

First Unitarian Society of Chicago
Minutes of the March 2020 Board Meeting (Online via Zoom)

Board Members Present: Kristin Faust, Board President
Amos Biggers
John Martin-Eatinger
Cindy Pardo
Margie Gonwa
Grace Latibeaudiere-Williams
Ellen LaRue

Others Present: Rev. Teri Schwartz, Senior Co-Minister
Rev. David Schwartz, Senior Co-Minister
Beth Moss, Director of Religious Education
Monica Kling-Garcia, Ministerial Intern
Kristina DeGuzman, Secretary

Opening words were offered by Cindy.

Those present shared their joys and concerns.

Report by the Director of Religious Education

Beth provided an update on the state of the religious education program and operational plans for the stay-at-home order.

Prior to the pandemic, the program was going very well, the high school program in particular receiving great feedback. The high school group is discussion-based, which will adapt well to online modality. The middle school group had just started OWL, and OWL trainers recommend not doing OWL from home, both for privacy reasons and due to the importance of in-person interaction; therefore, OWL will be on hiatus during stay-at-home orders. The middle school group will instead hopefully meet via Zoom before Sunday services and the curriculum will be heavily visual. With respect to the elementary group, Beth had a good planning chat with the teachers, and plans to combine the youngest and the middle grade class, as children in the youngest grades will need family help to use the technology. Activities may include family projects, for example building a pillow fort, or downloading a digital chalice. Beth had a good meeting with the RE council to plan out and structure those activities.

Board members expressed praise and appreciation for Beth's ingenuity during these contingencies.

February 2020 Board Meeting Minutes Tabled

Due to late distribution, February minutes will be approved at the next Board meeting. Kristina will meet with Rev. David to learn how to post the minutes to the church website.

Delegation to the Midwest Regional Conference

Kristin provided an update on the Midwest Regional Conference, should it go forward in light of the stay-at-home order.

Allan Lindrup had, on his own initiative, collected and presented the signatures required by the by-laws to be a delegate to the Midwest Regional Conference. It was discussed whether the conference would still be held, perhaps online. Rev. Teri confirmed that it would be held virtually via Zoom the week of April 18. A discussion followed on the current state of the Denominational Affairs Committee, and it was noted that neither the Board nor the Committee had put out information to the congregation regarding the Regional Meeting or the General Assembly. It was discussed whether or not to approve Allan Lindrup as a Midwest Regional delegate given on the one hand his considerable experience with denominational affairs and on the other his stated issues with Board governance and stated intention to leave the congregation. Some board members had serious concerns about Allan's prospective representation of a congregation that he may wish to leave. Others felt that given his experience, initiative, long history with the congregation, and compliance with the by-laws in collecting signatures, that the Board should approve him as a delegate. The timeline for the Board's decision was discussed. There was general agreement that one or more Board members should discuss these issues in person with Allan prior to making any decision, and that an in-person discussion should be followed up with a written response. Additional issues to be clarified included the applicable registration deadlines and other administrative requirements for the delegation to the Regional Meeting.

Ministers' Benefits Fund Discrepancies

Kristin updated the Board members on discrepancies in the ministers' benefit fund that she had previously informed the Board of via email, in which the fund had been underpaying and the ministers overpaying for health benefits.

Michael Knowles has compiled the relevant information and reviewed it with Liz Harris, who sent it to Kristin. While the discrepancies amount to a significant chunk of money, the church does have the cash on hand, although it will affect income this year significantly. Kristin clarified that reimbursement will be made with interest, and called for comments and questions. Board members inquired how this happened; Kristin explained that it appears to have started when the benefits management changed to a new company about 2 years ago, and the contribution amounts from the fund versus from the ministers were inadvertently reversed. The Board members apologized to the ministers for the huge inconvenience, and noted that the switch to the new financial secretary will hopefully prevent these errors in the future. Praise was

expressed for Michael Knowles's extensive work in correcting the situation. The error will likely cause a budget deficit unless the Borja house is sold particularly quickly.

Listing Agreement for the Borja Estate

Kristin provided an update on the listing agreement for the Borja house.

The Board has voted to use realtor Rita McCarthy to list the Borja house with a 5% commission; the next step is to prepare a listing agreement. Cindy and Grace both know Rita personally and vouch for her. John knows a different broker whom he and Lisa Martin-Eatinger could also recommend. Kristin wanted to revisit the decision to use a broker. It was noted that the church organization has many moving parts and that a 5% commission to hand the work over to a professional may be worth the avoided aggravation. It was further noted that having an outside professional perform the services is safer and more transparent than individual church leaders handling the process themselves. It was generally agreed that the Board should move quickly, given changing economic circumstances, and liquidate the property at the first opportunity. Kristin noted that the current plan is that the day the property transfers from the estate to the church, the church will get property insurance (Wallace Moy, the retained attorney, is working on this issue) and sign the listing agreement with the realtor. The house will likely need to be professionally cleaned before showings begin. Rita has experience with these issues, and Michael will assist with procuring property insurance.

