

FINAL

Christ Congregational Church  
Silver Spring, MD  
Meeting of the Coordinating Council  
May 1, 2017

PRESENT

Gwen Garrison (Moderator)  
Matthew Braddock (Senior Pastor)  
Steve Anderson (Member Care)  
Kristen Brown (Formation)  
Chris Bublitz (Trustee, At-Large to CC)  
Lissa Costa (Member Care)  
Judy Cox (Mission & Outreach)  
Matt Dinkel (CC At-Large)  
Tom Doggett (CC At-Large & Facilitator of 2017 Stewardship Campaign)  
Larry Duff (Chair of CCC Corporation, Trustee)  
Susan Gray (Worship & the Arts)  
Marilyn Hall (Trustee, At-Large to CC)  
Sarah Ingram (Church Clerk)  
Dayna Brown Majorowitz (Trustee, At-Large to CC)  
Steve Petersen (Trustee, At-Large to CC)  
John Potts (Trustee, Vice-chair of CCC Corporation, At-Large to CC)  
Doug Redmond (Trustee, At-Large to CC)  
Olen Stephens (Trustee, At-Large to CC)  
John Wack (CC At-Large)  
Anne Weissenborn (Mission & Outreach)

**Gathering, Opening Thought, and Prayer:** Gwen Garrison, Moderator, gathered the Coordinating Council, shared an opening exercise and led the group in prayer.

**Call to Order and Review of Agenda:** Gwen called the meeting of the Coordinating Council to order at 7:46 pm. Agenda was accepted without change.

**Approval of April 3, 2017 Minutes of the Coordinating Council:** The minutes were approved (with one correction): motion by John Wack; second by Anne Weissenborn; motion passed.

**Committee Reports**

### **Stewardship 2017 and Pledge Sunday (Attachment A)**

Gwen presented an update from Dan Pence (unable to attend) with numbers updated by David Main as of that morning. She reported that there remain 36 members who gave last year but have not yet submitted a 2017-18 pledge. The stewardship team will be reaching out to each member to answer questions and encourage pledging. Some CC members asked clarifying questions about the amount of money represented by the not-yet-pledged group and about the meaning of the “withdrawn” category.

### **Tally of Voice and Interests Results (Attachment B)**

Gwen provided an update on the results, which remain consistent with the priorities tallied as of the April 3<sup>rd</sup> CC meeting, noting that there was consensus across demographic categories.

### **Sabbatical Team Report (Attachment C)**

Pastor Matt Braddock provided an update from the Team as Tim Carrigan could not attend the meeting. The Lilly Endowment has confirmed that it received timely the CCC submission for funding for Pastor Matt’s 2018 sabbatical (approved at the April 3<sup>rd</sup> CC meeting). CCC should hear from Lilly in August 2017. Regardless of Lilly’s response, a CCC sabbatical planning team will convene in fall 2017 to plan for CCC while Matt is away, including youth minister duties and worship services. Church school superintendent Chris Braddock will also be away but planning is already under way. It was noted that if the Lilly funds are denied, Matt will still take his sabbatical and CCC will need to budget \$ 12-15,000 for church expenses, spread between two fiscal years.

### **Property Contract Management Report (Attachment D)**

Marilyn Hall presented the report from the HVAC Maintenance Contract Task Force. After reviewing the satisfaction level, number of annual visits and costs of the existing contractor, Rommel Cranston, and of a potential new contractor, Comfort Systems, the task force recommended that CCC continue with the HVAC maintenance contract with Rommel. The process included a detailed walk-through with Comfort Systems representatives.

The task force also recommended that in the future CCC do a review of all of the current contracts, and issues for which regular maintenance contracts do not exist, and consider whether a single comprehensive services contract would be advantageous. There was consensus that under the new CCC governance structure, a team under the Property area would be tasked with this effort.

The CC accepted the report and recommendations.

## **Safe Conduct Policy Report (Attachment E)**

Olin Stephens reminded the CC that at the last Annual Meeting the congregation had approved the Safe Conduct Policy document for a year to have time to live with the policies, and amend as needed, before final approval at the June 4, 2017 Annual Meeting. Olin described the few comments provided by the Because We Care team, by the church school superintendent, and others.

Olin noted that the second part of the package, the Practices document, remains with the Personnel Committee to be incorporated into the Employee Manual. The third part, the Safe Conduct Covenant, is recited by the Congregation at the fall commissioning of church school teachers. All parts of the package are incorporated into training done with individuals in a variety of roles.

One CC member raised a concern about whether the document was sufficiently clear about an adult never meeting one-on-one with a minor out of sight behind closed doors. There was some discussion about the Boy Scouts' training and guidelines and whether CCC was, or was not, tracking the same rule. There was consensus on the intended rule. Discussion ensued with a majority stating that they read the document as being sufficiently clear and strict when read in whole, one member seeking a more cut-and-dried single statement, and all agreeing that clarity is important. The concerned member did not have language edits prepared.

