

**Unity of Greater Hartford Policies      (September 2019)**

**1. Activity and Event Fees**

Approved and set January 2015

**2. Animals and Pets**

Approved and set January 2015.

**3. Board of Trustees Officer Positions**

Officers will serve no more than two (2) consecutive years in the same position.

A Board member may assume a new position on the Board immediately following the two (2) consecutive years of service. *(In full as stated here)*

Approved and set on December 17, 2003.

**4. Building a Savings Account**

Approved and set May 2015.

**5. Church Tithing**

Approved and set November 2014.

**6. Employee Grievance & Dispute Resolution**

Approved and set August 2013, amended November 2014

**7. Inclement Weather**

Approved and set on December 21, 2013. Revised December 2018.

**8. Lock & Key Control**

Approved and set on March 5, 2013.

**9. Overnight/Long-term Parking**

Approved and set April 2018.

**10. Petty Cash & Other Float Accounts**

Approved and set November 2014.

**11. Physical Accidents on Church Property**

Approved and set December 2018.

**12. Private Business**

Unity of Greater Hartford will not sponsor or be affiliated with any private business. *(In full as stated here)* Approved and set on August 16, 2003.

**13. Procedures for New Hires**

Approved and set in 2013.

**14. Safe Behavior**

Approved and set on August 16 2014.

**15. Sexual Abuse Policy**

Approved and revised and set on August 25, 2007.

**16. Sexual Offender**

Approved and set on September 26, 2014.

**17. Sharing Information**

Approved and set on December 18, 2010; revised February 2, 2019.

**18. Youth Education Staffing**

Amended set and approved on January 18, 2014.

# **1. ACTIVITY AND EVENT FEES POLICY**

*Approved by the Board of Trustees January 2015*

## **PURPOSE**

This policy establishes the intent of Unity of Greater Hartford to provide activities and events for the benefit of church members and visitors, and maintain fiscal responsibility for these activities and events through the use of fees as defined in this policy. The church encourages participation by providing financial support to individuals in need on a case-by-case basis.

## **DEFINITION OF FEES**

- Free – no cost
- Love Offering – donate what one is led to give; one gives some amount
- Suggested Love Offering – the amount is suggested, but one may donate what he/she is led to give (higher, equal to, or lower than the suggested amount); one gives something
- Fee, Cost, Investment, or Tuition – one must pay the publicized set price
- Required Tithing – set percent (%) of person's income is required to participate (such as 10% for the duration of a Prosperity course)
- Sliding Scale Fee – one determines for oneself how much to pay within the scale, but one must pay the minimum

## **DETERMINING FEES**

The Minister, Church Administrator, or authorized person scheduling the activity or event determines the type of fee and the amount with the presenter.

The fee information will be publicized so attendees are clear on the financial requirement. When the church provides financial support to any attendee(s), the church will ensure that the presenter still receives his/her full, agreed-upon payment.

## **MINISTER'S GUIDELINES**

The Minister will use his/her discretion in deciding whether to provide financial support to an individual, and in what form and what amount.

The Minister will practice fairness in allocating financial support.

The Minister will maintain the confidentiality of who is receiving financial support (for example, not indicated on the public registration list).

The Minister will report the amount of such financial support to the Board of Trustees on a quarterly basis, maintaining confidentiality (or anonymity) of the recipients.

## **REQUESTS**

An individual may request financial support to attend an activity or event.

The requester must be a member of the church or be an active participant who attends services or classes regularly.

To obtain this support, the requester must speak with the Minister at least two weeks in advance.

## **TYPES OF SUPPORT**

Full – the full fee is provided

Partial – part of the fee is provided; the individual pays the balance

Grace – the individual is graced with the financial support; no exchange is required

Exchange – the individual helps prepare or works at the activity or event in exchange for full or partial financial support (for example, publicity, marketing, set-up, registration, kitchen, audio, assisting presenter)

## **FUNDING**

The Board of Trustees authorized a Participation Fund to support individuals attending church activities and events per this policy.

The Participation Fund may be funded through the church's share of activity and event proceeds, targeted giving by congregants or others, and authorized transfers from the General Fund

## **2. ANIMALS AND PETS POLICY**

*Approved by the Board of Trustees January 2015*

### **PURPOSE**

This policy establishes when an animal or pet may be brought onto the grounds or into the church building at Unity of Greater Hartford. The goal is to ensure the safety of all people at the church.

### **GROUND POLICY**

**People, whether church members or members of the public, may bring an animal or pet onto the grounds of Unity of Greater Hartford.**

The grounds include the driveway, parking lot, sidewalks, lawn, and land. The portico is considered an extension of the building, and separate rules apply there.

Anyone bringing an animal onto the grounds must have the animal under their control at all times. For example, a dog must be held on a leash.

The owner of the animal is legally responsible for its behavior at all times.

The owner or person handling the animal must clean up after the animal immediately and properly dispose of any waste in the dumpster.

## **PORTICO POLICY**

**Animals or pets are not allowed under the portico unless they are being brought into the church building when permitted by policy.**

The portico is considered an extension of the building.

Since people are coming from and going to the building, it is imperative that the animal be properly controlled for everyone's safety.

The animal owner or handler must grant the right of way to people passing by.

## **BUILDING POLICY**

**Animals or pets are not allowed to enter the church building, with two exceptions:**

- **Certified, trained service and assist animals are welcome at all times.**
- **Pets may be brought for special events, which have been announced, such as pet blessings.**

When an animal or pet is allowed in the building, the owner or handler must keep the animal under control at all times.

