

## **Hierarchy of Decision Making**

As a committee chair, it is critical to understand how decisions are made at the UUSMV. There are three levels of “authority” described below. Committee chairs are responsible for understanding and accessing all three. It is also important to share these documents and how they impact the committee with all committee members. Committees are responsible for recommending to the Parish Committee needed changes to policy and for creating, reviewing, and implementing procedures related to the committee.

These documents can be accessed on the UUSMV website in the Member section.

1. **UUSMV By-laws** – Congregation is the authority and approves all by-laws and/or amendments to by-laws.

Bylaws are the rules established by an organization or community to regulate itself. They are the highest authority within the organization.

2. **UUSMV Policy Book** – Parish Committee is the authority and approves all policies and/or amendments to policies

Policies guide important and recurring decisions and actions made on behalf of the Society. They are made by the Parish Committee based upon fundamental values that the Committee wishes to affirm on behalf of the total membership of the Society. Policies describe what is to be considered in decision-making; procedures describe how decisions are to be implemented.

3. **UUSMV Procedures** – Lay leaders have authority (with collaboration) and approve procedures and amendments to procedures

1. The Minister, President, and lay leaders share responsibility for developing and codifying procedures in collaboration with the staff who share responsibilities and tasks for any given procedure.
2. Leaders draft a procedure and share the draft with all staff and other leaders of committees and groups who are impacted by the procedure.
3. Staff and committee leaders provide feedback to the leader who has proposed the procedure.
4. The leader resolves issues and concerns and notes the date of the procedure and those who conferred and concurred with the final procedure and submits the procedure to the administrative assistant for inclusion in the UUSMV Procedure Book.

Procedures are the steps used to achieve the tasks common to the UUSMV office, staff, and committees of UUSMV. The documentation and sharing of procedures ensure consistency and clarity in the responsibilities of the staff, minister, lay leaders, and members of the congregation in achieving these Tasks.

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