As the CC committed last June to putting the Policy before the congregation again this June, Gwen asked for a motion to approve the Policy document for presentation at the Annual Meeting. Motion was made by Judy Cox and seconded by Steve Petersen. The CC voted to approve the document, as attached, with one dissenting vote.

Gwen invited the concerned member to provide an amendment for the Annual Meeting if the member remains concerned. The member agreed that if he did remain concerned he would provide language to Gwen in advance to facilitate logistics at the meeting.

## **FY18 Budget Preparation**

Larry Duff and the Budget team are working on a proposed FY18 budget to be presented at the Annual Meeting. They will schedule a budget hearing following the May 7<sup>th</sup> town hall.

## **Next Steps in Leadership Structure**

### **Structure of Coordinating Council and related positions**

Gwen thanked the CC for all of the past discussions and input and presented the newest iteration of a CCC Leadership Structure to put before the congregation at the annual meeting. She had shared with the CC in advance a narrative and graphical document and during the meeting she walked the group through a graphical slide show, explaining positions, roles and relationships.

The CC members asked clarifying questions and then agreed that except for one naming issue the model was ready to go before the congregation. The group debated whether to adopt the suggested title of Associate Moderator for the nine (9) positions so named, or to continue the use of the title “Coordinator” for seven (7) positions and “At-large” for the other two positions.

- Associate Moderator makes clear that the individuals are sharing in the top leadership strategic thinking, communication, cross-cutting connections, and leadership visibility, and are not mired in the day-to-day tasks. It reserves the word “coordinator” for the team leads who coordinate day to day details and ad hoc project efforts. Also, it sends a clear message that the CC intends to “right-size” the Moderator role.
- The term “Coordinator” was adopted by the Congregation in January as part of a process that has included much change in terminology, strategies and roles. The concern was that asking the congregation to change labels again so soon, when the desired change at the Annual Meeting is the Coordinating Council size and structure, would be simply distracting.

Consensus grew to retain the Coordinator title for the positions on the Coordinating Council and focus the town hall and Annual Meeting on the other changes and clarifications to be presented. It was agreed that as CCC continues to evolve there will be other opportunities to tweak alignment of labels with roles.

The group reviewed the scope of each position, the relationships with other church officers and paid staff, and the need for a slide displaying the CCC corporate officer and trustee roles. It was agreed that a separate slide would reduce clutter while providing that crisp data.

Gwen noted that because she has agreed to put herself forth again as Moderator, and because Tim Carrigan’s other responsibilities mean he will not volunteer as Past Moderator for a second year, the Past Moderator position will also might be vacant. Gwen stated that some of the tasks of a future Past Moderator would be to assemble a nomination slate (as the P.M. could not be nominated to anything), work on succession planning and leadership development, and assist the CC with cross-cutting events such as a Taste of Ministry to foster volunteer interest.

John Wack moved that, subject to the Moderator’s consideration of the Associate Moderator/Coordinator discussion, the CC approve the proposed Leadership Structure to be presented to the congregation for approval. Patty First seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

### **Leadership Roster for the Annual Meeting**

Gwen explained that under the proposed structure, the slate for the June congregational vote would consist of 14 members of the Coordinating Council and 6 other officers listed in the narrative proposal. No other volunteers would be voted on by the congregation; instead, volunteers would be self-identified and recruited throughout the year for whatever roles they are inspired to assume.

One member noted that while this concept was in the materials at the January congregational meeting, this is a significant departure for the congregation and needs to be made clear when presenting the roster. She noted that in the past the congregation voted on board members but the board chairs were selected by the board members. Now, the congregation essentially picks the area “chairs” but not the group of volunteers, f/k/a board members.

There was consensus that even though there are, and will be, further questions about the scope of positions and areas, the need to set term limits beyond next fiscal year, the successful recruitment of needed volunteers, future succession planning, and the nominating process, the CC should put forth a Leadership Roster aligning with the proposed 20 positions. It was understood by the CC members that if the congregation rejects the recommended leadership structure the entire January Coordinating Council will be offered for a one year extension of service. Gwen and Matt expressed hope that all current members will consider serving in the new group for continuity of vision and leadership, although additional volunteers are welcome.

Gwen asked for expressions of interest by Friday so she knows by the Sunday town hall how to phrase solicitation of further nominations. She also stated that as the CC is shrinking some current members may wish to step down into a working team to focus on an area of particular interest (for example, a trustee may want to focus on property management issues, only, or offer to be the Congregational Giving leader doing strategic thinking on the new CC). She pointed out that all talents are needed going forward but there is opportunity to consider one’s desired role.