Annual Fund Campaign Update

Margie provided an update on the Annual Fund Campaign

Margie and Lisa Martin-Eatinger are co-chairs again this year, and will recruit a few more people to help. They have met with Rev. David about Annual Fund Campaign preparations. There will be a virtual kickoff the first week in April, maybe Sunday, April 5. Any large donor events will also be virtual. The co-chairs are currently updating the prospect list, marketing materials, personalized letters, and mailings, and are organizing testimonials and assessing possible improvements to online pledge functions.

Operational Issues During Stay-at-Home Orders

The Revs. Schwartz wanted to bring 3 operational issues before the Board.

- (1) Pay for Hourly Staff: Rev. David noted that hourly staff have continued to work as much as possible, either in the building while still respecting social distancing rules or working remotely as teachers, and the ministers would like to assure that they continue to be paid for their regular work hours even though they may be working fewer hours due to restrictions. Ellen moved that the church continue to pay the hourly staff what they would be paid if they

were working their normal hours during the stay-at-home orders; Amos seconded the motion, which carried.

- (2) Rev. David requested a motion that the church building be entirely closed to all members and friends absent the express authorization of the ministers or Director of Operations until notice that the building has reopened. Concern was expressed by the Board regarding the ability of church members involved in construction projects to access the building as required. Rev. David assured that issues surrounding construction will be worked out with relevant church members who still require building access. Other Board members noted that similar issues will arise with church members involved in the Annual Fund Campaign. Rev. David noted that the resolution would not indicate that no one can enter the church, only that entrance should be coordinated with the ministers and Michael. It was also noted that in the event that a church member or staff member becomes ill, coordination will be required to notify other individuals who may have been exposed. Margie moved that access to the church building be restricted to those with permission from the ministers or Director of Operations; Cindy seconded the motion, which carried.
- (3) The ministers requested a motion that all in-person meetings for church-sponsored groups are cancelled until notice is given by the church leadership that in-person meetings are resuming. Grace so moved; Amos seconded the motion, which carried.

The ministers' priorities for next week are getting Zoom info out to church groups for meetings and creating continuity of business operations plans. The church has paid for 2 Zoom rooms, but is currently locked out of one room, and Zoom tech support has been slammed recently. Church members and friends can book the Zoom room through Mike using a space-use calendar.

Board members expressed praise and gratitude to the ministers for last weekend's online service.

The Board then went into executive session for an open conversation about the church's congregational culture.

Draft 3/3/20

FIRST UNITARIAN SOCIETY OF CHICAGO

Policy on Conflict Resolution

Introduction

Conflict is an inescapable part of human relations and community life. In striving for good relations with each other, our challenge is not to prevent or avoid conflicts but rather to manage and resolve differences of opinion, personalities, or objectives in ways that build rather than diminish our community.

This document identifies the steps that should be followed in our church when conflicts arise. These are:

- Step One: Direct Dialogue Between Concerned Persons
- Step Two: Request Help from the Good Relations Committee (GRC)
- Step Three: Facilitated Conversation with members of the GRC
- Step Four: Concluding Actions (Impasse or Referral to the Board)

This Conflict Resolution Policy, which applies to adults only, fits within a set of documents, [some of which are still under development], including:

- Congregational Behavioral Covenant [under development]
- The Bylaws of the First Unitarian Society of Chicago
- The Policy Manual of the First Unitarian Society of Chicago, including the Policy on Disruptive Behavior

The Good Relations Committee has the role of implementing and managing the Policy on Conflict Resolution, as described. The Committee will not serve as professional mediators, nor adjudicators, nor investigators. The Committee will assess issues brought to its attention, make recommendations for resolution, and serve as trained volunteer facilitators.

The four types of conflict that we address are:

- 1) Between/Among Members/Friends of the Congregation (*chart 1 attached*)
- 2) Between Member/Friend of the Congregation and Church Staff (*chart 2 attached*)
- 3) Between Member/Friend of the Congregation and Minister (*chart 3 attached*)
- 4) Disruptive or Dangerous Behavior (*chart 4 attached*)

We have incorporated a Glossary of terms used, for common understanding, and four charts that provide a graphic representation of the process to be followed in each type of conflict.

