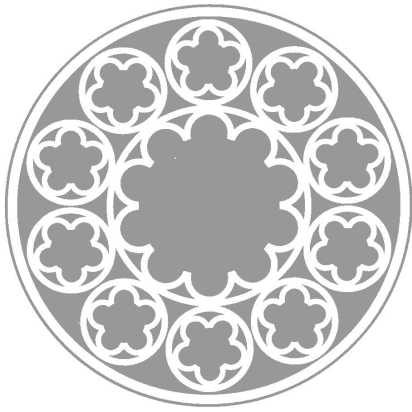




First Reformed Church
Schenectady, New York

Organizational Policies and Practices 2020

Bylaws	2
Consistory	5
Introduction	5
Worship Committee	6
Youth Education And Nurture Committee	10
Adult Education and Nurture Committee	11
Support and Care Committee	11
Membership and Fellowship Committee	12
Finance Committee	13
Property Committee	19
Mission And Benevolence Committee	21
Archives and History	22
Personnel Committee	22
Child Abuse Prevention Policy	25
Leadership Relations	27
How To Be Safe	29
General Financial Policies	30
Facility Procedures	31

Bylaws

approved by congregation June 1, 2014

PREAMBLE

This church is a member church in the Reformed Church in America. These bylaws are not intended to supersede the *Book of Church Order* of the Reformed Church in America (BCO). If there is any inconsistency between these bylaws and the BCO, the BCO shall control.

ARTICLE I: Membership

Section 1. Eligibility The members of the church congregation shall be as described in the BCO. A record of members shall be maintained by the church consistory.

Section 2. Annual Meetings The congregation shall, at least once a year, meet for the purpose of electing the consistory of the church, receiving an annual report from the consistory, including information about the programs and activities of the church, and conducting any other business necessary to accomplish the purposes of the church.

Section 3. Special Meetings Special meetings of the members may be called at the discretion of the consistory, and shall be called upon written request of ten percent of the confessing members.

Section 4. Quorum Members present at any meeting held after notice to the members shall constitute a quorum for transaction of membership business.

Section 5. Voting

A. All decisions shall be made by voice vote unless a vote by ballot is required by the

consistory, by the bylaws of this corporation, or by state law.

B. A majority vote of the confessing members present at a meeting shall determine any issues unless a greater percentage is specifically required by the consistory, articles of incorporation, bylaws, or state law.

Section 6. Rules of Order The consistory shall have authority to adopt rules of order that are consistent with the bylaws and articles of incorporation of this church.

Section 7. Notice Notice to members that is required by state law shall be given in the church bulletin or by such other means as may be determined by the consistory or required by state law, but shall be at least two Sunday's notice.

ARTICLE II: Consistory/Board of Trustees

Section 1. Title The church shall be governed by the church consistory, which shall be the directors and board of trustees of the church.

Section 2. Eligibility Subject only to any restrictions imposed upon eligibility for consistory membership by either applicable law, the classis of which this church is a member, or the BCO, all confessing members of the church are eligible for nomination and election to the consistory.

Section 3. Number The number of members of the consistory shall be twenty consisting of ten elders and ten deacons unless a change in the number of the consistory members is approved by the congregation.

Section 4. Meetings The consistory shall normally meet monthly, with the date and time of the meeting to be determined by the president. Special meetings of the consistory shall be called

upon the majority vote of the officers of the consistory, by the president, or requested by one third of the active consistory. Meetings may occur by phone, email or other methods.

Section 5. Election

- A. A single slate of nominees for vacancies on the consistory shall be established by a nominating committee consisting of the officers of the consistory, any retiring consistory members, and three persons elected by the congregation during a preceding congregational meeting.
- B. Election of the consistory shall be by written ballot or voice vote.

Section 6. Term Consistory members shall serve two-year terms. A consistory member is limited to serving only two consecutive terms. The term of individual consistory members shall be arranged so that approximately one third of the consistory members are elected each year.

Section 7. Voting

- A. Each consistory member shall have one vote regarding any business conducted.
- B. All decisions shall be made by oral vote unless a vote by ballot is requested by a consistory member or required by a vote of the consistory, the church's articles of incorporation, the church's bylaws, or applicable state law.
- C. A majority of the votes cast shall determine any issues unless specifically provided otherwise by the consistory, the church's articles of incorporation, the church's bylaws, or applicable state law. In the case of voice, phone, or other electronic voting, a two-thirds majority of all consistory members is required.

Section 8. Quorum Two-thirds of the consistory members shall constitute a quorum for doing business and making decisions.

Section 9. Duties of consistory members

Consistory members shall:

- A. Serve as liaisons between the consistory and the church's members.
- B. Meet monthly to conduct the business of the church.
- C. Present an annual report and budget to the church's members.
- D. Serve on committees as determined necessary by the consistory. The duties specified in this section are in addition to, not in limitation of, any duties of the consistory which are specified in the *BCO*.

Section 10. Notice Notice regarding the date and time of monthly consistory meetings shall be given in the church bulletin. Notice regarding special meetings shall be given at least 48 hours prior to any special meeting of the consistory by phone, email, or other method.

ARTICLE III: Officers

Section 1. President The president of consistory is the Senior Minister. The president shall preside at all meetings of the congregation and meetings of the consistory. The president shall enforce the rules and regulations of the church as specified in the bylaws and articles of incorporation of the church.

Section 2. Vice Presidents Other called ministers of the congregation, if any, in order of seniority, shall be vice presidents and shall act on behalf of the president in the absence or disability of the president, or at the president's request.

Section 3. Secretary The secretary shall be appointed annually by the president and shall take and keep minutes of meetings of the congregation and of the consistory.

Section 4. Treasurer The treasurer shall be elected by the consistory annually and shall be

entrusted with the receipts and disbursements of church funds. The treasurer shall give a financial report each month to the consistory only of total receipts, total expenditures, and the treasurer's balance after receipts and expenditures. A detailed financial report shall be given to the congregation by the consistory no less frequently than bi-monthly.

Section 5. Senior Elders One elder a year entering his or her last two years of service will be appointed by the president to serve for two years as a Senior Elder to advise the president, to meet on personnel issues, and to be the representative of the congregation to the pastoral staff.

ARTICLE IV: Committees

Section 1. Appointment The consistory shall have authority to appoint members to committees as needed and as circumstances require, may designate and appoint standing and/or special committees, and may designate the number of persons to serve on and the duties of any committee.

Section 2. Authority

- A. Committees shall research, make recommendations, and implement consistory policies and functions.
- B. No committee shall have the power to act without the approval of the consistory, except in matters of emergency (in which case the action shall promptly be submitted to the consistory for ratification). The consistory may delegate functions as necessary.
- C. All committees shall report their activities to the consistory. No standing or special committee shall represent the consistory or church in advocacy of or opposition to any project without the

specific authorization of the consistory or as is clearly permitted under the general powers granted to committees by the consistory.

D. All committees shall retain their authority and continue to function until such time as a new committee is appointed, the committee's work is completed in accordance with the directives given regarding creation of the committee, or the committee is disbanded by the consistory.

Section 3. Committee Structure and Meetings

The consistory shall elect a chairperson who shall report to the consistory regarding the work of the committee. Committee meetings shall be called by the chairperson and held as necessary to carry out the committee's responsibilities.

Section 4. Quorum Unless the consistory specifies otherwise, a majority of the members of the committee present at a meeting shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of committee business.

ARTICLE V: Finances and Ownership of Property

Section 1. Control All finances and all properties of the church shall be under the control of the consistory.

Section 2. Fiscal Year The fiscal year of this organization shall run from January 1 to December 31. The books of the church shall be kept in accordance with the fiscal year.

Section 3. Financial Review The consistory shall appoint an independent auditor who shall report directly to the consistory after examination of the financial records. The financial records shall be **reviewed** at least once every **two** years.

Section 4. Ownership of Property The church shall have authority to own, sell, hold, lease, and furnish any real or personal property as may be necessary to carry on the functions and purposes of the church. Any instruments concerning conveyances of real estate shall be signed by the president and secretary of the consistory.

Section 5. Loans and Indebtedness Any indebtedness of the church shall be incurred only after a resolution approving such indebtedness is approved by two thirds of the consistory. The consistory shall authorize the president and secretary to sign any evidences of indebtedness and to pledge or mortgage the assets of the church.

