

# First Unitarian Universalist Church



## GOOD GOVERNANCE Frequently Asked Questions

What do we mean by **governance**?

- o Simply put, governance is the process of decision-making by and for a community and the process by which decisions are implemented or not implemented by and for that community.

What is **good governance**?

- o Good governance has 8 major characteristics:
  - It is **participatory** – everyone is included either directly or through legitimately-selected representatives.
  - It is **consensus-oriented** – it considers all the interests within the community to arrive at the best interest of the community as a whole.
  - It is **accountable** – those making decisions are accountable to those affected by these decisions.
  - It is **transparent** – decisions made are done in a manner that follows rules that are clear and available to all and information regarding those decisions is easily accessible by all.
  - It is **responsive** – it tries to serve all its constituents within a reasonable time frame.
  - It is **effective and efficient** – it produces results that meet the needs of the community while making the best use of available resources
  - It is **equitable and inclusive** – all members of the community have a stake in that community.
  - It **follows the rule of law** – it works within a framework of rules that are enforced impartially.

What is **policy governance**?

- o Policy governance provides a framework for good governance. By recognizing the distinction between visionary leadership and executive leadership it establishes clear lines of authority and responsibility to enable a community to achieve its goals. Under policy governance the provenance of visionary governance lies with the board of trustees and that of executive governance lies with a chief executive, which in a congregational setting will typically be the senior minister.

What is **visionary leadership**?

- o Visionary leadership asks:
  - What does our membership care about, think about, ask about?
  - What's at stake now and in scenarios for the future? What issues or realities do we need to prepare to address?
  - How are our core values expressed in the mission, ends and policies of our congregation?
  - What direction could we go? ... What direction will we go? ...
  - What priority and portion of our resources should we give to each particular end in our vision for the future?

What is **executive leadership**?

- o Executive leadership asks:
  - What programs and initiatives will enable us to make our vision reality?
  - How will our programs and initiatives flow from the energy and creativity of our members?
  - What do we need to change about our current situation to achieve our Ends?
  - Who will be responsible for initiating and managing what programs?
  - How will we manage, update and enhance our resources to achieve our Ends?

What does the policy governance **framework** consist of?

- o The framework consists of four parts: an ends statement and three limitations statements.

What is an **ends statement**?

- o An ends statement states the good things that the congregation wants to accomplish, for whom these good things are intended, and the cost the congregation is willing to bear to achieve these good things.

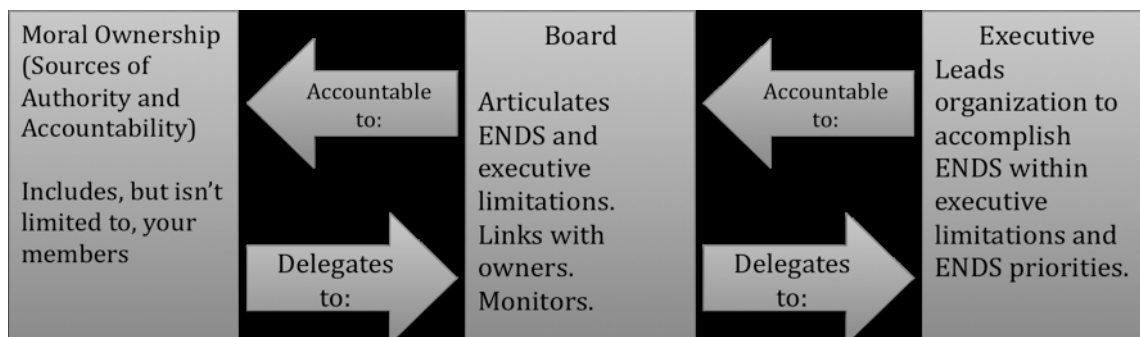
What are **limitations statements**?

- o Limitations statements: 1) establish the boundaries within which the senior minister will operate, 2) establish the boundaries within which the board will operate, and 3) establish the boundaries within which the board and staff will interact.

**Why** is First Church moving to policy governance?

- o Over the past several years the congregation has felt that, at times, some or all of the elements of good governance have been lacking at First Church. After studying the alternatives available to them, the board decided that policy governance offered First Church the best opportunity to, not only achieve the goal of good governance, but also to clearly articulate its mission and goals and to help it achieve them.

What will the lines of **responsibility and accountability** at First Church look like under policy governance?



**Where can I learn more** about policy governance?

- o The Board is in the process of creating a library of policy governance materials.
- o The UUA maintains a website on policy governance which contains a lot of useful information: <http://www.uua.org/events/uuuniversity/2009/144413.shtml>