We expect and hope that most conflicts can and will be resolved by effort on the part of individuals to treat each other with dignity and respect, follow our Congregational Behavioral Covenant, and seek resolution when conflicts arise through the processes articulated in this policy, thereby strengthening the social fabric of our community and our ability to live out our mission.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION PROCESS

STEP ONE: Direct Dialogue Between Concerned Persons

When you have a conflict or concern with another individual or church body, including with another congregant, minister, staff member, or committee you are asked to:

- First address your concern directly with the person or persons involved. If you do not know who is responsible for your area of concern, consult this policy or check with a minister, member of the Good Relations Committee, or member of the Board.

The simplest, most effective path to conflict or concern management is one-on-one, face-to-face, open communication. This honors confidentiality and allows each party to address the issues without involving unrelated third parties that can lead to gossip and escalation of the conflict.

Communicating face-to-face is best or over the phone (if necessary). Avoid communicating via email or text.

- Agree on a mutually acceptable time and place to talk one on one and as soon as possible after the incident. Use the "Ground Rules" and "Preparation Suggestions for Successful Resolution" included at the end of this policy to prepare for and engage in a productive conversation.
- If you are uncomfortable meeting directly with the person with whom you are in conflict or with whom you have a concern (e.g., if safety is an issue), the individual refuses to meet or use the ground rules, or a meeting does not resolve the conflict, move to Step 2.

STEP TWO: Request Help from the Good Relations Committee

Often it is helpful to involve other skilled people to advise and assist parties in conflict to resolve their differences in positive ways. First Unitarian's Good Relations Committee is chartered to fill that role.

If you have a conflict or concern that you are unable to address by direct dialogue, you may take your conflict or concern to the Good Relations Committee for their confidential help in resolving the conflict or concern. You may email the GRC chair or email [goodrelations@firstuchicago.org] to schedule a meeting. A member of the GRC will respond to your request within two weeks.

If, for any reason, you are not comfortable with bringing your issues to the Good Relations Committee, then talk to a minister or member of the Board who will provide direction on taking the next appropriate step.

When communicating with the Good Relations Committee, you will be required to describe in writing your concern or conflict stating:

- A brief description of the conflict or concern, including the person(s), committee or situation you are having difficulty with (anonymous complaints are not acceptable--be prepared to take responsibility for your concerns)
- What steps you have taken to resolve the conflict or concern
- What outcome you would like to see

(Assistance in writing up and submitting the conflict or concern summary can be available, as needed, from the GRC.

As in Step 1, use the "Ground Rules" and "Preparation Suggestions for Successful Resolution" described at the end of this policy to engage in productive conversations with members of the Good Relations Committee about the conflict or concern.

Members of the Good Relations Committee working with you will do their best to listen carefully, try to understand the nature of the conflict or concern, and make recommendations regarding how the GRC can help.

After assessing the situation, the Good Relations Committee may:

- Help you clarify your understanding of the conflict or concern
- Help you find words to talk with the person directly
- Help you to prepare to meet with the other party
- Contact other parties to the dispute or concern and offer the services of the Good Relations Committee to them as well

If the initial steps taken by the Good Relations Committee are not able to resolve the conflict or concern, the Good Relations Committee will consider next steps in conflict resolution, which could include facilitated conversation, declaring an impasse, or referring the conflict or concern to the Board.

In the following cases, the matter will go directly to the Board:

1. One or both parties refuse to participate productively in the resolution process;
2. The conflict or concern is perpetuated by unchanged behavior;
3. The Good Relations Committee believes the conflict or concern involves disruptive, dangerous, or damaging behavior as defined by the Policy on Disruptive Behavior.

STEP THREE: Facilitated Conversation by GRC Facilitators

If the Good Relations Committee (GRC) believes that a more formal process would be justified in managing the conflict or concern, the GRC can make a recommendation to the parties that a facilitated conversation be pursued.

- *Selection of a facilitator*
The GRC will select one or more Facilitators from among the members of the Good Relations Committee or other congregants skilled in conflict resolution if approved by the GRC.

- *Purpose of Facilitated Conversation and Role of the Facilitator(s)*
The purpose of a facilitated conversation is to make space for the parties in conflict to communicate their respective concerns, feelings and needs. The role of the facilitator is to create space for the parties to voice, and potentially hear, the concerns of the other, but does not extend beyond that. While it is hoped that the parties will be able to come away from the process with greater understanding of themselves, the other, the situation, and likely scenarios going forward, it is ultimately up to the parties involved, not the facilitators, to identify and arrive at any potential resolutions going forward.
- *Format of the Conversation*
The facilitator(s) will introduce themselves to the persons in conflict, specify the purpose of the conversation, the behavioral expectations, and the time schedule. Each party will be allowed to present their issue, uninterrupted; the facilitator will reflect back to the presenter what they heard and understood. The other party will be allowed to speak, uninterrupted, and the facilitator will reflect back in the same fashion. The facilitator will assist the parties in understanding the nature of their conflict or concern and, if relevant, help them articulate an agreement that will help resolve the issue.
- *Agreement*
Any agreements reached to resolve the dispute will be documented by the GRC facilitators to ensure a common understanding among the parties. The agreement that the parties arrive at will be filed with the chair of the Good Relations Committee.

