

Safe Church Policy of the Deansboro Congregational United Church of Christ

Policy Objective: The purpose of the Deansboro Congregational United Church of Christ safe church policy is to promote our church as a safe place where young people and adults can expect to participate in ministry without fear of harm.

Statement of Policy:

The Deansboro Congregational United Church of Christ is committed to creating and maintaining a worship and work community in which members, friends, staff, and volunteer can share in an atmosphere free of all forms of discrimination, harassment, exploitation, or intimidation.

Specifically, all persons associated with the Deansboro Congregational United Church of Christ should be aware that the church is strongly opposed to sexual exploitation and harassment and that such behavior is prohibited by church policy.

It is the intention and responsibility of the church council acting on behalf of the congregation, to take whatever action may be needed to prevent and correct behavior, which is contrary to this policy.

All persons engaged in the ministry of Deansboro Congregational United Church of Christ (including elected, appointed, Employee, volunteer and authorized minister) are responsible for knowing the possible impact of their words and actions in ministering to the emotional, mental, and spiritual needs of persons who come to them for help or over whom they have any kind of authority.

Sexual harassment or sexual exploitation of parishioners or other individuals by anyone engaged in the ministry of Deansboro Congregational United Church of Christ is unethical and unprofessional behavior and will not be tolerated within this congregation.

It is also expected that those engaged in providing ministry will complete and submit the disclosure document accompanying this policy.

Any complaint of alleged sexual exploitation or harassment against any employee, volunteer, person in leadership or member shall be referred to any officer of the Church council. (A written complaint is preferred however a verbal complaint will be accepted.)

The Deansboro Congregational United Church of Christ church council shall then request that the Regional Conference Minister of the NY Conference UCC summon a 'response team to gather statements or other information from individuals involved in the alleged exploitation or harassment, and from others who may have pertinent information, and present such information to the church council and or Oneida Association Committee on Authorized Ministry.

The church council shall make determinations and take actions appropriate to resolve the matter. These actions shall include:

- i. Finding that sexual exploitation or harassment has occurred. Official action may include; Formal reprimands, probation or dismissal. If the accused is an authorized minister (ordained, commissioned or licensed by the Oneida Association) the response team shall inform the Committee on Authorized Ministry. The Deansboro Congregational United Church of Christ will cooperate fully in any procedures related to the individual's ministerial authorization. The Deansboro Congregational United Church of Christ retains the right and responsibility to determine what is best for its leadership interest. (That is retain or dismiss the pastoral leader.)**
- ii. Finding that no sexual exploitation or harassment occurred.**
- iii. If the complainant or accused person is not satisfied with the disposition of the matter by the church council that person has a right to appeal to a congregational meeting of the Deansboro Congregational United Church of Christ properly called the Church Council.**
- iv. A written summary of the Church Council proceedings, the proceedings of the NY Conference, or Association Response Team shall be maintained.**
- v. If allegations of possible child abuse are included in the complaint, the Association/NY Conference Response Team shall notify appropriate secular authorities and the Deansboro Congregational United Church of Christ will cooperate fully in any investigation. This policy shall continue to be followed to determine the continuance of the individual in leadership position in the Deansboro Congregational United Church of Christ.**
- vi. All public communication of this matter shall be maintained by the response team until such time that the matter is referred back to the church council for action.**

Accompanying this policy is a list of definitions.

Accompanying this policy is a disclosure form.