

Governance Task Group Q & A

1. Q. What is the Florida Disciples of Christ Regional Governance Task Group?

A. The Governance Task Group is one body commissioned by the Florida Regional Assembly in 2016 as part of the strategic plan for the Florida Disciples Regional Church. At that time, the region established 14 building blocks as part of this Strategic Plan for a transformed regional church.

One of those building blocks, number 4, addressed “streamlining governance”. The region has limited resources and "streamlining governance structures and committees would free up time and energy of staff and volunteers for doing the actual ministry of the region..." The basic structure of the church is described in the bylaws of the region therefore that document is the one addressed to re-form the governance of the region so there could be "more time spent in direct mission work with others and in the nurture of individuals and congregations in faith and effectiveness".

2. Q. How many other committees or task groups are working on a part of the strategic plan?

A. There have been sections of a few building blocks that have been addressed, but none in the entirety that building block 4 has received.> There has been some work in clergy peer groups and a regional church stewardship initiative. There is a good start on the Annual Planning Event > building block. However, many of the building blocks will have a direct or indirect response or reaction to the “streamlining governance” building block. This building block is crucial when conducting business and doing both routine and periodic tasks of the region.

3. Q. What are the governance documents that will be modified or changed?

A. The primary document is the bylaws of the Christian Church Disciples of Christ in Florida. The proposed document will now be called The Design of the Florida

Disciples of Christ Regional Church. This new document is not a simple rewrite of the previous bylaws but is a totally new concept for the region.

The Regional Governance Task Group has been working on this for over a year, meeting more than 25 times for periods of one to three days and has collaborated with team members in between those gatherings. Needless to say, there has been much effort that has gone into the building block 4 area, and most at the expense of the individuals serving on the task group.

Additionally, as the design is implemented, there will be a need for changes of supporting documents and maybe some additional > documents which would outline the routine or day to day processes and procedures of a commission, committee, or area. Some commissions and committees have operating procedures they must follow because of the General Church processes for conducting business and licensing or ordaining clergy. Other committees may find they need to change their documentation either minimally or dramatically as we note the impact of the new design on the commissions, committees, congregations, and region.

4. Q. What are the biggest changes in the design?

A. The most dramatic changes will be to the Leadership Council. The Leadership Council will do the major project planning and policy/business of the region. Partners in the Leadership Council will come from every congregation in the region. In other words, each church will designate and formally recognize a member of that congregation to serve as a partner on the Leadership Council. The congregation will be responsible for the expenses encored by that partner. The Leadership Council will meet three times each year. The vision in this new concept is that there will be a sharing of information between congregation and region as well as congregation and congregation.

There is an administrative team, a much smaller group, that will assure the intent and actions of the Leadership Council are carried out and monitor business which requires attention between Leadership Council gatherings.

5. Q. When and how will The Design be implemented?

A. The design will be implemented in the fall of 2017. The goal is to have the congregations submit the name of a partner by August 2017. September 15, 16, 2017 will be the first Leadership Council. The primary focus of business will be training the new council and conducting any business needing attention until the next meeting which will be January 2018.

The current bylaws will be suspended at the September 2017 meeting and we will transition to the design which will be the model in which business of the region is conducted until the Regional Assembly in the Fall of 2018. At that next Regional Assembly, the design will either be accepted or rejected. If accepted, the region will continue to function under the design. If rejected, the region will unsuspend the current bylaws and revert to the present structure and a new team will start over on a new governance.

6. Q. Doesn't a change in structure need to be presented to the Regional Assembly?

A. Our current bylaws say that any changes will be presented to the regional assembly. However, the regional assembly also approved the strategic plan along with the building blocks for implementation. The current regional board prayerfully considered how to approach this change, and concurred that a trial period of about a year to experiment with and experience the new design was a logical intent of the regional assembly's direction. Generally, this was seen as the intent of the documentation and a positive step toward implementing a major part of the strategic plan.