Section 6. Limited Liability--Indemnification The private property of the organization's members, consistory, offices, or officers shall not be liable for the debts of the organization. The consistory, by resolution, may provide for indemnification by the organization for expenses actually and necessarily incurred in connection with the defense of any action, suit, or proceeding in which any consistory member is made a part, excepting only those matters in which a consistory member is judged to be liable for negligence or misconduct in the performance of duty.

ARTICLE VI: Approval and Amendments

Section 1. Proposal Approval of these by laws and any amendments are proposed by the consistory, and shall only be effective if submitted to and approved by a majority vote of the congregation present at a congregational meeting after notice of the proposal has been provided to the congregation.

Section 2. Notice Any notice regarding proposed acceptance or changes in the bylaws shall be given to the congregation in writing on at least two (2) Sundays prior to the regular or special meeting at which the proposed by laws or changes in the bylaws shall be considered.

Consistory

Introduction

The consistory is the governing body of First Reformed Church (FRC). It is composed of those elders and deacons serving a current term and the installed ministers. Consistory governance and conduct of business conform to The Constitution of the Reformed Church in America, which includes The Book of Church Order, The Liturgy and Directory for Worship, and the Doctrinal Standards. These are the constitutional documents for congregations of the Reformed Church in America (RCA). Consistory members should be familiar with the duties of elders and deacons and the responsibilities of consistory as prescribed in The RCA Constitution.

The purpose of this Handbook is to present concise information concerning the meetings, structure, and specific committee responsibilities adopted by this consistory as it functions in conformity with the general provisions of The RCA Constitution.

Meetings

Consistory normally meets in Covenant Hall on the second Tuesday of each month, September through June, and as needed during July and August. Committee meetings begin at 6:30 p.m. and the consistory itself begins at 7:30 p.m.

Standing Committees of Consistory

Standing committees submit reports and recommendations for action by consistory in their assigned areas of responsibility. Each consistory committee is chaired by a consistory member and is composed of additional consistory members and members of the congregation at-large. Every consistory member serves on one standing committee. Members at-large with special gifts for and commitment to a committee's purpose are nominated by the ministers and by committee members and are appointed by the president to one committee. At-large members serve two year renewable terms. Committee terms begin on July 1 and end on June 30.

Representatives to Church Judicatories
In addition to the clergy of the congregation who are enrolled as members of the Classis of Schenectady, the church is currently entitled to two elder delegates. These elder delegates can be chosen by the Consistory from active elders and/or elders from the Greater Consistory.

Senior Elders

Two senior elders serve as vice presidents of Consistory by seniority after the associate minister(s) and other installed ministers. They, with the ministers, are charged to provide leadership to the Consistory and the Board of Elders, and the congregation, to communicate to the congregation important decisions of the Consistory and the Board of Elders, to support the ministers with their advice and counsel, to facilitate the Consistory's annual performance evaluation of the ministers, and to encourage the ministers' continuing education and growth in pastoral competence.

Senior Elders are appointed from among elders currently serving on Consistory. Two senior elders serve rotating two-year terms. Each year a senior elder is appointed from among those elders who will begin the next to last year of their

Consistory term. The senior elders are appointed by the senior minister after consultation with the other installed ministers and current senior elders.

The senior elders serve as vice presidents of Consistory by seniority after the installed ministers.

1. The senior elders are available to the ministers for counsel and support. They initiate meetings with the ministers when they determine that advice and counsel are needed.
2. Understanding their supportive role, the senior elders are available to members of the congregation, referring people and concerns to the ministers or to others as appropriate.
3. The senior elders act as representatives of the Consistory and congregation in special worship services, e.g., as bearers of the Christ candle on Christmas Eve and Easter.
4. Senior elders serve on the Personnel Committee
5. The senior elder in the last year of his/her term serves on the Tercentenary Fund Distribution Committee.
6. The senior elders are available to the ministers for special leadership tasks as opportunities or emergencies arise. They are encouraged to initiate Consistorial and congregational leadership as needed, consistent with their charge.

Worship Committee

Charge: The worship committee oversees all regular and special services of worship to encourage the congregation's faithful and vital praise, prayer, and participation in the word and sacraments. The committee supports the ministers with advice, evaluation, and assistance in the preparation and conduct of worship

services. The committee recruits, trains, and supports all members who assist in providing for worship services.

Composition: The worship committee is normally chaired by a consistory member. It includes the director of music, the president of the chancel guild, the senior minister, additional elders or deacons appointed by consistory, and at-large members of the congregation.

Specific Responsibilities:

1. Be informed concerning the theological foundations and liturgical practices of worship in First Reformed Church, the Reformed tradition, and ecumenical Christianity in order to encourage worship that is both faithful to our heritage and open and reforming in response to contemporary needs and faith expressions.
2. Study and recommend to consistory major changes to the order of worship, special or alternative services, and any other policies and procedures affecting the worship life of the congregation, including weddings and memorial services.
3. Provide advice and counsel to the ministers on all matters relating to public worship and assist in preparation for special services.
4. Oversee all policies, procedures, and training for ushers and other member activities in support of the worship services.
5. Oversee the preparation and serving of the sacraments and the maintenance of communion implements, the baptismal font, and other liturgical symbols and appointments.
6. Supervise and support the ministry of the Chancel Guild.

7. Supervise and encourage the entire program of music in worship, advise and counsel the director of music, and participate in the encouragement and evaluation of professional music staff in consultation with the personnel committee.
8. Maintain and improve the sanctuary sound system.
9. Prepare and submit to consistory an annual budget to support worship activities and the work of the committee.

Guidelines for Ushers

Ushers schedules are issued three times a year. If ushers cannot be present on the assigned day, please arrange for a substitute, and notify the church office.

Ushers are requested to wear appropriate dress. For men, a suit or sport coat is the customary attire, including the summer months.

1. Please be in the Narthex no later than twenty minutes prior to the start of the service.
2. Pick up your name tag in the Usher's closet
3. Report to your head usher for an assignment.

Offering

1. Assemble for offering assignments during the second hymn.
2. The processional should be performed in pace and at a moderate speed.
3. When presenting the offering, place your plate on top of those plates already held by the minister. Wait until the offering prayer is complete, then proceed to the first pew.

After the service

1. Assist in cleaning up the Sanctuary.
2. Remove all bulletins, etc. from hymnal books and pews.
3. Place the Bibles and hymnals upright in the pew racks.
4. Take lost and found articles to the church office.
5. Discard offering envelopes and pew cards that have been drawn on.
6. Return your name tag

General Guidelines for Head Ushers During the Church School Year

1. Turn on all lights, including the Dykstra Chapel, and place parking cones along Union Street. Make certain that both doors of Dykstra chapel are open and that the lights are turned on.
2. Place guest book on lectern in the Narthex and open to last entry. Make sure a working pen is there. Turn on the attached lectern lamp.
3. Turn on the lectern lamp for the church Charter near the Poling House door.
4. Retrieve offering plates from the locked cabinet in the hallway entering the sanctuary.
5. Light the chancel candles about 9:30 a.m.
6. Bulletins will be found on top of the Narthex cabinet, sanctuary entrances from the Dirck Romeyn Room and Poling House.
7. Assign ushers to the various aisles and help them to assertively greet people, offer a bulletin and find them a desired seat.
8. Assemble the Ushers and assign them their areas to receive the offering. Move them down the aisle promptly when the offering is announced and again promptly following the first bars of the Doxology.

9. Record the attendance in the attendance book; strive for fair accuracy.
10. At the start of the final hymn, open the Sanctuary doors outward toward the Narthex so that the Elders and Ushers may exit and the choir can reassemble in the rear of the Sanctuary.
11. At the start of the final hymn, open the Sanctuary doors outward for the exit of the Elders and Users leave open during the benediction response. In nice weather, also open both outside center doors.
12. Instruct the ushers after the service to replace the hymnals, pick up any bulletins left in the pews or pew racks, and replace offering envelopes and pew cards in racks.
13. Extinguish the candles; turn off the master power switch on the audio system if there is no audio attendant around; deposit the offering in the church vault; put out all the lights and close the outside doors.