If the conflict or concern is beyond the scope and/or skills of the Good Relations Committee but the GRC believes that mediation would be justified in managing the conflict or concern, the GRC can make a recommendation to the parties and/or the Board that external mediation resources be pursued. The Board will determine whether it is appropriate to allocate church resources for securing mediation services.

STEP FOUR: Concluding Actions (Impasse or Referral to the Board)

If the conflict or concern remains unresolved even after receiving help from the Good Relations Committee, the GRC will declare an Impasse or refer the matter to the Board.

A. Declaration of an Impasse

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 Process has been followed
- The parties in conflict or concern 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 Committee has been involved in the attempts toward resolution

- The minister(s) is/are aware of the conflict or concern and the attempts toward resolution, either through direct involvement or through consultation with the Good Relations Committee
- The majority of the parties in conflict or concern, the Good Relations Committee, and the minister(s) agree that an impasse has been reached (if the conflict or concern is with the minister(s), the Good Relations Committee is responsible for declaring an impasse)

When an impasse is declared, further attempts at conflict resolution are recognized as futile. However, if the involved parties commit to and uphold First Unitarian's Congregational Behavioral Covenant, they can remain in right relationship with each other and the congregation.

To that end, the parties in conflict or concern shall enter into an agreement called a Commitment to Covenant regarding how they will treat each other with respect in all public settings. In addition to incorporating the standards set forth in the Congregation's Behavioral Covenant, a Commitment to Covenant may also specify limitations on communications about each other within the First Unitarian community, as the situation requires, and will articulate the terms of confidentiality expected.

The Commitment to Covenant will be made in writing, signed by the parties in conflict or concern, witnessed by one or more members of the Good Relations Committee, and submitted to the GRC for final approval. The Chair of the Good Relations Committee will keep copies of the final Commitment to Covenant in the church's files for record and reference by current and future GRCs, the Board of Trustees, and Minister(s).

Any action that violates the spirit of the agreement shall be deemed as a failure to adhere to the signed Commitment to Covenant and will be referred to the Board for action as described below.

B. Referral to the Board

Some conflicts or concerns may involve behaviors the Good Relations Committee deems to be dangerous (i.e., threatening to people or property), disruptive (i.e., interfering with essential church functions), or damaging (i.e., driving people away); these matters will be referred to the Board directly, to be addressed through the Disruptive Behavior Policy.

If a conflict or concern is not of the nature described in the preceding paragraph and cannot be successfully managed through Steps 1-3 of this policy, the Good Relations Committee may also refer the matter to the Board for formal resolution.

The types of actions the Board may take include:

- The Board will consider matters coming from the GRC and take action as they deem appropriate
 - If no resolution is possible, concern for the well-being, openness, safety and stability of the congregation as a whole shall be given precedence over the feelings or actions of any individuals

- The Board can endorse the GRC's recommendations or it can set its own recommendations and ask that the parties adhere to said recommendations
- The Board can solicit assistance from the UUA or other resources
- Exclusion or removal of a person from church activities
 - The Board can take action to exclude a person from attending church activities for a period of time based on a refusal to honor our church mission, Congregational Behavioral Covenant, or Conflict Resolution Policy
 - The Board, given just cause, can exclude a person from the church and the church premises, and remove their name from church membership
 - The Board may specify conditions for returning to the First Unitarian community, and set criteria for evaluation of compliance
 - Once conditions are met, assent of the Board will be required for return to the First Unitarian community
- Information sharing
 - The Board may share the final actions with the congregation

TYPICAL CONFLICT SITUATIONS

Conflict Between/Among Members/Friends of the Congregation

You are urged to follow the steps outlined in the policy, namely:

Step One: Direct Dialog Between the Concerned Persons

Step Two: Request Help from Good Relations Committee

Step Three: Facilitated Conversation by GRC Facilitators

Step Four: Concluding Actions will apply, if no resolution is reached.

Conflict with Staff

The Good Relations Committee processes do not apply to supervised staff. Supervised staff includes the Director of Religious Education, employed teachers, Director of Operations, Nursery staff, the Director of Music, and the Sextons.

If your conflict or concern is with one of the supervised staff, you are urged to attempt Step 1, Direct Dialogue. If this does not result in an adequate solution, your next step is to go to a minister who in their role as Chief of Staff are the supervisors of staff members. If that does not produce a satisfactory result, you may contact a member of the Board.

