

**To: Church of the Holy Trinity Parish**  
**From: Transition Committee**  
**Re: Background Report on Governance prior to Cottage Meetings**  
**Date: October 2008**

The Holy Trinity Transition Committee has been working since March of 2007. Part of its Terms of Reference includes a responsibility to clarify the governance model for the parish. The Committee undertook a survey of the parish on governance matters this spring as part of that mandate. At the end of June the Transition Committee reported to the parish the results of the survey.

Some of the key responses to the survey indicated that :

- ❖ there is a lack of transparency in our communications
- ❖ communications are inadequate.
- ❖ the lines of accountability are not clear.
- ❖ the Wardens are unsure of the limits of their authority.
- ❖ there is a lot of uncertainty around conflict resolution.

The survey also indicated that :

- People do not have a clear idea of how the governance system at HT works
- People are concerned about the heavy workload of the Wardens.
- People value a democratic, consultative decision-making process.
- People want a system of shared ministry and shared governance.
- There was also interest in experimenting with new forms and models of governance

The Transition Committee concluded that:

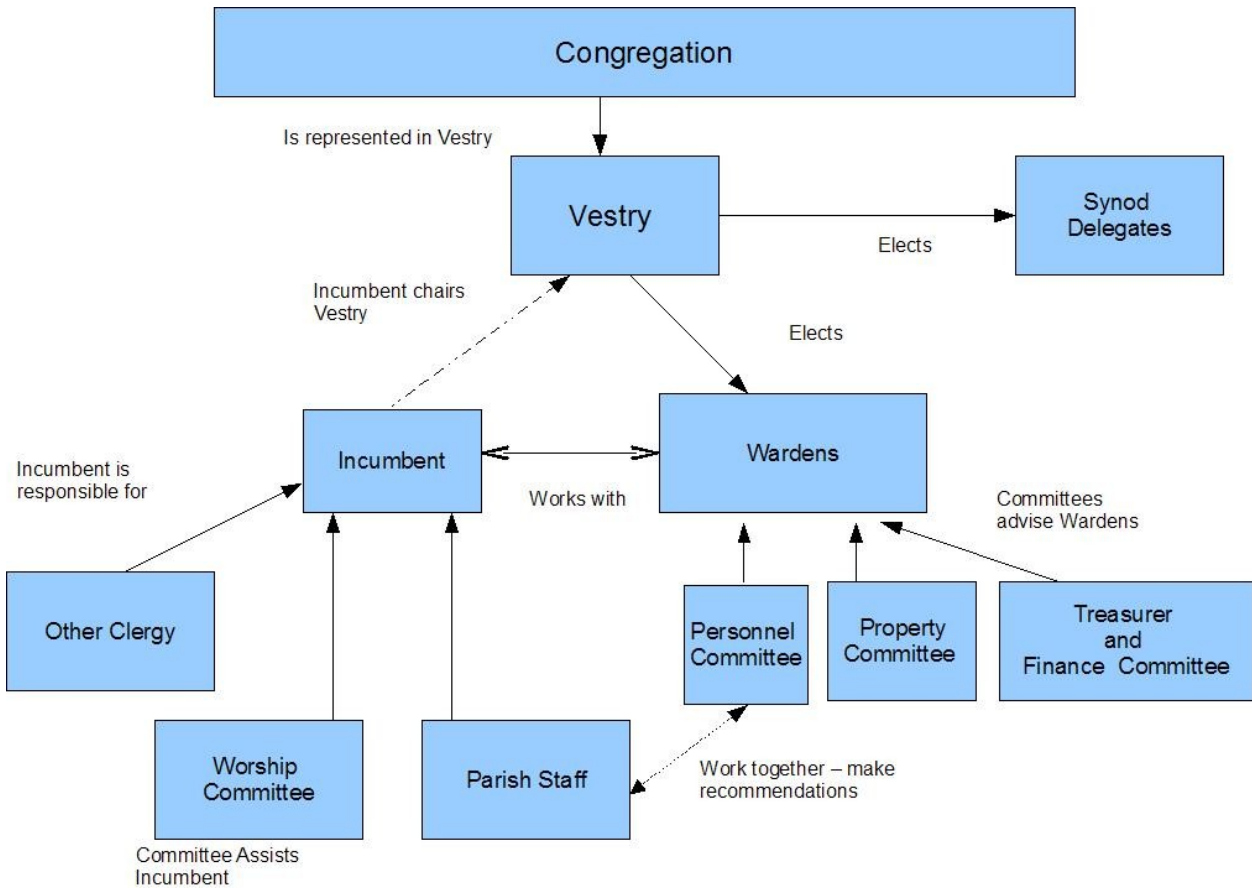
- The issue of governance serves both a practical and symbolic function in our parish.
  - it is practical because decisions need to get made and they need to be good and timely.
  - It is symbolic because it has to do with power and authority - two issues, the misuse of which have been at the heart of HT's public justice ministry.
- Wardens seem unclear about the nature, scope and limits of their authority and it would not be surprising if the Incumbent shared this lack of clarity.
- People don't know how to work conflict out, and this lack of resolution increases the workload of wardens (and other leaders) and contributes to the lack of clarity.
- In practice, people think of authority emanating from the Vestry, not the Diocese; as a result, they want parish leaders to be accountable to Vestry in the first instance.

