

## Philosophy of Right Relations

The mission of the UUC includes inspiring spiritual and ethical growth, creating compassionate community, and transforming our community through courageous love. The UUC strives to be an inclusive community, affirming our differences in beliefs, opinions, and life experiences. This calls upon us to interact together with love, respect, and support as described in our Covenant. At the same time, concern for the safety and wellbeing of our congregation as a whole must be given priority over the privileges and inclusion of the individual.

The following policies provide direction for our congregation to maintain a supportive, happy, and healthy community in which we may all be our better selves while acknowledging that human relationships inevitably involve differences in perspectives, opinions, and goals.

Expectations initiate with the UUC Covenant, adopted in 2016 after a congregational process of introspection and communication.

### UUC Covenant

*We covenant to create a place of respect and kindness, and to build a spiritual community based on reason and courageous love.*

*We will listen to one another respectfully, assume good intentions, use the power of our words with care, express gratitude, honor our differences, help one another, and welcome all.*

*We will communicate directly, honestly, and compassionately. When we hurt one another, we will forgive, make amends, and re-connect.*

*While we celebrate the words of our Mission Statement, and of this covenant, we affirm that our mission lives through our actions.*

Creating compassionate community requires intention and practice. Our covenant articulates our intention, but how do we live into the practice? Right Relations Teams (RRT) are lay leaders entrusted to help the congregation practice faithful communication and creative conflict based on values of mutuality and consent.

The term “right relations” has been adopted widely within UU circles. In this context, we use the word “right” in the spirit of “righting the ship”, not as the opposite of wrong, nor as an indication that there is only one way to be in a relationship.

Conflicts arise naturally because we are different from one another. We have different beliefs and experiences, and we are also at different stages in our spiritual journey. As Unitarian Universalists we honor and celebrate differences, and yet may struggle with how to manage them. Our congregation is healthier when our members feel safe

expressing their differences in addition to their similarities. Disagreements often result in a more thorough study of options and better decisions and direction, as well as ensuring that multiple people feel included in the process.

We assume that most conflicts can and will be resolved by efforts on the part of individuals and groups at UUC as members aspire to live into the UUC covenant. It is expected that all congregants will use the UUC Covenant and UU Values to inform their own actions and will treat everyone with compassion, respect and dignity.

Conflict transformation begins with listening and understanding the contexts and perspectives of the involved parties. Instead of minimizing or dampening differences, the goal of conflict transformation is to clarify differences in perspectives. Only by truly hearing and understanding the other person can transformation occur. When one party understands another in a full way, learning and change occurs for that person, and the conflict becomes transformed.

The RRT roles thereby include an educational component for the UUC to encourage and develop the skills and habits that congregants can use to live into the UUC covenant. The RRT will provide education about the process of creating brave spaces for differences and conflicts to be engaged and transformed. Additionally, the Team will provide various levels of support as the need may arise, to provide facilitated conversations with willing congregants who experience conflicts in relation to their involvement in the UUC.