Conflict with Ministers

If your conflict or concern is with a minister, you are urged to attempt Step 1, Direct Dialogue. If this does not result in an adequate solution, your next step is to go directly to the Board of Trustees. If necessary, and with the option of consulting with the Good Relations Committee, the Board will consider whether other methodologies for conflict resolution, including denominational resources, and/or declaring an impasse are advisable.

If you have a conflict or concern with a minister regarding performance matters, policy matters or ethical issues, such as honesty, integrity, professional conduct or violation of First Unitarian's Bylaws or Policies, you are asked to:

- Submit a signed complaint in writing to the Congregation's 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.

Disruptive or Dangerous Behavior

In these situations, the existing Disruptive Behavior Policy in the Church's Policy Manual applies. This Policy states in part:

" While openness to a wide variety of individuals is one of the prime values held by our congregation and expressed in our denomination's purposes and principles, we affirm the belief that our congregation must maintain a secure atmosphere where such openness can exist: both for those on its physical property or participating in church activities elsewhere and, by its public presence and impact, for those who might be drawn to it. When any person's physical and/or emotional well-being or freedom to safely express his or her beliefs or opinions are threatened, the source of this threat must be addressed firmly and promptly, even if this ultimately requires the expulsion of the offending person or persons."

See https://firstuchicago.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/PolicyManual_May2018.pdf

OTHER POSSIBLE TYPES OF CONFLICT

Conflict or concern with/within Committees

Process for resolution: Follow Steps One through Four

Conflict or concern over decisions made by the Board of Trustees

Process for resolution: The Board of Trustees is an elected body of the Society. The Trustees establish the policies necessary for the conduct of the programs and affairs of the Society. On occasion, decisions made by the Board of Trustees may generate conflict or concern. In such instances, the complaint/concern should be put in writing to the Board of Trustees. The Board will review and respond in writing as to the results of the review. This decision may be shared with the congregation, as appropriate.

Tools for Self-Mediated Conflict Resolution

A. Preparation Suggestions

For the Party Requesting Dialogue:

- Before approaching someone about a concern or conflict, ask yourself:
 - What exactly is bothering me?
 - Why is this matter important to 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?
 - What is my own role in contributing to the conflict or concern?
- Reflect on the possible outcomes that would bring resolution, remembering 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.
- Approach the person(s) with a request to discuss a concern you have. Be prepared to offer a succinct summary of the issue and to coordinate on a time to talk once the other person has had an opportunity to process the situation and prepare for a productive conversation.

For the Party Invited to Dialogue:

- When approached by someone regarding a concern or conflict, be willing to learn more about the other person's concern and experience.
- Give yourself time to consider what is being said. If you need any clarifications, ask.
- Reflect on your intent at the time of the incident and the intended as well as unintended impact on the other person.
- Decide if this is an issue that you can address directly with the person. If you decide to proceed, schedule a time to discuss the issue with the person. Prepare for that meeting by using the tools and strategies included in this document to help facilitate conversation.

B. Suggested Structure for Dialogue

Ground Rules

Together review and agree to abide by the following Ground Rules:

- 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 one person speaks at a time so all parties can be heard.
- 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.
- We agree to try our hardest and trust that the other person is doing the same, approaching the resolution of differences with an open mind and an open heart and not rigid demands.
- We agree to focus on the issues, and not to attack the person with whom we disagree.
- What we discuss together will be kept in confidence, unless there is explicit agreement regarding who needs to know further information.

Sharing & Active Listening

For the person who initiated the conversation:

- (1) Thank the other person for being willing to meet and discuss your concern.
- (2) State the problem clearly, focusing on your understanding of the facts.
 - Speak from the first person: "This is my experience, my recollection, my perception, my point of view, my interpretation."
 - Be as specific as you can about whatever situation you are describing; give examples.
 - Speak about the behavior you observe, not someone's character or personality.
 - Avoid labels.
- (3) After presenting your understanding of the facts, share your feelings as honestly and completely as you are able.
- (4) What are the "hurts"? Use "I" messages to describe feelings of anger, hurt, or disappointment: "I am sad," or "I am disappointed." Avoid "you" messages such as "you make me angry...."

For the person invited to the conversation:

- (1) Use active listening skills--be careful not to interrupt and genuinely try to hear the other's concerns and feelings. Try to see the problem through the other's eyes. The "opposing" viewpoint can make sense even if you don't agree.
- (2) Take a moment to confirm that you understand what the person said. Try to restate what you have heard in a way that lets the other know you have fully understood.

After the person who has initiated the conversation has confirmed that they feel heard/understood, switch roles, with the invited party sharing their experience, feelings, needs from the same situation/issue and the party that initiated the dialogue actively listening and reflecting.

