

Trinity Leadership Team Structure Updates 2024

Over the last 18 months, Trinity's Leadership Team and Consistories have been working alongside pastor and consultant Dave Bartlett to address the lids in our current structure. In many areas we have been encouraged and affirmed, especially noticing Trinity's long history of visionary leadership. After our work we have approved a proposal to make some updates to our Leadership Team structure.

Why Update?

Trinity has had a number of leadership structures that have served us in different seasons. When Trinity was a much smaller congregation, leadership decisions were primarily carried out by the Consistory (the name of all of our elders and deacons). Because of growth in our congregation and staff, we moved to a different structure that included the formation of the Leadership Team in the early 2000s. In 2020, Trinity enfolded with First Reformed Church of Hospers, shifting our leadership structure once again to fit our new needs as a multisite church.

The challenge we face with our structure today is that our Leadership Team has a high turnover rate due to our staggered 3 year term. This has made it difficult to maintain momentum as at least 2 of our 7 Leadership Team members come off and on each year. **Our goal is to extend the time Leadership Team members can serve without coming off.** We believe this will lead to:

- Greater continuity on our Leadership Team.
- Greater effectiveness in what our Leadership Team can accomplish.
- Greater accountability for our staff.

Update 1: Leadership Team Member Term Length

We are **proposing that Leadership Team members serve up to 4 year terms, with the possibility of serving a second consecutive term** after approval from the congregation. This means that Leadership Team members could serve up to 8 years at a time, at which point they would be required to come off the Leadership Team for at least one year. With the potential for longer terms, our Leadership Team will annually evaluate each member to determine if it's healthy and helpful for them to continue in their role for another year. This means that while Leadership Team terms would be 4 years, the expectation is not that members must serve a full 4 years. There may be variety such as 3, 5, or 7 years, depending on the annual discernment and assessment of the Leadership Team members.

With this structure there may be some years where there are no new Leadership Team members, while some years there may be 3 or more. Even with this variance, we believe a longer length of term will add continuity and momentum to our Leadership Team.

Update 2: Selection Process and Slate

While the vast majority of our structure and process will stay the same (see more about our process [here](#)), we do plan to present our Leadership Team slate differently. In the past we used a single slate / double slate where the congregation would select their preferred candidate. Most recently at our Orange City campus we have had a double slate with the casting of lots. **Going forward, we would like to present a single slate for our Leadership Team. This slate would include new nominees and existing Leadership Team members who are seeking to be affirmed for a second term.** If this slate were not to be affirmed by the congregation, we would then have a congregational vote to individually affirm or deny Leadership Team nominees. Our ministry elder and ministry deacon slates will remain the same.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Will there be a lack of accountability of the Leadership Team and staff.

It has been demonstrated that longevity and continuity within leadership roles actually creates a stronger climate of accountability. Trust is an essential ingredient within a leadership framework. There are no shortcuts to developing trust. It's a process that requires time and consistency. Also, it has been shown that accountability of the staff and leadership in a large, diverse congregation cannot be the responsibility of the whole congregation. It must be built into the leadership structure. We believe extending the terms of the Leadership Team members will increase accountability for both staff and the Leadership Team.

2. Will this create a closed system with only hand-picked "yes" people involved.

The Leadership Team and the staff of Trinity have clearly stated that they want nothing to do with a closed leadership structure. There are too many dangers associated with a closed system. By protecting the nomination process, which involves a Nominating Team that operates independently from the Leadership Team, an open system that is continually looking for new leaders and new ideas is maintained.

3. Will the congregation have less ownership in the mission of Trinity Church because they are not able to be involved in making decisions.

Decision making is not decreased in Trinity's structure. More decisions are made by the people who are doing the ministries. For instance, the Mission Team will make decisions regarding missions, the Children's Ministry Team will make decisions regarding children, and so on. A common struggle found in larger churches that are still operating under a traditional leadership structure is that volunteers and staff who are actively involved in leading and serving in various ministries feel powerless and unable to make decisions for themselves. A leadership structure that empowers ministry leaders naturally nurtures ownership. With the congregation empowered to make decisions in the areas they are serving and the Leadership Team being charged with defining the broad boundaries and helping hold up the vision and values we have named as a church, we believe Trinity will be able to better build trust between staff, the congregation, and the lay leaders, and be more effective in accomplishing our mission.

4. What do we do if we don't know a person or multiple people on a slate? Could we just leave it blank? Yes, this has been an option that actually we have been using already. In our current voting process we have people not vote on all of the slates. We do calculate the vote based on "yes" vs. "no" votes rather than "yes" vs total votes already. Anyone always has the option of not voting on a particular slate if they feel they don't have enough information to affirm the slate.

5. Should we make sure that at least 1 new LT member comes on every year? While we would also affirm that new ideas and new people are valuable and important, with serving 8 years maximum, Every LT member (7 total currently) will be replaced at least once every 8 years. While in this structure there will be more variance year to year, most years we will see at least one new LT member coming on. Rather than locking us in to requiring a new person, we believe having healthy and honest conversations with our sitting LT on when the right time is to step down will be more important.

6. Do we require that both genders are represented on the LT? Trinity affirms the leadership of both men and women in every area of leadership in our church. We believe we are better and stronger when we have more diversity around our leadership tables. In our nomination process, our Nominations team is reminded each year of this value and is instructed in putting forth slates of people that represent this diversity. We believe that our Nominations Team should be empowered to live into this value and to make decisions on what would be the best slate to bring to the congregation rather than requiring quotas in different categories for our Leadership Team.

Other Questions

In our process we received input and feedback from both Consistories, and are hoping to also hear from the congregation. If after reading these updates and FAQs you have additional questions or you would like to give feedback, please join us for one of our Sunday morning in-person sessions:

- Orange City Campus: **Jan 28th at 10:30am** (Rooms 1-2), **Feb 4th at 9:00am** (Rooms 3-4)
- Hospers Campus: **Feb 4th at 10:15am** (Fellowship Hall)

You can also talk to Andy Keller, Dave Van Den Brink, Naboth Netten or any of our [Leadership Team members](#).