



Covenant of Right Relations

Unitarian Universalist Church of Lexington, Kentucky

Adopted May 31, 2015

This covenant of right relations was developed by members of the congregation of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Lexington Kentucky. In the voices of those who participated, it describes how we, the members of the UUCL, aspire to relate to ourselves, each other, and the larger world.

These guidelines are intended to promote a safe, respectful, caring, and nurturing community while reducing hurt feelings, misunderstandings, and conflict. We recognize that tensions and disagreements are inevitable in any group of passionate, committed people and that a vibrant congregation rests on a foundation of healthy communication. In order to create a church community that fosters loving relationships, social justice, and personal and spiritual growth, we pledge to follow this covenant as best we can.

In my relationship with myself:

- I will treat myself with compassion.
- I will pay attention to my internal emotional reactions.
- I will be mindful of my intentions and question my assumptions.
- I will claim responsibility for my own actions and behavior.
- I will acknowledge mistakes honestly and make constructive efforts to correct them.
- I will strive to be my best possible self.
- I will remind myself of my inherent worth and dignity as a human being.
- I will be my own best friend.

In my relationship with the congregation:

- I will contribute to creating a welcoming environment for others.
- I will treat others respectfully.
- I will share my time, talent, and treasure with the church family and constructively encourage others to do so.
- I will listen actively and respectfully to others in order to understand their point of view.
- In the event of disagreement, I will present my point of view in a straightforward way while respecting the point of view of others.
- Recognizing that uncomfortable conversations are sometimes necessary, I will do my best to stay in conversation with others even when this feels difficult or stressful, within the limits of safety and respect.
- I will tell only my own story and refrain from speaking for or about others.
- If my feelings have been hurt I will communicate this with care and respect.
- If I have hurt others' feelings I will acknowledge this and respond with care and respect.
- I will educate new members and others about this covenant and I will accept reminders.

In my relationship with the minister:

- I will communicate directly, respectfully and honestly in a spirit of loving kindness.
- I will honor the minister's time – allowing for continuing education, professional development, and personal renewal.
- I will welcome the minister's partner and/or family while being respectful of their choice to be active in church life or not.
- I will express appreciation for the minister's gifts and work with the congregation.
- I will recognize and value the leadership provided by the minister while accepting the responsibility we have in the shared work of the church.
- I will welcome periodic visits by the minister to the committees, other groups, and to the youth of the church to allow for informal conversation and guidance.
- I will expect that the minister will hold regular office hours and will advise congregants of his or her preferred methods of communication.
- I will support the minister in pastoral care through open communication and sharing the needs of others only with permission.
- I will respect and appreciate the minister as a whole person who has strengths and weaknesses.
- I will support fair compensation and benefits (consistent with UUA guidelines) and regular evaluation of the minister.

In my relationship with the church staff:

- I will treat staff members with respect, honesty, and kindness and will work in partnership with them.
- I will recognize and value staff members' contributions to church life and will express my appreciation to them.
- I will help the church provide an environment for staff that includes:
 - Pay and benefits consistent with UUA guidelines
 - Safety in the workplace
 - Clear job descriptions and expectations
 - Appropriate training and opportunities for professional development
 - Adequate resources
 - Appropriate supervision and regular supportive feedback
- I will respect and appreciate staff members as human beings who have strengths and weaknesses.
- I will remember that, for staff members, UUCL is not a church home in the same way that it is for members of the congregation.

In my relationship with the Board:

- I will stay informed of the Board's activities and functions.
- I will respect the Board's processes and guidelines.
- I will respect that the Board is acting in good faith to serve the congregation's best interests.
- I will offer encouragement and appreciation for the Board's service.
- I will be an active and respectful participant in the Board's processes and will do my best to respond appropriately to the Board's requests.

- I will seek out appropriate channels of communication with the Board, including requests for the Board's consideration, while understanding that not everything is a Board matter.
- I will address problems to the Board in a respectful manner.
- If I feel that the Board is going in an unhelpful direction I will come forward with a proposal for change.

In my relationship with the larger community:

- I will identify myself publicly as a UU, when appropriate.
- I will share UU principles and values publicly and assist others in developing statements to do likewise.
- I will work to confront attitudes and practices of unjust discrimination or inequity in the community on the basis of race, ethnicity, color, class, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender expression, or physical or mental ability.
- I will be open to dialogue with others of different viewpoints.
- I will engage and participate with the larger UU community and share my experiences with the UUCL.
- I will support efforts to be a presence within the community through participation in organizations and events such as campus ministry, music with a message, peace efforts, and interfaith groups.

Our intention is that this covenant will guide our relationships for many years. We also recognize that this is a living document that the congregation may revisit and modify.