Devise Possible Solutions

After each party has been offered a chance to be heard, move into a conversation about potential solutions.

- The party who initiated the request for dialogue should be prepared to propose specific solutions, asking directly for what they want as well as identifying what they themselves might need to change to improve the situation.
- Invite the invited person to propose solutions, too.

Be ready for some compromise.

- Allowing the other person only one course of action will likely hinder resolution.

If you are able to reach agreement on a proposal for change, celebrate!

If you are not, consider requesting help from the Good Relations Committee.

Closing

Thank each other for being willing to try to resolve the conflict.

GLOSSARY

Agreement - harmony of opinion, action, or character; an arrangement as to a course of action; a document detailing the course of action the parties involved reached to resolve the dispute to ensure a common understanding.

Board of Trustees – Seven members of the congregation elected to serve as the governing body of First Unitarian Society of Chicago (First Unitarian Church) for staggered terms of two or three years. As stated in the Bylaws, “The Trustees shall have the care, custody, and control of the real and personal property of the Society and shall establish the policies necessary for the conduct of the programs and affairs of the Society.”

(see https://firstuchicago.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Bylaws_180520.pdf)

Concern - A worried or nervous feeling about something, or something that makes you feel uncomfortable or uneasy.

Confidentiality – The state of keeping or being kept private.

Conflict - Strong disagreement between individuals or groups that often results in angry argument; a difference that prevents agreement; disagreement between ideas, feelings, and more.

Congregant – A member or friend of the congregation.

Damaging - To cause damage to; to injure or harm; to drive people away from the congregation

Dangerous – Able or likely to cause harm or injury; behavior that threatens physical or emotional well-being of self or another, or church property.

Destructive - Causing or wreaking destruction, or ruin; tending to disprove or discredit.

Direct Dialogue – Speaking one-on-one with the person with whom you have a concern or conflict.

Disruptive behavior - Behavior that interferes with, or disrupts, the activities of the congregation, disruption of public events and diminishment of the church; perceived compromise of the safety or well-being of child or adult.

Facilitated Conversation – Conversation between parties in conflict or expressing issue(s) of concern that is guided by a facilitator or facilitators chosen by the Good Relations Committee.

Facilitator – Someone who helps two individuals or a group of people understand their common objectives and assists them to plan how to achieve these objectives; in doing so, the facilitator remains neutral, taking no particular position in the discussion.

Friend (of the congregation) – Individual who attends, on a regular basis, the worship service and/or activities and events sponsored by the church, but has not taken membership classes, made a financial pledge to the church, nor signed the Membership Book.

Impasse - A situation in which no progress is possible.

Mediation - Intervention in a dispute in order to try to resolve it. Note: Depending on the conflict or concern, and the assessment of the Good Relations Committee regarding the skill level required to address the conflict or concern, a professional mediator might be recommended.

Member (of the congregation) – Individual who has signed the Membership Book, after taking membership classes, or has over time become familiar with, and subscribes to, the UUA Principles, the mission and vision of the congregation, its governance structure and culture, and upholds the covenants of the church. A Member makes a financial pledge to support the upkeep and programming of the church, within his/her means, or contributes a minimum of \$50 per year, or has received a waiver after speaking with a minister. Members are allowed to vote at the Annual Meeting and special meetings of the society. Only members are eligible to serve in elected positions, e.g. Board of Trustees, Social Justice Council Chair. The Bylaws state: "Any person who subscribes to the purposes of this Society and is approved by the Membership Committee shall become a member of the Society upon signing the Membership Book."

Minister(s) – Professional clergy "called" by congregational vote on the recommendation of an elected Search Committee, or hired. According to the Bylaws, they have control of the pulpit and general direction of the religious activities of First Unitarian.

The Senior Minister is also the chief administrator and is ex officio member of all committees. Decisions regarding the use of space in First Unitarian's buildings are to be coordinated with the Senior Minister but are ultimately the responsibility of the Board of Trustees. According to the Minister(s) letter of agreement with First Unitarian, supervision of all staff is their responsibility, but this responsibility may be delegated where appropriate. Other ministerial positions may include Associate, Affiliate, Minister-at-Large, Minister of Religious Education, and Ministerial Intern.

Offensive - Causing someone to feel deeply hurt, upset, or angry.

Safe – Protected from, or not exposed to, danger or risk; not likely to be harmed or lost.

Staff – Paid employees of the church; namely, the Ministerial Intern, the Director of Religious Education, the Director of Operations, Director of Music, paid RE teachers, nursery staff, the Financial Secretary, the Sextons (2). Note: The Ministerial Intern and the Directors are supervised by the Senior Ministers; the Financial Secretary and the Sextons are supervised by the Director of Operations, the paid RE teachers and the nursery staff by the RE Director.