### **Major Meeting Planning**

Gwen reviewed the key dates and tasks leading up to the town hall and the Annual Meeting. Various reports are due for the Annual Report, as well as the Engagement Area plans for next fiscal year. Target for posting to the CCC website is May 18<sup>th</sup>.

Gwen referenced, generally, the agendas for both meetings and reminded members of their promises to step up and be heard so the congregation can understand the work by, and agreement amongst, the members of the CC. The CC members agreed.

### **Adjournment and Prayer**

Gwen adjourned the meeting at 9:33 pm and Matt led the group in a closing prayer.

*Respectfully submitted by Sarah Ingram, Church Clerk.*

# Pledge Sunday Stewardship Campaign Report for CC May 1, 2017

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Dan Pence

## **Quantitative Perspective**

The results of the Stewardship campaign to date, as reported by Dave Main (see below), are encouraging, given an unusually high proportion of people who have increased their pledge, but not spectacular in total dollars because of some large pledges that are going away.

The 38 existing FY16-17 pledges "yet to pledge" for FY17-18 represent approximately \$75,000 of the FY16-17 base. If all renewed at the same level, the total pledged would be about \$672,000, nearly a 7% increase, which is nice. But a 15% or so increase (i.e., another \$50,000) would put us on a much sounder financial footing. A more conservative view is to assume that we will see about 2/3 of that \$75,000 in pledges, and the rest will not be renewed, resulting in a total amount pledged of about \$647,000. This is still more than the current year's pledge total, but not much.

From a participation perspective, we might get  $129 + 38 = 167$  total pledges, seven more than the number for this year, but the more conservative view would put the number at  $129 + 26 = 155$  total pledges, five fewer than the current number.

The people who carried out the original stewardship calling have been asked to follow up with the 38 "yet to pledge" members to try to get those pledges submitted in time to make a difference when we vote on the budget at the annual meeting.

## **Qualitative Perspective**

There is no way to know how the congregation feels about our efforts to have individual, personal stewardship calls with most of the members of the congregation without surveying those who were called, which I have not done. However, I can say that I found the experience of recruiting and training those who made the calls very rewarding in itself. The calls that Mary and I made personally as stewardship callers were, without exception, open, honest, heartfelt conversations about what CCC means to those with whom we met. It was a privilege to really get to know people that, in some cases for many years, we have spoken with only briefly during coffee hour. I remain convinced that the one-on-one or two-on-two format of personal, in-home calling during the Stewardship campaign is the best approach for building community within the congregation, a necessary precursor to a strong pledging response.

With Gwen's support and guidance, we pulled together and trained a team of thirteen callers, made assignments, and went about the process of calling on the membership within the space of

about two months. This team worked hard, and it is important to acknowledge their efforts. The members of the calling team, in alphabetical order, were:

Dave Ackerman  
 Tom and Aldene Ault  
 Jim and Kristen Brown  
 Judy Cox  
 Tom Doggett  
 Sarah Ingram  
 Peder Maarbjerg  
 Dan and Mary Pence  
 Alison Peterson  
 Olen Stephens

### Observations

In hindsight, it would have been better to have had three or four more callers and to have started the process in mid-January rather than mid-February. Many of the callers told me that the "Pledging Pyramid" graphic (attached) was particularly eye opening when explained to the member(s) being visited. We also found Gwen's list of "All Good Things in 2016-2017" (attached) helpful and inspiring when shown to members. We all agreed that the "message" to be conveyed is situation dependent, e.g., new members vs long term members, members with children in the church school program vs members without children in the church school program, members who came to CCC from a church that did not ask members to pledge vs those for whom pledging is a given. Finally, we encountered some members who not only said they would renew and increase their pledge, but then, in addition, asked if there is a way in which they can make a significant gift toward building maintenance (i.e., boiler replacement, carpeting replacement, exterior repainting). This was very gratifying.

Note: This update from Dave Main includes more recent information than what is explained in Dan Pence's report above.

Per D Main May 1, 2017 email							
	Complete	Complete	As of May 1, 2017 (6 weeks from Pledge Sunday)				
Summary	2015-2016	2016-17	2017-18	Change	Decreased	Increased	Steady
Dollars	\$ 654,959.50	\$ 629,396.40	\$ 606,506.00	\$ 49,085.60	14	67	33
Pledge Units	184	160	130				
			New Pledges	Withdrawn	Died	Yet to Pledge	
			12	5	1	36	
% of Previous Pledge Year			96%				

## Results from Voice & Interest Cards

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**General Notes:** The results include both a simple tally of votes and a calculation of “importance” [1 = top priority (weighted 5 points), 2 = very important (weighted 3 points), 3 = important (weighted 1 points), and 4+ (weighted .5)]. For some people they either didn’t understand or ignored the directions so it is difficult to determine the meaning. Others ranked all items the same and some ranked none. Nevertheless, here are the highlights for the 112 submissions:

### FY18 Budget Priorities (listed in order of importance)

Item	Importance (if 1, then given 5 points; 2 =3 points and 3=1 point; others given .5)	Tallied Number of Votes
Sustain our vibrant <b>Cooperative Youth Ministry</b> by hiring a 20 hour per week <b>Director</b>	301.5	82
Support our <b>Sunday School Superintendent</b> by adding 5 hours per week to the position	168	53
Increase our <b>giving to Social Mission activities</b> both local and worldwide	148	44
Make improvements to our <b>building</b> —such as painting, Re-carpeting, and furniture upgrades	108.5	47
Enhance <b>communications</b> within our church and on our website by upgrading our technology	93.5	42
Wherever it is <b>most needed</b>	80	22
Create an <b>action fund</b> to quickly empower new activities that support CCC’s values/priorities	77.5	34
Return programs to our building on <b>Fridays</b> by adding hours for custodial staff	22.5	13

### Demographic Notes:

Most of the cards contained the names of church members. From this information, I grouped Individuals into demographic categories [Seniors (Over75), Retired (aged 62-74) Empty Nesters (Working 50s &60 year olds), Young Adults, Family with Kids, and Undetermined<sup>1</sup>). Key take-way is that the budget priorities do not change order from above when disaggregated by demographic groups.

### Conclusion:

From the card tallies and level of “importance”, the results indicate support of CCC staffing. Participants affirmed the direction to hire a part-time CYM Director and increase the Church School Superintendent hours.

*Compiled by G.E. Garrison, Moderator, as of April 26, 2017.*

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<sup>1</sup> There were too few tallies for “Young Adult” & “Undetermined” to provide information at this time.



**CCC's Proposal to the Lilly Endowment for  
Funding for Pastor Matt's Sabbatical in 2018**  
(excerpted from the proposal)

**Program Rationale and Design**

**Summary.** *“Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you”* - Romans 5:7. The purpose of this National Clergy Renewal Grant proposal is to seek support to help our pastor use his 2018 sabbatical to engage in activities that foster Jesus' radical inclusiveness and advance our church's vision of becoming a multi-racial, multi-cultural, anti-racist congregation. Rev. Dr. Matthew Braddock, Senior Minister, Christ Congregational Church [hereafter CCC], United Church of Christ, will use his sabbatical to explore and strengthen relationships with immigrant communities in our congregation's culturally diverse locale – and especially our large Ethiopian immigrant community – through internships with local civic leaders, guided reflection, and pilgrimage. Especially at a time when fear and trust issues abound in immigrant communities, the sabbatical will provide opportunities for Pastor Matt to engage the spiritual and community needs of our immigrant neighbors.

The capstone will be a pilgrimage to Ethiopia, allowing Pastor Matt, his wife, and his four children (two of them from Ethiopia) to explore their family heritage, reflect on Ethiopia's Christian history, and link with our local Ethiopian community. Upon his return, Pastor Matt will lead our faith community to new opportunities to embrace and act on Jesus teachings on inclusiveness in our diverse community. In light of our national discourse, CCC is summoned compassionately to the increasing anxieties of our immigrant neighbors.

**Rationale.** CCC is located in Silver Spring, Maryland, a close-in, first-tier suburb of Washington DC. Silver Spring is rated an extremely diverse urban area; the DC metro area has the highest population of Ethiopian immigrants in the U.S. (Pew Research Ctr., 2/14/17). In *“Exclusion and Embrace,”* theologian Miroslav Volf wrote of the self-giving love of God and the Christian commitment to social justice. He used the metaphor of embrace to describe the will of the majority community to give itself to others by readjusting its identity to make space for those outside of our carefully constructed boundaries. CCC sees itself as an organization that acts in this manner as we stand against injustice and seek to forge a more compassionate world. In 2006, CCC unanimously adopted an “Anti-Racism Covenant” that committed us to become a multi-cultural, multi-racial, anti-racist congregation that more faithfully reflects the entire community of Silver Spring. Affirming that all people are made in God's image, our predominantly white congregation has explored white privilege and implemented strategies to dismantle racism through education, Sunday services, mission giving, purchasing and personnel practices, and community outreach and action. However, we still desire to more deeply engage the multi-cultural opportunities around us.

When we called Pastor Matt as our Senior Minister in 2011, he came with the intention of helping us live more fully into our covenantal commitments, especially our Anti-Racism Covenant (see <http://www.cccsilverspring.org/pages/about-us/a-covenant-faith/becoming-anti-racist-congregation/>). As white parents in an Ethiopian-American trans-racial family, Pastor Matt and Chris, his wife, were excited to relocate their family of two birth children and two adopted Ethiopian children to Silver Spring in order to be closer to the Ethiopian immigrant community. The metro Washington D.C. area now has the nation's largest Ethiopian community. Ethiopians are, in

fact, the largest African immigrant group in the region, making up one-fifth of the region's African diaspora. Pastor Matt reports that his family has made only limited headway learning about and connecting with the Ethiopian community in Silver Spring. Similarly, CCC has not yet made the generative, sustained connections with immigrant communities that we hold as the vision for our church.

