

FUS Governance Review – Statement of Principles

- Our goal is to unleash the full potential of FUS by organizing our power and facilitating engagement to enhance the lives of our members and the broader community. By having the Board focus on its role of discerning a clear mission for FUS, we hope to accomplish more as we align our energies in a common direction.
- The Board is proposing to concentrate the power to “govern” in the Board and the power to “manage” in the Staff. We are working to define these roles and responsibilities with clear policies. This will make it easier for FUS as a whole to be more efficient and ultimately to have more impact.
- The Board will have responsibility for defining the church’s vision of ministry through a process that engages the congregation and Staff. The Staff will have responsibility to engage the membership in carrying out that vision.
- We intend to provide more opportunity for members to bring their creativity and energy to the development and execution of ideas to fulfill the vision of ministry.
- The Staff will be responsible to the Board for the fulfillment of the vision of ministry, including the selection of programs and ideas to be implemented.
- Councils, committees, and working groups will continue to be teams of talented volunteers who help execute the vision of ministry. They will likely be redefined as ministry teams under the leadership of appropriate Staff members in order to insure alignment with the vision of ministry.

FUS Policy Governance Manual

Definitions

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First Unitarian Society of Madison (FUS) : The First Unitarian Society of Madison is a non-profit, church corporation founded in 1878. FUS is operated according to the terms of its Articles of Incorporation, its By-laws, and the laws of the State of Wisconsin.

Affirmation: The process by which the Board, after an initial review of a policy drafted by the GFT, approves the release of the draft policy for wider discussion and review.

Congregation: The Congregation members, who are the highest governing authority in the Society, are those members who are eligible to vote. That eligibility is set forth in the Society's Articles of Incorporation and By-laws.

Core Values: Core Values are those values and behaviors that the Church intends to honor in all of its endeavors. The Unitarian Universalist Principles are an example of Core Values. The question, "What principles do we intend to observe, no matter what?" helps lead to the discovery of Core Values.

Governance: Governance is a collective, democratic process that produces lasting policies designed to direct many individual decisions. It is best accomplished through democratic or representative bodies, including Congregational meetings, the Board of Trustees, Board Committees, and Board working groups. The Board of Trustees, under the leadership of the President, is responsible for leading the governance of the Church.

Ministry: Ministry is the practical work of the Church, and consists of continually choosing means and methods, allocating resources, hiring staff, recruiting volunteers, and giving them leadership and support that will enable them to serve the mission of the Church effectively. Ministry is best accomplished through empowered ministry teams of people who share a sense of calling to particular forms of service. The Senior Minister, as the called spiritual leader and designated ministry team leader, is responsible for directing the Church's ministry in accordance with Board policies.

Ministry Team: Includes the staff and all volunteers who plan, organize and carry out the work of the church on a day to day basis.

Mission: The Church's mission is the good that the congregation means to do, whom it hopes to serve, and how. It answers the question, "Whose lives do we intend to impact and in what way?"

Strategic Plan: The strategic plan contains the Church's longest-range plans. A strategic plan answers the question, "What major choices have we made about how we will fulfill our mission?"

Trial Run: The Board intends to initially adopt these policies for a one-year trial. During the year, policies will continue to be developed and necessary changes will be implemented. At the end of the Trial Run, the process will be evaluated and a determination will be made with respect to permanent adoption.

Vision: A vision is a statement about what the Church wants to become. It is a star to guide by, an imagined future state of the Church as it becomes a better vehicle to serve our Mission. It answers the question, "What will our Church look like if we serve our Mission well?"