[See Flow Charts 1-4 attached]

Developed by the Good Relations Committee:

Lisa Christensen Gee

Jean Hester

David Hodgson

Ellen LaRue

Jim Proctor

Joan Staples

Grace Latibeaudiere-Williams, Chair

Rev. Teri Schwartz, Ministerial Advisor

Sources:

The Good Relations policies of: the Unitarian Universalist Church of West Lafayette, IN, the Chalice UU Congregation of Escondido, CA, the Hopedale Parish of Hopedale, MA, the Unitarian Universalist Church of Palo Alto, CA.

Mindful Mediation training of the Pollack Peace Center by Consultant Henry Yampolsky.

With appreciation to Rev. Lisa Presley, Congregational Life Consultant, UUA MidAmerica Region, for her wisdom and guidance in helping the Committee to develop a thoughtful and viable Policy.

March 7, 2020

Dear Members of the Board,

Several members have asked for more details about the contents of Finley's writing used in his *Nature of Racism* class. I've compiled some excerpts below and offered a few thoughts after. This is substantively the same as the letter I shared with the Board, the Social Justice Council, with Finley, and with the Adult Ed committee last year, but I thought it would be helpful to update and resend.

In a Unitarian Universalist congregation, the decision to cancel a member-led class because of the content being taught is weighty, difficult, and rare. The free and responsible search for truth is among our core values. The open exchange of ideas—including radical or unpopular ideas—is a critical part of that process.

Our tradition is committed to a search for truth that is not merely free but also responsible. To cancel a class is not to prevent or censor the belief in the notions being taught but to prevent the resources of the church being used to promote that thing. We have a responsibility not to use the power and platform of the congregation to spread misinformation. We have a responsibility not to empower the intolerant by tolerating their views.

We feel unambiguously that the resources and name of this congregation should not be used to advance misinformation or intolerance. Among the claims Dr. Finley Campbell has made in his self-published writing in recent years are:

Racism

- White privilege is not real and is in fact a form of anti-white racism.¹
- Pluralism, multiculturalism, separatism, race-based identity groups, and implicit bias training must all be rejected.²
- The word "multicultural" means "anti-white."³
- The Doctrine of Discovery is a program advanced by some Native American capitalists to get support for their industrial investments.⁴
- The notion of microaggressions and of implicit bias are themselves anti-white racism.⁵

Unitarian Universalism

- The UUA supports racially segregated meetings.⁶
- Powerful individuals in the UU Ministers Association oppose multiracial Unitarian Universalism.⁷
- The proposed 8th principle is anti-white. Being anti-white is the essence of anti-black racism in the leadership of the UUA.⁸
- DRUUMM/ARE "is a kind of anti-democratic authoritarianism whose ultimate goal is the destruction of Unitarian Universalism as a liberal humanist/theist religion."⁹
- The organizers of General Assembly 2017 attempted to stop an opening banner parade in order to show that neo-racists were in control of the UUA.¹⁰
- "In the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations, the term [multiculturalism] is meaningless, unless it is really a code word for anti-white racism."¹¹

History

- The Black Power movement of the late 60s and early 70s “was a COINTELPRO (counterintelligence program) run by J. Edgar Hoover, Richard Nixon, and then Governor Ronald Reagan.”¹²

This list draws only on what he’s published that I’ve had the opportunity to read. *The Nature of Neo-Racism* is a regular class text and the other materials are distributed. These sorts of claims are, of course, not the only things which are taught in class, or written in texts. I respect the sincerity with which Finley advances these claims. I don’t doubt the depth or seriousness of his beliefs, or think these are merely rhetorical devices. Nor do I minimize these as incidental or peripheral claims not germane to his argument.

A Responsibility Not to Share Misinformation

We ought not use the resources of the church to inform people that the Doctrine of Discovery is a ploy by greedy Native Americans, or that the Black Power Movement was a CIA operation run by Hoover, Nixon, and Reagan—points Dr. Campbell’s writing take as a given. In the same way, we wouldn’t offer a church-sponsored class about how vaccines cause autism or how aliens landed in Area 51 because we shouldn’t use the resources of the congregation to advance conspiracy theories.

Anyone is entitled to their beliefs, but to put the imprimatur of the congregation on these conspiracies is categorically different.

Beyond such conspiracy theory, we have a responsibility not to advance misinformation under the name of the congregation. Take, for example, Dr. Campbell writing that the UUA supports segregated meetings. In fact, there are many and various affinity groups—by gender, sexual orientation, race, professional role, class background—which gather at UUA meetings. These affinity groups are voluntary gatherings of individuals sharing an identity who themselves wish to gather with each other for conversation and support. To suggest such gatherings are equivalent to segregation—the enforced separation of people of marginalized identities by those in power—actively obscures what is happening at these meetings.