For Summer Schedule

During the summer, the Ushers Corps is reduced to five, plus the Head Usher. All duties of the Head Usher remain the same as during the calendar year, except for the following:

1. The head usher will be responsible for lighting and extinguishing the Chancel candles.
2. During the offering, four ushers are to fan out across the Sanctuary, while the fifth usher receives the offering from those in the Gallery.
3. Adequate ventilation during warm or humid summer days is critical.
4. Open the windows in the Dykstra Chapel, the Dirck Romeyn room, and the Flower Room.
5. Turn the building exhaust fan "on". Switch is located in the minister's office, upstairs.

6. Leave the doors next to the organ open.
7. Leave the front doors to the Sanctuary open (Watch for stray dogs, squirrels. Seriously).

Communion Coordinator

In preparation for Communion, the Worship Coordinator should make arrangements for providing bread and grape juice for the service.

The Communion coordinator will also organize those who will be participating in the Service of Communion. Each Deacon and Elder, will have received a reminder notice, including detailed instructions on what is expected of them during this service. All should be particularly mindful that they arrive at church no less than 20 minutes prior to the service.

Diagrams are made available to each Deacon and Elder in advance of Communion. These provide an overview of the Service, and are found to be a handy and discreet reference once the Service has begun.

Heritage Sunday (First Sunday in February)
Remember that the Lydius Cup is used at this Service. The cup is stored in a vault in the office. The Elder for Worship should make arrangements for getting and returning Lydius Cup.

Medical Emergency Plan

If someone in the congregation takes ill during the service, be prepared to take immediate action.

- A wheelchair is located in the Poling coat closet.
- The portable oxygen tank is stored on the lower left shelf of the Narthex cabinets.

- The nearest telephones are located in Heritage room and Friendship Hall.
- Paramedic assistance may be reached by calling 911. There are also doctors and trained CPR specialists in the congregation. Know where they are seated. If paramedics are called, ask them to meet you at a special doorway entrance. They should arrive without sirens, if safe to do so.

Chancel Guild

The work of the Guild may be divided into three responsibility areas:

1. Flowers, plants, and floral arrangements.
2. Vestments (antependia), bookmarks, communion cloths, flags and banners.
3. Worship implements (crosses, candlesticks, vases, offering plates, communion silver, baptismal bowls, candle snuffers).

It is the responsibility of the Chancel Guild to provide adequate storage, for proper and safe care of worship appointments, and properly set them for use in worship. The chair of the Chancel Guild, or appointees, will be directly responsible, with the minister, for vestment or floral decisions for weddings, memorial services, and all regular services or uses of our worship area.

Among the general concerns for proper vesting of worship areas there are the following considerations:

It is the custom that only elements normally found on a dining table are set upon the Communion Table. Memorial flowers in most cases should be placed elsewhere.

It is customary that flowers are never arranged in such a way as to allow the top of the vase or container to be above the cross arm of the cross. This is not as sometimes erroneously understood that flower tops must never be above the top of the cross.

The cycle of the church year, which incidentally follows the biography of Jesus, is carried out in the changing of the liturgy colors in the sanctuary.

Youth Education And Nurture Committee

Charge: The Youth Education and Nurture Committee lead the consistory and the congregation in fulfilling our baptismal vows "to provide Christian love and nurture through our prayers and encouragement, teaching and affection" to the children and youth of the church. The committee is responsible for all policies, programs, and activities, which create and maintain an atmosphere of love, learning and fellowship for our children in community with the church family and the larger community. The committee provides programs of education, worship, music, and outreach to encourage each child to develop an understanding of the Word and the role of Scripture in our lives; a personal relationship with God, whom we know in Jesus Christ; a sense of belonging to the family of God through intergenerational relationships in the church; and a commitment to mission and service in the world God loves.

Composition: The committee is chaired by a consistory member and includes at least one additional member of consistory and the minister for children and youth. An additional 6-8 at-large members of the congregation serve on the committee. Other members are recruited to plan and implement specific committee programs or events.

Specific Responsibilities:

1. Be informed concerning the biblical and theological foundations for Christian nurture and current developments in education and faith development. Engage

consultants and persons with special expertise to advise the committee as needed.

2. Recommend to consistory all policies governing the education and nurture of children in the church.
3. Review and approve all programs of education and nurture including Kinderwyk, church school, youth groups, pre-confirmation and confirmation, Communion education, children in worship, etc.
4. Supervise the church school, its curriculum, and the recruitment and training of teachers and other program leaders.
5. Provide training and support for church school teachers and youth leaders and an annual recognition event.
6. Oversee Kinderwyk, its programs, facilities, equipment, and staff.
7. Provide for the inclusion of music and the arts in Christian nurture programs and participate in the support and evaluation of staff involved, in consultation with the personnel committee.
8. Nurture children and youth in Christian mission and service by providing and overseeing a series of annual outreach projects such as church school offerings, One Great Hour of Sharing, Souper Bowl Sunday, Christmas clothing appeal, workcamp, and ministry to local needs.
9. Supervise summer nurture programs and opportunities.
10. Provide regular intergenerational, fellowship/family events such as suppers, Advent festival, retreats, picnic, etc., in collaboration with the adult education and nurture committee.
11. Prepare and submit to consistory an annual budget for our ministries with

children and youth and the work of the committee.

Adult Education and Nurture Committee

Charge: The Adult Education and Nurture Committee provides leadership to enable adult members to respond to Christ's call to discipleship, to mature in Christian faith and learning, to be nurtured in faithful community, and to deepen their spiritual lives. The Committee plans, implements, oversees, and evaluates all programs, which enhance the Christian education and nurture of adults. The Committee assists the ministers with counsel and support in their teaching responsibilities. The Committee provides adults regular opportunities for spiritual growth, prayer, and sharing through retreats, small groups, and other structured experiences. The committee recruits, trains and supports program teachers and leaders.

Specific Responsibilities:

1. Be knowledgeable about resources and trends in adult Christian education and nurture, discipleship, spirituality, and small group ministries.
2. Recommend to consistory all policies governing the education and nurture of adults in the church.
3. Plan, implement, and evaluate all programs of adult education, spiritual growth, Bible study, and prayer.
4. Provide small groups and other shared experiences to enhance opportunities for Christian fellowship, learning, mutual support, and growth in community.
5. Provide leadership training for all programs of adult education and nurture.
6. Plan, oversee, and evaluate the annual Lenten series, retreats, and workshops.

7. Provide oversight, planning and support as needed for on-going and occasional adult education programs, e.g., Kerygma, Wednesday Dialogue, Wednesday evening study/discussion groups, First Forum.
8. Communicate regularly and creatively with members involved in adult education, staff, consistory, and the congregation as a whole to inform and involve the congregation in programs of adult education and nurture.
9. Consult and collaborate with the youth education and nurture committee to provide intergenerational experiences of learning, spiritual growth, and Christian community.
10. Oversee Johnson Library, enlist and support Library leadership, and advise the church librarian concerning the purchase of books and other resources for adult education and nurture.
11. Oversee Faith Bookshop, enlist and support Bookshop leadership, and advice concerning policies and book purchases.
12. Prepare and submit to consistory an annual budget for our ministries of adult education and nurture and the work of the committee.

Support and Care Committee

Charge: The Support and Care Committee facilitates care of members of the congregation in need of assistance. The committee provides for the needs of individuals and families in the congregation in times of illness, aging, death, or other personal crises by assisting personally as well as encouraging and enlisting others in the congregation to be involved in the support and care of members according to their ability. The committee oversees the Stephen Ministry

program and supports the ministers in their pastoral care.

Composition: The committee is chaired (or co-chaired) by a consistory (or two) and includes and the associate minister as well as at least four members from the congregation.

Specific responsibilities:

1. Be aware of current trends and resources in Christian support and care and provide resources appropriate for the ministries of FRC.
2. Coordinate the support and care of individual members, e.g., delivery of Sunday chancel flowers, delivery of flowers before Christmas and Easter services to homebound, hospitalized, or bereaved members; meals to persons or families in need; communion for homebound members; the chain of prayer.
3. Consult with the ministers concerning members of the congregation in need of the pastoral care ministry of the church and support the ministers in their pastoral work.
4. Oversee the Stephen Ministry program and support its work by encouraging members to provide and accept this ministry of individual, compassionate care giving.
5. Prepare and submit to consistory an annual budget for support and care and the work of the committee.

Membership and Fellowship Committee

Charge: This committee is responsible to nurture the congregation's awareness and appreciation of one another, enhancing the sense of belonging, enjoyment, and mutual care. The committee provides and supports fellowship

programs, occasions of hospitality, and regular contact with members and visitors to strengthen and build the church as a beloved community. This fellowship charge includes visitors and people interested in joining.