The Transition Committee further proposed that a day long Vestry occur in 2009 to work on governance and visioning. Some members of the parish thought this was too long to wait so the Committee proposed and the Wardens agreed that an alternative Governance model should be presented for discussion at parish wide “home” or “cottage” meetings in October and November so that everyone would have a chance to express their opinions in small informal groups. The Committee will then consider feedback and make an appropriate proposal to our regular Annual Vestry in February of 2009.

## Our Current Governance Model

Our current Governance Model can be described by reference to the following chart.

It attempts to show how the various incumbent, the wardens and the committees work together in the day to day governance of the parish. It doesn't extend beyond the parish other than to indicate our representation in Synod. It also does not go deeply into those committees who represent the activities of the parish such as the refugee committee, social justice or other committees of that nature. The diagram simplifies some complex concepts as well as interactions. The standard "reports to" lines just don't work in a church for many reasons. So we've tried to give some indication of what kind of relationships exist.



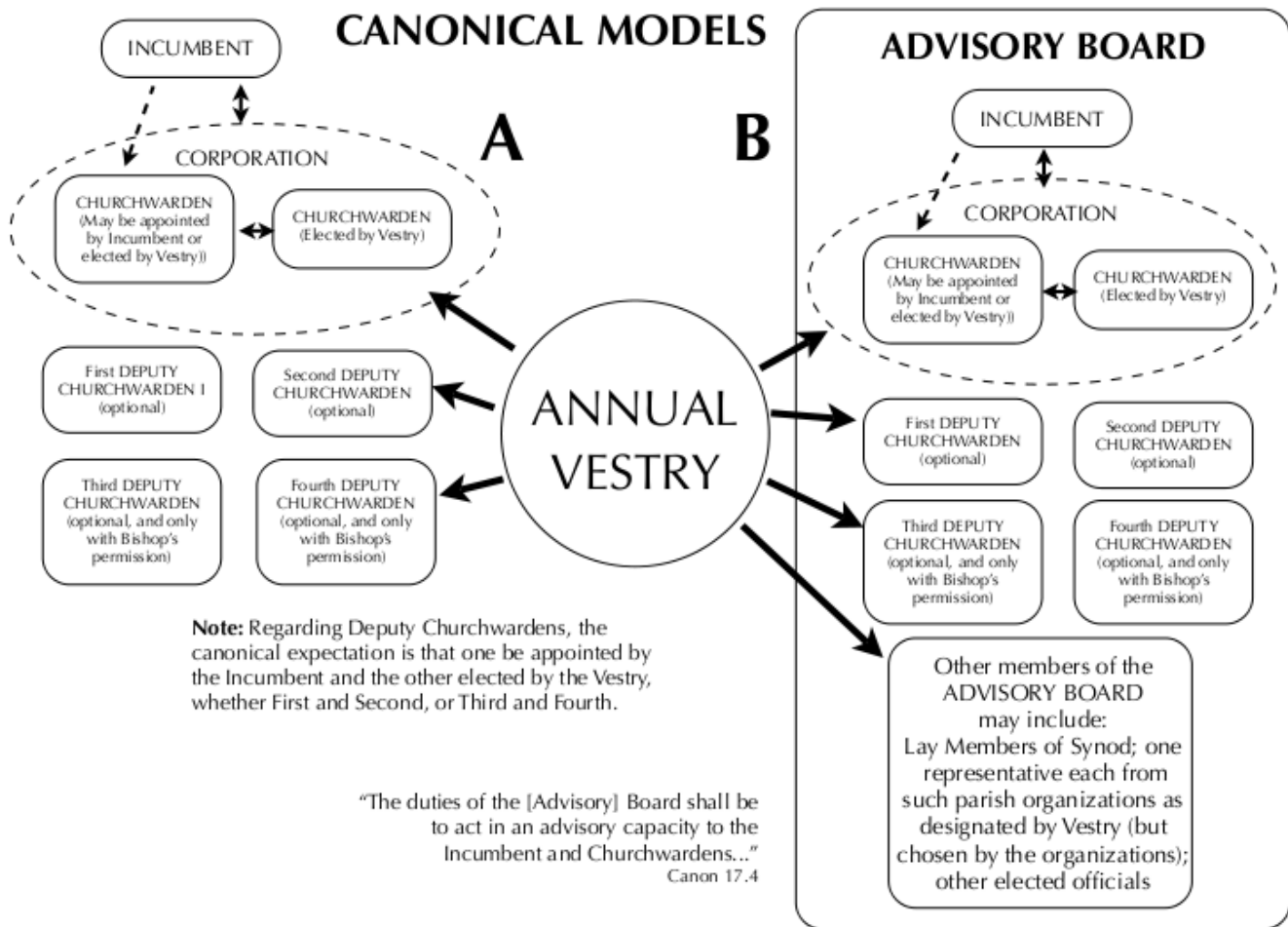
# Parish Governance According to Diocesan Rules (Canons)

Holy Trinity has had many forms of governance over the last 40 years. In each case the parish has tried to adapt the official rules (called canons) to fit the emerging needs of the parish. The official rules have also changed a lot over the last 40 years. The next chart tries to show what Holy Trinity governance would look like if we just accepted the current rules.

Basically, it works like this:

The **Incumbent** is responsible for worship, including music, frequency and shape. The Incumbent is also in charge of other ordained persons appointed to work in the parish either in a paid or voluntary capacity. The Incumbent chairs Vestry.