The owner or handler must clean up after the animal immediately and dispose of waste properly.

## **ADVICE**

Since Connecticut has cold winters and hot summers, we advise church members and visitors not to bring their animals or pets with them to church. Animal or pets are not permitted in the building, and being left in a car for any length of time may harm them.

## **VIOLATIONS**

If someone violates the Animal and Pet Policy, they will be reminded of the policy and asked to rectify the problem right then (for example, clean up after their animal; give the right of way to people; remove the animal from the building).

If the person violates the Animal and Pet Policy repeatedly, they may be asked to refrain from bringing the animal or pet to the church until they are able to comply with the policy. This will be documented in a letter to them from the Minister, with a copy to the Board of Trustees.

## **4. Policy and Procedure for Building a Savings Account**

*Approved by the Board of Trustees May 2015*

*Please note that the amount was established at the January 2014 Board meeting, without a clear procedure.*

## **PURPOSE**

The Board of Trustees wishes to increase our financial stability by building a savings account for the purposes of maintaining a six-month operating expense fund as well as establishing a capacity to fund special capital projects and programs.

## **POLICY & PROCEDURE**

- A. The church will direct two-percent of all income to the church's savings account. The amount will be calculated by the Church Bookkeeper and presented to the Minister.
- B. The Minister will issue a transfer from the operating account at the end of every quarter to the Savings Account and report this action to the Board of Trustees.

## **5. POLICY FOR CHURCH TITHING**

*Approved by the Board of Trustees November 2014*

### **PURPOSE**

In alignment with Principle, the Board of Trustees commits to a practice of regular tithing to sources of our spiritual nourishment as well as those organizations which engage in spiritual service in the world.

- A. The church will tithe ten (10) percent of all income with the exception of income to targeted giving, income to Youth and Family ministry fundraisers, Bookstore revenue, and only on the net income for Seminars, Classes & Workshops.
- B. Assignment of tithe:
  - a. The Board of Trustees establishes a list of organizations to include in a regular rotation cycle of five weeks
    - i. Unity Institute
    - ii. Silent Unity
    - iii. Unity Worldwide Ministries
    - iv. Unity Eastern Region
  - b. The Minister determines additional organizations and individuals to complete this regular rotation. These selections may include suggestions from the congregation.
- C. Procedure for Payout
  - a. The church will issue tithe checks at month end, equally dividing the tithe amounts between the designated organizations and individuals scheduled for that month.
- D. Special Tithes
  - a. The Board of Trustees may choose to assign a special tithe at their discretion.

## **6. EMPLOYEE GRIEVANCE & DISPUTE RESOLUTION POLICY & PROCEDURES**

Approved by the Board of Trustees August 2013.; Amended November 2014

### **PURPOSE**

Any grievance or dispute shall be resolved in accordance with the Church's Grievance and Dispute Resolution Policy which may be amended from time to time.

- [a] Should any dispute arise between any employee of the CHURCH and the CHURCH, the parties shall meet in a good faith effort to resolve the dispute.
- [b] If the dispute cannot be resolved as outlined in item [a], either party may reduce the dispute to writing and present it to the other party. The served party shall respond, in writing, within fifteen [15] calendar days of receipt.
- [c] If the dispute cannot be resolved through the above procedure[s] as outlined in items [a] or [b], then either party may within fifteen [15] calendar days following receipt of the written response, refer the matter to mediation.
- [d] The mediation shall be conducted either internally or by requesting Unity Worldwide Ministries provide mediator within thirty [30] days.
  - i. Any expenses for the mediator's services shall be borne equally by both parties.
  - ii. The mediator shall have no power to add to, subtract from, modify, or alter in any way the provisions and terms of any agreement or policy of the CHURCH.
  - iii. If mediation is not successful, either party may bring suit in the courts of Connecticut at its sole expense.
- [e] If the mediator utilized is provided by Unity Worldwide Ministries, copies of all correspondence relating to the dispute and its final outcome will be sent to Unity Worldwide Ministries.

## **7. INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY**

*(Approved November 2018)*

### **SUNDAY SERVICE**

The Minister and the Board of Trustees are responsible for making the final decision as to whether the church will be closed for Sunday Service due to inclement weather. The Minister or the Minister's appointed designee will provide notification before 7:00 am if the service is to be cancelled.

Notification means adding closure information to the Unity of Greater Hartford website, contacting local news if applicable, or any other means deemed appropriate.

### **CLASSES & SPECIAL EVENTS**

The Minister and the Board of Trustees are responsible for making the final decision as to whether to postpone or cancel any Unity sponsored event or class due to inclement weather. For daytime events and classes the Minister or the Minister's designee will provide notification of the closure before 7:00 am or as soon as reasonably possible. For events and classes that are scheduled during the evening, the Minister or the Minister's appointed designee will make closure notification by 4:00 pm or as soon as reasonably possible.

In the case of a class or event that is not a Unity sponsored event (i.e. Rentals, Use of space Agreements); the contract holder is responsible for providing notification to those who attend their event. The contract holder will be directed to the Unity website for information and details.

## **8. KEY CONTROL PROCEDURES**

### **PURPOSE**

The purpose of this Lock & Key Control Policy is to establish reasonable personal liability for members of the community and to ensure the protection of personal and Unity of Greater Hartford's property through the control of locks and keys to the building and other secure areas of the community. The responsibility for implementing this Lock & Key Control Policy is with the Unity of Greater Hartford's Board of Trustees.

