From: Edward Obermueller
To: Preston Christie A
Subject: Form 990 Comments
Date: Friday, September 11, 2015 5:52:50 PM

Dear Ms. Preston,

As a former Lutheran pastor and a currently active member of the Morristown Unitarian Universalist Fellowship, Morristown NJ, I recognize the value that churches and religious organizations bring to the community. However, I feel strongly that they should be held to the same standards of transparency as other non-profit organizations.

At a minimum, the IRS should require any organization that claims to be religious, to file an annual notice with the IRS that they are claiming tax exemption.

I do know that many churches do not have the administrative resources to comply with the filing of form 990. Therefore another way of asking them to be transparent needs to be implemented, so that all organizations are treated equally under the law. Many people (including members of said churches) do not have any awareness of the fact that churches are exempt from these sorts of public disclosures, and this gives rise to the possibility of abusive practices. As a former minister, I saw up close the way church governing boards were sometimes willing to use funds in inappropriate ways, and we should not assume that religious organizations are benign in the way they conduct themselves.

Kind regards,
Edward

Edward Obermueller
11 Holloway Place
Morris Plains, NJ 07950
201-274-5782