The **churchwardens** are responsible for property and money, lay employees and lay officers of the church. They form a corporation that can sue and be sued. They are also responsible for keeping order during worship. In order to act, churchwardens must agree. In matters of property, churchwardens and the Incumbent must agree.



Where the Incumbent declines to appoint one of the churchwardens, all churchwardens may be elected by **Vestry**. Deputy Churchwardens may also be elected. With the permission of the Bishop, more than 2 deputy Churchwardens may be elected. The churchwardens are responsible to Vestry.

The Vestry elects annually an **Advisory Board** to advise the Incumbent and Churchwardens. The Advisory Board should meet monthly. The board shall be made up of a representative of each parish organization, the lay delegates to Synod, at least two members of vestry along with the Incumbent and Churchwardens. The Advisory Board elects its own chair.

### An Alternative Model for Discussion

At the Cottage meetings we will offer a third model for discussion. As we reported in June, this model will be based on the image of the circle rather than the pyramid. In all these cases we invite you to consider the following:

1. How do our Christian spiritual beliefs relate to the design of our governance process?
2. What is the spiritual dimension of administration?
3. Since all systems of power and authority have strengths and weaknesses, which strengths do we want to emphasize and which weaknesses can we most tolerate?

There are cottage meetings currently scheduled for the following dates and areas of the city. Please call the Parish office at 416-598-4521 x 222 to sign yourself up for one of the meetings.

*Transition Committee members: Jennifer Colleran: Chris Lind: Jim Love: Merylie Houston: Jean Robinson: Nancy Whitla.*