### **Personnel Authorized to Issue Keys**

- a. The Unity of Greater Hartford board of Trustees through administration with the main office will authorize issuance of a key.

### **Rules Regarding Issuance of Keys**



- a. Faculty/Staff members will be issued keys consistent with the job responsibility, actual need, and the approval of the Board of Trustees.
- b. All keys will be assigned one person per key and the serial number of the key will be recorded to assure accountability
- c. All keys will be signed for indicating that the person has read and agrees to adhere to the Unity of Greater Lock & Key Policy. (Appendix #1)
- d. All key issuances will be for a specific period of time.
- e. Upon expiration date a signature of policy acknowledgement must be renewed or the key returned to the main office. Keys not returned or renewed will be considered and treated as lost.

#### Padlock, Peripheral and Personal Lock Policy

- a. All padlocks affecting Unity of Greater Hartford's property (whether it be written, electronically stored/produced, monetary or real) must be compatible with this policy. All keys to these locks will be controlled per policy. Keys to the file cabinet, desk drawers, and personal lockers will remain the responsibility of the person in charge of the area unless specifically restricted because of a special need. Unity of Greater Hartford retains the right to access these non-restricted access control areas and to examine the contents upon request.

#### Duplication of Keys

- a. No key will be duplicated except by the approval and control of the Unity of Greater Hartford's Board of Trustees. The unauthorized duplication of Unity of Greater Hartford keys so adversely affects the security of persons and property that violations of this rule are considered serious and grounds for termination.

#### Numbering System for Keys

- a. An identifying serial number will be stamped on each key. The serial number for each key will not identify a building, location or lock.

#### Lost/Stolen Keys

- a. Lost or stolen keys must be reported to Unity of Greater Hartford's Board of Trustees by the quickest means available.
- b. When a key is lost or stolen, the locks will be modified and render the current key inoperative. The lock core/cylinder will be replaced in the existing lock and the new key will be issued to the owner.
- c. The fee for replacement key will be \$250.00. The fee will include the cost of the replacement core, key and actual labor charges. A record will be kept of all individuals who have reported a lost or stolen key. Any subsequent loss of a key will result in the individual being considered for disciplinary action.

#### Termination, Retirement Separation from Unity of Greater Hartford

- a. Unity of Greater Hartford regulation requires all keys to be returned to the main office upon separation, termination, or retirement from the community.

- b. The Faculty/Staff member's separation will not be complete until the key(s) assigned have been returned and the main office generates written verification.

#### Repair of Locks, Keys, or Door Hardware

- a. All repairs or additions to any Unity of Greater Hartford locking device, key or door hardware will be controlled the President of Unity of Greater Hartford board of Trustees a documented. If a change to an access combination is made rendering the old key as useless, the change must be noted and the records changed to reflect the new key code.
- b. N area may be secured except by a locking device authorized for that area and with an operating code compatible with the Unity of Greater Hartford's key system.
- c. Any person causing an unauthorized repair to a Unity of Greater Hartford lock or key is in violation of Unity of Greater Hartford rules.

#### Storage of Keys and Auditing

- a. All keys cut which are ready for issue will be stored in a locked location within the main office.
- b. The supply of all unassigned keys will be audited and compared to the keys ordered distributed on a regular and ongoing basis to ensure all keys are accounted for.

#### Key Control Database

- a. Unity of Greater Hartford will maintain the Key Control Database. The Key Control Database should be a centralized, protected, efficient system for recording, storing and accessing key control data. Key Control Data is all data relevant to: key issuance, key replacement/collection, specific locations, specific key holders, authorization of work, key filing, hardware maintenance, etc.

#### Key Issuance to Outside Contractors

- a. Repairs of community facilities, which require a contractor to be issued a key to any area, must be approved by the Board of Trustees. The contractor will be issued and will return the key per established policy. A release must be signed by the contractor to deduct funds from his fee if the key is lost and the area must be rekeyed.

#### Knox Box

- a. A Knox-Box Rapid Entry System for use of first responders is to be located outside of main entrance.
- b. A current set of keys to all areas of the community will be provisioned for its use and will be maintained whenever a lock is changed.

## **9. Overnight/Long-term Parking Policy**

*Approved and adopted unanimously by the Board of Trustees April 2018*

### **PURPOSE**

To establish and clearly define the use of parking spaces on Unity of Greater Hartford's property beyond regularly scheduled Sunday services; day, evening and weekend classes, workshops and events occurring at this facility.

### **POLICY**

- No vehicles of any type will be allowed to park in the church parking lot for either overnight or extended-stay purposes.
- Any exception will be made **only** if there is a sanctioned church function requiring such a change, and **must be approved by Board prior to function or event.**

## **10. Policy and Procedure for Petty Cash & Other Float Accounts**

*Approved by the Board of Trustees November 15, 2014*

### **PURPOSE**

To provide policies and procedures relating to the establishment and administration of petty cash fund, a float fund for the Seeds of Spirit Bookstore, and a float fund for the Kitchen Ministry.

