

# Questions/Comments Recently Heard about Eliot's Governance

Our full governance policy can be found on the Eliot website [here](#).

*"We moved to Policy Governance and did away with congregational polity."*

Congregational polity is alive and well at Eliot and not at all inconsistent with Policy Governance. Only the congregation can call a minister at Eliot Chapel. The congregation votes on Board members to represent it. There is no central authority at the UUA which makes decisions affecting Eliot Chapel. Policy Governance is simply the most effective method to govern a church of our size.

*"Policy Governance delegates a lot to the Lead Minister."*

On a day-to-day basis, our Lead Minister fields suggestions, complaints and any number of matters related to the operation of the Chapel's programs. She makes decisions based on the budget, other programs, available resources and the goals the Board has established. The Board holds her accountable for making progress toward our Ends, but this is only possible if she also has the freedom to select the means.

*"What if I disagree with something our Lead Minister has decided?"*

Members can, of course, approach Rev. Barbara about their concerns. OurEliot is also available, should living into our [Congregational Covenant](#) be at risk. Rev. Barbara is free to pursue programs that further our Ends, as long as they do not violate our limitations policies, or the "curbs" we place on the Lead Minister.

*"What sort of oversight does the Board have once they've delegated a decision to the Lead Minister?"*

I meet with Rev. Barbara almost weekly and she participates in all monthly Board meetings. She prepares the annual budget but the Board must approve it. All of our governance policies are monitored at least once annually. If the Lead Minister – or the Board, for that matter -- are ever found to be non-compliant on a policy, there must be an accepted plan to return to compliance.

*"In the past, we just formed a committee and did what needed to be done."*

This may have worked when we were a smaller church and coordination was easier. At over 550 adult members, we need a strong Lead Minister, a great staff and well-coordinated lay leadership to further the mission of the church. Rev. Barbara is always listening to input and looking for new leaders to operate programs which further our Ends.

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*"We need more congregational meetings to decide things."*

Congregational meetings are effective for large, sweeping issues on which there has been adequate preparation. In a congregation of our size, most issues are best handled by a called leader who gathers information, uses her best judgment and exercises clear authority to work toward our Ends.

Any questions on these or other governance issues?  
Feel free to reach out to me.

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