Composition: The committee is chaired by a consistory member and includes another consistory member, the Hospitality Coordinator, the associate minister, and members from the congregation.

1. Initiate and supervise all efforts to build community within the congregation and to increase each member's sense of belonging.
2. Provide for all regular and special hospitality events such as post-service coffee hours, Fall Picnic, special receptions, Progressive Dinner, Winter Festival, fellowship dinners, and hospitality for visiting persons and groups.
3. Initiate and promote activities off-site that foster challenge, vitality and accomplishment and joy among members of the congregation and community, e.g. athletic, service, and cultural outings.
4. Support as needed other church organizations, individuals, and groups that provide fellowship opportunities, e.g., Tuesday Ladies, Groups V and VII, Thursday Knitters.
5. Oversee plans and implementation of care for visitors and prospects.
6. Assist with new member classes and new member integration.

Finance Committee

Charge: The Finance Committee is responsible to the consistory for continuous oversight of church finances; the integrity of accounting, records and controls; recommendation of policies and procedures for the management of operating and endowment funds; initiatives to inform the congregation about church financial affairs and encourage the financial stewardship of members; and support of the church treasurer in carrying out the duties of that office. The committee shall meet as needed and at least four times per year.

Composition: The committee is chaired by a consistory member. It includes the senior elder serving the final year of his/her term, the church treasurer, the chair of the endowment sub-committee, the senior minister, additional elders or deacons appointed by consistory, and at-large members of the congregation.

Responsibilities:

1. Oversee all policies and procedures governing the solicitation, receipt, recording, acknowledgement and disbursement of church contributions to assure fiscal integrity and encourage the congregation's Christian stewardship.
2. Review and recommend revisions as needed to all policies and procedures governing the management of church finances.
3. Review and recommend revisions as needed to policies and procedures governing endowment funds, expenditures of endowment income, and evaluate the performance of the trustees or managers of these funds. Supervise memorial funds.
4. Provide judgments with respect to the financial feasibility of projects or

expenditures proposed by other consistory committees.

5. Receive budget proposals from consistory committees, evaluate and consolidate such proposals, and submit the annual church operating budget to consistory, guided by priorities established by the committees of consistory.
6. Plan and conduct the annual financial stewardship appeal to the congregation (Consecration Sunday), enlisting the ministers, other consistory committees, and additional church members as needed in this effort.
7. Perform an annual review of casualty and liability insurance coverage, recommending revisions as needed to consistory.
8. Communicate regularly with the congregation concerning church financial affairs through the Annual Report, the newsletter and other appropriate means. Provide members with a quarterly pledge statement.
9. Provide periodic, independent reviews of the financial records and accounting procedures of the church by a competent auditing firm.
10. Provide financial analysis, reports and projections as needed by consistory for strategic planning.
11. Supervise and support the work of the endowment sub-committee to counsel church members on planned giving, promote endowment growth through such bequests, and assure preservation of donor intent.
12. Supervise, advise, and support the church treasurer in the duties of that office and consult with the president of consistory in submitting an annual nomination for election by consistory to that office.

Church Funds

Tercentenary Trust Fund

The trust was established "to promote the development of Christian leadership in, by way of example and not limitation, the ministry, Christian education, music and the arts. The financial assistance to be provided would be for activities which are beyond the ordinary responsibilities of the church organization, such as . . . exchange ministries, internships, special studies, and other broadening experiences for professional personnel." These funds are not for undergraduate or seminary study or for regular budgetary expenses.

Composition of the Tercentenary Committee: Senior Minister, senior elders, chairpersons of Mission and Benevolence, Youth Education, Adult Education, Support and Care, a chair of a women's group, one person at large.

Birch Memorial Foundation and the Schermerhorn Foundation

These are "income only" trusts established by wills under the legal oversight of the surrogate court and Attorney General of New York State. Income is only available after commissions and expenses.

Endowment Fund

First Reformed Church has full access to the principal and income. The Consistory, through the Finance Committee designates a percentage of the average of the balances of the trailing five quarters for income to the budget for the following year.

The Education Fund

The Education Fund was established by Consistory in 1990, and recognizes the spiritual benefits First Reformed Church enjoyed from the gifts and talents of Albert A Smith, our Senior

Minister from 1986-1990. The inspiration for the Fund came both from Al Smith's life and his circumstances. Income from the Fund is used to grant scholarships to active members of the church and church staff and their families to cover expenses related to pursuing educational goals. Applications should demonstrate need and interest in church and community affairs. Applications are encouraged from adults returning to pursue or continue formal, higher education, and from graduating high school seniors. Scholarships are not limited to religious education.

Memorial Fund

1. Gifts to the first reformed church memorial fund shall be identified as such by the office administrator.
2. Any gift received as a memorial to First Reformed Church shall be reported to the Memorial Fund Committee.
3. Designated gifts shall be held in the First Reformed Church Memorial Fund account until such time as the minister and the family involved have decided how the designated gifts shall be used.
4. Undesignated gifts or contributions of insufficient amount to establish a tangible memorial (under \$100) shall be consolidated into the General Memorial Fund.
5. Once each year Memorial Fund interest shall be credited to the General Memorial Fund by the office administrator. The interest rate will equal the rate earned in the First Reformed Church's investment account and will be applied to the General Memorial Fund balance as of December 31st.
6. The General Memorial Fund shall be utilized for any church purpose (other than ordinary operating expenses) by

recommendation of the Memorial Fund chairperson and the senior minister.

Responsibilities Of The First Reformed Church Memorial Committee

1. The Memorial Fund Committee shall be appointed by the senior minister. The committee shall consist of the senior minister and three members of the congregation-at-large.
2. The Memorial Fund Chairperson shall be appointed by the senior minister.
3. Accurate records of all gifts and their designations shall be the responsibility of the Memorial Fund Chairperson.
4. All records and accounts shall be subjected to regular audit under the direction of the Finance Committee.
5. The Memorial Fund Chairperson, in conjunction with the senior minister, shall see that memorial donor cards are readily available to the congregation and that church families and friends are encouraged to make contributions to the Memorial Fund in lieu of other expressions of sympathy.
6. The Memorial Fund Chairperson, in conjunction with the senior minister, shall see that each donation to the Memorial Fund is properly acknowledged, and that the family of the person in whose name the gift was given is informed of each donation.
7. The Memorial Fund Chairperson shall be responsible for updating the Memorial Book kept in the narthex of the sanctuary of First Reformed Church.
8. At least once a year the Memorial Funds Chairperson shall inform the consistory and church staff of available memorial funds.

Covenant Fund

The following policies govern the management of The Covenant Fund:

1. Consistory establishes, reviews, and approves all policies, procedures, and contributions to The Fund.
2. The Fund is established as a discrete, designated account within the church endowment fund. Fund principal and interest will be separately accounted for, reported, and distributed.
3. The Fund will include the bequests of Laura Auer and Agnes Macdonald and any additional gifts or bequests designated by others for The Covenant Fund.
4. The Fund will be managed by the finance committee which will determine management policy in consultation with the endowment committee and the church treasurer, with the approval of the consistory.

Fund Distribution

1. Consistory must approve all distributions from The Fund. A simple majority vote will authorize Fund distributions to meet needs beyond the congregation. In extraordinary circumstances the consistory may, by three-fourths majority vote, authorize Fund distributions to meet financial needs of First Reformed Church
2. Distributions are to be made from a percentage of the total return of the Fund over the prior year, such percentage to be recommended by the finance committee and approved by consistory. Sufficient Fund earnings will be retained, at a percentage to be determined and annually reviewed by consistory, to maintain current value and offset the effects of inflation over time.