### **FUND CUSTODIANS**

- The petty cash custodian is the designated employee who has been authorized by Unity of Greater Hartford to make payments from a petty cash fund and who is directly responsible for the administration of the fund.
- The Seeds of Spirit Bookstore float fund custodian is the Bookstore Manager, in conjunction with the designated employee who has been authorized by Unity of Greater Hartford.
- The Kitchen Ministry float fund custodian is the Kitchen Coordinator, in conjunction with the designated employee who has been authorized by Unity of Greater Hartford.

### **SECURITY OF FUNDS**

The Minister is responsible for the proper safeguarding of fund monies entrusted to the custodian. When not in active use, these funds must be kept in a locked container such as a fire-proof cabinet, safe, locked cashbox or other suitable device to which unauthorized access is difficult.

## **FUND AMOUNTS**

Amounts for the funds are as follows:

- Petty Cash \$100 – In order to improve the efficiency of church operations. These funds are available to purchase minor items when it would be otherwise impractical to purchase items through other preferred purchasing methods.
- Seeds of Spirit Bookstore Float \$100 – In order to have the ability to make change for cash transactions during the course of business.
- Kitchen Ministry Float \$60 – In order to have the ability to make change for cash transactions during the course of business.

## **PETTY CASH FUND**

- These funds are subject to periodic audits. Recurring negative audit findings may result in the petty cash fund being revoked.
- The custodian is responsible for ensuring that the cash on hand and the receipts equal the authorized amount of the fund at all times.
- When the balance of cash falls below \$50.99, the custodian is responsible for generating a check request for the amount spent, submitting all receipts for the monies spent with the check request to the church bookkeeper.

## **PETTY CASH FUND PURCHASES**

Disbursements from petty cash funds must be properly documented and be for a valid church business purpose. An employee purchasing items using petty cash funds must obtain prior approval from the Minister, a supervisor or the fund custodian.

Petty cash funds may NOT be used for the following expenses:

- Items in excess of \$100.00
- Cashing of personal checks or providing personal loans.
- Purchases which are required to be reported per specific policy.

Approval from the minister for exceptions must be received prior to purchasing items.

## **11. Physical Accidents on Church Property Policy**

*Adopted by the Board December 2018*

If a physical accident or emergency should occur on church property or during a church sponsored event off property, a Board Member or the Minister should be contacted immediately and will be responsible for any decisions on how the situation should be handled including but not limited to any decisions around calling an ambulance. The Board Member or the Minister will be responsible for completing an Incident Report. Once the Incident Report is completed it will be given to the Minister to file. Only the

Minister makes contact with the Insurance Company. After that the Minister will make regular reports to the Board and include them in all decisions regarding the incident.

All claims as a result of the accident will be processed through the Insurance Company and not the church.

Blank Incident Reports will be kept in the Kitchen and in the Volunteer Room.

### **13. Policy and Procedure for New Hires**

*Approved by the Board of Trustees 2013*

#### **PURPOSE**

To provide policies and procedures relating to documentation and agreements required for employees of Unity of Greater Hartford.

#### **POSITION JOB DESCRIPTIONS**

All staff positions will have written job descriptions. Each job description is initially approved by the Board at the time the staff position is created and funding authorized. Job descriptions shall then be updated and modified by the minister, with the exception of the minister's job description, which falls under the purview of the Board.

#### **CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT**

Each member of the staff, including the minister, is required to sign the Unity of Greater Hartford confidentiality agreement.

#### **OTHER AGREEMENTS REQUIRED FOR THE MINISTER**

In addition to the Confidentiality Agreement, the minister will agree to sign:

- Employment Contract, including a Non-Compete Agreement
- Minister's Code of Ethics
- Sexual Conduct Policy
- Moving Expenses Agreement
- Grievance and Dispute Resolution

### **14. SAFE BEHAVIOR POLICY**

*Approved August 16, 2017*

Unity of Greater Hartford affirms the inherent worth of all people, and seeks to create an open and inclusive spiritual community. This requires a safe and supportive environment, which includes addressing any situation which impinges on the individual's

or the community's well-being. Such situations will be addressed promptly, directly, clearly and with compassion and consistency.

Disruptive behavior under this Policy means one or more of the following behaviors:

- **Dangerous:** The individual's behavior is a threat, or reasonably perceived to be a threat, to people engaged in the ministry's activities or to property for which the ministry is responsible.
- **Disruptive:** The individual's behavior has a significant negative impact on ministry activities and/or significantly interferes with the development of healthy relationships within the spiritual community.
- **Offensive:** The individual's behavior is such that reasonable persons regularly attending ministry activities could **reasonably** decide to leave or not join the community.

This policy provides a coherent process for addressing these situations:

1. Since prayer is foundational to who we are, when disruptive behavior arises, the leadership will respond first with prayer (including, to the extent possible, when immediate action under Section 5 is necessary) – holding the situation and all those involved in a space of love and wholeness. Throughout this process, ministry leaders will maintain a prayerful space in all discussions.
2. In order to address disruptive behavior fairly and effectively, leaders will endeavor to keep accurate and timely records, which document observed behavior and actions taken. Written records provide context and continuity should similar issues arise again either involving the same individual or someone different,
3. It is the responsibility of the Board of Trustees to prayerfully discern when action needs to be taken on disruptive behavior using the criteria specified above. Persons identified as disruptive will be responded to as individuals of sacred worth; stereotypes will be avoided. To determine the necessary response, the following questions may be appropriate:
  - a. Is it a conflict between the individual and others in the ministry?
  - b. Is there a known professionally diagnosed condition of mental illness?
  - c. What is the frequency and degree of disruption caused in the past?
  - d. How likely is it that the problem behavior will diminish in the future?
4. The Board, with prayerful consideration and rational decision-making, will decide upon the necessary response on a case-by case basis. The following three levels of response are recommended for consideration:
  - a. **LEVEL 1:** The Board, after or as part of an initial investigation, assigns a team of at least two people to meet with the individual. This team should consist of a Board member and/or credential leader, and a lay leader within the congregation. This team will clearly articulate concerns and work with the individual to co-create a plan of action which addresses the impact of any disruptive behavior on the community and works to assure that such behavior doesn't continue.

