

I. How We Care for Ourselves

A. Care for Congregants

1. Welcoming Congregation

We are pleased to be designated a Welcoming Congregation by the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations, and as such honor and value the racial, cultural, economic, religious, physical ability, sexual orientation and gender diversity of our members and visitors, young and old.

2. Our Covenant

Chalice Congregation voted to adopt this Covenant in the early 2000s.

Mindful of our diversity and our need for greater understanding, we promise to open our hearts and minds to foster a safe, inviting and loving community.

We will treat one another genuinely and respectfully as together we share life's journey toward wholeness.

3. Living our Covenant Policy – Adopted, Board of Trustees, October 2012, Revised June 12, 2018

Because of our congregational vote, this Policy and its pledges apply to all who participate in the life of Chalice Congregation.

The well-being, strength, and reputation of our church depend on a sense of fellowship among the members, friends, and staff, a fellowship that thrives in an atmosphere of trust, respect, and cooperation. Within such an atmosphere, differences of opinion and their resolution through compromise or consensus can enhance a sense of community. However, differences or misunderstandings that go unresolved and descend into prolonged conflict can threaten the social fabric of our congregation. We expect that conflict will arise from time to time and that, when it does, its management and resolution are paramount. Therefore, in order to uphold our covenant with one another, we pledge to follow these practices when we find ourselves in disagreement:

- We agree to approach our resolution of differences, not with preconceived outcomes or specific demands, but with open minds and open hearts.
- We agree to talk directly with the person with whom there are concerns, and not to seek to involve others in "gossip" or "alliance building."
- We agree to make a sincere commitment to listen to one another, to try to understand the other person's point of view.
- We agree to focus on the issues, and not to attack the person with whom we disagree.
- We agree to communicate face-to-face (best) or over the phone (if necessary), and not through email when there is a conflict or concern.
- We agree that if we find ourselves in conflict that we are unable to resolve on our own, we will follow our congregation's Conflict Resolution Policy in order to maintain the health of our community. This should be followed when the conflict is with another congregant, the Minister, or staff member.

- We agree that we will strive to preserve our congregation's health by meeting with the Good Relations Team if requested by the Good Relations Team to do so.

4. Conflict Resolution Policy – Revised, Board of Trustees, June 12, 2018

Note: There is a separate Employee Grievance Policy in the "Care for Staff" section. The process below is intended for congregants.

When you have an interpersonal conflict with another individual, including with another congregant, the Senior Minister or a staff member, you are asked to:

- First, talk directly to the other individual about your conflict and see if your issues can be adequately addressed.
- If this does not work, request a more formal meeting with the individual and request that you both use the "Ground Rules" and "Preparation Suggestions for Successful Resolution" described below so that you both may participate in the Congregation without conflict.
- If you are uncomfortable meeting directly with the person with whom you are in conflict, or the individual refuses to meet or use the ground rules, or if such a meeting does not resolve the conflict, follow the steps below in resolving your conflict:
 - For conflict with another congregant, do the following:
 - Take your conflict to the Good Relations Team for their confidential help in resolving the conflict.
 - If, for any reason, you are not comfortable with bringing your issues to the Good Relations Team, then talk to the Senior Minister, who will determine how best to proceed.
 - If the initial steps taken by the Good Relations Team or the Senior Minister are not able to resolve the conflict, the Good Relations Team will consider other methodologies of conflict resolution, including denominational resources, and/or declaring an impasse as laid out in 5. Conflict Impasse Policy.
 - For conflict with the Senior Minister, if the conflict is of an interpersonal nature or deals with a matter of preference how something is done at Chalice, do the following:
 - Take your conflict to the Good Relations Team.
 - If they are not able to resolve the conflict, the Good Relations Team will consider other methodologies of conflict resolution, including denominational resources, and/or declaring an impasse as laid out in 5. Conflict Impasse Policy.
 - If the conflict with the Senior Minister involves ethical issues such as honesty, integrity or professional conduct or violation of Chalice's Bylaws or Policies, refer to Policy "7. Complaints about the Senior Minister's Performance or Bylaws or Policy Violation".
 - If the conflict with a staff member is of an interpersonal nature, the next step is to take your conflict to the Good Relations Team, or if that is not acceptable or successful, take your conflict to the Senior Minister
 - For conflict with a staff member that is about performance, ethical issues or policy matters, the next step is to take your issue to the Senior Minister who in their role as Chief of Staff is the supervisor of the staff member.

Please feel free to call any Good Relations Team member to discuss utilizing this process.

If your conflict is not with an individual, but is a concern about a Committee, Program, Board, or their Policies, see Policy 6. Contacts for Bringing Forth Concerns about Committees, Programs and the Board.

Ground Rules to be Used by the People in Conflict

- We agree one person speaks at a time.
- We will make a sincere commitment to listen to one another, to try to understand the other person's point of view before responding.
- We will provide time and space to say what needs to be said, listening quietly without interruption.
- What we discuss together will be kept in confidence, unless there is explicit agreement regarding who needs to know further information.
- We agree to talk directly with the person with whom there are concerns, and not seek to involve others in "gossip" or "alliance building."
- We agree to try our hardest and trust that the other person is doing the same.
- We agree to focus on the issues, and not to attack the person with whom we disagree.

