

# Shelter Island Presbyterian Church Employee Handbook



1st Edition  
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**Shelter Island Presbyterian Church Employee Handbook**

## ***Approved by the SIPC Session on August 20, 2013***

The Shelter Island Presbyterian Church (SIPC) is a religious body with Christian values in a secular context. We understand our relationship with church employees in light of God's Covenant with us, and recognize that we are ultimately accountable to our Lord. Ultimately all policies and relationships within the Church should be illuminated by the light of Scripture.

Shelter Island Presbyterian Church affirms our heritage and association with the Presbyterian Church, USA, the General Assembly, and the Presbytery of Long Island. In developing the Employee Manual we are guided by the Book of Order and the policies of the General Assembly along with applicable federal, state, and local laws.

### **Purpose & Open Door Policy:**

This statement of policy is aimed at building understanding, equity and effective administration of Personnel policies for all staff of Shelter Island Presbyterian Church (SIPC). This policy provides an overview of the guiding principles, policies and procedures of SIPC. While detailed policies are a necessity for some situations, the policy cannot address every contingency. Therefore, SIPC supports an open door policy to promote open communication to provide a more productive workplace. Staff members and support staff are encouraged to discuss any issue with their manager and resolve questions as they arise. If they are not comfortable with this option, they may address their issue with a member of the Personnel Committee.

## **I. Employee Classifications**

Employees are classified into two groups: **Clergy (Ordained staff)** and **Support Staff**. In addition to these groups, there are full-time and part-time employees. Members of the church and community who donate their time to work for the church are considered volunteers.

### **A. Clergy, or Ordained Staff**

1. “**Ordained Staff**” shall refer to those persons ordained to the Ministry of Word and Sacrament by the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). For purposes of this handbook, Ordained Staff shall be treated in accordance with their call, although they may on occasion assume functional duties of Program Staff or Support Staff. All Installed and Interim **Clergy** will be called by the procedures specified in the Book of Order. The Installed Clergy’s Terms of Call must be approved by the congregation of the Shelter Island Presbyterian Church and also by the Presbytery. A copy of the terms of call is kept in the personnel file. Interim pastors will be hired by the session with their Terms of Call approved by the Presbytery.

2. The Ordained Staff is accountable to the Session through its Personnel

Committee. The congregation recognizes that clergy are members of the Presbytery and accountable to the church beyond the local parish. In fact, the ordained clergy commit themselves to the values of energy, intelligence, imagination, and love in their Ordination Vows in service to the local church, the denomination, and even the universal church [Book of Order, G14.0405 (b)].

3. Clergy are expected to uphold their Ordination Vows and the “Presbyterian Standards of Ethical Conduct.”

## **B. Support Staff**

1. Support-staff are hired by the session through the Personnel Committee of the session. Support staff can be full-time or part time, but are typically part-time and hired for a specific number of hours per week. The Pastor is the Head of Staff and supervises the support staff and meets with them to develop skills, set goals, and evaluate his or her professional progress.
2. Support staff may be paid an hourly rate that is negotiated at the time of hire. Other support staff, for example the church organist, may be paid salary.
3. Unless otherwise negotiated and specified in a contract, support-staff who work 20 hours per week or less do not receive insured or non-insured benefits.

# **II Employment Practices**

## **A. Employment at-will**

Employment of the staff of the Shelter Island Presbyterian Church is at-will and may be terminated at any time by the church, except for discriminatory reasons.

## **B. Equal Employment Opportunity**

The church is committed to fair employment practices and abides by the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of the United States Code. All employment policies and practices, including recruiting, selection, benefits, compensation, performance appraisals, promotion, transfers, discipline, training, and separation will be administered without discrimination based on race, color, national origin, gender, age, marital status, sexual orientation, creed, disability, or religious affiliation (except where a category is determined to be a bona fide occupational qualification).

## **C. Employment Documents**

1. All **Ordained Staff** will be called by the procedures specified in the *Book of Order*.
2. The congregation and the Presbytery approve the terms of call of installed pastors and a copy will be kept in their personnel file. Interim pastors will be

hired by the session with their Terms of Call approved by the Presbytery.

**3. All other employees** are hired by the Session upon recommendation of the Pastor/Head of Staff and appropriate committees. The church will obtain references on candidates for employment and a background check before an offer of employment is made.

**4. For Support staff**, the first three months of employment are a probationary period. Their work will be evaluated at the end of the 3-month period.

**5. 1) Copy of the job description, 2) Employment offer letter and 3) Receipt of Employee Handbook** will be kept in the employee's personnel file as follows:  
Note: As the Employee Handbook is implemented, an employment offer letter will be signed at the next annual review for current employees without an employment letter. Contents of the Employee Personnel File are as follows:

1. The appropriate and most recent job description negotiated at annual review in January.
2. A written notice or letter of employment will be given to each staff person from the Clerk of Session with a copy to the Chair of Personnel. This notice will stipulate compensation and specific conditions of employment.
3. The copy of the Employee Handbook will be provided to the employee at time of employment and reviewed with the employee. Signing of the receipt of the Employee Handbook denotes the employee's agreement to abide by its terms. Whenever the Handbook is revised, copies will be provided to each employee of the church.