- b. LEVEL 2: The Board in writing excludes the individual from ministry activities as appropriate for a defined period of time, with reasons and the conditions of return made clear and supplemented as appropriate orally.
  - c. LEVEL 3: The Board in writing excludes the individual permanently from ministry activities and/or premises. The board sends a letter to the individual explaining the expulsion and the individual's rights and possible recourse, if any. If appropriate, the letter should be presented during a face-to-face conversation.
5. IMMEDIATE RESPONSES: If the disruptive behavior presents an immediate danger to anyone in the ministry, an immediate response is required. In such circumstances, those in the most responsible position should take action to establish safety. Immediate on-time action could include:
- a. Asking the individual to leave.
  - b. Immediately suspending the meeting or activity until such a time as it can safely be resumed
  - c. Calling the police department and requesting assistance.

Anytime any of these actions are undertaken without a Board member or minister(s) being present, the senior minister and president of the Board, or those acting as same, must be notified by phone as soon as possible. The senior minister, or person acting as same, should assure that in all situations a written report is submitted promptly.

- 6. The Board will review the immediate response and shall send a follow-up letter to those individuals whose behaviors appropriately require further restrictions or exclusions. The letter in reasonable detail will explain the further restrictions or exclusions and what steps, if any, must be taken before returning to the activities involved.
- 7. Whether and how an individual's membership in the ministry is implicated as a result of disruptive behavior is not the focus of this Policy. While disruptive behavior may be a cause for the loss or restriction of membership rights, such issues should be addressed separately, normally through the ministry's bylaws.
- 8. Appeal: Any action that restricts or excludes future participation by an individual, the Board, or spiritual leader determined to be disruptive may be appealed to the Board of Trustees. The procedure for doing so requires a timely, written letter to the Board requesting review of any decision and setting forth reasons for any action requested. Whenever the board cannot meet in a timely manner to make decisions under this Policy, the spiritual leader of the ministry may act on its behalf, bringing such action to the Board for its review as soon as possible.

This policy is adapted from Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations with their permission.

## **15. SEXUAL ABUSE POLICY**

*Revision 08/25/2007*

### **Policy and Overview**

Unity of Greater Hartford, Inc. (subsequently referred to as either 'Unity Church of Greater Hartford' or 'Unity Church') prohibits and does not tolerate sexual abuse in the church facilities or in any church related activity. Unity Church of Greater Hartford provides procedures for employees, board members, volunteers, church members, victims of sexual abuse, and others to report sexual abuse. No employee, volunteer, church member, or third party has the authority to allow or commit sexual abuse, regardless of title or position.

Unity Church of Greater Hartford has a zero tolerance for any sexual abuse committed by an employee, board member, volunteer, or third party. Upon completion of an investigation, disciplinary action up to and including discharge, and criminal prosecution may ensue.

Sexual abuse is inappropriate sexual contact of a criminal nature or intention. Sexual abuse includes sexual molestation, sexual assault, sexual exploitation, or sexual injury. Sexual abuse does not include sexual harassment.

### **Reporting**

If any employee, board member, volunteer, or third party is aware of, or suspects that sexual abuse has or is occurring within the facilities of Unity Church of Greater Hartford, or during a sponsored activity of Unity Church of Greater Hartford; that person must immediately report that suspected abuse to the Minister or Board Member of Unity Church of Greater Hartford.

If suspected abuse notification is made to a Board Member, that Board Member must immediately inform and consult with the Minister of Unity Church of Greater Hartford.

Any incident of sexual abuse, reasonably believed to have occurred, will be reported to appropriate law enforcement and regulatory agencies by the Minister, or Board Member if appropriate.

### **Anti-Retaliation**

Unity Church of Greater Hartford prohibits retaliation against any employee, board member, volunteer, church member, or third party who reports a good faith complaint of sexual abuse or who participates in any related investigation.

Making false accusations of sexual abuse in bad faith can have serious consequences for those who are wrongly accused. Unity Church of Greater Hartford prohibits making false



and/or malicious sexual abuse allegations, as well as deliberately providing false information during an investigation. Anyone who violates the rule is subject to disciplinary action up to and including discharge.

### **Investigation**

Unity Church of Greater Hartford will take all allegations of sexual abuse seriously, and will promptly and thoroughly investigate whether sexual abuse has taken place. Unity Church of Greater Hartford will use an outside third party to conduct investigations. (In the event that Unity Church of Greater Hartford develops a trained team, they may elect to conduct the investigation internally.) Unity of Greater Hartford will co-operate fully with any investigation conducted by law enforcement or other regulatory agencies. It is Unity Church of Greater Hartford's objective to conduct a fair and impartial investigation. Unity Church of Greater Hartford provides notice that they have the option of placing the accused on a leave of absence.

Unity Church of Greater Hartford will make every reasonable effort to keep the matters involved in the allegation as confidential as possible while still allowing for a prompt and thorough investigation.