3. The principal of The Fund will be preserved and not distributed, except in compliance with donor provision or by action of consistory.
4. Distributions will be recommended for vote of consistory by The Covenant Fund distribution committee.
5. The amount to be distributed each year, including the Annual Memorial Distribution, is intended to be equal to the total return of the Fund during the prior Fund fiscal year less the retained earnings referenced in paragraph two of this section and all Fund management fees and expenses. In the event that the total return of the Fund is small or negative for a given year, it is expected that the consistory will choose to distribute an amount equal to at least three percent (3%) of the balance of the Fund as reported on the last day of the prior fiscal year of the Fund.
4. The following guidelines will direct the committee in recommending distributions from The Fund.
 - Distributions will aim for major mission achievements, providing sizable grants to promising mission initiatives, rather than small distributions to numerous ministries and programs.
 - Single distributions, multi-year funding commitments, or renewable grants may be made.
 - Distributions will reflect the local, national, and global covenant responsibilities of First Reformed church.
5. The distribution committee is charged to publicize The Covenant Fund and its purpose, to invite and evaluate funding proposals, and to recommend to consistory all Fund distributions which support Christian ministries and address human needs beyond First Reformed Church. The distribution committee will require adequate documentation of each funding proposal to assure its integrity, without imposing undue administrative burdens on the organization making application. When evaluating funding proposals, the committee will give priority to funding requests which meet some or all of the following criteria:

Distribution Committee

1. The Covenant Fund distribution committee will consist of The chairperson of the endowment committee, The chairperson of the finance committee, The co-chairs or the chairperson and one additional member of the mission and benevolence committee, the president of consistory, and two at-large members of the congregation appointed by consistory
2. At-large members must have demonstrated a commitment to the mission and outreach of the church. They will serve two-year alternating terms and may be appointed to two consecutive terms.
3. The chairperson of the endowment committee will chair the distribution committee.
- a. expresses God's compassion for the poor and God's passion for justice, peace, and the care of creation.
- b. consistent with *The Covenant of the Congregation* and the mission of the Christian church.
- c. encourages individual responsibility, initiative, and long-term solutions to local, national, or global needs and problems.

- d. is expected to achieve demonstrable results in meeting specific needs, which will be defined and measured by stated criteria.
- e. will be seed money for new, creative mission initiatives beyond currently available financial resources.
- f. will encourage matching gifts and contributions from other sources, thus multiplying the funding impact.
- g. may be initiated by or provide opportunity for mission involvement by members of First Reformed Church.
- h. addresses a major mission need or opportunity with reasonable probability of significant and sustained achievement.
- i. will cultivate other funding sources and become self-sustaining within a specified time-frame.

Annual Memorial Distribution

In gratitude to God for the faithful membership of Laura Auer and Agnes Macdonald and in recognition of their desire to contribute to the life and ministry of First Reformed Church beyond their death, an annual memorial distribution from the Fund will be made to the operating budget of the church in an amount equal to their last financial pledge, adjusted annually for inflation. Such inflation adjustment is to be calculated by application of the change in the *Consumer Price Index for All Urban Consumers, All Items, Not Seasonally Adjusted*, published by the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics. This Annual Memorial Distribution will be noted in each Annual Report.

Union Mission Fund

The Union Presbyterian Mission Fund of the First Reformed Church ("the Fund") is established to the glory of God and to give shape to a continuing memory and activity in mission from the former Union Presbyterian Church. The purpose of the Fund is to provide for mission causes.

Fund Management

1. All considerations of the Fund are under the authority of the consistory of the First Reformed Church.
2. The Fund is established as a discrete, designated account within the church endowment funds.
3. The Fund will include the distribution of any undesignated assets of the former Union Presbyterian Church and any additional gifts or bequests to the former Union Presbyterian Church.
4. The investments of the Fund will be managed by the Finance Committee in consultation with the church treasurer and with the approval of the consistory.

Fund Distribution

1. Consistory must approve all distributions from the Fund upon recommendation of the Union Mission Fund Committee,
2. Normally, distributions are to be made from a percentage of the total return of the Fund over the prior year, but shall be at least 3% of the balance of the Fund as reported on the last day of the prior fiscal year of the Fund.

Distribution Committee

The Union Presbyterian Mission Fund Committee will consist of:

- The president of consistory
- A representative from the Mission and Benevolence Committee or its successor.

- A representative from the Finance Committee
- Until January 1, 2020, four at-large members of the congregation appointed by the president of consistory who were previously members of Union Presbyterian Church at the time of the merger.
- After January 1, 2020, four at-large members of the congregation appointed by the president of consistory.

Distribution Guidelines

1. Distributions will be for no less than \$1,000.
2. Distributions may be one-time or multi-year.
3. Distributions will attempt to generally honor the mission directions of the former Union Presbyterian Church.
4. Distributions will not normally fund the internal activities of the First Reformed Church, but may underwrite mission efforts funded in the budget.
5. The Union Presbyterian Mission Fund Committee is charged to publicize the fund and its purpose, to invite and evaluate funding proposals, and to recommend to the consistory distributions which support Christian ministries and address human need. The distribution committee will require adequate documentation for each funding proposal to assure its integrity, without imposing undue administrative burdens on the organization making application.

Church Treasurer

Term and Qualifications: The church treasurer is elected by consistory at its June meeting to a one year, renewable term. The church treasurer

is elected from among the confessing (active) members of the church. The person should have expertise and experience in accounting, budgeting, financial reporting, and the management of funds and investments.

Charge: The church treasurer is accountable to the consistory for the conduct of the office within the framework of financial policy, practice and directive proposed by the finance committee and approved by the consistory.

Responsibilities:

1. Oversee and authorize the receipt, safeguarding, investment, and disbursement of all church funds.
2. Oversee and assure the accuracy of recording, accounting, and reporting for all church funds.
3. Attend consistory meetings and submit and interpret to consistory a monthly financial report and periodic summary reports of cash transactions, investment performance, and the church's overall financial condition.
4. Prepare required reports to federal, state and local agencies and taxing authorities.
5. Assure the accuracy, safety and preservation of financial records.
6. Act as authorized liaison with financial institutions or individuals acting as depository, trustee, or manager of endowment or other funds.
7. Act as authorized liaison with insurance underwriters to assure adequate insurance coverage's and process of claims.
8. Provide leadership with the finance committee in preparation of the annual operating budget, evaluation of budget recommendations, and analysis of the financial feasibility of special projects or expenditures submitted to consistory.

9. Recommend revisions in financial policies and procedures as needed.
10. Prepare the annual financial report for consistory and The Annual Report.
11. Assist the finance committee in preparing financial analysis, reports, and projections for the annual stewardship campaign and for strategic planning.
12. Advise and instruct the office administrator in the administration of church finances and participate in the evaluation of the office administrator in consultation with the personnel committee.

Assistant Church Treasurer

An assistant church treasurer may be appointed from among the confessing (active) members of the church by the president of the consistory in consultation with the finance committee upon recommendation of the church treasurer. The assistant church treasurer will perform duties assigned by the church treasurer as needed and serve as a possible successor. The assistant church treasurer does not normally attend consistory meetings.

Property Committee

Charge: The buildings and grounds committee is responsible for the maintenance, renovation, and alteration of all church facilities, buildings and grounds. It gives special attention to the preservation of the church's historic architectural legacy. Committee chairpersons advise the head maintenance worker and participate in his performance evaluation. The committee provides an annual budget for buildings and grounds. The committee supervises and supports groups or individuals who contribute to the enhancement and beautification of church property. The

committee meets at least four times each year to coordinate the performance of its duties.

Responsibilities:

1. Be familiar with maintenance procedures and the regulations and resources which apply to the preservation of an historic site.
2. Oversee the maintenance, custodial care, renovation, and improvement of all buildings and grounds, including the sanctuary and adjoining rooms, Poling House, Poling Chapel, Covenant Hall, Walton House and the church offices, Kinderwyk and the residence at 12 N. Church Street.
3. Advise the head maintenance worker, conduct an annual inspection of all buildings and grounds, and prepare an annual maintenance plan in consultation with the head maintenance worker.
4. Advise the personnel committee concerning the job descriptions, specific duties, and performance of maintenance staff.
5. Oversee the purchase and servicing of all maintenance machinery, tools, and equipment.
6. Provide and maintain adequate systems for security, fire prevention, and safety and assure compliance with all safety regulations, building codes, and historic preservation requirements.
7. Administer all leases and rentals of church property.
8. Provide liaison with contractors, vendors, and service providers on major maintenance projects and approve all maintenance contracts within budget constraints.
9. Advise the church treasurer and finance committee concerning insurance coverage and contracts.

10. Oversee and support the work of the garden guild and the interior coordinating committee.
11. Submit to consistory an annual budget for the operation, maintenance, and improvement of all church property, and administer the budget throughout the year, approving all expenditures in excess of \$200.
12. Develop and maintain an on-going strategic plan for buildings and grounds as a vital component in the strategic plan for FRC.
13. Provide and care for, in perpetuity, the heritage and records of the former Union Presbyterian Church. FRC agrees to honor and maintain in the worship life of the community an honored place for UPC sacramental objects including the baptismal font and communion ware.

