

The current bylaws and associated governance structure have played a meaningful role in enabling the remarkable ministry that has flourished at FCC over the past several decades. However, in today's rapidly evolving environment, conversations with FCC staff and lay leaders have surfaced several persistent and unsustainable challenges within the existing governance structure. We also recognize our peer churches have shifted to other governance models. These issues underscore the need for thoughtful revision to best equip FCC to pursue even more effective and transformative ministry in the years ahead.

The bylaws as currently drafted were adopted in 2006, almost 20 years ago, and in fact represent a governance model that dates even further back to the 1940s. While God is unchanging, God's church continues to change, moving forward to meet the current needs of God's people, the community, and the wider world. It's worth considering how well the church governance structure meets those needs and in particular, whether critical ministry areas could flourish under a revised governance structure.

One significant challenge we face is the disproportionate amount of time and energy required to maintain our current governance structure versus focused effort on living out our mission and vision. With 67 elected positions needing to be filled from a total church membership of just 300, the model is no longer sustainable as mandated by the bylaws. In fact, we have struggled to fill all positions for several years, partially because many of our congregants are serving in non-elected ministry positions. These observations highlight the need for change.

Of these 67 positions, 60 serve across seven distinct ministry boards, each with specific responsibilities and accountabilities. These boards report up to the Church Board, which holds overall fiduciary responsibility to govern the church. However, decision-making authority has been delegated to the ministry boards within their specific oversight areas. Because each board meets only once a month, decisions that require collaboration or cross-board input often become prolonged and cumbersome, sometimes taking several months to resolve, hindering effective decision-making.

In today's fast-paced world, our members face increasing demands on their time. We must create space for them to engage meaningfully in ministry, community, and spiritual growth—without being overwhelmed by administrative burdens that our bylaws constrain us to. As it stands, serving on a ministry board often means sacrificing the opportunity to participate in mission-focused activities. This trade-off limits our ability to live out our calling in practical and meaningful ways. To move forward faithfully and effectively, we need to reimagine a governance structure that is more flexible, mission-oriented, and aligned with the evolving needs and capacities of our congregation.

Another key challenge area is that the bylaws come across to many current FCC members and attenders as outdated or potentially sexist in having two distinct deacon boards, one solely for men and one solely for women, with specific responsibilities assigned primarily based on gender and not gifting. This contradicts the Biblical understanding that our denomination and church have discerned that women are equally called and gifted, which is reflected in FCC's blend of men and women pastors and staff leaders that work together seamlessly. All other FCC boards are not so restrictive, nor are the other ministries of the church in practice.

The recently adopted Joint Diaconate Policy has specifically enabled the Deacon Boards to effectively operate together, with equally shared responsibilities and accountabilities. Nevertheless, the bylaws still separate men and women in an important care ministry of the church. Moreover, the Joint Diaconate Policy implies that a Bylaws change would be preferable, but a policy pathway was pursued more for expediency.

The ministry work carried out by our boards is vital and will continue—but the governance structure supporting it does not need to remain exactly as it is for that ministry to thrive. We believe that updating our governance model will better position us to meet the needs of our ministries both now and in the future, allowing focus on other critical ministries, such as youth and prayer ministries. By doing so, we can focus our collective energy on living out our mission and vision in ways that are vibrant, sustainable, and deeply impactful.