

The First Congregational Church of Darien

The Governing Structure of Our Church

Our Church is based on consensus and every Member is a minister. Annual Meetings typically take place in February, Part I: finance/budget; and in May, Part II: annual report, nomination and election of officers and Boards, bylaws changes, etc.; as the church calendar permits. Such other business as may properly come before the meeting may be transacted at either section of the Annual Meeting. Additional meetings of the entire Congregation are called as needed, for example: the calling of a Minister; and can be petitioned for.

- **please see the official bylaws that follow for details.**

In between membership meetings, the **Church Council**, chaired by our **Church Moderator**, is authorized to act as the primary policy-making body of the Church. The Council is assisted by our **four Boards: Deacons, Christian Education, Christian Outreach and Stewards**. The chairs of these Boards sit on the Church Council, along with nine At Large Members, the ordained Clergy, the Church Clerk, the Church Historian, the Chairs of Communications and Nominating and the President[s] of the Women's Association.

All meetings of our Council and Boards, that are not executive sessions, are open to the Members, who may attend but are without vote or voice unless recognized to speak. In addition there are numerous standing committees, as well as ad hoc committees that are appointed as needed. **Please see the list, indicated with a special tab for your convenience, of our Clergy & Staff, Council, Board and Committee members for 2008-2009.**

Council has the following committees that report to them: **Communications, Nominating, and the Pledge Campaign**. In addition, the Moderator is the Chair of the **Personnel Committee** which reviews/recommends changes to our personnel policies and procedures; reviews employee personnel evaluations/salaries; serves as a clearinghouse for all information regarding personnel; and serves as a reconciling body for grievances and disputes concerning Church personnel.

The Board of Deacons is responsible for leading the spiritual life of the Church together with our Ministers. The Deacons provide advice to Ministers on the overall form and content of our Sunday worship services, including music, and also help in several ways in implementing such services (recruiting greeters,

ushering and collecting offerings, reading scripture, serving communion, etc.). Deacons also are responsible for membership, caring for our members in time of need and provide general assistance to our professional ministerial staff. The Chair of the Board of Deacons also Chairs the **Pastoral Relations Committee** which provides for confidential communication between the Ministers and the Church.

The Board of Christian Education provides and maintains educational programs for our Church which include Church School, youth ministry, adult education, Bible study and discussion groups and fellowship activities which promote the educational activity of the Church. Christian Education establishes policy and programs; develops curriculum; recommends and administers budgets; recruits and trains personnel; operates the Church Library; and provides policy guidance and review for the Church's weekday Nursery School.

The Board of Christian Outreach provides and maintains effective programs of outreach, both local and worldwide. Outreach identifies social and moral issues or practices of concern; and recommends, when appropriate, statements and programs for consideration by the wider Church; develops programs or courses of action as necessary; prepares a benevolence budget; and recommends the designation and allocation of special Outreach offerings.

The Board of Stewards is responsible for the care and custody of the real and personal property of the Church, including maintenance of Church buildings and grounds; the receiving and disbursing of monies and the administering the financial affairs of the Church; and the raising of money and the establishment and monitoring of endowment funds for the support of the Church, its programs and operations. Stewards makes recommendations to Church Council as to the acceptance of gifts and their usage; keeps appropriate financial records, including periodic audits; submits an annual financial report and quarterly investment reports; makes appropriate financial recommendations; and prepares the Annual Church Budget for review and approval by Church Council and the Congregation.