

Eliot Chapel Church Disruptive Behavior Policy

I. Background

Eliot Chapel strives to be an inclusive community, embracing our differences in beliefs, opinions, and life experiences. So that our community remains strong and vibrant, we are committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of everyone attending our church or participating in a church-sponsored event. Toward this end, we recognize that the safety and well-being of our congregation as a whole must be given priority over the privileges and inclusion of an individual.

II. Definitions / Scope

This policy applies to all adults while on Eliot Chapel property or at an off-site UU-sponsored event. We define disruptive behavior to be:

- perceived threats to the physical or emotional safety of any adult or child;
- sexual harassment;
- disruption of church activities; OR
- diminishment of the church's appeal to its potential or existing membership.

Criminal and violent behaviors are beyond the scope of this policy. In the case of such behaviors, all staff members and congregants have the authority and duty to contact the police immediately.

III. Confidentiality

Silence empowers the aggressor and often engenders gossip. Due to the types of behaviors that trigger this policy, confidentiality cannot be assumed. Often the aggressor tells their own version of events. Leadership must feel free to speak the truth about these events to the extent that good judgment indicates. In all communications, leaders will speak of those involved in a covenantal manner, showing respect for all parties.

IV. Actions

A disruptive situation can be handled by the lead minister if she/he is available. However, all staff members and congregants have an interest and responsibility in the response to disruptive behavior. As such, any staff member or congregant who feels capable may handle a disruptive situation in a covenantal manner.

Usually a situation escalates from uncomfortable to disruptive. See Appendix A for examples of disruptive behavior. Make an attempt to diffuse the situation. If the situation continues to escalate, the recommended actions are:

1. Request that the offending party cease the behavior.
2. Ask them to leave.
3. Contact police or security to calm the situation or remove the offending person.

If the lead minister does not handle the situation, the person who did so shall leave the lead minister a message immediately, followed by a detailed report within 24 hours. The initial message can be email, text or voice mail. The report can be written or emailed.

If the offending party is not member or friend of our congregation, the matter is considered closed. If the offending party is a member or friend of our congregation, it is recommended that the lead minister follow the Serious Covenant Breach Policy.

Appendix A

Here are a few examples of disruptive behavior.

- perceived threats to safety: a rowdy drunk
- disruption of church activities: repeated interruptions of group discussion
- diminishment of appeal: someone panhandling on church property
- disruption of church activities: someone on moratorium comes back to church and
- is asked to leave
- sexual harassment: sexual innuendos [See [Safe Congregation Policy](#).]