

Safe Community Covenant

Hosanna! A Fellowship of Christians

Introduction

The purpose of this covenant is to define the parameters of behavior necessary to establish a safe, authentic community of work and worship and to define the processes by which behavior contrary to that objective is addressed by Hosanna. This covenant consists of three portions:

- The relevant sections of the By-Laws that address the kind of community Hosanna is attempting to create and maintain, the expectations on those who participate in this community, and the remediation process for addressing failures to meet those expectations.
- A statement that more specifically defines unsafe or inappropriate behavior.
- A statement that articulates how the remediation policy applies to situations in which the safety of one or more participants in the Hosanna community is or may be threatened.

These statements are supported and supplemented by a pre-existing policy on workplace harassment that is included in the Hosanna Personnel Manual.

The principles that underlay all policies and procedures are 1) safety, 2) confidentiality, and 3) restoration, in that order of priority.

The By-Laws (Article I. The Congregation)

Section 1. Definition

Hosanna! A Fellowship of Christians (hereafter "Hosanna!") is a local congregation of the Church universal. As such, it invites all those who are believers in Jesus or seekers of truth to participate in its ministries and activities. Hosanna! is committed to the equality of adult believers, irrespective of gender, race, ethnicity, or age. No individual shall be denied participation in or appointment to any role in the congregation on the basis of such demographic factors. Spiritual maturity, giftedness, and calling are the essential criteria for participation or appointment in this congregation.

Section 2. Expectations

Those who voluntarily choose to participate in the public ministries or activities of the congregation are expected to...

- ...speak the truth in love with each other,
- ...resolve conflicts quickly, privately, and with mutual submission,
- ...serve and worship in a manner that respects the service and worship of others,
- ...serve when and as called by God and confirmed by those in spiritual authority,
- ...step aside from such service when requested by those in authority, and
- ...submit to discipline when exercised by those to whom such authority is rightfully granted.

Section 3. Remediation

Should any individual demonstrate a pattern of behavior that is contrary to these expectations, a process of remediation may be initiated by the Ministry Staff in consultation with the Elders. Such remediation may include the following options:

- ...removal from a particular ministry or activity for a period of time,
- ...request or requirement for personal or family counseling.
- ...request or requirement for conflict mediation,
- ...request or requirement for behavioral modification, and/or

...removal from membership.

Such remediation shall always be consistent with the instructions given in Matthew 18:16-20 and Galatians 6:1; its purpose is restorative whenever possible. Once a process of remediation is engaged, one may be restored to full participation upon evidence of genuine repentance of the offense and reconciliation, as determined by the Ministry Staff in consultation with the Elders.

Unsafe and Inappropriate Behavior

Hosanna! is characterized by a pervasive atmosphere of grace, which means that we exercise considerable patience with each other, love each other through our failings and weaknesses, and urge one another on to growth in holiness with gentleness. We desire this environment of grace for all members of our community, but particularly for our children. Yet we recognize that this atmosphere of grace is conditional upon each individual believing that such grace will also be extended to oneself, that s/he will not be subject to words or behaviors that threaten, intimidate, demean, harass, or otherwise create an unsafe environment. These behaviors include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Illegal behavior on the church premises or at church-sponsored activities;
- The use of racial or ethnocentric invectives, epithets, slurs, utterances, or physical acts or threats (written or spoken);
- Possession or use of firearms or weapons, ammunition or explosives in or upon church-owned property;
- The disruption or obstruction of teaching, worship, business meetings, or other group activities;
- The harassment of Hosanna! staff or volunteers, whether onsite or elsewhere;
- Physical assault, abuse, threats, and verbal or written intimidation of any person;
- Theft from or damage to Hosanna premises or damage to property of a member of the Hosanna community;
- Failure to comply with directions of Hosanna leaders acting in performance of their duty to ensure a safe environment;
- Retaliation, intimidation, or coercion directed against any member of the community, anyone who intends to register a complaint or anyone who has done so.
- Unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, inappropriate behavior of a sexual nature, and other written, verbal, or physical conduct of a sexually intimidating or offensive nature.

The Remediation Process

This policy applies to all participants in the Hosanna! community...members, guests, employees, or officers. Should a person believe that one or more others have engaged in behaviors that fit the criteria of unsafe or inappropriate, s/he should report this behavior as follows:

- If the complaint is against a guest or member of the Hosanna! community, that behavior should be reported to the Pastor of Congregational Life.
- If the complaint is against an employee of Hosanna, that behavior should be reported to a Senior Pastor.
- If the complaint is against a Senior Pastor, that behavior should be reported to the President, who will utilize a separate remediation process as defined by the By-Laws.

The individual receiving the complaint will make a preliminary determination as to whether the complaint requires further investigation, immediate action in favor of safety, or no action. In all cases, that determination will be made on the basis of the priorities identified in the Introduction to this policy. The individual receiving the complaint will be authorized to act to initiate such action.

Should the complaint require further investigation, the individual receiving it will solicit the participation of one or more elders for whom the investigation would not involve a conflict of interest. These individuals shall form an "inquiry group" that will, if at all possible, meet separately in a timely manner with the parties. As a result of that inquiry, the group will determine if the complaint requires one of the remedial actions defined in the By-Laws, no action, or other such action that will support the priorities identified in the Introduction to this policy. The inquiry group will be authorized to act to initiate such action.

Should a complaint be found to be without basis, the matter becomes a pastoral care issue, and reconciliation of the relationship between the parties will become the primary focus of the remediation process.



Acknowledgement

With my signature below, I indicate that I have received the Safe Community Policy of Hosanna! A Fellowship of Christians, that I understand what I have read, and that I agree to abide by its policies and provisions.

Signature: _____

Printed Name: _____

Date: ___/___/___