

January 2021

Proposal to change By-laws

Presented by the Session

Proposed changes:

1. Decrease the number of Elders from nine (9) to six (6)
2. No longer require the Clerk of Session to be chairperson of the Nominating Ministry Team (c€committee)

1. Current By-Law with proposed changes noted:

- a. There shall be ~~nine (9)~~ six (6) Elders – Trustees making up the membership of the Unicameral Board. Each year at a Congregational meeting ~~three (3)~~ two (2) Elders – Trustees shall be elected to serve a term of three (3) years. Other Elders – Trustees, if necessary, shall be elected to fill unexpired terms. No Elder – Trustee shall be eligible to serve on the Unicameral Board for more than two (2) consecutive full or partial terms. An Elder – Trustee, who having served two (2) consecutive full or partial terms, shall not be eligible for election again until after two (2) years have elapsed since their last service on the Unicameral Board.
- b. **Information regarding the proposed By-Law change:**
 - i. This proposed change was approved at the November 30, 2020 Session meeting.
 - ii. Background
 1. The Nominating Ministry team (committee) is tasked with nominating individuals whom they have prayerfully discerned to be called by God to be Elders.
 2. The nominating process is one that is done with much prayer and discernment.
 3. At the beginning of each year, at the first Nominating Ministry team (committee) meeting the responsibilities of the team are reviewed. The process of identifying individuals is reviewed. The importance of prayer and discernment is stressed. The idea that we “simply need to fill a spot” is discussed and dismissed because it is not about filling a spot, it is about listening to God and only nominating those individuals that God raises up. This may mean that a slate is presented with vacancies, as we have seen last year. However, an incomplete slate means that the Nominating Ministry team (committee) needs to work that much harder

to fill the vacancies and/or the Session operates with less than the deemed number of Elders that the By-laws state.

4. In 2018, we approved changing the By-Laws so that we would have six (6) Deacons instead of three (3). This means that the Nominating committee went from having to discern and nominate three (3) Elders and one (1) Deacon to two (Deacons). This change, while it does not seem like much, increased our nominated and elected officers from twelve (12) to fifteen (15). When the Deacon board was formed we had twelve (12) Elders. In order to form the Deacon board three (3) elected officer positions were taken from the Session to create the Deacon board. This reduced the number of Elders to nine (9) instead of twelve (12). By reducing the number of Elders from nine (9) to six (6), we would be returning to having twelve (12) officers in the church and the same number that the Nominating Ministry team (committee) used to be responsible for discerning and nominating.

iii. Rationale:

1. Over the past three years it has been increasingly difficult to find individuals who are willing to be nominated and elected to be an Elder.

iv. Perceived benefits this change will have:

1. By making this change, it is thought that the Nominating Ministry team (committee) will be able to prayerfully discern enough individuals who are willing to be nominated and elected to be an Elder, so that a full slate will be placed in nomination for election.
2. With the current situation of vacancies, every current active Elder must be in attendance or we will not have a quorum. By decreasing the number of Elders and being able to have a full slate of Elders the monthly meetings will be able to continue as scheduled even if an Elder or two needs to be excused.

v. Changes that may potentially need to be made:

1. The current Ministry team (committee) structure may need to be revised moving from the current eight Ministry teams to six Ministry teams (or perhaps something else) so that each Ministry team will have an Elder sitting on it.
2. The current Ministry team (committee) structure may remain the same, but a couple of Elders would need to sit on two Ministry teams.
3. The quorum would need to be adjusted to take into consideration the decreased numbers.

2. Current By-Law with proposed changes noted:

- a. Once a year at the duly constituted annual congregational meeting, a committee, hereinafter called the Nominating Ministry team (committee), shall be elected to serve for a period of one (1) year. It shall be this committee's function to place in nomination Elders – Trustees and Deacons for regular three (3) year terms and to nominate Elders – Trustees and Deacons to fill unexpired terms. This committee shall consist of the

following: two (2) members from the congregation at large to be elected at each annual meeting of the congregation; two (2) members of the Session, one of whom shall be the Clerk of Session ~~who will serve as chairman~~; and one (1) member each to be appointed by the following church organizations: Senior High Youth and Christian Education Ministry Team (committee). The Pastor (Teaching Elder) will be an ex-officio member.

b. Information regarding the proposed By-Law change:

- i. This proposed change was approved at the October 26, 2020 Session meeting.
- ii. Background:
 1. Currently our By-laws state that the Clerk of Session will chair the Nominating Ministry team (committee). We currently have a wonderful Clerk of Session who would like to continue as Clerk, but does not feel that her gifts lie in moderating a Ministry team.
- iii. Rationale:
 1. Our current Clerk of Session is doing an incredible job fulfilling the responsibilities as Clerk, but she does not want to moderate the Nominating Ministry team (committee). She has expressed concern of continuing as Clerk if she is required to continue moderating the Nominating Ministry team.
- iv. Perceived benefits:
 1. We will be able to keep a well-qualified and excellent Clerk of Session
 2. In the midst of the current problems of being able to find individuals who are willing to be nominated as Elders, it would be nice not to need to find a new Clerk.
- v. Changes that will need to be made:
 1. At the first meeting of the newly formed Nominating Ministry team (committee), the team will need to elect a moderator.
 2. The pastor, as ex-officio member, will need to call and moderate the first meeting, until the moderator is elected, then that person would take over responsibility for running the meeting.