

First Parish In Concord SC Good Practices (edited 12/13/15)

When creating our list of annual goals for the Standing Committee (SC), we strive to find areas of improvement to focus upon in the coming year. One potential pitfall of this sort of approach is that good practices that have been established may be forgotten. In order to prevent this, a group of SC members (Lora, Kate and Kristin) got together to create a list of current "good practices". We hope that this document will be referenced by members during the course of their work as well as by the evaluation subcommittee when producing the annual self evaluation of the committee. It is our hope that this document will continue to be updated annually, in order to ensure the continual improvement of the committee as well as to provide documented institutional memory for future iterations of the SC.

A summary of adopted practices by the SC that we feel is representative of good functioning:

Healthy communication

- Weekly SC presence at welcome table and as greeter at side door
- Well maintained website, with current contact information
- Timely posting of decisions, reports, and minutes
- Advance notification of meetings and agendas
- Regular reminders that members are welcome to attend meetings
- Regular attendance at church events with intentional outreach
- Maintain committee liaisons
- SC bulletin board with names and photos

Maintaining congregational trust

- Operating transparently
- Welcoming visitors
- Welcoming discussion about our practices and policies
- Listening to congregants about issues they raise

Job clarity

- Process driven group
- Reviewing and following policies
- Completing yearly evaluations of SC and senior minister
- Intentional, proactive work
- Create and publish annual goals to improve performance
- Operate by building consensus
- Speak with one voice policy
- Understand our governance model
- Keep a timeline for future agenda items
- Follow up on decisions made

Meeting protocol

Well-facilitated meetings
Time keeping
Respectful dialogue during meetings
“What we're hearing” section of meetings
Welcoming/recognizing visitors

In addition, we found that there were some topics that are currently on our annual goals, but merit separate identification on this document. We believe these adopted practices should be maintained, and we hope that they are implemented each year in our goal section:

- 1) Once or twice yearly Retreats
- 2) Hosting regular congregational conversations
- 3) Annual campaign involvement.

Finally, there were two items that fall outside of the scope of our current goals and yet are not quite integrated as standardized good practices that we would like to call attention to:

- 1) SC Leadership selection (chair)
- 2) Orientation for new SC members.