Regulations for Use of Church Facilities

Building Use Policy

12/2018

The Consistory encourages the use of church facilities by its member groups and recognized civic community organizations within the limits of the church's ability to provide resources and services and in accordance with the church's principles and Creation Care priorities. All requests for use of facilities must be made through the church office at least two weeks in advance of the desired date of use. All groups and organizations must complete a Facilities Use Form and provide a Certificate of Insurance if appropriate and as noted below.

Facilities of the church are available, subject to the following regulations:

1. The beliefs and practices of the organization must not be discriminatory or

contrary to the spirit of the church or the laws of the community, state, or nation. Organizations agree to abide by the policies of the church when using the facilities.

2. Wine and beer may be served at church events if a member of the staff is present. Wine, beer, and other alcohol may be served at catered events at the church by a caterer that is appropriately licensed.
3. Demonstrations may not be conducted with fire, explosives, firearms or weapons of any kind, or caustic or volatile materials or any other materials that may be dangerous to life or property.
4. Smoking and/or illegal drug use is not allowed on the premises.
5. Gambling of any kind shall not be permitted.
6. Displays shall not be affixed to any building surface.
7. Adequate adult supervision must be provided for children and youth using church facilities. The congregation's Child Abuse Prevention Policies must be observed.
8. Organizations using church facilities will assume full responsibility for damage done during their occupancy of the facilities and will be expected to reimburse the church for repairs or unusual cleaning.
9. Special permission will be required from the Coordinator of Music and/or the Senior Minister for use of church musical instruments.
10. Outside groups not directly sponsored by FRC using church facilities are required to provide a Certificate of Liability Insurance showing insurance coverage for their members during the time that their group meets at First Reformed Church. This certificate should provide a minimum of \$1,000,000 liability insurance protection.

This provision does not apply to events connected to weddings or funerals held at the church.

Fees for use of the facility are listed below. Fees may be waived in special circumstances by a minister of the church. All room use fees are based on per diem use, and include the services of the church custodian, excluding weddings.

1. First Reformed Church organizations have free use of all facilities for meetings, religious programs and social events.
2. Groups or Individuals normally pay the following fees per diem:

Event Item	Non-Member	Member
Wedding Inclusive	1000	300
Funeral		
Organist	125	125
Minister	200	0
Sanctuary	300	0
Poling Chapel	200	0
Reception w/coffee	200	0
Meeting		
Classroom	80	40
Hall	200	100
Dirck Romeyn	100	50
Poling Chapel	200	100
Any Kitchen	100	50
Coffee	1 / cup	.5/ cup

Mission And Benevolence Committee

Charge: The mission and benevolence committee enables the congregation to respond to God's love for us and God's commandment to love our neighbors as ourselves. The committee directs the resources of the congregation to the hungry, homeless, abused, and others in need of God's love locally, nationally, and globally. In a world where human needs abound and ministry

opportunities are virtually unlimited, the committee sets policies and priorities to maximize the effective use of finite Church resources in mission. The committee gives attention to the needs of the RCA mission program, the RCA Synod of Albany, the education of seminary students, local community ministries, and emergency needs. The committee recommends to consistory the designated percentage for mission and benevolence in the annual budget and determines which mission programs will be funded by the annual budget and special offerings. The committee educates the congregation concerning mission opportunities and calls members to respond with their love, involvement, talents, and financial support.

Responsibilities:

1. Be informed concerning human needs and mission programs locally, nationally, and globally and about the specific programs and ministries supported by FRC.
2. Set policies and priorities to assure the effective allocation of church funds for local, national, and global mission and ministry.
3. Evaluate funding requests and appeals, recommend to consistory the annual mission and benevolence budget allocation, and determine the recipients of funds from the mission and benevolence budget and special offerings.
4. Review and evaluate all mission programs, institutions, and agencies receiving FRC support to assure effective use of church funds for mission and ministry beyond our congregation.
5. Inform and educate the congregation concerning mission opportunities and the specific people, ministries, agencies, and institutions supported by FRC through the church newsletter and Sunday bulletin,

The Annual Report, and other appropriate means.

6. Encourage the congregation's increasing financial stewardship for mission and benevolence.
7. Provide support, encouragement, and programs for members to discover their spiritual gifts and commit themselves to ministry within our community and beyond.
8. Develop and maintain a long-range plan for the mission and benevolence programs of our church as a vital component in the strategic plan for FRC.
9. As a part of the Joint Witness that brought about the joining of Union Presbyterian Church, FRC will annually collect a One Great Hour of Sharing Offering that will be distributed by the PC(USA) or its successor.

Archives and History

Charge: The Archives and History Committee is responsible for the preservation and promotion of the heritage of First Reformed Church.

Responsibilities:

1. Care for and organize the archives of the church including those at other sites.
2. Care for and promote displays of local church history in the church building.
3. Manage and promote the use of the Heritage room.
4. Help with the planning and execution of Heritage Sunday.
5. Assist with requests for archival retrieval as time permits.

Personnel Committee

Charge: The personnel committee is responsible for all matters relating to the employment of non-ordained church staff. The committee prepares position descriptions for consistory approval, hires employees as needed, provides staff support and oversees staff evaluation, maintains a handbook of employment policies and procedures, conducts an annual review of staff salaries and benefits, and recommends adjustments in compensation as part of the annual budget process. The committee maintains confidentiality in all personnel matters and consults with the church attorney as needed.

Composition: The personnel committee is chaired by the senior elder serving the last year of his or her term. It includes the second senior elder, the last retired senior elder and the ordained ministers. The committee consults with the staff supervisor in matters concerning an employee under that person's supervision.

Responsibilities:

1. Prepare staff job descriptions for consistory approval.
2. Maintain and revise as needed a handbook of employment policies, procedures, and regulations for consistory approval.
3. Enforce all personnel policies and regulations, act in accordance with the employee grievance procedure, and administer warnings or discipline as required.
4. Supervise the hiring of all non-ordained staff including advertising, screening, candidate selection, compensation, and the approval of employment contracts within the constraints of the operating budget.
5. Act to terminate the employment of non-ordained staff when required,

following procedures specified in the employee handbook.

6. Supervise annual performance reviews for non-ordained staff.
7. Conduct an annual review of non-ordained staff salaries and benefits to assure fair and competitive compensation, and recommend adjustments for inclusion in the annual operating budget.
8. Provide encouragement, support, and recognition for staff employees and act on all employee requests for waivers or exemptions from stated personnel policies and procedures or for special considerations related to their work.
9. Ensure compliance with all governmental laws and regulations regarding employment.
10. Review and revise staff organization, accountability, and assignments as needed and prepare a long-range plan to assure that future staffing needs are met.

Creation Care Committee

Charge: The Creation Care Committee guides the congregation in realizing our shared commitment to prioritize the care of God's creation in our shared ministries and individual lives. The committee collaborates with other consistory committees, church staff, groups, and members to establish perspectives, policies, practices, initiatives, resources, and events which enable us, together and apart, to decrease our unnecessary harming of creation and instead increasingly serve the world we touch.

Recognizing the urgent and pervasive need for radical transformation within every area of life in order to prevent the worst effects of climate change and ecological damage for current and future generations of all life on earth, the committee also partners with others in the

denomination, the wider faith community, and those of good will locally, regionally, nationally and internationally.

Composition: The committee is chaired by a member of the consistory and includes a minister of the church and at-large members and adherents of the congregation who share a love for and feel a need to better care for God's beloved world, our common home.

Specific Responsibilities:

1. Be knowledgeable of both the biblical basis of our call to inhabit, enjoy, and serve the world, as well as the scientific consensus regarding the present crisis of ecological degradation and climate change brought about by rapid industrialization, increasingly carbon-intensive living in developed nations, and unprecedented population growth.
2. Carefully assess and address current and future opportunities for furthering creation care within and beyond our congregation.
3. Identify specific annual goals of the committee; remain open to emerging opportunities during the course of the year; designate leaders of particular efforts; establish expected timelines; and regularly review, evaluate and celebrate progress towards goals and/or modify goals as needed.
4. Recommend to consistory policies governing the purchase of products and services that further the goal of decreasing the harm to and increasing the care for the web of life, present and future, e.g., purchasing renewable energy for our electrical needs.
5. Provide various educational opportunities for the congregation on the current state

and faithful care of God's world, so that members and adherents are equipped to practice and extend awareness of and advocacy for creation care within the wider community.

