

Section 8. Dispute/Conflict Resolution Procedure for Matters Involving a Congregant and the Minister of Westside UU Church

For

Westside Unitarian Universalist Church (WUUC), Ft. Worth, TX

Date Adopted: April 20th, 2006

Signature of Committee on Ministry: /s/ Beverly Archibald 3/10/2006

Signature of Board of Directors: /s/ Bill Terry 4/20/2006

Signature of Board Secretary: /s/ Gino Kennedy 4/20/2006

**WESTSIDE UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH POLICIES AND PROCEDURES
DISPUTE/CONFLICT RESOLUTION PROCEDURE
FOR MATTERS INVOLVING A CONGREGANT
AND THE MINISTER OF WESTSIDE UU CHURCH**

SECTION 8

This process applies to all parties having an issue or conflict with the Minister. The Board, other committees, and individuals of the Church should refer such matters to the COM for resolution if they cannot be resolved by direct discussions between the Congregant and the Minister.

PROCESS:

Two processes are available: one for normal matters that arise during the daily function of our Church; the second, for situations that might involve a breach of ethical, legal or professional standards of conduct by the Minister. Only the minimum number of people who are directly involved or who directly affect the outcome should be engaged, and each should be reminded of the importance of maintaining confidentiality in dealing with these matters. They are described separately below:

A. Normal Matters:

1. When a matter arises involving a concern, conflict or issue between a member(s) of the congregation and the Minister, the member(s) and Minister are encouraged to engage in a direct, first party discussion to find resolution that is satisfactory to both or all parties. This is the primary and most desirable path. It is suggested these discussions be held in a neutral and private location agreeable to all parties. If the parties cannot reach a mutually satisfactory outcome, either may invite the COM or a representative(s) of the COM to work with the parties to facilitate resolution.
2. If either party is uncomfortable engaging in direct discourse, either may bring the matter to the COM and request help in facilitating these discussions. The COM will provide a facilitator agreeable to both parties to resolve the matter or may, in exceptional circumstances, suggest the use of an outside mediator.
3. As a last resort, the COM may act as mediator between the congregant and the Minister.
 - a. Direct discussion of the issue is by far the preferable solution. However, anonymity may be requested and that request will be honored by the COM. The parties must understand that effective resolution may be impeded or made impossible by such a pledge of confidentiality.
 - b. The COM may meet with individual Congregants or in private session to discuss these matters without the Minister. The Minister shall always be advised that such meetings and conversations are taking place.

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- c. The decision to bring in an outside party for assistance resides solely with the COM, but should be considered where the skills of a trained professional are indicated.
 4. The efforts to provide a suitable resolution shall continue until a resolution acceptable to all is achieved. If that is not achievable within reasonable time, it shall be the prerogative of the COM to determine suitable closing action and advise all parties of that action.
 5. Other considerations:
 - a. The Minister will be made aware of other issues that are brought to the COM and the proposed path forward as soon as practical.
 - b. Written documentation shall be kept to a minimum and shall be safeguarded to ensure the privacy of all involved. Such written information will be shredded upon resolution of the conflict.
 - c. Should a member of the COM also be directly involved in the matter at hand, he or she should so inform the committee and recuse themselves from discussions of that issue by the COM.
- B. Matters involving unethical conduct: A potential breach of the UUA Code of Ethics, Conduct, or Public Law.
 1. Any information about any such action should be brought immediately and in confidence to the COM, whereupon the COM assumes the responsibility to investigate and take appropriate action.
 2. If it is determined there is sufficient evidence to suggest such a violation has occurred, the Chairperson of the COM shall notify the Board President and the UUA District Executive. The COM shall follow the guidance of the District Executive in these matters, notwithstanding their fundamental obligation to the Westside UU Church Congregation for the ministry of the Church. Upon recommendation of the District Executive, the Minister and the President of the Congregation will be notified as soon as practical of the planned action. Any proposed action affecting the Minister shall only be taken by and with approval of the Board of the Church.