Preparation Suggestions for Successful Resolution

Step one: Before you begin, ask yourself, "What exactly is bothering me? What do I want the other person to do or not do? Are my feelings in proportion to the issue or are they amplified by some other situation or condition?"

Step two: Reflect on the possible outcomes that would bring resolution.

Step three: Remember that the idea is not to "win" or "be right" but to come to a better understanding of each other and a mutually satisfying and peaceful solution to the problem. We all come to the table with the total of our life's experience. This includes all our wounds as well as our inherent worth. Our perceptions and therefore our truths may be very different. Trust that we all are telling "the truth" as best as we are able.

Step four: State the problem clearly. At first, try to stick to the facts; then, once you've stated the facts, state your feelings. What are the "hurts". Use "I" messages to describe feelings of anger, hurt, or disappointment. Avoid "you" messages such as "you make me angry...."

Step five: Use active listening skills: Be careful not to interrupt, and genuinely try to hear the other's concerns and feelings. Try to restate what you have heard in a way that lets the other know you have fully understood.

Step six: Try to see the problem through the other's eyes. The "opposing" viewpoint can make sense even if you don't agree.

Step seven: Propose specific solutions, and invite the other person to propose solutions, too. What do we need to make it right? Whose responsibility is it?

Step eight: Be ready for some compromise. Allowing the other person only one course of action will likely hinder resolution. When there is agreement on a proposal for change, celebrate! Set a trial period for the new behavior. At the end of the trial period, you can discuss the possibility of modifying or continuing the change.

If no solution has been reached regarding the original problem, consider implementing the Conflict Impasse Policy.

5. Conflict Impasse Policy – Revised, Board of Trustees, June 12, 2018

There may be times in our congregational life when parties seeking conflict resolution find that they are at an impasse. An impasse will be declared when the following criteria in conflict resolution have been met:

- The congregation's Conflict Resolution Policy has been followed.
- The parties in conflict have met face-to-face to attempt resolution.
- Each party involved feels that they have said what needs to be said to the other party.
- The Good Relations Team has been involved in the attempts toward resolution.
- The Senior Minister is aware of the conflict and the attempts toward resolution, either through direct involvement or through consultation with the Good Relations Team.
- The parties in conflict, the Good Relations Team, and the Senior Minister all agree that an impasse has been reached.
- If the conflict is with the Senior Minister, the Good Relations Team is in charge of declaring an impasse.

When an impasse is declared, further attempts at conflict resolution are recognized as futile. However, it is still possible for the involved parties to uphold our Chalice Covenant, remaining in right relationship with each other and with the congregation.

To that end, the parties in conflict shall agree to treat each other with respect in all public settings. This includes not speaking, writing, or otherwise communicating thoughts about each other within the Chalice community for three years following the declaration of impasse. It is understood that commiseration with a confidante is not a violation of this agreement unless that commiseration devolves into gossip or alliance building.

Finally, both parties shall resolve to uphold the spirit of the agreement in addition to its specific terms. This agreement, called a Commitment to Covenant, shall be made in writing, signed by the parties in conflict and witnessed by members of the Good Relations Team. The Senior Minister will keep the original document on file.

From the time of the meeting forward, any e-mails or other written or verbal communications that contain references to the other by either party, or that violate the spirit of their agreement, shall be deemed as a failure to adhere to the signed Commitment to Covenant and may lead to termination of membership.

6. Contacts for Bringing Forth Concerns about Committees, Programs and the Board – Adopted, Board of Trustees, June 12, 2018

Concern Regarding:

Contact:

A Chalice program, committee, or affiliated group or their procedures

The appropriate paid Staff Member, Chair of the Committee, the Coordinating Team or the Good Relations Team

The Coordinating Team or their procedures

The Coordinating Team chair, Senior Minister or Good Relations Team

The Board or Board Policies

The Board President or the Good Relations Team

Administrative Procedures (Facilities, Parking Lot, Maintenance, etc.)

The Office Administrator

Calendar/Scheduling

The Office Administrator

7. Complaints about the Senior Minister’s Performance or Bylaws or Policy Violation – Adopted, Board of Trustees, June 12, 2018

Note: If your complaint is about an interpersonal interaction or preference in matters related to the congregation, utilize “4. Conflict Resolution Policy”.

Definitions

1. *Performance matters* include ethical issues related to the honesty and integrity of the Senior Minister, and professional conduct in accordance with the Code of Professional Practices and Guidelines for the Conduct of Ministry of the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association.
2. *Policy matters* are issues about violations of Chalice’s Bylaws, Governance Policies or Congregational Policies.

Chalice’s President, Vice-President and Past President will manage complaints about *performance matters* and *policy matters*. Any complaint brought to the Board under this Policy will be kept in strict confidence, and shared only with those Board Members with a specific need to know. If you have conflict with the Senior Minister regarding *performance matters* or *policy matters*, you are asked to:

- Submit a signed complaint in writing to the Congregation’s President, Vice President, and Past President.
- The Board will acknowledge the complaint in writing.
- The Board will advise you in writing as to the outcome of the review and the Board’s actions.