With a promised four-month sabbatical due Pastor Matt in 2018, CCC proposes a plan that will help us all to strengthen relationships, widen the scope of our anti-racism work, and allow the Braddock family to explore their own family heritage as a way to better connect with our Silver Spring community. Spring 2018 is an appropriate time for the sabbatical. At that time, our congregation will have completed an intense period of restructuring begun in 2015. As we move to a permission-giving church governance system and lay-empowered ministry teams, we recognize the high demand we have put on Pastor Matt's time and energy during this process, and want the sabbatical to be a time of renewal and refocus (CCC provides our senior ministers a sabbatical after seven years).

The theme for Pastor Matt's proposed sabbatical is *Expand, Embrace, and Connect*. We hope that he can welcome and be welcomed as he *expands* his spiritual activism skills and engages deeply with our anti-racism commitments. He will use this time to learn to *embrace*, creating space for "the other" where society may have constructed artificial boundaries. He will *connect* anew with the history and heritage of Ethiopia as he relates to the Ethiopian community here and makes a family pilgrimage. Expand: Pastor Matt will explore strategies for fostering connections external to the church building within the greater community. CCC seeks to be a presence that provides a living witness to God's inclusive love, welcome, and compassion. To do so, we want to expand our knowledge and experience of the needs of the community around us. In a recent report on our members, we note that when asked, "What attracted you to Christ Congregational Church?" one consistent response was our commitment to social justice. In one member's words, "I was looking for a church whose actions matched its words." Embrace: Pastor Matt will examine and shape the role of the senior minister as a spiritual activist within the wider community. He cites St. Augustine of Hippo: "There are two ways of life that God has commended to the Church. One is through faith, the other is through vision. One is in pilgrimage through a foreign land, the other is in our eternal home; one in labor, the other in repose.... one in action, the other in the fruits of contemplation." Our pastor tells us that activism needs a spiritual rhythm. We act together, and then listen for the Divine Spirit and engage the community again. We do not think ourselves into a new way of living, but we live ourselves into a new way of thinking. In a sermon on spiritual activism, Pastor Matt said, "My hope begins with listening for brokenness. Can we offer good news to those who are broken, those who ache and grieve deeply? I'm talking about both the targets and the agents of oppression...." We support Pastor Matt's intention to grow in his ministry of active contemplation and contemplative action. Connect: Relationship, interactivity, collaboration, mutuality – these are the processes from which every living thing is created, survives, and prospers. In our tradition, every person is owed dignity and respect. Power and authority must be shared. Mutuality helps us add complexity and diversity. We wish to join Pastor Matt as he explores ways to participate with groups that sustain minority and immigrant community members and link with their work, accessing the resources available through CCC as needed. After his sabbatical, CCC will look to his leadership as we continue our work as an anti-racist congregation.

Budget amount requested from the Lilly Endowment: \$47,730 (\$14,200 for congregational expenses due to Matt's absence and \$33,530 for sabbatical expenses, including travel to Ethiopia).

## HVAC Maintenance Contract Task Force

**Task Force Rationale:** Since our maintenance contract with Rommel Cranston is scheduled for renewal later this spring, it is in our interest to review other options given the constraints on our staff and volunteers.

**Original Charge with Desired Outcome:** Review CCC Church Administrator's property needs assessment and current service level experience alongside a new proposal from an HVAC company and provide feedback and if possible recommendation to Coordinating Council in these areas.

- Company reliability as service provider, reputation, and quality of work, financial stability and commitment to the community.
- Identify what this company could do for the CCC facility
- Service agreement cost and any competitive pricing
- Analyze how would this be implemented - our maintenance contracts start and end with a variety of renewal timeframes

**Team members:**

Marilyn Hall—Coordinating Council Member and At-Large Trustee

Jim Conklin—Green Team

Tony Ingram—Building and Grounds

Jim Walters—Coop connection

Bridgette Dougall—Asst. Treasurer, AP& F new governance area, Building and Grounds

**Task Force Review Activities:**

Comfort Systems is a company that is expanding its clientele in Maryland; the company had communicated its interest in supporting CCC the Property Administrator, Dianne Abraham. The team met with the Comfort Systems representatives for a walk through of the facilities, including kitchen equipment and pumps. The team subsequently reviewed the Comfort Systems service proposal and sought additional information from the Property Administrator about the multiple current maintenance contracts for the various building systems in the CCC facilities.