6. Initiate collaborative ventures with other committees, staff, groups, and members of the congregation that further our care of creation, e.g., Poor People's Campaign (Justice Action), People's Climate March, presenters at First Forum, renewable energy electrical supply (Property), native plants (Garden sub-committee).
7. Advocate for, affirm, celebrate, and support environmentally-friendly initiatives of other committees, staff, groups, and members within the congregation, e.g., fossil free Tercentenary Fund (Finance), Season of Creation (Worship), Creation Retreat (Adult Ed. and Nurture), repurposing building materials and Green Roof (First Futures), Solarize Schenectady.
8. Partner with other faith communities, civic organizations, businesses, and people of good will to promote the wellbeing of life on earth, e.g., Schenectady Classis, Regional Synod Albany Creation Care Team, Capital Region Interfaith Creation Care Coalition, Capital Area Climate Network, Fowler Camp and Retreat Center.
9. Meet for business and fellowship in a variety of local natural and built environments in order to deepen our awareness and appreciation of the multifaceted aspects of our place on earth as well as the gifts, needs and opportunities within this world we touch.

Creation Care Purchasing Policy

The following policy seeks to provide clarity and scope for staff, committee chairs, and others in discerning among the various options of products and services available and making purchases of the same in accordance with the FRC's commitment to prioritize the care of God's creation as expressed in our Creation Care Resolution (2016). It is anticipated that deliberations and decisions on these matters will benefit from periodic consultation and collaboration among staff, church leaders, and members in respective areas of knowledge and experience.

In general, those products and services with the following characteristics listed in order of priority are preferable to products and services lacking such characteristics or of lower priority:

1. Made from renewable resources (e.g., electrical energy from solar, wind, water)
2. Reusable (cups, plates etc.),
3. Recyclable or composted at the end of their use (e.g., single-use flatware, plates, cups)
4. Made of recycled material (e.g., office paper, hand towels, napkins)
5. Non-toxic chemicals (e.g., cleaning supplies)
6. Organically grown (e.g., food, apparel)
7. Certified Fair Trade/Just Trade (e.g., coffee, other food, clothing, materials)
8. Locally/regionally owned companies (e.g., suppliers, recycling / compost / trash providers).

We will make best efforts to secure products and services that meet the above values without paying more. However, products and services that possess the most highly prioritized creation friendly characteristics should still be purchased if doing so does not exceed 125% of the financial cost of other comparable products. The staff, in consultation with the Creation Care Committee,

may exceed the 125% cap in extraordinary circumstances. Any additional expense as a result of this policy is subject to the normal budgeting process and constraints for the Creation Care budget lines.

Child Abuse Prevention Policy

Introduction

The congregation of First Reformed Church of Schenectady is committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all children, youth, and volunteers who participate in ministries and activities sponsored by the church. The following policies and procedures reflect our congregation's commitment to preserving this church as a holy place of safety and protection for all who would enter and as a place in which all people can experience the love of God through relationships with others. This policy was approved by the Consistory of the First Reformed Church of Schenectady on June 13, 2006 and went into effect on July 1, 2006. This policy will be implemented by the Youth Education and Nurture Committee, the Ministry Leadership Team, and the Personnel Committee.

Purpose

The aim of this policy is to assure the safest environment possible for our children to be nurtured in life and faith through spiritual, mental and physical growth. Abusers thrive on secrecy, isolation and manipulation. The use of this policy will protect both our children from potential abuse and our volunteers and staff from false accusations. This policy will also direct the church and its leadership if abuse happens or is suspected.

Interaction with Children.

Two Adult Rule - There must always be two adults over the age of 18, unrelated by blood or marriage present at all times during any church sponsored program, event or ministry involving children. If the group is split into multiple rooms with only one adult in each room (e.g., for church school), doors must be left unlocked and/or open if only one adult is in a room with children. If only one teacher is in the room, the Director of Children's Ministries and/or a designee will count as a second adult. In Kinderwyk, there must be two unrelated adults at all times.

Five Years Older Rule - Adult Volunteers must be at least five years older than the children in the program or ministry in which they share leadership.

Windows or Open Door - When an adult is alone in a room with a child, an uncovered window must provide visual access to the room or the door must remain open.

Parental Notification - Parents will be notified:

1. Of activities in which their child will be participating.
2. If someone other than their announced driver to, from, or home after an event is driving them.

Screening of Church Employees and Volunteers

All ministers and new church employees hired will undergo a full background check, including a reference check and a police background check.

All volunteers who will have direct contact with children will have a police background check. People working in Kinderwyk must additionally be

a member of First Reformed Church of Schenectady.

Reporting Policies

In NYS churches and clergy are permitted but not required to report suspected child abuse, including sexual abuse. The policy of this church is to report all suspected child abuse.

When abuse is suspected, the person who suspects abuse shall report only to his/her direct supervisor or to a minister. Information about the abuse will not be shared with anyone else until given permission by the Ministry Leadership Team. This is to protect both the victim and the alleged abuser. If a minister is suspected or accused of abuse, then the abuse will be reported to the senior elders and other ministers of the church who will convene a meeting of the Board of Elders to consider the evidence and take appropriate action. The Board of Elders will designate the senior minister or another person to respond to any inquiries from the media. No one else will be authorized to speak on behalf of the church with respect to a child abuse issue.



Criteria for Effective Programs

While measuring our efforts by the number of participants is a clear metric, it may not address the more complex development of individuals and community that require attention to more subtle factors. Even if participation numbers are low, we will consider programs a success if they have the following qualities:

Substantive Content

- Planned content addressing clear objectives
- Related to congregational mission (i.e. Covenant)
- Challenging curricula or content that encourages growth
- New elements introduced

Trained Leadership

- Initial competence of leader
- Continuing education and consultation for key leaders
- Trained assistants and back-ups

Regular Supervision

- New directions and schedules approved by supervisor and/or committee
- Reports on activities filed quarterly
- Program self evaluations with participant input submitted annually to supervisor

Administrative Communication

- Office notified of all schedule changes and room uses
- Content oriented publicity, not just meeting announcement

Participant Contact

- Information distributed on a regular basis
- Personal contact for dropouts and new participants
- Social events encouraged

Safety

- Child Protection Policies are followed rigorously
- Dangerous situations are avoided

Theological Integrity

- Leadership style and program content reflect fruit of the spirit of God (Gal 5:22-23)
- Group strives to understand and show God's love (I Cor 13:4-7)

Leadership Relations

Approved by consistory 2014



Openness

We have no secrets. Church information is generally available to everyone.

“Confidences” are generally discouraged. Talking to one leader or staff member is equivalent to speaking to all. Anonymous input and information is impossible to consider in context and therefore will not be considered at all. We share our ideas and feelings as early in a decision making process as possible. We have an open door policy on meetings and minutes unless otherwise specified. Confidentiality is, of course, maintained for pastoral counseling, personal contributions, and personnel evaluations.



Honesty We tell the truth in all circumstances. Inappropriate inquiries may be answered with “I cannot say.”

We assume others are telling the truth and support their positions unless we personally discuss it with them. We overdo financial accountability and documentation to avoid any untoward appearance.



Loyalty We say nice things about each other. We actively stop destructive criticism or gossip and route feedback directly to people involved. We are subject to the

decisions of ruling boards and committees, even if we disagree with them. We are loyal to the process and decisions of our denomination. In all situations we do not mutter dissent.



Responsibility We share credit and own mistakes. We do our best at our jobs and assume that others do as well. We do not venture opinions about another's

area of responsibility without discussing it with them first.



Positive Attitude We spend much more time supporting and praising what is happening than criticizing. We tell stories of

successes and paint positive pictures about the future. We do not grumble or whine. We report problems as opportunities for growth, not as evidence of incompetence. We actively resist rehashing past problems except insofar as they affect strategies for growth.



Faith Sharing We apply our faith to personal and church situations. We do not rationalize our own feelings with scripture, but seek to learn and

show God's benevolence honestly. We strive to embody and show the fruits of the spirit: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, meekness, self-control. We pray for each other, especially those with whom we are at odds.



