance system places a higher level of priority on lay-leadership involvement at all levels of congregational governance than is found in traditional Policy Governance. It seeks to create partnership relationships more than to legislate relationships. The congregation should consider contracting with the Rev. Dan Hotchkiss to help the congregation to transition to a governance system more in tune with his published works. I make this recommendation because I assess that the more conservative Policy Governance system that currently exists at All Souls has never fully settled because it is not culturally appropriate to the congregation. I believe that Governance and Ministry, while not perfect, is more appropriate to ASCU as I have encountered it. This will take some education on the part of leaders, and some deepening of the concept of covenant within the congregation. I also feel it is important to say that this is a recommendation I have only made two other times in my history of doing Governance Assessments for UU Congregations. I have rarely seen a congregation whose culture more closely matches what is envisioned by Governance and Ministry.

2. **Transition the Senior Minister fully into the role of a member of the ASCU Board of Trustees with the Senior Minister accountable to the Board of Trustees for the effectiveness of the congregation's programming within the mission and vision of the congregation.**

Transitioning the relationship between the Senior Minister and the Board of Directors towards a more partnership relationship appears to me to be the most vital cultural transition I am recommending for the congregation. I believe a significant part of that transition will be made by moving the Senior Minister out of the Administrative, and Operational Executive Role, and towards that of the "Board Officer for congregational programming and ministry". This will mean managing a complicated relationship with the Executive Director, as they will have responsibility for Operations and Administration, including supervision for all non-ordained staff. The Senior Minister must be in an accountable covenantal relationship with the Board for how they work with the Executive Director given this complex relationship. As I said in the assessment, no system will solve all of the potential challenges in relationships, and the best they can do is choose where the challenging relationships may lie and hold the individuals accountable for managing their relationship well. It is appropriate to expect that the two senior compensated individuals in the congregational system be able to manage a relationship whose complication cannot be fully solved by the governance system.

3. **Hire an Executive Director who is accountable to and hired by the Board, with direct responsibility for all congregational administration, finance, and operations, with the Senior Minister and Board President serving as the day-to-day accountability liaisons of the Board for the Executive Director.**

The Executive Director should be hired by the Board of Trustees (with the Senior Minister as a member of the Board of Trustees) and should be directly accountable to the Board of Trustees. The Executive Director would have direct authority over all administrative, operational, staff supervision and hiring (other than ordained clergy), financial management, and volunteer management. The Executive Director is directly responsible to the Board of Trustees for all monitoring on all administrative, operational, and staff policy monitoring. The Senior Minister and the Board President serve as the Executive Directors liaison and contact in between Board Meetings, without lessening the overall authority of the Board of Trustees. The Senior Minister

will engage the Executive Director within the Governing Policies as promulgated by the Board. This will include policy defining how the Executive Director and the Senior Minister relate regarding areas where the ministry and program responsibilities of the Senior Minister and Executive Director intersect.

4. **Require the Executive Director to develop and implement a policy for an effective employee Performance Management system, including requiring the Senior Minister to conduct appropriate Performance Management Reviews of all ordained staff within that system.**

The Board of Trustees should promulgate Governing Policies that make the Executive Director responsible and accountable for the Performance Management System similar to the one defined in When Moses Meets Aaron: Staffing and Supervision in Large Congregations by Susan Beaumont. This will include needed policies from the Governing Board that require the Senior Minister to be accountable to the Executive Director for appropriate supervision and Performance Management of ordained staff within the Performance Management System, and that through these other ordained staff all other Program Staff receive similar supervision and Performance Development Reviews and Support. In other words, all Administrative and Operations staff are part of a supervision structure that is headed by the Executive Director. All Program staff are part of a supervision structure that is headed by the Senior Minster. The Senior Minister is responsible, by policy, to the Executive Director for effective supervision and performance development support within the Program staff.

5. **Integrate the Congregational Officer Positions of Secretary and Treasurer into the Board of Trustees as voting ex-officio members of the Board of Trustees, and reduce the number of Trustees elected by the congregation directly to seven, two or three elected per year for a three year term as appropriate. Maintain electing the President and Vice President from within the direct elected Trustees.**

This will require significant bylaws changes, but the result is a Board of Directors that consists of two congregationally elected officers who are voting ex-officio Board Members, seven congregationally elected voting trustees, and one congregationally called non-voting member who is the Senior Minister. This will be a 10-member Board of Trustees, nine of whom have the vote. The

Board as a whole (all 9 voting members) will elect the President and Vice-President each year from among the congregationally elected voting trustees.

