

Senior Minister's Report to the Board of Trustees January 2019

Report on Limitations Policy 3.2 *Treatment of Congregants, Friends and Visitors: With respect to interactions with Congregants, friends and visitors of the Congregation the Senior Minister shall not allow conditions, procedures, or decisions that are unsafe, disrespectful, unnecessarily intrusive, or that fail to provide appropriate confidentiality and privacy.*

We are largely in compliance with this policy. I will report on this under three headings:

- a. Confidentiality. Pastoral concerns are handled by a closed group of ordained and lay ministers. Larger issues such as hospitalizations, the need for visits or other pastoral concerns are discussed with the ordained clergy who then, at the Senior Minister's discretion, assign either ordained or trained pastoral care chaplains to the congregation in need. Pastoral Care Chaplains are all trained in issues concerned with confidentiality. All pastoral care givers keep sensitive information revealed in pastoral care to themselves unless they are mandated to report abuse, in which case, they contact the Senior Minister to handle that report. Financial discretion is maintained as to the congregant's pledge and gift information and only shared on a "need to know" basis with members of financial committees and appropriate staff.
- b. Safety. We maintain a "Safe Congregations Team" who reports to the Senior Minister as needed in handling issues of sexual misconduct. That team reports on the number of incidents (but not their content) and its overall policy as part of the Annual Reporting Process. So far this church year, we have had only one case reported which the team satisfactorily resolved. As to fire, hazard and disruption concerns, the staff does have a "Safety Protocol" which outlines what to do in case of a fire, medical or intruder incident. Incident report forms are filed by the responsible staff person and kept on hand should they be needed by insurance or other parties. *One area of continuing concern is an adequate protocol for active shooters. The staff continues to research the best approach to this issue and we hope to make changes by Spring in training ushers and others.* We do hold an annual safety training for ushers, staff and worship associates each Spring.
- c. Grievances. As of now our process for handling congregant grievances towards the staff is for the aggrieved to contact the Senior Minister directly with their complaint and an attempt will be made to rectify the situation. If the grievance is with the Senior Minister than the Committee of Ministries has an established protocol for handling those grievances. The COM also acts as a sounding board for the congregation on those grievances which do not involve a particular individual. Our Covenant of Right Relations calls on all congregants to act in such a way that befits being a member of a caring community. In extreme cases of a grievance of congregants towards one another the "Disruptive Behavior Policy" may be invoked.

One final item to report: I have asked Rev. Jim Francek to serve as our “Community Minister for Pastoral Care”. As an ordained and trained chaplain, Jim is already handling our Pastoral Care Chaplains. This appointment, which is completely voluntary, will help me formalize our pastoral care across clergy and chaplains. This appointment is governed by an written agreement between Jim and myself, which we have both signed and which I will make available to Board Members on request. Jim serves at my discretion and must report directly to me in all cases. Either one of us can discontinue this arrangement at any time.

Respectfully Submitted, Rev. Dr. John T. Morehouse