

MISSION STATEMENT

The Shared Ministry Committee (SMC) is a continuing body whose purpose is to strengthen the quality of the ministry within the congregation. It shall listen without judgment and assess objectively issues and concerns to ensure that the mission of the Fellowship is being fulfilled.

VISION STATEMENT

Giving voice to our shared ministry.

MEMBER QUALIFICATIONS

1. Members must be a GUUF member for a minimum of three years.
2. Prior GUUF leadership experience as determined by the Nominating Committee.
3. Must not serve as the chair of any other committee, task force, or any other entity of GUUF.
4. Must not be a member of the Board of Trustees.

MAKEUP OF THE COMMITTEE

The SMC consists of five members, one of whom serves as chair and one of whom serves as secretary. The chair and secretary are selected within the committee. SMC members are nominated with a critical eye toward the stature necessary for it to function effectively. The following criteria play a critical role in selecting its membership:

1. An overarching commitment to the congregation's mission above all other agenda.
2. An ability to see past the part to account for the whole.
3. Capacity to keep confidences.
4. Personal integrity.
5. The ability to listen.
6. A willingness to make the tough, fair decision.

Internal membership policy:

1. Regular attendance at meetings is necessary for effective member contribution.
2. Members must attend Sunday services at least once a month.

OVERALL RESPONSIBILITIES

The SMC, on behalf of the Congregation, is responsible for assessing and supporting the effectiveness of every facet of GUUF's ministry. "Ministry" includes all the entities of the

Fellowship: The Board, committees, groups, staff, Minister—all of which make up the total life of our Fellowship. The SMC will also maintain a procedure for conflict management.

FUNCTIONS

1. Assess the total ministry and provide a written report at least annually to the Board and the congregation.
2. Follow processes to manage conflicts within the congregation.
3. Promote awareness of the SMC and its mission.
4. Consult with Minister(s) and Lay Leaders and provide feedback on the ministerial and program goals for the coming year.
5. Occasionally attend Program Council meetings, Board meetings and other committee meetings.

STANDARDS

1. The evaluation of all facets of ministry flows from and through the Fellowship's mission statement.
2. The congregation is ultimately both responsible and accountable for the success or failure of its ministry.
3. While the professional ministers and staff play vital roles of leadership within the congregation's ministry, they are servants of the congregation's ministry and are not its owners.
4. The SMC will act as an agent in congregational life that represents the total of its ministry, and is responsible for monitoring, evaluating, protecting, educating, and advising in respect to its effectiveness and which is inclusive of both professional and lay leadership functions.

ASSESSMENT

The SMC is responsible for working out a plan to assess the effectiveness of every facet of the congregation's ministry. Using a plan that annually alternates assessing the total congregation's ministry and the professional minister's ministry conserves energy. Whatever the rhythm, tool, or method used, a pertinent report will be made to the Board and the results converted into specific recommendations made to specific agents of the congregation's ministry. Although the SMC will make a periodic concerted evaluation of the congregation's ministry (as required by the by laws of the fellowship), it is understood that assessing is a year-around activity rather than an occasional event.

PROMOTION

The SMC will seek opportunities to promote awareness of its existence and mission. This may include brochures, orientations, newsletter editorials, worship services, and reports to the Board and congregation at its annual meetings.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The SMC makes recommendations to all agents of the congregation's ministry relative to elevating their effectiveness. This approach focuses on potential for progress and growth, rather than problems.

CONFIDENTIALITY

SMC members make a covenant of confidentiality and mutual honesty in respect to all deliberations. Confidentiality is necessary in order to:

1. Honor people's need for privacy.
2. Facilitate the well-being of all involved.
3. Give time for resolving misunderstandings and conflicts without increasing and inflaming the issues involved.
4. Avoid misinformation and gossip.
5. Limit the possibility of conflict escalation through unnecessary involvement and talk.

POWER

The SMC has no authority except that of recommending. It makes recommendations to the board but is ultimately accountable to the congregation. The SMC is not overseen by the Board. SMC members can be terminated by a congregational vote.

Contact response: All members of the SMC will be ready to respond in the same way to any member of the Fellowship who voices a comment, criticism, or conflict. While internal debate is healthy and inevitable, the SMC policy is to speak with one voice to the Fellowship. Furthermore, every effort will be taken to avoid triangulation in communications and to maintain clarity about who is responsible for resolution of issues brought to the attention of the SMC. Triangulation moves the responsibility for solution from the shoulders of those involved in the conflict onto the shoulders of the SMC. This is why the SMC's constant approach is to ask those posing complaints to offer a solution and those offering negatives to translate them into positives.

Process policy: The SMC is responsible for defining a process to help resolve issues. It is not responsible for resolution.

Member selection: Since the SMC knows best the kind of members it needs, the SMC presents a prioritized list of recommendations to the Nominating Committee to replace members who are leaving. The NC makes its recommendation for replacement to the congregation at its annual meeting. If going beyond the SMC's recommendations is necessary, the NC always solicits the SMC's endorsement of further suggested candidates.

