

Committee on Ministry

The Committee on Ministry (COM) fosters open, two-way communication between the ministers and the congregation. COM seeks to understand, assess, support, and advocate for robust ministry within context of congregational life, our community and our world.

Description

COM consists of three members in good standing serving staggered three-year terms. The ministers will nominate COM members for the approval of the Standing Committee. COM shall agree upon a Chair and meet monthly or more often as needed. COM members share the congregation's mission and vision, make every effort to leave personal biases at the door, and work in a confidential manner.

COM engages the ministers, through confidential conversations, in a free exchange of ideas and viewpoints. COM is a sounding board for issues within our community that can be addressed sensitively in order that we may live up to the covenant and mission of our congregation. COM is also a conduit for communication from the congregation to the minister and an impetus for stronger communication from the minister to the congregation. COM members understand, assess, and support multicultural and multi-staff ministry.

Any member of the congregation may contact a COM member if there is an issue (joyous or troubling) that he/she would like the committee to address. COM may address the issue directly or redirect the congregant to a more appropriate committee. COM has no role in judging the ministers' performance or determining the ministers' compensation. The Standing Committee will be responsible for any written evaluations of the ministers' performance, any salary adjustments, or contract negotiation.

Tasks and Responsibilities

- COM will work with each minister on his/her continuing education program, sabbatical planning or other professional development, and present any such plans to the Standing Committee and congregation.
- Notwithstanding any agreement of confidentiality, COM members shall report to the Standing Committee Chair information concerning abuse or illegal activity by either minister, impairment compromising fulfillment of ministerial responsibilities, or behavior detrimental to the well-being of First Parish. The Standing Committee chair is given the discretion to act upon any such disclosures in an appropriate and sensitive manner.
- COM periodically assesses the health and effectiveness of the congregation's shared ministry. Every three years, COM will gather data using focus groups, interviews and/or surveys to clarify the congregation's vision and recommend steps to enhance the quality of our shared ministry. COM will present its findings and recommendations to the Standing Committee and the congregation.
- COM will keep the congregation informed of its purpose and activities. COM works in confidential manner, but is not secretive about its activities. COM will employ various communication tools (e.g., announcements, newsletter articles, or programs) to remind the congregation of COM's purpose and how to contact its Chair, to provide information about the ministers' sabbatical or other professional development activities, to promote a model of shared ministry that includes everyone who works or worships at First Parish, and to invite participation in the periodic assessment of the congregation's shared ministry.