

Congregant Matters Brought to the Attention of Active Elders

If a congregant approaches an active member of Session with a question, issue or concern [the “matter”] verbally, by letter or email, the Session member should:

For simple, non-confidential matters — Respond immediately to the matter, or find out the appropriate response or referral person, consulting with the Clerk of Session [the “Clerk”], if necessary, and report back to the congregant.

For matters involving an individual or ministry — Suggest that the congregant discuss the matter directly with the individual or the elder responsible for the ministry.

For confidential matters, matters involving substantive policy issues, and/or matters not resolved by the above steps — Mention that (1) a letter detailing the matter can be sent to the Clerk or (2) a meeting can be arranged with two or three active elders and the congregant to discuss the matter prior to its presentation to the full Session. IMPORTANT NOTE: Ask the congregant if he or she wishes to remain anonymous prior to the elder team meeting.

Arrange the elder team meeting — Consult with the Clerk to determine the appropriate elders to attend the meeting. Decide logistical details and/or the necessity for any background work or information gathering prior to the meeting.

Hold the elder team meeting — If a thorough discussion of the matter does not lead to resolution, the elder team in consultation with the Clerk decides whether the matter should be brought to the attention of the full Session. If no, then at least two members of the elder team should explain to the congregant the reasons why advancing the matter to the full Session is inappropriate. If yes, the elder team in conjunction with the congregant should prepare a proposed draft of the matter for review by the Clerk prior to the matter being listed as a Session agenda item.

Report Session action back to the congregant — the Clerk shall officially report the results of the Session’s deliberation of the matter in person and in writing to the congregant. The Session action should be recorded in the minutes as is the normal requirement.

Session Approved: November 21, 2007