6. **Maintain the Moderator as the only non-board Congregational Officer position and have the Board of Trustees appoint the Assistant Secretary and Assistant Treasurer positions from among the Membership. Board Appointed Officer's participation in the Board of Trustees should be limited to filling in the specific duties of the Treasurer and Secretary in the event of their absence.**

The Moderator should serve the Congregational Meeting as their observer in the deliberations of the Board of Trustees, and in doing so can provide effective Process Observation for the Board of Trustees. This will require Moderators to take some training in effective Process Observation as well as serving to moderate the Congregational Meeting. This will also allow the Moderator to express the activities of the Board within the congregation, including in the Program Council. The Assistant Treasurer and the Assistant Secretary should be appointed by the Board, and their role on the Board should be limited providing support to the Board in the absence of the Secretary or Treasurer in their specific responsibility areas.

7. **Integrate into the Moderator's responsibilities the provision of Process Observation for the Board of Trustees.**

While the Moderator is not included as a Board member, I recommend that the Board integrate into the Moderator's role providing process observation for Board Meetings rather than participating directly in Board deliberation. This will allow the Board of Trustees to have a view of its own process and support for remaining in covenant, while also allowing the Moderator to report to the Congregational Meeting on the functioning of the Board of Trustees.

8. **Transition the Membership Secretary Position into a Membership Volunteer Staff Position that reports to the Senior Minister**

One of the more difficult recommendations to make has been the nature of Membership Secretary as an elected Congregational Officer Position. Through conversations and an understanding of the nature and responsibilities of this

role, it is clear to me that this is an operational role, not a governance role. It belongs in Governance Level 3, rather than Governance Level 1. This recommendation is for a volunteer staff position, with a job description and recruiting/hiring of a lay-member volunteer, to create essentially the same position but accountable to the Senior Minster as an aspect of the congregation's programming.

9. Develop with the Executive Director an effective and regular monitoring regime and maintain that monitoring regime with minimal changes for a minimum of three years.

The Board of Trustees and the Executive Director should develop an understanding of the information that the Board of Trustees needs for effective fiduciary monitoring of the congregation's Operations, Finances, and Administration, and then maintain that monitoring regime for a minimum of three years with only minimal alteration. The purpose of this is to allow the Board of Trustees and the Executive Director to develop a regular pattern of monitoring, to change the culture within the Board of Trustees. The Programming and Ministry goals or Ends of the congregation will be monitored through an active Congregational Assessment practice developed by the Board of Trustees, where the Board of Trustees (including the Senior Minister), with the potential support of a Standing Committee of the Board.

10. Reclaim Strategic Planning and Congregational Assessment as a responsibility of the Board of Trustees from the Executive, and implement a plan for effective accomplishment of both that may involve delegation to Standing Committees of the Board. The Senior Minister will participate in these processes as a member of the Board of Trustees, and the Executive Director will support the processes by providing necessary data to the Board of Trustees.

The Board of Trustees, with the potential support of Standing Committees of the Board, and with the integrated support of the Senior Minister (as a Board of Trustees member) will regain responsibility for conducting assessment of the congregation's ministries and programs of the congregation, as the monitoring of the congregation's ministries and programs. From that assessment, the Board of Trustees would also regain responsibility for developing, monitoring all strategic planning for the congregation. They will be supported by the

Executive Director with necessary data and information. That strategic planning could take many forms, depending on the requirements of the congregation's vision and mission.

11. **Make appropriate changes to the ASCU Bylaws and the Board of Trustees Governing Policies to implement these changes, as well as to implement recommendations from the Bylaws and Governing Policies Review.**

The ASUC Board of Trustees should charge a Task Force to draft and educate the congregation on any and all developments of the ASUC Bylaws to implement the recommendations of this Governance Assessment, as well as other needed recommendations as listed in the congregations Bylaws. The Board of Trustees would make any alterations to the Governing Policies to implement the recommendations of this Governance Assessment that the Board of Trustees and congregation choose to implement.

12. **Integrate into the congregation's leadership development and new member programs an educational program on the congregation's governance structures, theory, and process, with a focus on developing awareness in members of the different roles and responsibilities at different levels of congregational governance.**

This recommendation is self-explanatory. There is a need to integrate into the process of people becoming members and people becoming leaders of the congregation a deeper understanding of both the congregation's governance system, as well as to help people to understand their own role and responsibility as both governance leaders at Level 1 and implementors at Level 3.

