

First Church Member Conflict and Complaint Resolution Procedure

Approved by First Unitarian Society of Milwaukee Board of Trustees Oct 2021

Transparent communication is at the heart of good relationships. In First Church, we promote open, direct and honest communications and positive efforts towards resolution.

For handling complaints, conflicts, or concerns, whenever possible members should first express their concerns to the other individuals involved and attempt to settle differences among themselves.

If this does not resolve the problem, then the member should share any conflict, complaint with the staff member connected to the area of church in which the conflict or complaint is arising and discuss the problem, applicable policies or procedures, and possible resolution. Members who have a conflict or complaint involving the relevant staff member should present the matter to the staff member's supervisor.

Members should be able to share concerns without fear of retaliation, and under no circumstances will a member be penalized for constructively presenting a good-faith complaint to supervising staff after initial attempts at direct communication have failed.

When the concern is between members, relevant staff should consider facilitating a mediation or conflict resolution meeting with the affected members. When the concern is between a member of the congregation and a staff member, supervising staff should consider facilitating a mediation or conflict resolution meeting with the people involved. Staff members and supervising staff members should address such concerns or grievances in a timely manner.

If discussion and/or a conflict resolution meeting with the supervising staff member does not resolve the matter to the complainant's satisfaction, then the complainant should submit the conflict or complaint in writing to the Head of Staff, the Senior Minister.

The Senior Minister will consult with the Committee on Ministry and/or Personnel Team for their expertise and advice, as appropriate. If there has been a violation of church policy, then the Senior Minister and the Committee on Ministry and/or Personnel Team will develop a plan to remedy the violation, and will inform the complainant of that plan. They will also inform the Board of Trustees of the plan.

The Senior Minister will recommend a resolution to the involved parties, which shall be binding.