

## **Dangerous and Disruptive Behavior Policy – Adopted, Board of Trustees, November 2012**

Chalice Unitarian Universalist Congregation, Escondido, CA, (hereinafter called Chalice) unites to foster spiritual and personal growth and to promote principles of community, dignity, and the right of individual conviction and truth regardless of source. As a community, we uphold the following Covenant:

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.

Chalice strives to be an inclusive community, affirming our differences in beliefs, opinions and life experiences. However, concern for the safety and well being of the congregation as a whole must be given priority over the privileges and inclusion of the individual. When any person's physical and/or emotional well being or freedom to safely express his or her beliefs or opinions is threatened, the source of this threat must be addressed firmly and promptly. The following procedures are designed to ensure fairness to all, and will be implemented in a sensitive and confidential manner.

### **Dangerous Behavior Defined**

Dangerous behavior can be defined as behavior that is perceived as a threat to persons or property.

### **Response to Dangerous Behavior**

In dangerous situations immediate action is warranted and should be taken. If the behavior occurs in a meeting or other gathering, the minister(s) and/or the leader of the group involved will undertake an immediate response to such behavior. This may include asking the offending person or persons to leave, or suspending the meeting or activity until such time as it can safely be resumed. The police department may be called if further assistance is required. For example, it is appropriate to call the police to remove a person exhibiting violent or threatening behavior.

Any time any of these actions is taken, the Good Relations Team and the minister(s) must be notified. If required by law, ordinance or similar regulation, the senior minister will immediately report the incident to the proper authorities. The Good Relations Team and minister(s) will consult with the President of the Board of Trustees to determine what steps must be taken before the offending person or persons may be allowed to return to the activities involved. A letter detailing these steps will be sent to the offending party or parties. A copy will be retained in the minister's files.

Individuals who feel threatened by the behavior of others on the premises are free to call for needed assistance immediately.

### **Disruptive Behavior Defined**

Disruptive behavior can be defined as behavior that is not immediately threatening but that actively disrupts church activities, or is likely to drive away existing members or visitors, or that repeatedly fails to adhere to congregational policies.

### **Reporting Disruptive Behavior**

Since it is a serious business to bring a formal complaint against a fellow member, doing so should never be taken lightly. Every attempt should be made to resolve disruptive situations by addressing them directly, with compassion and concern, before resorting to the use of this policy.

Nonetheless, there will be times when personal intervention is not possible or advisable, or when direct attempts have not succeeded. Any person who believes that they have witnessed or experienced disruptive behavior should contact the Good Relations Team. If they are uncomfortable contacting the Good Relations Team they may contact the Minister.

The leadership will strive to maintain confidentiality of the individuals involved, who will only be identified as needed to investigate and resolve the complaint.

In all cases involving reports of disruptive behavior, it is important that the Good Relations Team and minister(s) are diligent in keeping accurate and timely records while approaching a problem and resolution. Written records provide context and continuity should similar issues arise again either involving the same individual or someone different.

### **Responses to Disruptive Behavior**

The Good Relations Team will assess the situation and consult with the minister to determine how to proceed. The following levels of response are possible:

- **No Action:** It may be determined that the complaint does not warrant further action. A brief summary of the meeting will be written by the Good Relations Team or the Minister (whoever has met with the concerned individual), and shared with the other. The Minister will retain a copy.
- **Level One:** If the complaint involves a conflict between persons or groups, the Good Relations Team will meet with the person(s) and other related parties to implement the Conflict Resolution Process as set forth in our policies. If the incident does not involve a conflict per se, the minister(s) shall meet with the offending individual to communicate the concern and expectations for future behavior. At this time the individual will also be provided a copy of this policy and have the opportunity to ask

questions. If records indicate that the individual has been in a significant number of resolutions before, or has shown a repeated pattern of disruptive behavior, then the Committee may infer that repeated visits have not worked, and may move the matter to Level Two.

- **Level Two:** If Level One efforts to resolve the situation are not successful, the full Board of Trustees will become involved. The Board will determine a limited period of time during which the offending individual(s) needs to be excluded either from Chalice or from specific Chalice activities, with the reasons for such action and the conditions of return made clear in a written notification to the individual(s). If the conditions of return are not met, the matter will move to Level Three.
- **Level Three:** The Board of Trustees, after careful consideration, may determine that the offending individual(s) should be removed from membership and, if appropriate, excluded from the Chalice premises and all Chalice activities. Per the Chalice Bylaws, (Article III, Section F) a  $\frac{3}{4}$  majority vote of the Board is required to remove someone from membership. Notification of such a decision will be made in writing, and will explain the individual's rights and possible recourse.

### **Process of Appeal**

Any action taken under Level Three may be appealed, in writing, to the Board of Trustees within thirty days of the letter of notification. If this happens, the Board of Trustees shall form an ad hoc appeal committee. The appeal committee shall be composed of two members of the executive team of the Board of Trustees, two members selected by the Good Relations Team who are not members of the Good Relations Team nor members of the Board of Trustees, and a fifth church member who is an active member of the church, chosen by the removed person. In a case where the individual does not have a member to propose, the other four members of this appeal committee would select the fifth member. The majority decision of the appeal committee shall be final and not subject to further appeal.

### **Possible Reinstatement of Removed Individual**

The individual who was removed from membership, and only that individual, may make a request for reinstatement, no sooner than one year following the removal. The request must contain information concerning the rationale for the reinstatement, including: 1) a statement of understanding the reasons for which s/he was removed from membership and 2) an explanation that details how circumstances and conditions have changed, such that a reinstatement would be justified. The request shall go to the Board of Trustees. The Board will review the request and respond within thirty days as to whether or not to reinstate the removed member. A  $\frac{3}{4}$  majority vote of the Board is required for reinstatement. The decision of the Board shall be effective for one year and not subject to further appeal during that year. In the event that a reinstatement request is not granted, any subsequent reinstatement requests may be made no sooner than one year following the member being informed of a negative decision on the previous request.