Implementation

As the process for this governance assessment has been a faster process than I typically facilitate in a congregation, this implementation guidance will be more preliminary than I sometimes offer. Simply put, it is clear to me that the congregational leadership and congregational membership have not yet had the

time to reflect and discern, in order to know exactly what recommendations, if any, the congregation wishes to implement from this assessment.

It is also true that the primary purpose of a governance assessment is to give the congregational leadership and membership something to "react to". It is completely normal for leaders and members of a congregation to agree with some aspects of an assessment, and to disagree with others. It is also normal for a congregation to select and adapt the recommendations to create the plan for how the congregation will adapt their governance system.

However, there are a few elements of implementation guidance that I can share as the congregation enters into significant discernment about how ASCU makes decisions together. I can also share that, though it appeared when we began this Governance Assessment process that I would be going on leave from the UUA in August 2018, that no longer appears to be the case, or at least the timing of any potential absence from the UUA may be further away than expected. As such, I now believe I will be available as a resource to the congregation as you develop your own plans for implementation.

I am suggesting five primary steps for initial implementation planning that I am suggesting. All three of these steps can be engaged at the same time but may need different teams to be responsible for them.

Step 1: Create a sub-committee of the Board, or a Task Force of the Board, or a Committee of the Congregation to consider and make recommendations to adapt the congregational Bylaws in response to recommendations 5, 6, 8, and 11, as well as the Bylaws Review. This is likely to be a complex undertaking, as it is a fundamental shift in the nature of the governance level 1 system. It will likely need significant congregational engagement and support. As such, I would consider asking the Moderator(s) to lead or be directly involved in this process. In part I make this recommendation of leadership by the Moderator(s) because this is a Level 1 issue, but also because of the levels of trust in the congregation for the Board of Trustees and the Executive Team have been damaged by recent events.

Step 2: Begin an education and discernment process, first within the Board and Senior Staff, and growing into the entire congregation, on the theory of governance behind the Governance and Ministry system. This will include a focus on covenantal relationship at all levels of congregational life and ministry. The congregation may consider contracting with Rev. Dan Hotchkiss on this implementation step, or other consultants versed in this system. The congregation should also consider utilizing its current leadership development system in doing this exploration, education, and reflection process.

Step 3: Hire an Executive Director that will be directly accountable to the Board of Trustees for Operations, Administration, Finance, and a Performance Management System. This will include setting a pattern of Monitoring with a commitment to stay with that pattern for at least three years before altering it. I would also recommend that the new Executive Director attend training with Rev. Dr. Susan Beaumont on Staff Supervision in Large Congregations and consider a consulting/coaching relationship with her in setting up a Performance Management system. Though I would expect the Executive Director to have significant HR experience outside of congregations prior to being hired, the above-mentioned training and coaching relationship would help translate that experience into a congregational context.

Step 4: Develop, clarify, and define the role of the Senior Minister in line with recommendations 1,2,3,4,8, and 10. This will involve intentional and formal development of a covenantal relationship with the Executive Director related to the dual role of the Senior Minister being both a Board Member and the supervisor of the Program Staff. It may also involve the development of formal covenantal relationship between the Board of Trustees and the Senior Minister. The Senior Minister may wish to engage collegial support in developing those covenantal agreements and relationships.

Step 5: Continue to use the current Policy Governance framework as a congregation until such time as the congregation chooses to transition to a Governance and Ministry system, or another governance system. However, the congregation should do so with the covenantal agreements in place, and intentionally trying to shift to a partnership relationship between the Board of Trustees and the Senior Minister, between the Board of Trustees and the Executive Director, and between the Senior Minister and the Executive Director. This will involve active covenantal work that will also help determine if the Governance and Ministry system is appropriate to the congregation. This step will feel counter-cultural, and will take active practice to do well. The transition of the Senior Minister to fully serving as a member of the Board of Trustees, and the transition of the strategic planning and congregational assessment roles into the Board of Trustees will allow the space for these covenanted partnership relationships to grow. It will also require active education and development of new board members into this transformation of the relationships and leadership culture.

It has been our joy to conduct this Governance Assessment of All Souls Church Unitarian. Any questions about this Assessment should be directed to Rev. David Pyle, UUA Central East Region Governance Program Manager, at dpyle@uua.org.

Be well and blessed,

Rev. David Pyle

Congregational Life Consultant and Governance Program Manager

Central East Region of the UUA

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