## **D. Position Descriptions**

The Shelter Island Presbyterian Church makes every effort to create and maintain accurate position descriptions (also sometimes referred to as job descriptions) for all positions within the organization.

## **E. Attendance**

**1. Consistent and punctual attendance** is essential to the successful operation of SIPC. Employees must notify their supervisor of absences due to illness, on a daily basis, either prior to or shortly after their scheduled start (a maximum of 1 hour). SIPC may, at its discretion, require employees to obtain a doctor's certificate for any absence from work due to illness. Employees who are absent for three consecutive days without proper notification are considered to have abandoned their position and are considered to have voluntarily resigned their position.

**2. If a pattern of absences & tardiness develops**, disciplinary action may result.

- 3. Employees are expected to work the hours negotiated with SIPC.** The Head of Staff may, at his/her discretion, reschedule, or reduce hours at his/her request or the employee's request with a minimum of 1 week's notice.
- 4. Employees, may also be asked to work additional hours (if available)** on an ad hoc or emergency basis. Overtime pay (1-1/2 x regular hourly wage) will accrue after the employee has worked 40 hours in a regular workweek.

## **F. Annual Performance Reviews in January**

Supervisors and staff members are strongly encouraged to discuss job performance and goals on an informal, day-to-day basis. Additional formal performance reviews are conducted to provide both supervisors and staff members the opportunity to discuss job tasks, identify and correct weakness, encourage and recognize strengths, and discuss positive, purposeful approaches for meeting goals.

# **III. Employee Benefits**

## **A. Ordained Employees**

**Ordained employees** receive benefits as defined in their terms of call. The workweek varies with the job description and terms of employment. For Ordained employees, the Board of Pensions determines the benefits provided by the church and defined in their terms of call. The Terms of Call include insurances, retirement, and other benefits such as SECA reimbursement and participation in a tax free investment account.

The congregation approves the terms of call annually for installed pastors. The Session and the Presbytery approve the terms of call (called "Contract") annually for interim pastors.

## **B. Support Staff**

Support staff employees work a set number of hours per week. The church pays the required Social Security tax (FICA) for all non-ordained personnel and withholds taxes from the employee's salary. Support staff members working 30 hours per week or less do not receive benefits unless otherwise specified in their contract.

## **C. Leave Benefits:**

- 1. All Leave Benefits** are based on a regular 40-hour week. Benefits for part time support staff will begin at the start of employment.

## **2. Holidays**

All full time staff will receive five paid holidays per year. Employees will receive the following holidays if it falls on a regular workday for that employee:

New Year's Day  
Memorial Day  
Independence Day  
Thanksgiving  
Christmas

If a holiday falls on a Saturday, Sunday, or the employee's regular day off, another day shall be taken at the employee's discretion.

The full time employee will schedule days off around the church calendar. Employees taking more than two days off in a row shall notify the session and arrange for pastoral coverage.

For part time staff, when a holiday occurs on a regular work day, another workday may be arranged in consultation with the pastor.

### **3. Paid Time Off (PTO)**

SIPC recognizes that individuals need time off from work to recover from illness, take vacation, handle family emergencies or take care of personal business.

Ordained staff will receive vacation and study leave days according to their Terms of Call. Study leave for other part-time employees may be negotiable.

The church secretary and sexton will receive the equivalent of 2 weeks (prorated) PTO days depending on the days worked each week. The number of days a person works per week will be used to determine the number of PTO days. For example, for persons scheduled to work 3 days a week the employee would receive six PTO days. Employees working flex schedules will receive the equivalent of two weeks of PTO days.

The Minister of Music will receive up to five weeks of PTO days, five paid Sundays off and one week of study leave.

Employees will not be paid for any accrued and unused PTO days when they terminate.

### **4. Other Time Off**

All employees (full time and part time) will receive the following benefits:

- Bereavement leave is an unpaid/paid leave of absence in the event of the death in the immediate family (spouse, children, step-children, parents, step-parents, brothers or sisters) of the employee or spouse. For ordained staff, bereavement days shall be negotiated with the Personnel Committee. For part time employees after one year, leaves will be approved for a maximum of 3 days (if the deceased lives less than 1000 miles away; 5 days if the employee must travel more than 1000 miles).

- Jury Duty, Military Leave

After one year, leaves for jury duty and regular training in the US Armed Forces will be compensated without gain or loss to the employee. Stipends (excluding travel expenses) will be paid to SIPC.

