

# Unitarian Universalist Church of Spokane

## COVENANT OF GOOD RELATIONS

### **Preamble**

This is our covenant as members and friends of The Unitarian Universalist Church of Spokane. We hereby agree to join with fellow congregants in relations conducive to the harmony of our community, while maintaining room for all to enjoy independence of thought, practice, and action. We seek to be kind to one another, and to respect our differences.

This document speaks to us individuals. It marks the covenant we each make with ourselves, other congregants, the minister, the staff, the board of the church, and the community at large. We accept this covenant solemnly and in good faith, with the understanding that it simply offers guidelines for the conduct of these relationships.

### **Good Relations with *Myself***

1. I will take responsibility for my personal well-being. By doing so, I will be able to relate more harmoniously to others, my church, and the larger community.
2. I will treat myself with kindness and respect.
3. I will be honest with myself.
4. I will make the kinds of choices that balance the various needs of my life. I will also respect my own boundaries and limits. I will say “no” when it is appropriate.
5. I will communicate my needs to others when appropriate.
6. I will accept that change is a part of my life.
7. I will remain open to diversity.
8. I recognize that, like others, I am fallible. I will try to treat myself and others with acceptance or forgiveness and will make amends when necessary.
9. I understand that I am responsible for my own personal journey.
10. I will attempt to live my life according to my values and with integrity.

### **Good Relations with *Congregants***

1. I will become acquainted with other congregants and will allow others to become acquainted with me (for example: by staying for coffee, wearing my nametag, introducing myself, and asking others their name).
2. I will welcome new people into this congregation.
3. I will relate to all congregants of all ages with respect and kindness, looking beyond labels and stereotypes.
4. I will attempt to use skill, tact, and gentle kindness in communicating with others (for example: respecting confidences, not monopolizing conversation, avoiding gossip, speaking up when needed...).

## UUCS Covenant of Good Relations (cont.)

5. I recognize that each person is free to make choices regarding his or her personal journey. I will cooperate with other congregants to maintain an environment that nurtures personal growth and freedom of opinion.
6. I recognize that volunteerism is vital to the church. I will participate as my interest and time allow, and will acknowledge, encourage, or offer sincere praise for the work of other volunteers. When I need help, I will ask others to volunteer, recognizing their right to decline if they wish.
7. When volunteering, I will act responsibly, recognizing the need for accountability.
8. To build a sense of community among congregants, I will not claim sole ownership of any role or task in which others desire to participate.
9. I recognize that this church community needs money and resources (services, supplies, in-kind donations, etc.) in order to function. I will contribute as seems fitting for my values and circumstances.
10. I recognize that I am a member of a religious community. As a responsible citizen in this community, I will remain informed about the church and its activities. I will actively participate in the democratic process and will respect its outcomes.
11. If I have a conflict with another congregant, I will go directly to him or her and make an effort to resolve the issue. I will communicate with honesty and kindness. I will be willing to maintain dialog and will attempt to understand the other's view. If I cannot resolve the issue with the other congregant directly, I will remain open to other processes (for example: offering a personal apology, involving a third party, mediation, counseling, etc.).

### **Good Relations with *the Minister***

1. I will respect the position and person of the minister, and will treat him or her with dignity and consideration.
2. I will respect the personal time of the minister and the minister's family.
3. I will acknowledge or offer sincere praise for words and deeds by the minister that I like.
4. I will go to the minister directly, or to the Team on Ministry, if I have a question or concern related to ministerial responsibilities. I will give feedback gently.
5. I will support and encourage the minister to exercise a responsible freedom of the pulpit.
6. I recognize that every minister has unique personal and professional contributions to offer to the congregation.
7. I recognize that if I wish to be known by the minister, I need to give him or her a chance to know me. I also understand that I am responsible for letting the minister know if I need contact.
8. I will let the minister know about other members who may need comfort and support, with their permission.

## UUCS Covenant of Good Relations (cont.)

9. I support the goal of providing the minister reasonable and fair compensation.
10. I recognize that responsibility for the church's ministry is shared between the minister, other groups within the church, and congregants.

### **Good Relations with *Staff***

1. I will treat the staff with respect and courtesy.
2. I will acknowledge or offer sincere praise for work done.
3. I will respect the personal time of the staff and the staff's family.
4. I will collaborate with the staff to determine the best method to get work done and to ensure that requests are reasonable.
5. I will go directly to the staff with issues I may have in their area of responsibility.
6. I support the goal of providing the staff reasonable and fair compensation.

### **Good Relations with *the Board of Trustees***

1. I recognize that the Board of Trustees is a treasured center of continuity in the church.
2. I will take opportunities to express appreciation for the board members' work.
3. I will remember that board members are volunteers doing the best they can. I will give them feedback gently.
4. I acknowledge that the board operates within constraints that I as a member impose (for example: finances, time lines, amount of volunteerism, etc.).
5. I will communicate directly with the board of trustees or its individual members concerning issues I may have in their area of responsibility. In addition, I will provide feedback when it is sought by the board.
6. I will support equal opportunities for all congregants, minister, and staff to voice their concerns to the board.

### **Good Relations with *the Community***

I recognize that more harmonious relations with the community at large can be maintained by following many or all of the points listed in "Good Relations with Congregants." In particular:

1. I will try to live my life in a way that encourages equality and compassion in human relations.
2. I recognize that volunteerism is vital to the community. I will participate as my interest and time allow.
3. I will encourage other congregants to work for the good off the community at large. One way that this is carried out is by the various community outreach teams of The Unitarian Universalist Church of Spokane.

## UUCS Covenant of Good Relations (cont.)

4. I support the goal of establishing and maintaining a Unitarian Universalist Church identity and presence in the Spokane community.
5. I will act responsibly in local and global issues in order to promote a world community with peace, freedom, and justice for all.
6. I respect the interdependence of all existence. I will act responsibly to promote balance between the needs of humankind and the needs of nature.

### **In Closing**

Tactfully and respectfully, I will encourage myself and other congregants to be mindful of these guidelines (e.g., by setting a good example