

Senior Minister's Report to the Board January 2020

Happy New Year. We continue to see increased attendance in worship: October had 715 adults, November 873 adults and December 1357 adults. Even discounting the Christmas Eve services of 498 adults, December was still a healthy 859 adults attending. The total of adult attending for the last quarter of 2019 was 2945 compared to the last quarter of 2018 which was 2713 adults attending. What is especially encouraging are the increased numbers of children attending on Sunday.

As per our monitoring schedule I am reporting on Treatment of Congregants, et al from our Policies:

Treatment of Congregants, et al

3.1 The Senior Minister shall not cause or allow any practice, activity, decision, or Congregational circumstance that is unlawful, in violation of professional ethics or commonly accepted business practices, or inconsistent with our values.

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.

3.3 Accordingly, the Senior Minister shall not:

3.3.1 Violate the confidentiality of Congregant pledge information, except as required by congregants of the Finance and Annual designated individuals to carry out their responsibilities.

3.3.2 Fail to provide a reasonable level of safety, upkeep, access and functionality for of the facilities.

3.3.3 Fail to maintain and enforce procedures to ensure the safety of individuals while at the Congregation or on the congregation's properties and at Congregation functions.

3.3.4 Fail to establish, publicize and follow written policies for processing Congregant grievances and suggestions.

3.3.5 Fail to maintain a process to address serious breach of covenant(s).

Report 3.3.1 I have reviewed our protocols and I conclude that there has been no activity that has been unlawful or in violation of professional ethics (all professional staff, including ministers, abide by their professional guidelines). We have done our best to maintain the confidentiality of personal and pledge information beyond those volunteers in Stewardship, Finance, Capital Campaign or Staff who are on a "need to know" basis. This has been a challenge at times given our recently completed Capital Campaign

Report 3.3.2 Our lighting has been improved around our property, most recently at the Meeting House where new lights have been installed on the stairs and driveway. In addition to the review of entrance and approach safety by our architects, we have completed a request for proposals to redo the stairs at the Meeting House. We awarded the contract and will begin work in the Spring. We have elected to just replace the stairs and landing to the Meeting House and we will hold off on replacing the ramp. We look forward to the review of our current approaches to the main building by the architect. We had two falls in recent months both of which were dealt with and documented by staff.

Report 3.3.3 Our Safe Congregations Team has reviewed our protection policies regarding sexual safety (including harassment and abuse) and has made some minor revisions. We have also reviewed our physical safety and we continue to improve on our plans. Fire and natural disaster protocols are in place. We need to do an usher training. We met with the Westport Police and we are considering safety protocols to deal with disruptive persons and a shooter. The Team met with their counterparts at Temple Israel to review their safety protocols. The Team's goal is to produce a comprehensive plan for physical and procedural improvements in our physical security including responding to fire, intrusive individuals and groups and active shooters. This report will then be assessed and actualized where possible including new budget items for our FY 2021 budget. The Team is also interacting with the Facilities Team and the architect to consider safety improvements in this renovation. We will continue to have yearly trainings for ushers, staff and other volunteers on CPR and defibulator use.

Report 3.3.4 Our Leadership Development Team and the COM have focused in on our Covenant of Right Relations (CORR). The CORR will now be part of all leadership training and chairs are encouraged to read the CORR at the start of meetings especially those of a more public nature. The chairs are being trained to call people back into covenant when necessary or suspend the meeting (note this does not apply to duly called Congregational Meetings which are governed by Robert's Rules of Procedure). Furthermore, a copy of the CORR is now displayed in the foyer. By March I will appoint a new CORR Task Force to revisit the CORR and involve the congregation in its formation and approval, including issues concerning Gender Equity. Grievances can be submitted to the Senior Minister and/or COM who have procedures for processing them, including final arbitration by the BOT. In the case of chronically disruptive persons, the Board has a graduated Disruptive Behavior Policy at its disposal.

Respectfully Submitted,

Rev. Dr. John Morehouse