**Moderator Gwen Garrison then clarified that the scope of this effort should be limited to the HVAC system only**, which is currently maintained by Rommel. We learned that the Property Administrator believes we are well served by the quarterly maintenance visits Rommel provides. The Comfort Systems proposal included only two maintenance visits during the year for the HVAC system. The proposed cost for these two visits was roughly twice the \$7,300 that we paying for Rommel's service. (We could not verify this figure with the Property Administrator, but derived it by reviewing invoices.)

**Recommendation:**

1. **CCC should continue the HVAC maintenance contract with Rommel.**
2. CCC should review all maintenance contracts for the multiple systems in the church facility, compared to a comprehensive proposal from Comfort Systems and/or other vendors at a future time when the Property Administrator can fully participate and provide input. A comprehensive maintenance contract for all systems may be advantageous.

# CCC Safe Conduct Policy

**CHRIST CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
Approved by the Board of Trustees June 20, 2016<sup>2</sup>**

## **Statement of Policy Prohibiting Abuse, Exploitation and Harassment**

***“Instead, as he who called you is holy, be holy yourselves in all your conduct.” (1 Peter 1:15)***

As a community of Christian faith, Christ Congregational Church is committed to creating and maintaining programs, facilities and a community in which members, friends, staff and volunteers can worship, learn and work together in an atmosphere free from all forms of harassment, abuse, exploitation, or intimidation. The congregation of Christ Congregational Church supports safe conduct principles, which include individual responsibility to fulfill the highest standards of personal conduct toward others and to lead and guide the congregation in fulfillment of the standards set by our Christian faith. Christ Congregational Church strongly opposes and prohibits sexual harassment or any form of exploitation or abuse of others regardless of age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, or mental capacity.

It is the intention of our congregation to affirmatively promote good behavior, and to prevent and correct behavior that is contrary to this policy and, as necessary, discipline those persons who violate this policy. This policy is not intended to cover violations of law. Allegations of criminal activities should be immediately reported to the proper authorities. In addition, under Maryland law, all adults have an obligation to make report(s), if they have reason to believe that a child has been subjected to abuse or neglect.

## **Overview**

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<sup>2</sup> Original version adopted November 11, 2007 and amended May 4, 2009

Consistent with our understanding of the priesthood of all believers, everyone at CCC -- authorized clergy, employees, elected and appointed lay leaders, members and friends -- is a Minister to the congregation. It is important that authorized clergy, employees, elected and appointed lay leaders, members and authorized volunteers be adequately prepared and trained for the ministry in which they serve and understand the ways in which their use or misuse of authority may impact others. Everyone is obligated to demonstrate and encourage safe conduct by being attentive to self-care, continuing education, maintenance of personal boundaries, and support of those who are vulnerable or in need of support or refuge. Everyone should seek to protect vulnerable individuals of every kind. Abuse, exploitation and harassment of parishioners or others by anyone engaged in ministry on behalf of Christ Congregational Church will not be tolerated in this congregation.

Everyone at CCC should read and understand the details of this policy and related procedures in order to:

- Ensure CCC remains a sacred space where everyone belongs, where all are welcome, where we honor and celebrate people of all races, cultures, ages, abilities, sexual orientations, and gender identities.
- Prevent sexual exploitation or sexual harassment of parishioners, employees or others.
- Prevent abuse or exploitation of vulnerable adults, including financial exploitation.
- Prevent abuse or mistreatment of children and youth to include abuse of one child by another.
- Recognize circumstances of, and understand how to report, suspected abuse, exploitation and harassment of children and youth or vulnerable adults as required by this policy or as required by the State of Maryland, and cooperate with any investigations.

Authorized clergy who are serving the congregation in any capacity (active, retired, employee, volunteer) should hold themselves to a higher standard of care with respect to their personal conduct and relationships with the congregation, church staff and volunteers, whether pastoral, administrative or personal in nature.

Christ Congregational Church is committed to prompt, professional and measured response to all alleged violations of these policies and procedures and suspicions or allegations of abuse. CCC is committed to (1) seriously consider the concerns of victims; (2) undertake a fair investigation; (3) protect the confidentiality of parties involved in an investigation; (4) report as required to, and cooperate fully with, public authorities; and (5) communicate fully with the congregation within the bounds of individual rights to confidentiality.

Fulfillment of this commitment requires everyone to assume responsibility for safe conduct as part of their respective duties, whether authorized clergy, employee or volunteer.

## **Code of Conduct**

The following Code of Conduct applies to everyone (members, friends, staff and volunteers) in the Christ Congregational Church community wherever they encounter members of the CCC community (e.g. Mission trips, beach weekend, Retreat House, or downtown Silver Spring).