Again, one is entitled to one’s beliefs. But the church ought not attach its name to such misinformation.

A Responsibility Not to Provide a Platform for Intolerance

Many members of the congregation have deeply and sincerely held differences of opinion around analysis of race, or class, or economics, or politics just as around theology. It’s normal to have things we disagree about, and nowhere in our mission is the goal of uniformity of thought. As Unitarian Universalists, our shared values don’t demand uniform philosophical or strategic agreement. Precisely for that reason, we have a responsibility not to tolerate intolerance within the congregation.

Consider if a group in the church taught that LGBTQ people were bad, but warmly invited anyone who wished to learn more about why that’s true to dialogue, debate, and discussion. A kind invitation to dialogue does not make the group more tolerant. Thoughtfulness or respect in the conversation does

not make that group more tolerant. The group is not tolerant just because most of its contents is on a different subject. A competing pro-LGBTQ group also in the congregation does not make the first group more tolerant. Instead, the newcomer who attends a class or reads that group's pamphlets—which casually mention LGBTQ people are bad—gets a clear message: this is a congregation of people who tolerate intolerance.

We as a congregation say we encourage a diverse variety of beliefs but then offers classes and distribute literature which tell people they are reprehensible if they disagree with the published beliefs of one member or cohort. It is a conflict between our commitment as Unitarian Universalists to a plurality of beliefs and one person who teaches that their beliefs are the only true ones.

The Native American newcomer who abhors the Doctrine of Discovery, the white newcomer who supports the 8th principle, and the visiting interracial couple in which one partner experiences white privilege are each unambiguously informed that Finley labels them racists because they do not share his beliefs. But each of these people isn't merely told that one member of the congregation believes they are racist: they are also told that the congregation as a whole permits such intolerance and provides a time, space, and publicity to share it.

*

This letter is lengthy because I want to give adequate nuance. As I wrote to you last year, I want to take the time to share my rationale because I know it's easy for misinformation to spread. Nothing here is secret or under the table.

Visitors, newcomers, and members have repeatedly expressed confusion about the *Nature of Racism* class to me, to Teri, and to other staff. After these individuals attended or read about the class in past years, they have asked me and other staff various questions: what Finley's relationship is with the church; whether the class represents an official position or point of view; where the curriculum comes from; if this analysis represents our church or denomination; and whether the opinions expressed are widely shared within the congregation. These questions may or may not be posed to him, but they are regularly asked of us.

It was and remains a Board decision to suspend the *Nature of Racism* class. Similarly, it is a Board decision whether to provide a platform for the outside group Finley founded, the UU Multiracial Unity Action Caucus, to teach or distribute the same materials in the congregation.

I'm always open and welcome conversations, thoughts and feedback. If something here doesn't make sense, or is unclear, please don't wait to reach out – just let me know and I'll be glad to sit down together.

Sincerely,

Rev. David Schwartz

¹ *The Nature of Neo-Racism: An Expository Outline Analysis – A Response to Racism, Old and New, A Working Draft of the 19th and Final Edition – a work still in progress; an emergency copy for the UUGA 2018.*

² *The Nature of Neo-Racism: An Expository Outline Analysis*

³ *Why the Unitarian Universalist Multiracial Unity Action Caucus (UUMUAC, aka the MAC) Should Oppose the Adoption of The Black Lives of UU Organizing Collective 8th Principle in Unitarian Universalism*

⁴ *White Chauvinism: Culture, Privilege, Supremacy – A Critical Analysis The MAC GA 18 6th Edition, p 45*

⁵ *The MAC Arrow newsletter, spring 2019*

⁶ *The MAC Arrow newsletter, Winter 2018*

⁷ *UUSJ Newsletter Spring 2018*

⁸ *Why the Unitarian Universalist Multiracial Unity Action Caucus (UUMUAC, aka the MAC) Should Oppose the Adoption of The Black Lives of UU Organizing Collective 8th Principle in Unitarian Universalism*

⁹ *Why the Unitarian Universalist Multiracial Unity Action Caucus (UUMUAC, aka the MAC) Should Oppose the Adoption of The Black Lives of UU Organizing Collective 8th Principle in Unitarian Universalism*

¹⁰ *The MAC Arrow newsletter Summer 2017*

¹¹ *The MAC Arrow newsletter, fall 2017*

¹² *Why the Unitarian Universalist Multiracial Unity Action Caucus (UUMUAC, aka the MAC) Should Oppose the Adoption of The Black Lives of UU Organizing Collective 8th Principle in Unitarian Universalism*