## **POLICIES AND PROCEDURES FOR SAFEGUARDING YOUTH, STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS OF UNITY CHURCH OF GREATER HARTFORD**

### **Goal**

It is the goal of Unity Church of Greater Hartford to make it a safe place for children, our youth education workers and volunteers while establishing a program that meets the standard of reasonable care and lowers Unity Church of Greater Hartford's risk regarding child abuse claims.

### **Purpose**

Unity Church of Greater Hartford seeks to ensure a safe environment for our children and the staff and volunteers who work with the children. Additionally, Unity Church of Greater Hartford seeks to safeguard Unity Church of Greater Hartford against any allegations or claims of child abuse. A four part strategy has been developed, reviewed, adopted and approved by the Board of Trustees, Minister, and Youth Education Director. The four part strategy includes but is not limited to the following:

1. Worker Selection and Screening
2. Supervising Procedures for Youth Education Workers and Volunteers
3. Reporting Procedures
4. Responding to Allegations

### **Policies and Procedures**

1. Worker Selection and Screening

- a. An Employment Application must be completed by all paid Youth Education and volunteer workers and must include authorization for personal screening and a national background check.
- b. The Youth Education Director and/or Minister must conduct a personal interview.
- c. The Youth Education Director, or designee, will perform a reference check. A written record of each contact and response will be created, and will include date, time, and a summary of the remarks of the reference. If the applicant has prior church work referenced, each church shall be contacted and a written record created, including and refusal to provide information.
- d. After permission is granted, a national background check shall be obtained.
- e. The Church Administrator or Office Manager shall periodically check the State of Connecticut abuse registry regarding all people working or volunteering in the Youth Education Department. This should be done semi-annually.
- f. The Youth Education Director shall conduct ongoing orientation sessions for new staff and volunteers explaining the application and screening process along with its purpose in relation to Unity Church of Greater Hartford's goal and purpose.
- g. All volunteers shall have attended and participated in a Unity church for at least 6 months prior to volunteering in the Youth Education Department.
- h. No one with criminal abuse violations shall be allowed as a worker or volunteer with any contact with youth or children of any age.
  - i. All adult survivors of misconduct and/or abuse shall be encouraged to counsel with the senior minister.
  - j. Formal screening may be waived for youthful volunteers who are active in the youth education or whose parents are approved volunteers and who assist under an approved youth education worker or volunteer.

2. Supervising Procedures for Youth Education Workers or Volunteers

- a. Two supervisors are recommended as follows:
  - i. In the nursery
  - ii. On all field trips and/or retreats
  - iii. On all Church sponsored "sleep-overs" or "lock-ins"
- b. A signed parental permission will be obtained whenever an adult worker or volunteer would be alone with a child for any reason. This signed parental permission is also required for items III,2,a,ii and III,2,a,iii listed above.
- c. Any and all suspicious behavior must be discussed with the Youth Education Director and/or Minister immediately. Suspicious behavior includes but is not limited to the following:
  - i. Inappropriate language
  - ii. Inappropriate jokes
  - iii. Inappropriate touching
  - iv. Inappropriate dress

- v. Any use of inappropriate printed or visual material from any source.
  - d. All classroom doors shall have windows and all activities monitored. Workers and volunteers are not allowed to take children into windowless confined areas other than restrooms as needed and requested by the child.
3. Reporting Procedures
- a. All incidents involving children shall be reported to the Youth Education Director and/or Minister immediately.
  - b. The alleged offender shall be removed from all contact with children immediately.
  - c. The Youth Education Director, Minister or a person designated by the Minister shall follow the law of the State of Connecticut regarding reporting of incidents involving children.
4. Responding to Allegations
- a. The Minister shall ensure that the Church response plan is followed.
  - b. The Church response plan is as follows:
    - i. The Minister will appoint a person to prepare an incident report regarding the incident.
    - ii. The Minister will select a spokesperson should the incident warrant.
    - iii. The spokesperson will review the incident report prepared and develop a position statement.
    - iv. The Minister will report the incident to the Church attorney.
    - v. No one other than the selected spokesperson should have any comment or be interviewed by any member of the news media. If possible this individual shall be the Church attorney.
    - vi. No one will engage in denial, minimization or blame under any circumstance.

## **16. SEXUAL OFFENDER POLICY**

*Approved by the Board of Trustees September 26, 2014*

**Purpose:** This policy is a mandatory requirement of our insurance policy with Church Mutual Insurance Company. Compliance with Church Mutual's requirement is crucial, as insurance coverage is a stipulation of our mortgage note (currently held by Citizen's Bank).

Unity of Greater Hartford may allow a person known to be a sexual offender to remain or become a member of the congregation but they must adhere to specific guidelines. However, first check with the offender's probation/parole officer for any restrictions regarding attending services or other functions where children are present. Ask the

probation/parole officer to put any restrictions in writing. If restrictions don't prohibit participation, implement the following four guidelines.

1. A known sexual offender cannot participate in any of the child or youth programs in any way;
2. A known sexual offender can only participate in a predetermined service each week; and
3. A known sexual offender must report in and be assigned to an escort who will accompany him or her at all times.
4. The identity of the sexual offender will be disclosed to the congregation.