The following behaviors are prohibited at all times --

- Displaying affection toward a child, youth or vulnerable adult in private (for exceptions, see section below outlining acceptable physical interactions).
- Discussing sexual encounters with or around children, youth or vulnerable adults.
- Adults dating or becoming romantically involved with children or youth.
- Possessing sexually oriented materials, including printed or online pornography.
- Having secrets with children, youth or vulnerable adults.
- Staring at or comment on the bodies of children, youth or vulnerable adults.
- Engaging in inappropriate or unapproved electronic communication with children, youth or vulnerable adults.
- Touching bottom, chest, or genital area of a child, youth, or vulnerable adult.
- Permitting children or youth to engage in the following: Hazing, bullying, derogatory name-calling, games such as Truth or Dare, ridicule or humiliation or sexual activity.
- Abusing children, youth or vulnerable adults in any way including (but not limited to) the following:
  - Physical abuse: hit, spank, shake, slap, unnecessarily restrain
  - Verbal abuse: degrade, threaten, curse
  - Sexual abuse: inappropriately touch, expose oneself, or engage in sexually oriented conversations
  - Mental abuse: shame, humiliate, act cruelly
  - Neglect: withhold food, water, shelter
- Manipulating or exploiting a child, youth or vulnerable adult in any way.

## Interaction Guidelines –

In addition to the Code of Conduct, everyone at CCC should be aware of and adhere to these Interaction Guidelines when interacting with children, youth, and vulnerable adults. The interaction guidelines listed below serve two purposes:

- To protect children, youth, and vulnerable adults from abuse or grooming for abuse; and
- To protect/prevent church staff from engaging in patterns of behavior that may be construed as abusive or predatory.

While a single infraction of these guidelines may not be a concern, a pattern of repeated violations may result in disciplinary action for employees and dismissal from a ministry involving children, youth or vulnerable adults for volunteers.

- Approval and Affection – In providing approval or affection, the following guidelines apply:

Acceptable Physical Interactions	Discouraged Physical Interactions
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<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Side hugs</li> <li>• Shoulder-to-shoulder or “temple” hugs</li> <li>• Pats on the shoulder or back</li> <li>• Handshakes</li> <li>• High-fives and hand slapping</li> <li>• Pats on the head when culturally appropriate</li> <li>• Touching hands, shoulders, and arms</li> <li>• Arms around shoulders</li> <li>• Holding hands (with young children in escorting situations)</li> </ul> <p>These may be inappropriate if unwanted by the child, youth or vulnerable adult.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full-frontal hugs</li> <li>• Kisses</li> <li>• Lap sitting</li> <li>• Wrestling</li> <li>• Piggyback rides</li> <li>• Tickling</li> <li>• Allowing a child to cling to an employee or volunteer’s leg</li> <li>• Any type of massage given by or to a child, youth or vulnerable adult</li> <li>• Any form of affection that is unwanted by the child, youth or vulnerable adult</li> <li>• Compliments relating to physique or body development</li> </ul>
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Note: When working with very young children (infants through 5 years old (Pre-K)), some items in the discouraged physical interaction category are appropriate and commonly used in early childhood settings to support the social-emotional development of children – such as full-frontal hugs, kisses, lap sitting.

- Verbal Interactions – The manner of speaking with children, youth, and vulnerable adults establishes respect. The following guidelines apply:

Appropriate Verbal Interactions	Inappropriate Verbal Interactions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive reinforcement</li> <li>• Appropriate jokes</li> <li>• Encouragement</li> <li>• Praise</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Name-calling</li> <li>• Cursing</li> <li>• Shaming</li> <li>• Belittling</li> <li>• Derogatory remarks</li> <li>• Using profanity or telling racist or sexist jokes</li> <li>• Harsh language that may frighten, threaten or humiliate children, youth, or vulnerable adults</li> <li>• Derogatory remarks</li> </ul>

**One-on-One Interactions –**

One-on-one meetings with a child, youth or vulnerable adult should generally be avoided. When they are necessary, the following guidelines shall apply:

**One-on-One Interaction With Children and Youth Guidelines**

- When meeting one-on-one with a child or youth, always do so in a public place in full view of others.
- Avoid physical affection that can be misinterpreted. Limit affection to pats on the shoulder, high fives, and handshakes.
- If meeting in a room or office, leave the door open or move to an area that can be easily observed by others passing by.
- Inform other employees and volunteers that you are alone with a child or youth and ask them to randomly drop in. (Ask to be supervised.)
- Document and immediately report any unusual incidents, including disclosures of abuse or maltreatment, behavior problems and how they were handled, injuries, or any interactions that might be misinterpreted.

To the extent any of these guidelines may appear to be in conflict, the spirit of them is that one should seek to be under the supervision of others while meeting privately with a child or youth.