- Inclement Weather

Employees are advised to use caution and consider the advice of public officials when weather conditions make it difficult to get to work. Staff who are unable to attend will be able to make the time up on another day. Should SIPC close due to inclement weather, all staff will be paid for the day.

- Family Leave

° Employees (full time and part time) are eligible after one year of employment to take unpaid family leave for the following reasons: a) birth of child, b) care of a newly placed adopted child or foster child under age 18, c) care for a spouse, parents, parent-in-law or child with a serious health condition, d) to recover from, seek treatment for the employee's own serious health condition, e) to care for a child with an illness or injury that is not serious. Leave taken for medical reasons requires doctor certification.

° Staff are entitled to 12 weeks of family leave within any 12 month period, with an additional 12 weeks available to a woman for a illness, injury or condition related to pregnancy or childbirth, or to care for a newborn, adopted child or foster child with a health condition that is not serious.

° Written notice 30 days in advance of the leave is required unless the leave is an emergency. Upon returning from Family Leave, staff will be reinstated to their original job or an equivalent job with equivalent pay and benefits, though PTO days do not accrue during family leave.

## **IV. Personnel Administration**

The Personnel/Finance Committee of the Session is a resource for the Pastor/Head of Staff in personnel administration. The Personnel Committee exists to support, guide, and encourage the church staff. The Personnel Committee also reviews policy and recommends updates and changes to the Session of the church. One of the values and expectations of the church is that the committees will communicate with each other to

facilitate clear personnel direction and needs. In support of this expectation, the church through the Pastor and Personnel/Finance Committee will assist each staff member in setting and meeting goals, developing skills, and evaluating his or her professional progress.

## **V. Professional Conduct**

In light of the church's values and expectations of ethical and appropriate behavior and professionalism, all staff members are expected to conduct themselves in a positive and helpful manner both in the church and away from the church site on church business. The actions and conversations of all church employees reflect upon the church.

Discriminatory language or other inappropriate language, violence, sexual misconduct or harassment, illegal activity, breach of confidentiality, inappropriate use of authority, inappropriate dress, inappropriate use of church resources (internet, email, fax, telephone, business expenses, copier, etc.) or other negative behaviors by church staff members will not be tolerated and may be grounds for dismissal.

### **A. Confidential Information**

1. The protection of confidential information is vital to the interests and the success of the Shelter Island Presbyterian Church. Such confidential information includes, but is not limited to, the following examples: staff member information (including, but not limited to, staff member social security numbers and medical information); vendor information; donor information; computer processes, programs, passwords, and codes (such as source code); and financial information.
  
2. Staff members who improperly use or disclose confidential information will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment, even if they do not actually benefit from the disclosed information

### **B. Dress Guidelines**

SIPC encourages a casual but professional dress code. All clothing should be in good condition and provide coverage in good taste and proper fit of the shoulders, torso and legs.

### **C. Cell Phone, Email, Internet Usage, Church Phone**

1. Personal cell phone use is permitted for emergencies only.
  
2. The primary purpose of SIPC's computer, email and Internet access and the church phone is to provide an efficient method of communication and source of information pertinent to the business of the church. It is intended as a tool to aid employees in their work.

## **D. Nepotism.**

No person may be employed in a position that is under the direct supervision of an immediate family member (spouse, parent, in-laws, child, grandchild, brother, sister, or grandparent) or a member of the same household. This applies both to original employment and changes in employment by promotion, demotion, transfer, or reorganization.

## **E. Harassment**

The Church remains committed to maintaining a work environment that is free of harassment or intimidation. To this end we will not tolerate harassment of employees by anyone, including any supervisor, pastor, co-worker, vendor, member, customer or visitor to Church premises.

Harassment consists of unwelcome conduct, whether verbal, physical or visual, that is based upon an individual's gender, race, religion, national origin, age, or disability. The Church expressly prohibits and will not tolerate sexual harassment or sexual misconduct.

# **VI. Disciplinary Process and Termination of Employment**

**A. Ordained Staff** The power to establish and dissolve pastoral relationships belongs to the Presbytery. Just as the establishment of a pastoral relationship requires the vote of the congregation and Presbytery on the call and the Terms of Call, the dissolution of the pastoral relationship requires the vote of the congregation and Presbytery on the dissolution and its terms. Presbytery's vote is the action that dissolves the relationship.

## **B. Support Staff**

1. In all matters of employee conduct and behavior, the Pastor has the responsibility to deal with each incident on a case-by-case basis and to determine the church's best interest and response.

2. If a cause for disciplinary action exists, one or more of the following may occur:

- Verbal warning for minor incident;
- Written warning for single incident or for failure to respond appropriately to a series of verbal warnings;
- Written warning constituting a final step before termination of employment;
- Termination (discharge of employment) with the Church Personnel Committee.

3. The disciplinary process may begin at any point, depending on the seriousness of the incident.