## **17. Sharing Information Policy**

*Adopted by the Board December 18, 2010; revised May 21, 2011; revised Feb 2019*

We recognize that membership in the spiritual community of Unity of Greater Hartford involves a sacred trust, and we hold our physical facilities as a sacred space as well as holding all those who are members or visitors in sacred safety.

### **Printed Materials or Flyers**

Any distribution of printed material or display of posters, signs or any other form of display on the property or within the building(s) of Unity of Greater Hartford must have the prior approval of the Minister or the Board of Trustees. Prior approval of the Minister or the Board of Trustees is required before any information or flyers can be displayed on the property of Unity of Greater Hartford.

### **Membership or Congregant Contact Information**

Membership or congregant information including names, addresses, phone numbers and email addresses, may not be given out to anyone, unless the person has given permission in writing for a particular reason. The church office may share member or congregant contact information with the Board of Trustees and Ministry Team Leaders to further the work of Unity of Greater Hartford.

Under no circumstances will a member or congregant's contact information (telephone number or address) be published in the electronic newsletter or posted on a church Bulletin Board. An email address of a member or congregant can be published or posted with that person's written permission for a particular reason and for a particular time and approved by the Minister.

### **Requests from a Member or Congregant to Contact Another Member or Congregant**

If a member of congregant asks to obtain another member or congregant's contact

information, the church office may not grant that request unless the request comes from a member of the Board of Trustees or a Ministry Team Leader and it is approved by the Minister. All other requests will be denied. Instead the person who is requesting the information may leave their contact information with the church office who will reach out to the other member/congregant. They will leave the caller's contact information stating that the caller wishes to talk to them.

### **Member or Congregant Requesting Prayers, Calls or Visits from the Congregation**

From time to time, members or congregants might request healing prayers as well as personal calls or visits. With written permission of the requester, the request for prayers may be published in the newsletter. If the requester cannot provide written permission, the Minister can accept verbal permission from the individual or a close relative. No personal contact information or health details can be published. If a member or congregant desires more information, or wishes to call or visit the requester, upon request of the church office or Board of Trustees, their contact information will be given to the person requesting prayers, calls, or visits or to their close relative. (please see paragraph above)

## **18. YOUTH EDUCATION STAFFING POLICY**

*January 18, 2014 – Amended and Approved*

### **1) VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT PROCEDURES**

Volunteers will be recruited by the Youth Education Director, Volunteer Coordinator or the Minister.

- a) All names of potential volunteers will be approved by the Youth Education Director or the Minister. If the Prayer Chaplain Ministry is aware of any reason why a person would not be suitable for a volunteer position, further investigation and discussion will take place and a final approval or denial, of the name will be made. If there is a medical reason for a potential volunteer to not be suitable as a leader/helper, he/she will be paired with another volunteer.
- b) In the case of a potential volunteer who is new to the church, a confidential dialogue will take place to determine interest, experience in child/youth ministry and readiness of the individual. This dialogue will be conducted by the Youth Education Director and/or the Minister. New potential volunteers for any Youth Education program will not be assigned to work alone, but will be paired with others who are familiar with the program.
- c) Parent volunteers are sometimes required to assist in a particular program or event. When a parent who is not an active participant in the church congregation or in the Youth Education program and volunteers for an event or special program, he/she is to be screened by the volunteer coordinator and teamed with a leader who has already been approved. Under no circumstances is a parent volunteer, who has not been screened or background checked, to be alone with a child or group of children and out of sight of leaders or staff.

## **2) SELECTION AND SCREENING**

- a) A Youth Education Volunteer Application must be completed by all volunteers as well as church employees who participate in the Youth Education Program. This application will include an authorization for personal screening and background check.
- b) A personal interview must be conducted by the Youth Education Director, Volunteer Coordinator and/or the Minister
- c) A reference check will be performed by the Youth Education Director or the Volunteer Coordinator. A written record of each contact and response will be created which will include date, time and a summary of the remarks of the reference check. If the applicant has prior church work referenced, each church shall be contacted and a written record created including any refusal to provide information.
- d) After permission is granted, a national background check shall be obtained through Lexis. Those individuals not granting permission for a background check will not be permitted to participate in the Youth Education program.
- e) The Youth Education Director or Volunteer Coordinator shall conduct ongoing orientation sessions for new Youth Education staff and volunteers explaining the application and screening process along with its purpose.
- f) All volunteers shall have regularly attended Unity of Greater Hartford for at least 6 months prior to volunteering in the Youth Education program.
- g) No one with criminal abuse violations (staff or volunteer) shall be allowed any contact with youth or children of any age.
- h) Formal screening may be waived for teen volunteers who are active in the Youth Education program or whose parents are approved volunteers and who assist under an approved youth education worker or volunteer. Teen volunteers must always be accompanied by a screened adult volunteer.
- i) A Volunteer Ministry Covenant will be signed by all volunteers agreeing to comply with church policies and guidelines.

## **3) STAFF AND VOLUNTEER SUPPORT**

- a) It is the goal of Unity of Greater Hartford to not only provide for the safety of our children and youth, but also to support and provide, to the best of our ability, a system of procedures that will protect the staff and volunteers from being falsely accused of wrongful acts. This is accomplished by:
  - i) Screening potential volunteers to determine where a volunteer would be best suited to use their gifts, abilities, interests and experiences.
  - ii) Providing leadership development that will further prepare the volunteer for leadership within a group/class.
  - iii) Maintaining the records of groups/classes for a period of 30 years in their original form

- iv) Providing coverage for all staff and volunteers under Unity of Greater Hartford's Insurance policy with periodic reviews to insure that the Policy covers all areas of our church ministry.
- b) When a staff person or volunteer is accused of an alleged wrongful act, the church congregation will provide spiritual and moral support to the person(s) involved.

