**Governing Body/Congregation Tool**

**Behavioural Covenant**

**&**

**Conflict Resolution Process and Consequences**

This tool provides a sample Behavioural Covenant and Conflict Resolution document. It is intended to help communities of faith to name their norms of behaviour and a process for managing conflict. It is best to see these samples as worksheets to lead to conversation and adapting the templates to reflect your community of faith.

Remember, conflict is normal and will happen especially in communities where people share deeply with one another. How we engage and work through conflict is key. The hope is that, through faith, disagreements can happen, and conflict can be resolved in a way that upholds or restores our common life together. Congregation members can disagree with one another in a way that is respectful and caring as it upholds the common good of the community of faith. When this isn’t possible healthy boundaries need to be upheld.

We give thanks to Pacific Mountain Regional Council for creating this resource.

For more information and assistance please contact your Minister, Pastoral Relations and/or Congregational Support Minister.

**Behaviour Policy -** **Holy Manners \***

**Our Commitment to the Creation of a Safe Space at \_\_\_ United Church**

We will show our concern for others by observing the Golden Rule:

“So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them” (Matthew 7:12)

In our interactions with others both in individual and group settings, we commit to relate to one another with:

* respect
* humility
* patience
* open mindedness
* courage
* compassion
* kindness
* honesty

“Jesus calls on us to treat all people with love, respect and dignity”. Matthew (7:12)

Keeping God at the centre, in our interactions, we will:

* embrace and honour diversity: age, gender, neuro, racial, cultural and religious.
* listen empathetically to others.
* speak for ourselves in the spirit of truth and gentleness, avoiding unhelpful judgments, generalizations and stereotypes.
* allow others to speak without interruption.
* focus on the issues, separating the process and ideas from the person.
* respect the responsibilities and roles of others and support them in their work.
* respect confidentiality especially regarding personal and personnel matters.
* express appreciation and recognize the contributions of our congregation and staff.
* be willing to respectfully name inappropriate behaviour when it occurs, including gossip and hearsay, recognizing that grace, mercy and kindness must guide our actions.
* honour decisions made by the governing body.
* commit to resolving issues by reconciliation and forgiveness.

In our interactions in the church, we will remind ourselves that we are the people of God. When we gather together, prayer, meditation or some other form of Christian spiritual practice will be included.

We will keep our promises.

“I will not violate my covenant or alter the word that went forth from my lips.” Psalm 89 (34)

\*Holy Manners is based on Gil Rendel:

Behaviour Covenants in Congregations: Handbook for Honouring Differences

**\_\_\_ United Church**

**Conflict Resolution Process and Consequences**

At \_\_\_ United Church we acknowledge that conflict can occur. When it does, the following process consistent with United Church of Canada policy, is recommended.

**Step One:** (within our church community)

* When possible, speak with the person directly in a safe and respectful manner.
	+ Using ‘I’ statements, identify what you believe the problem to be and look for common goals and viewpoints.
* If the dispute is not resolved, inform that person that a neutral person may be asked to assist with a resolution.
	+ Speak with a member of M&P or the Minister who are appropriate referrals.

**Step Two:** (with the assistance of the Regional Council)

* If the conflict is not resolved, M&P or the Minister may assist to identify a mediator.
	+ The United Church has people trained as conflict resolution facilitators who can assist. For more information, contact the Office of Vocation, which maintains the list of conflict resolution facilitators

**Step Three:**

* If there is no resolution as a result of Step 1 and if either Step 2 was not chosen or there was no resolution as a result of Step 2, then M&P may refer the matter to Council.
* If appropriate, Council may determine the consequences such as:
	+ A written apology that reflects the nature of the violation,
	+ Limit nature and / or the amount of volunteer work by the individual(s),
	+ Limit the participation of the individual(s) from leadership positions, committee participation or,
	+ In severe cases, restrict any participation at all in the church

\_\_\_ United Church acknowledges and adopts the United Church of Canada policy on ‘Workplace Violence and Harassment Policy.’

References:

* The United Church of Canada - Ministry and Personnel Committees: Policy, Procedures, Practices 15 (January 2019), and,
* The Manual of the United Church of Canada, Bylaws: section J.3 Principles of Conflict Resolution