

First Congregational United Church of Christ

Pastoral Relations Committee Policies and Procedures

PURPOSE

The Pastoral Relations Committee (PRC) works to support a healthy relationship between the Pastor and congregants in order to enhance the effectiveness of the church's ministry. As an advisory group, it helps the Pastor and congregants share ideas, hopes, and dreams. As support, the committee acts as a sounding-board for the Pastor, helping interpret the Pastor's roles, functions, boundaries, opportunities and needs of the Pastor to the congregation. It seeks to promote effective pastoral leadership, by encouraging professional growth and supporting the Pastor's well-being.

The Pastoral Relations Committee is not a grievance committee. The intent of the PRC is not to relay messages between the congregation and Pastor, but to encourage and facilitate communication between them. It is not a substitute for personal interaction between individual members and Pastor, nor is it a vehicle for carrying anonymous complaints. The PRC meets regularly to guard against crisis management, with the hope of lessening the possibility of misunderstandings and preventing major crises. When necessary, it may need to manage conflict and negotiate differences between Pastor and the congregation or individual members.

The Pastoral Relations Committee is neither programmatic nor policy oriented. The PRC has no performance evaluation function, nor is it involved in compensation decisions. Performance evaluation is done by the Board of Directors. Compensation decisions begin with the Finance Committee of the Board of Directors and are eventually voted upon by the congregation as a whole.

ORGANIZATION

COMMITTEE COMPOSITION AND SELECTION:

This committee shall consist of 4-5 members, appointed by the Board of Directors in consultation with the Pastor. Members' terms shall be a maximum of two years.

MEMBER QUALIFICATIONS:

Committee members should be active participants in the life of the church. Other desirable qualifications would be: patience, flexibility, trustworthiness, ability to maintain confidentiality, ability to appreciate different points of view, ability to negotiate and reconcile differences, attention to the manner as well as content of what is heard.

ACCOUNTABILITY: This committee does not report to the Board of Directors, and committee minutes are not taken. The chair of the committee will confirm with the Moderator that monthly meetings have taken place, and will consult with the Moderator (in the presence of the Pastor) if the PRC is unable to resolve any issue that arises.

FUNCTIONS & RESPONSIBILITIES

- The PRC meets at least quarterly with the Pastor to listen and provide feedback concerning the mutual ministry of the Pastor and congregation.
- The PRC will allow the Pastor to reflect in confidence about personal concerns, hopes and frustrations related to his/her ministry.
- The PRC maintains the confidentiality of all things shared.
- The PRC offers expressions of care and appreciation, clarification of issues, and constructive criticism when needed.
- It is understood that there may be occasions when one or more committee members cannot be present at every meeting. However, the committee will not meet without the Pastor being present.

(Approved by vote of Board of Directors, July 12, 2019 Board of Directors meeting.)