4) **SUPERVISING PROCEDURES FOR YOUTH EDUCATION WORKERS AND VOLUNTEERS**

- a) Complete records are to be kept for each Youth Education level. These records are to include names of children, addresses, phone numbers, parent name(s) and any allergy/medical information. The records are to be handed into the church office at the end of each Sunday. They will be filed in the office in their original form under the title of each class. The files will be kept for a period of thirty (30) years. A list of classroom attendance is to be maintained each week. The names of volunteers are to be noted each week as well.
- b) There will be a minimum of two adults for every Youth Education level. Whenever there is only one adult leader in a classroom with children, the door will remain slightly open or there will be a window allowing anyone passing to look in without interrupting the teaching process. No one is allowed to take children into windowless confined areas including restrooms.
- c) Parents are encouraged to take their children to the restroom prior to the beginning of the service. No child should be sent to the restroom alone. If parents determine a child is old enough to go to the restroom alone without an adult, it is recommended that the supervising adult(s) send two older children together.
- d) Parents/Guardians must take responsibility to monitor their children when they are outside of the classroom both before and after service. Children under the age of 13 must be directly supervised by their parent/guardian.
- e) Sleepovers:
  - i) If a sleepover is to be held for the children or youth, additional adult supervision is required. Groups, which are co-ed, must have adequate adult supervision of both genders. The supervisors should not all be members of the same family. A minimum of two adult supervisors of each gender is recommended.
  - ii) Each sleepover must have a signed and dated parental waiver form from each parent/guardian.
- f) Sick Children: Children who are not feeling well should not be received into the classroom. Some signs of illness are unusual fatigue or irritability, coughing, sneezing, runny nose and eyes, vomiting, diarrhea, inflamed mouth and throat, complaining for sore ears or throat, and rash. Children with these or similar symptoms should be returned to the parent(s) or guardian(s).
- g) Parties and Field Trips: Youth Education programs are encouraged to provide opportunities for the group to go outside of the church building and into the community. The community provides a variety of outing possibilities to enhance

the curriculum being taught in the program and to serve the community. The following are the procedures for outings and parties, which are off the church property.

- i) There must be sufficient supervision at all outings. This would include the regular leaders within a program and parents of the children or approved volunteers.
- ii) All outings must have a signed and dated parental waiver form from each parent/guardian. The waiver must state the nature of the outing, the time of departure and return and the destination. If the outing involves transportation, transportation of children must be done within the parameters of the church's insurance policy.

## **5) EMERGENCIES**

- a) Volunteers are not to give or apply any medications to children except for bandages for minor cuts/abrasions or ice packs for bumps. If a child needs medication, the parent/guardian must administer it. No medications are to be left in any classroom with the exception of children who carry inhalers for asthma or medication for serious allergies.
- b) First aid boxes will be kept on hand and all volunteers are to review their locations and contents. The first aid boxes are to be inventoried to make sure that the contents are complete. These inventories should be performed semi-annually, once in April and again in September.
- c) Emergency procedures in the event of a fire will be reviewed with volunteers semi-annually, in September and in April, and with each new volunteer during their training process. Evacuation procedures are to be posted in each room.
- d) Reporting Accidents/Injuries: Occasionally, during the course of regular program activities injury occurs. These may be minor or major in nature.
  - i) After appropriate support and assistance is given to the injured child or adult, a written Incident Investigation Report should be filled out by the Youth Education Director or appropriate staff person. A description of the incident, contributing factors and the treatment given should be noted. Witnesses to the incident should be listed with addresses and phone numbers for follow-up purposes.
  - ii) The Incident Investigation Reports should be returned to the church office. A member of the Board of Trustees may be appointed to investigate the incident and bring recommendations back to the Board to prevent a recurrence of the accident. The reports are to be kept in the church office for future reference.

## **6) VOLUNTEER BEHAVIOR**

- a) Volunteers in Youth Education must always be above reproach in their works and conduct. They are to behave in a loving manner, demonstrating the principles of respect, honesty and trustworthiness.



- b) Volunteers must not in any way be involved in any of the following activities with older children: extended hugging, kissing, sitting on a lap, inappropriate touching or being alone with a child.
- c) In the event that a child approaches an adult with the intent to hug or kiss, or unexpectedly does so, the adult should accept the affection, but should quickly as possible, in a non-rejecting manner, encourage a more appropriate form of physical contact. Appropriate expressions for ages 0-3 include picking up the child, comforting the child, holding the hand of the child. Appropriate physical contact with children ages 4+ could include a handshake, pat on the back, a quick hug of encouragement with hands located in shoulder area and a “high five”.
- d) Volunteers who are not feeling well should not lead a group of children. If a worker is ill and not able to perform their duties, notification to a the team leader or a team member should happen as soon as possible so that other workers can step in and assist in the supervision of children. When notification is not possible until the last minute, adjustments should be made in the program to allow for doors to be open and the group meeting to take place in a higher traffic area where others can check on the group without interrupting the session.
- e) Volunteers need to refrain from personal cell phone use and texting while on duty.

## **7) SEXUAL CONDUCT CODE**

- a) Volunteers are required to sign the church’s Sexual Conduct Code.