Respectful Communication Guidelines

R = take RESPONSIBILITY for what you say and feel without blaming others.

E = use EMPATHETIC listening.

S = be SENSITIVE to differences in communication styles.

P = PONDER what you hear and feel before you speak.

E = EXAMINE your own assumptions and perceptions.

C = keep CONFIDENTIALITY.

T = TRUST ambiguity because we are not here to debate who is right or wrong.

Communication is one of the most important elements in building a more inclusive community. People of different backgrounds bring with them different communication styles. Sometimes these differences can cause conflicts among members of a community—often in an unconscious way.

Guidelines for communication are like the traffic rules that one has to understand and observe before getting a license to drive a car. We are required to pass a test proving that we know and will follow the rules in order to lessen the possibility of traffic accidents. With interpersonal communication, we do not require people to pass a test but we do need to remind people about how to interact respectfully. Conditioned by our society, we may react to others who are different with negative attitudes, put-downs, judgments and dismissal. If we are to express the essence of God’s inclusiveness, we need to agree to behave differently when we are attempting to build a more inclusive community. The Respectful Communication Guidelines provide a foundation to uphold the well-being of the community.

Different communities use different versions of communication guidelines. The guidelines used most often by the Kaleidoscope Institute have been developed over the years through working with various groups. They are written in an acronym that helps group members remember the guidelines. During the first meeting of the group, the meaning of each letter should be explored. In later meetings, the guidelines should at least be read and agreed upon, and sometimes, with briefer explanation.

A resource of the Kaleidoscope Institute, found at:

http://www.kscopeinstitute.org/respectful-communication-guidelines/