



Unitarian Universalist Congregation  
Blacksburg, Virginia



## Guidelines for Right Relations

Adopted by the Board of the UUC on October 11, 2006

We the members and friends of the Unitarian Universalist Congregation believe in the inherent worth and dignity of every person. In recognition of this shared value we covenant to work together to create an atmosphere of equality, trust and compassion within our congregation and the larger community. To this end, we commit ourselves to learn and practice the following attitudes and actions as we grow and develop our talents and skills within the context of this beloved community.

As members of a religious community that makes decisions through a democratic process, we understand that the health and well-being of our congregation rests upon each individual's willingness to actively participate in this process and to respect the outcome of the collective wisdom.

As individuals, members and friends, we pledge to walk together in this set of guidelines of right relations:

- I believe that all are free to make choices regarding their personal journeys. I will respect these choices and support the spiritual growth of others, accepting and supporting them in their spiritual and personal quest.
- I accept my responsibility to learn and practice the necessary skills to communicate with others in clear, honest and sensitive ways. I will strive to listen actively to others.
- I will strive to make the kinds of choices that balance my various needs and desires with the needs and desires of others.
- I will respect the confidentiality of the private disclosures made to me by others. Should I become concerned about the safety of the individual making disclosures or the safety of others as a result of a private disclosure, I will seek the support and guidance of our minister or another designated professional within our congregation. I will not engage in gossip about our staff or other people in the congregation.

*Continued next page*

- When making a request or suggestion based on my personal needs or wishes to either the staff or others in our congregation, I will respect their right to respond as they see fit, even when that response is not what I desire. I recognize that I too have the right to decline a request from a staff person or another member as long as my refusal does not endanger another person or violate the policies and covenants of the Congregation.
- I will respect the private and intimate relationships that exist between members of the congregation. I will recognize that each individual is responsible for their own words and actions and not assume that their partner agrees with them or is obligated to intervene on their behalf should a conflict arise.
- I will respect the personal boundaries of other individuals in the congregation, as they are made known to me. I will not harass or exploit another person for my own gratification. (Harassment includes, but is not limited to personal comments or questions of a sexual nature or intimidating nature and unwanted touching of a sexual or intimidating nature. Harassment also includes remarks or actions that demean, humiliate, or belittle another person's gender, sexual orientation, racial or ethnic background or religious beliefs.)
- I will be especially mindful of the vulnerability of children and youth and strive to create healthy and safe relationships with young people of our congregation.
- If I am concerned about an issue or conflict within our congregation, I will seek the facts from those who know them, avoiding speculation and conjecture.
- I will strive to be aware of my emotions and to be sensitive to the emotions of others, recognizing that these emotions signal meaningful issues, which require an empathic and thoughtful response. In the case of strongly held differences of opinion or belief, I will express my own emotions, opinions, and beliefs in a respectful and constructive manner.
- Should I be engaged in a conflict with another congregant or a staff member, I will act in good faith to come to an understanding even if we cannot agree on a resolution of the disagreement. If this is not possible and I feel the need for further action, I will take my concerns to a member of the Committee on Ministries or the Conflict Management Team. I will *not* use email for this communication.
- I will support this congregation with my time, talents, and financial resources to the best of my ability. I will support the staff and those members and friends who volunteer their time and talents to the programs and governance of the congregation. I will express my expectations, concerns, and appreciation in a responsible and constructive manner.