### One-on-One Interaction With Vulnerable Adults Guidelines

- To the extent possible, notify vulnerable adult and his or her family (if appropriate) prior to a visit
- When visiting in care facilities, sign in and sign out at the front desk
- Do not accept any gifts, dispense medicine or take money during the visits.
- Caregiver will provide brief reports to the authorized clergy or Program Director after each visit, reporting any significant safety concerns.
- When meeting one-on-one with a vulnerable adult, to the extent possible, conduct the meeting in a public place in full view of others.
- Avoid physical affection that can be misinterpreted. Limit affection to pats on the shoulder, high fives, and handshakes.
- If meeting in a room or office, leave the door open or move to an area that can be easily observed by others passing by.
- Inform other employees and volunteers that you are alone with the vulnerable adult and ask them to randomly drop in. (Ask to be observed.)
- The caregiver should visit with the vulnerable adult with the Program Director or another volunteer periodically to allow “two-deep” interactions as a cross check.
- Document and immediately report any unusual incidents, including disclosures of abuse or maltreatment, behavior problems and how they were handled, injuries, or any interactions that might be misinterpreted.

To the extent any of these guidelines may appear to be in conflict, the spirit of them is that one shall seek to be under the observation of others while meeting privately with a vulnerable adult.

## Safe Conduct Training

Every employee and each volunteer ministering to children, youth or vulnerable adults shall complete a specific program of training on this policy. Training shall be repeated annually. For additional information about the training, please see Safe Conduct Procedures.



## Screening & Selection of Candidates for Employment and Volunteers for Certain Ministries

Prior to beginning their duties, every candidate for employment or volunteer work with children, youth or vulnerable adults must complete a safe conduct screening form and application (see Safe Conduct Procedures – Applications and Forms), including disclosure of criminal convictions and permission to conduct appropriate background checks as specified by this policy. For additional information on screening, please refer to Safe Conduct Procedures.

### Reporting Obligations —

1. When anyone observes a violation of the Code of Conduct, whether committed by an employee, volunteer or other person, or observes any other circumstance they find suspicious or feel is inappropriate, they have a duty to report it directly to the Senior Minister, Associate Minister, Moderator, or Chair of the Personnel Committee. If someone does not know who to report a violation to, they should consult Safe Conduct Procedures – Leadership & Reporting Roster for a list of people.

If someone who has observed a violation believes that the primary contact has failed to respond or has not taken their allegation seriously, the latter may contact members of the Personnel Committee. The witness or victim may report violations of policy or circumstances of abuse anonymously. The Personnel Committee shall (1) investigate the facts, (2) institute corrective action, if warranted, and/or (3) report as may be required by statute.

2. When anyone observes a violation of the Interaction Guidelines, Guidelines Applicable to those Employees and Volunteers Ministering to Children and Youth or the Social Media Policy, they should report it to the Board Chair for the appropriate ministry.
3. If the witness or victim believes a criminal act has occurred, they should contact the appropriate law enforcement authority.

Every report of misconduct must be taken seriously. All persons involved in an allegation regarding misconduct must be treated with compassion, sensitivity and concern. The confidentiality of persons and the specifics of an allegation must be maintained in so far as possible. There is always a presumption of innocence until allegations are proven.

Christ Congregational Church expects and requires the cooperation of everyone in the investigation of violations of this policy, including a complainant, witness, and the accused offender. CCC may interview these individuals privately and take oral and/or written statements from them. Please see Safe Conduct Procedures for additional information about procedures for reporting and investigating allegations.

### Response to Allegations

Progressive discipline will generally be followed to address violations of the Code of Conduct. Please see Safe Conduct Procedures for further information about addressing violations.

### Congregational Awareness

Christ Congregational Church is dedicated to a policy of open communication and education. Children, youth, parents, vulnerable adults and guardians are entitled to know what to expect of CCC ministries, the authorized clergy and volunteers who serve them, and to know the related policies and procedures created to protect the respective ministry constituencies.

At the time children, youth, or vulnerable adults enroll in CCC programs, parents or legal guardians must be provided a copy of the CCC Code of Conduct, Interaction Guidelines, Guidelines Applicable to those Employees and Volunteers Ministering to Children and Youth or the Social Media Policy, as appropriate.

This entire policy will be posted on the Christ Congregational Church website, [www.cccsilverspring.org](http://www.cccsilverspring.org). The web site administrator will keep it up-to-date at the direction of the Personnel Committee.

Please see Safe Conduct Procedures for additional information about communication.

## Conclusion

This policy is a living document guiding the authorized clergy, staff, volunteers, and congregation of Christ Congregational Church (CCC), United Church of Christ, in the area of sexual misconduct and any other form of exploitation or abuse. This policy recognizes and upholds relevant state and federal laws dealing with sexual misconduct and exploitation and also sets guidelines for prevention and intervention procedures within Christ Congregational Church, United Church of Christ. It is intended that this document be subject to review and/or revision at least every three years. In the event any allegation of misconduct subject to this policy occurs, this policy shall automatically undergo review within one calendar year by a committee designated by the Executive Council.