

## St. Andrew's Structure II

This week's Gospel story introduces us to an interesting character: Nicodemus. Although Nicodemus was part of the establishment, it seems that he had an inquisitive mind and was willing to explore new ideas.

A new idea that we are exploring here at St. Andrew's United Church in Harvey is a change to our governance structure. The model we, the Session and the Official Board, are recommending is called a Unified Board. Some congregations who use this model call it a Council of Elders.

In this model, instead of having a Session and a Board of Stewards (or committee), the congregation elects Elders who perform both of these functions at the same time. This means that there are fewer people needed and fewer meetings. We think it is also a healthier way to make decisions with all factors considered at the same time, rather than in separate meetings by different groups.

There have been times when Session, or another committee, would decide to do a special program but had to wait for Official Board to meet to approve funds or facilities. With a Unified Board model, all concerned parties would be present at the same meeting sharing all the same information.

Our organization would still include certain committees that are mandated, like Ministry & Personnel, and many of the committees we rely on to do so much of the work of the church: Catering and UCW, just for examples.

Meetings of the Unified Board would look a lot like our Official Board meetings except that there would not have been a separate Session meeting. Committee chairs would be present as well. It is quite possible that some (or all) of the elected Elders might be committee chairs.

Unified Board is an apt name for the vision we have in mind because it indicates a unified effort, working together for the future of our ministry in this place. After all, we are called the United Church.