



The Effective Congregation Council

ESSENTIAL FOR A VITAL CONGREGATION

When they asked you to serve why did you say yes?

What do you hope your congregation will accomplish this year?

The legal duties of the Congregational Council

- ▶ You are the Board of Directors of a Minnesota charitable corporation
- ▶ The Pastor is (typically) the Executive Director of the corporation.
- ▶ The Pastor is a member of the council even if they are without vote.
- ▶ The Board governs the organization by setting policies and holding the Executive Director, and the membership, and itself accountable to these policies
- ▶ The three duties...
 - ▶ Duty of Care
 - ▶ Duty of Loyalty
 - ▶ Duty of Obedience

The three key questions the council needs to focus on...

- ▶ **Mission** – “Are we advancing a mission plan that is making an impact for Christ both in the congregation and in the community? Are we doing it well?”
- ▶ **Communication** – “Is this congregation telling a persuasive story of this mission in the congregation & in the community?”
- ▶ **Resources** – “Is this congregation growing new leaders & generous members?”

Excellent Council Members...

- ▶ Prepare for and attend meetings
- ▶ Take part in discussions
- ▶ Focus on policies, not management
- ▶ Don't do other people's work
- ▶ Speak with one voice or not at all

The work of the council

- ▶ The Executive Committee
 - ▶ Planning meetings
 - ▶ Preparing the agenda, protecting the agenda
- ▶ Standing Committees, board, organizations
- ▶ Nothing comes to the Council without a WRITTEN recommendation for action
- ▶ Your constitution is your friends – review every 3 year
- ▶ Parliamentary procedure is your friend
- ▶ “The council speaks with one voice or not at all.”

A well-planned agenda is essential for an effective Council

- ▶ The Agenda should be planned by more than one person (such as the Executive Committee)
- ▶ One agenda should build on prior agendas...
- ▶ ... and look forward to what is coming in coming weeks.
- ▶ “Whose responsibility is this?” Boards and committees understand what they should decide on their own and what goes to the Council.

Who should plan the meeting & agenda?

- ▶ The Chair (President) is responsible for executing the agenda but should not develop it alone.
- ▶ Best practice – the Executive Committee plans & shares it, at least a week in advance.
- ▶ The pastor must approve the agenda but should not develop alone make it alone.
- ▶ Two more best practices:
 - ▶ That all action items must come from one of the committees or the Executive Committee with specific language and a recommendation
 - ▶ That the agenda is developed by the Executive Committee and that any additional items must receive a 2/3 vote to be put on the agenda


Consider an “action agenda.”

- ▶ Open with faith formation—bible or book study, or at least a solid devotion.
- ▶ Consent Agenda: Agenda, minutes, routine reports.
- ▶ Action Items:
 - ▶ What do we need to decide today?
 - ▶ What do we need to work on now to decide at a future meeting
- ▶ Items we can see coming:
 - ▶ Example: Decide on spring how you will build a spending plan for the Annual Meeting
- ▶ Council highlights for the newsletter.
- ▶ Evaluation, pray and adjourn.

The minutes...

What they are and are not.

- ▶ A record of the actions taken at a meeting...
- ▶ NOT a record of the discussion.
- ▶ The minutes should not be released until they are official after they are reviewed, corrected (if needed) and approved by the council.
- ▶ Talk about be "Council Highlights" published promptly.
 - ▶ Bullet points are good for this.



What is one change you can make to how your council operates that would make a difference?