Meeting Behavior We are courteous to others at all times. We speak our own feelings. We honor time constraints by being brief and not

restating things. We report the actions of meetings to others fairly.



Guidelines for Unusual Visitors

It is our policy to be welcoming to all people. There are many times when our doors will be open for programs without direct supervision

of the entrances. Even when there are staff members present, there will be times when folks wander in seeking what they might think a church provides or for no good reason at all. Members may come across people who are not actively involved in any program that is going on at the moment. Insofar as we can determine the reason people are in the building, we can offer an appropriate response. As always, these categories are not mutually exclusive since life is often a combination of forces.

People waiting for programs to begin or end.

We have tried to make sure that programs here are sensitive to people wandering around the building. If the exterior door is locked, it is often for a good reason and letting people in may not be a good idea if there are children present.

People looking for assistance.

The church often helps people with food clothing and shelter. As a rule, we do not give out cash. We do not usually help with travel. Our ministers are experienced with dealing with people who need different types of assistance and can be called on at all times to help. We ask that members never give anyone cash on church premises since it often leads to other problems. If asked, you can be helpful by connecting those in need with the pastoral staff. Feel free to cite

our policy of not giving out cash or helping with travel.

People who are disoriented. Confused people may or may not know what they need. They may be frightening since they may look or speak strangely. They may focus on food that is set out.

People who are looking to do violence. While this has not happened here, it is important to understand that there is a possibility that someone may enter the church to do harm to themselves or others. They may have a weapon. Statistically, these folks make their intentions clear by their demeanor very early in the situation, so the best response is an immediate call to 911.

General Response

1. Call

In most situations, it is best to call an appropriate person right away. Sometimes this will be a minister. Sometimes this should be the police. If you are feeling unsafe at all, calling both is a fine idea. **Emergency phone numbers are posted on the main exterior doors and in the worship bulletin.**

2. Protect

Children. If there are children in the area, get them to a secure area.

Yourself. In any situation of danger, it is important to take your own safety seriously. Leaving the immediate area is always a good step. From a distance, you may be able to warn others and keep tabs on a situation.



How To Be Safe

All policies of the Child Abuse Prevention Policy are strictly enforced.

Preventing unpleasant situations

Abuse or harassment of all types is not tolerated in our congregation. This includes but is not limited to the following:

Harassment based upon an individual's sex, race, ethnicity, national origin, age, religion or any other legally protected characteristics will not be tolerated. All church employees and members are expected to abide by this prohibition.

Sexual abuse

Touching of any type between adults should only be at specific invitation. Sexual innuendo really has no place here and carries great risk. Incidents of undesired sexual contact or verbal harassment should be reported to a staff member. Touching between adults and minors should be generally avoided. Conduct between adults and minors that ANYONE could consider sexual is strictly prohibited. Any person having reasonable cause to believe that a child has been subjected to child abuse shall report the same to a staff member or to the appropriate governmental agency.

Sexual harassment is behavior of a sexual nature that is unwelcome and offensive to the person or persons it is targeted toward. Examples of harassing behavior may include unwanted physical contact, foul language of an offensive sexual nature, sexual propositions, sexual jokes or remarks, obscene gestures, and displays of pornographic or sexually explicit pictures, drawings, or caricatures.

Insults

Even playful remarks can hurt and escalate problems. Don't. Be very careful of sarcasm.

Violence

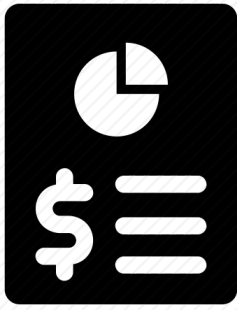
Vandalism, theft, or violence against persons MUST be reported to a staff person. Parents must be contacted if a minor is involved in any way.

Being prepared

Know where first aid kits are kept and how to get to a phone. There is a first aid kit on the wall by the drinking fountain outside the sanctuary. As a leader, you should know how to direct people to leave the building in event of a fire.

In case of injury

Immediate medical attention should be obtained. This protects the church from later liability concerns and shows caring for those who may be hurt. Always seek immediate help for at least the following situations: a cut more than one inch long or one half inch deep, any loss of consciousness, a potential broken bone or sprained joint.



General Financial Policies

Raising Money

All fundraising done by any group is under the jurisdiction of the Consistory. The Consistory needs to know of and approve ALL fundraising done by your organization including selling or taking donations of any kind well in advance of its happening. Approval is through the normal committee structures, i.e. a youth fellowship group would have its fundraising proposal forwarded through the Youth Education and Nurture Committee. Projects should include the purpose of the appeal and the scope in time and dollars. If the money is being raised to underwrite a particular trip or activity, the way the funds will be distributed to the participants should be worked out at the time the fundraising is approved. All types of approved fundraising should be included, including appeals to individuals or groups within the congregation. To ensure that we aren't asking people for money for several projects at the same time, it is possible that your group may be asked to hold your fundraiser at another time. Please avoid hard sell tactics and be sensitive to the atmosphere of worship on a Sunday morning. When your project is over, write up a brief accounting for the leaders and the committee.

Keeping Money

If possible, funds should not be held by individuals even overnight. Especially cash

should be counted and placed in a sealed envelope in a secure place in the office as soon as possible. At least two people should count money and note the amount on the envelope. You need not wait for all the money to be turned in or for the dust to settle on any particular project to turn in offerings.

Spending Money

The church is responsible for seeing to it that all money contributed or raised is spent wisely. They exercise oversight even over money individual groups have raised. For this reason, a voucher process is set up for all checks written by the church. You will be asked to fill out a voucher and that voucher will need to be approved by someone authorized to spend money from a particular line in the budget, other than yourself. Vouchers for more than \$25 are paid from store receipts, so you may be out of pocket until your voucher is processed.

Each part of the life of the church is budgeted for a certain amount of money. Unless you raise additional money, you may not spend more than has been approved for your area in a given period. Often, that amount is the annual figure approved in the budget. Sometimes, programs are asked to pace their spending so that they spend half in six months or even 1/12 of their allotment in any month. This is especially true for organizations with turnover in leadership or constituents. Because we track expenses so closely, you are encouraged to submit your expenses at least monthly. It is possible that because of a shortfall in income, unexpected overruns in other areas, or for another reason, you might be asked to limit your spending or stop altogether. We understand that this might limit the program itself.

Separate Accounts

Usually organizations spend money out of expense budget lines. Deposits from fundraising are credited to their expense lines. If money needs to be carried over to a following calendar year, however, a separate church account line will be established. If, on the rare occasion that an external account is approved for an organization, a detailed accounting is expected to be presented annually for the Annual Report.



Facility Procedures

Scheduling All activities and building use is coordinated and scheduled by the church office. All usage must be approved in a formal way and scheduled well in advance. Church facilities are managed with an eye to many factors that may not be immediately apparent. The best and easiest way to schedule a room is to fill out a form online on the church website under 'calendar.'

Set up Each group is expected to set up its own tables and chairs. If, for some good reason you need help doing that, contact the church office. Be sure to include any audio visual needs.

Refreshments If you bring all your goodies from home, or just plug in a coffee pot, simply be sure you leave everything clean. If you are actually going to use a kitchen, you will need to sign up for its use at the office. You can store things in the refrigerators for up to a week if the items are labeled. Please take all leftovers home, and clean up well.

Clean up After an event or meeting, the energy slips a bit and as a leader you may find yourself with a mess you don't feel like cleaning. Try to appoint cleanup crews before an event. Brooms, mops, vacuums are available. Return all the furniture to how it was.

Copying We will be happy to make copies for your programs with advance notice or you can make them yourselves on the copy machine in the Mohawk House. Although discouraged, personal copying is allowed at 10¢ a copy.

Publicity Announcements for the bulletin should be turned in to the office by Wednesday. Newsletter articles for the following month are due on the 15th. Please be brief and submit items in writing or preferably by email to 1stReformedPub@gmail.com

Security The building is regularly open Monday – Friday 8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. If you need the church open other than these times, you need to call the office and make arrangements. Office Hours 8:30 am – 4:30 pm Monday - Friday
Holidays office closed: New Year's Day, M.L. King, President's Day, Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day, Thanksgiving Thursday and Friday, Christmas and Day after Christmas.

Lost and Found Bring found items to the office. There is also a basket of found items in the Narthex.