

Foothills Governance and Decision-Making Process

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The Role of the Board of Trustees

Foothills is a congregational church, which means that the authority ultimately lies in the hands of its members. There is a democratically elected Board that governs by policy. The current Board Policy book can be found [here](#).

The policies and procedures detailed in this handbook are directed by these Board policies. More information about the role of the Board can be found in the Policy book.

The Board of Trustees is in turn governed by the By-Laws of the congregation, which can be found [here](#).

The Role of the Ministers

The congregation is in relationship with two ordained clergy who work in partnership to direct and partner with the paid staff and the members of the community to carry out the ministry of the Church. Any called ministers are held accountable through the Board of Trustees, yet cannot be directly dismissed (or called) by anyone other than the congregation as a whole. More information about calling and dismissing called ministers is detailed in the By-laws.

Hired ministers are hired by the Senior Minister as a part of the staff team, and they are both hired and dismissed in the same way as other hired staff.

However, any professional clergy (including interns) are provided a letter of agreement which describes the particulars of their employment agreement. In the case of any conflict between this Handbook and that letter, the letter is considered primary and accurate for that employment.

The Board delegates the supervision and direction of the paid and volunteer staff to the Senior Minister, and so authority for staff-related decisions reside with the Senior Minister as Head of Staff.

The ministers work as a professional team, grounded in a shared covenant, which can be found [here](#). Their partnership forms the foundation of the Executive Team, which works collaboratively to lead and unify the paid and volunteer staff in directing their efforts in fulfillment of the mission and vision, ensure compliance with By-Laws, Policies and applicable laws, and to uphold a high standard of ethical and professional conduct.

This Executive Team also includes the DFO, and may have additional team members added on either an ad hoc or regular basis at the discretion of the Senior Minister.

Board Vision

Every five to seven years, the Board of Trustees engages the congregation and other stakeholders in developing Vision / Ends Statements for the coming five to seven years. This Vision is delegated to the Senior Minister to be accomplished through the paid and volunteer staff of the congregation.

The Senior Minister is held directly accountable to the Vision through a process of monitoring and oversight by the Board of Trustees. The Senior Minister in turn is responsible for holding their staff team accountable to setting and achieving goals that align with the Vision.

Staff Oversight of Ministries

Each ministry or program in the Church has a designated staff lead, who is responsible for overseeing the activities of the program to ensure full alignment of the Vision of Shared Ministry and our congregational values, as well as compliance with established Operational Procedures. Staff leads regularly connect with the lay leaders of their designated ministries, help with recruitment, program design, development, and execution, and provide both spiritual and logistical support for the participants in the ministry. Ultimately this role prioritizes the spiritual experience and opportunity for deepening in faith formation over any other goals in more traditional “oversight.”

The full list of staff leads for each of our groups and ministries can be found [here](#).

Annually, the staff leads work with the Senior Minister to ensure alignment of the programs with the Vision. In this review, it is possible that some programs or ministries will be deemed either less of a priority than in prior years, or no longer in alignment. In these cases, the Senior Minister will work with the staff lead and the Executive Team to assess how to best ensure a renewed alignment, including the possibility of ending the program or ministry. Further, the staff lead is responsible for working with any program leads or congregants with a new idea at the outset of any new idea, event, or initiative to ensure that it aligns with the Vision, using the “Making Things Happen at Foothills Procedure” found at foothillsuu.org/idea.

Oversight and Reporting

The schedule for Board oversight of the Senior Minister is detailed in the Board Policy book. Most relevant for the employees of the Church are the monthly report by the Senior Minister to the Board, the Annual Report to the congregation, and the Operational Dashboard. Each of these require the cooperation and participation of the staff team in order to accurately represent the status of the Church's programs and ministries and our progress on achieving the Vision.