Minister involvement: The minister attends all SMC meetings but is not a member and does not vote. The minister's presence is invaluable to the committee's deliberations because of the information about both individuals and the institution that the minister embodies. The committee will freely draw on the minister's knowledge and insights. Under no circumstance does the minister represent the committee, either as a messenger or spokesperson.

ROTATION

Membership is for three years with a staggered rotation. There must be an intervening year before any member leaving the committee can have membership reinstated.

ACCOUNTABILITY

The SMC is ultimately accountable to the congregation. However, it reports to the Board in between congregational meetings. The reports are periodic enough to keep the board informed and aware of the COM's functional presence.

MEETINGS

Monthly meetings are typical, with additional meetings called by the chair or agreed upon by the committee. These meetings are normally held in member homes in order to guarantee confidentiality. Meetings must be held in an environment closed to the public.

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT PROCESS

The goal of the SMC is to manage conflict as opposed to resolving it. The SMC is only responsible for assessing the circumstance of the issue and designing a process that offers the opportunity of resolution or redemption. Here are some beginning steps:

- The SMC will suggest that the individual seeking help take the first step by approaching the person or group with whom the conflict is engaged with resolution or redemption in mind.
- Coach the individual on ways of responding, if requested.
- If the individual feels intimidated by this step, then the suggested step will be to offer for a member of the SMC to attend the individual in making this approach (not speaking for but being present with).
- If the individual is unwilling to take either of these steps, then the SMC will either devise a different process of appropriate approach or ask the individual

to cease pursuing the issue. It will be unlikely that there is another appropriate approach if the individual is unwilling to become responsible for helping process toward their own reconciliation. In such situations, the SMC will be forced to take the hard stand of calling for cessation for the sake of the congregation's ministry. If the individual is unwilling to engage any steps suggested by the SMC (including cessation of pursuit), then the SMC may decide to go to the board with a specific recommendation as to how the board should act in the matter on behalf of the well-being of the congregation's ministry (and such could be to terminate the individual's membership). The Disruptive Behavior Policy of the congregation may come into use here.

- If the individual complies with steps one or two and the other party involved is unwilling to engage reconciliation, then the SMC will, depending on the nature of the conflict, determine what steps to take to protect the ministry of the congregation. At this point, there are no formulas and creativity becomes the SMC's primary activity.
- Hopefully, the process will yield reconciliation or some form of useful resolution so that the SMC will not be required to invest further energy in the issue. If this is not the case, the SMC will pursue the issue, in terms of process, until it finds some result that maximally favors the congregation's ministry well-being.
- Whatever the issue under consideration, the SMC will gain as full a picture as possible as to what may lie behind the issue. The SMC will likely come to its own conclusions about the rightness or wrongness of the issue under consideration. However, its function is *not* to process its own conclusions; rather, it is to establish processes that are designed to lead to redemptive results for those who seek its assistance. To insert its conclusions is to fall victim to triangulation, assuming responsibility for resolution instead of directing it.
- The SMC will seek to understand the complexities of the grievance. It serves as a conduit for parties in disagreement to mediate their own grievances and if necessary to assist the board in the mediation of the grievances.
- While the SMC will resist the temptation to become the champion of its conclusions, nothing prohibits it from presenting the materials that led to its conclusions as part of the management process. In this case, the materials speak to the conclusions rather than the SMC.

POLICIES

The value of having policies in place is that they are immediately available for application in potentially emotional and conflictual circumstances that call for their guidance.

1. Good faith effort: The SMC will make a good faith effort to resolve grievances brought to its attention. It will document grievances as indicated and guarantee that any grievance or

suggestion brought before the SMC will not only be addressed but will be processed until there is either a resolution, an implementation, or the limits of SMC responsibility are reached.

2. Appeals policy: In cases in which a grievance cannot be resolved, the SMC will be an advocate for the appeals process as defined by the Board.

3. Education policy: The SMC will contribute to the education of the congregation with respect to the congregation's mission and ministry as it sees fit.

4. Recommendation policy: The SMC will make recommendations to the Board and will be available to meet with the Board or others to facilitate understanding of recommendations.

5. Visibility policy: The SMC will regularly make itself visible in the life and ministry of the congregation. The methods to be used will include but are not limited to mission-covenant renewal programs and forums, a brochure explaining the purpose and functions of the SMC, a newsletter column, presence at new member orientations, and reports to the board of trustees and to the congregation at its annual meetings.

6. Ministerial inclusion policy: Meetings of the SMC are open to all who serve the church in a professional ministerial role. When a grievance involving the minister is brought to the SMC, the minister shall have the same rights as anyone who brings forth a grievance. The SMC should resist the temptation to favor one party over another. Rather it should act as a conduit for the parties of the grievance.