

Prairie Circle Unitarian Universalist Congregation Grayslake, Illinois

Board Meeting Minutes — October 22, 2009 – 7:30pm

The Board met at Steve King's home on October 22, 2009 at 7:30 pm. Present: Steve King, Teresa Aguinaldo, Susan Bellmore, Diana Fox, Norine Fendrych, Elizabeth Harding and Andrea Mills. Also present: Joyce DeWitt, John Crowley, Rich Fendrych and Ric Sarmont.

Opening Reading & Chalice Lighting

An opening reading was provided by Reverend Harding and the chalice was lit.

Conversation with Worship Committee - Diana Fox

Diana reviewed the committee's goals and needs for 2009-2010 (see their attached report). There was a discussion about purchasing a new chalice. Diana and Elizabeth explained that the Worship Committee is in the process of creating a service packet that will be kept at the Barn in case there is an emergency and we do not have a speaker. The packet will contain hymns, an undated Order of Service and everything else needed for a service.

Conversation with Music Committee – Joyce DeWitt and John Crowley

The Music Committee developed a list of familiar hymns from the hymnal that are suggestions for services. The Music Committee has also instituted MorningSong to help introduce new hymns to the congregation. They are keeping a list of the hymns sung each Sunday so that we do not repeat hymns too often. They have begun working more closely with the Worship Committee and are looking at the music section of "Worship That Works" at the Worship Committee's recommendation. Joyce explained that the Choir sings one Sunday a month on a day that Elizabeth preaches. We use members of the congregation as performers and would like to have even more member participation. Joyce mentioned that the Music Sunday service this summer was well-received. Diana invited her to do a second hymn sing service which Joyce is interested in. Rich asked about whether or not we would use recorded music. Joyce agreed that this can be helpful but we would need to bring in a sound system. Norine suggested that we should be more pro-active about getting feedback by doing surveys more frequently possibly leaving them on the chairs on Sunday morning. Joyce agreed and suggested comment cards be made available each week. Diana expressed gratitude for the

quality of the music at our services. Joyce and Elizabeth discussed the benefit of having children perform at our services especially intergenerational and holiday services.

Approval of September's Minutes

Diana moved to approve the September minutes and Susan seconded the motion. The minutes were approved by the Board.

Rich requested that we have the minutes up on the website sooner. Andrea reported that, currently, minutes are on the website four to five weeks after the meeting. Steve suggested that we try to approve minutes via e-mail which would facilitate publishing the minutes sooner. Andrea agreed to e-mail the minutes to the Board within a week of the meeting and expected that the editing and approval process would take another week. The approved minutes are then forwarded to the Webmaster and she usually posts them within a few days. We will try this procedure next month and see if it is successful.

Consulting Minister's Report (complete report included at the end of this document)

Reverend Harding reported that the Ministerial Fellowship Committee voted affirmatively on her first renewal of fellowship as of October 2009. Every minister goes through two periods of fellowship - preliminary and final. Reverend Harding is in preliminary fellowship. Each minister must complete three renewals of fellowship in order to proceed to final fellowship.

Reverend Harding attended a web seminar about small congregations and brought back information that she thought would be of use to the congregation as they plan the next steps of the church's growth. Her notes from the seminar are attached. Steve suggested that everyone reads these notes carefully and then we will have a discussion about them at the next Board meeting. Reverend Harding reminded the Board that they always have the option to invite anyone who they feel could assist them in the process of growing the church. Options include people from the Central Midwest District, such as Dori Davenport Thexton, Rev. Karen Brammer, and other growth consultants. These two in particular led the webinar she attended.

Treasurer's Report

See financial reports included at the end of this document.

Director of Religious Education's Report

See report included at the end of this document.

Visitor Statistics

Steve introduced the visitor statistics (see attached chart). We will look at this each month and discuss as necessary. John mentioned that this is a typical pattern. There tend to be more visitors at the end of the summer and around the holidays. Rich offered to do a study of how often, over the past year, visitors have become members.

Committee Issues

A. Assignment of Liaison to Fundraising Committee

Steve requested that the Board appoint him to be the liaison to the Fundraising Committee. The Board unanimously voted to approve this assignment.

B. Affirmation of Jan Kirch and Dayle Kozlowski as Fundraising Committee Co-Chairs

Diana motioned to affirm Jan Kirch and Dayle Kozlowski as Co-Chairs of the Fundraising Committee. Susan seconded the motion. The Board voted unanimously to approve.

Other Business

A. Hiring of Members

Steve explained that this issue was discussed at the last two Board meetings without a resolution. There was discussion about the pros and cons of the decision and the current status of our one employee-member, Pierce Regnier. Steve will follow-up with Tonia on a few set-up issues. It was decided that a policy will not be instituted to prevent members from becoming employees.

B. Note Cards

Susan reported that her brother will print note cards for us for free. Andrea will send her the Publisher file with our design.

C. Conflict Resolution Process

Ric reported on the reason he has developed a covenant for the congregation (see the attached document). The discussion included the pros and cons of the proposal as well as the appropriate process for approving or denying this proposal. There was general agreement that we do need a conflict resolution process. It was mentioned that Laura Tomsy may be working on this. According to Ric, at the Annual Meeting in June, she had said that she was working on this. Steve suggested that the Board take responsibility for seeing that a process is developed. The Board unanimously agreed. Steve suggested that we set the proposed document aside

and take the time to develop a complete conflict resolution process with the current Right Relations document in mind. The Board agreed that, in the next 90 days, they will develop a conflict resolution process. At the next meeting, the Board members will bring conflict resolution processes they are familiar with from their employers or other sources and then the Board will spend a significant portion of the meeting time on this topic. Steve presented his hope that we will be able to designate someone to take the ideas developed by the Board and write a document. The final document will be presented to the Congregation for approval.

D. Growth Issues

Steve presented three actions he believes that the Board needs to do to move forward on our growth goal:

- 1) the President and the Board need to get in front of the congregation (during a Sunday service) to talk about growth
- 2) the Board needs to define what growth means in order to get a clear picture of what the Congregation will receive in response to their financial support of the church, and
- 3) the Board needs to bring the whole congregation together to talk about our growth goals

He would like these three pieces completed before we begin the pledging process. It was decided that Steve will speak at the service on November 15th. Steve will also put forward dates for half-day retreats for the Board and the Congregation. The Board brainstormed about pledge ideas and who might be asked to run the pledge drive.

E. Stewardship Committee

Steve would like the Board to make a decision on who will handle the upcoming pledge drive. Diana reiterated that the newly-formed Fundraising Committee is not interested in conducting the pledge drive.

Summary of Follow-Up Actions

Steve will ask the Worship Committee to consider instituting a quarterly survey of church members.

Andrea will prepare the Board meeting minutes within a week of the meeting; the Board will approve the minutes using e-mail within the following week.

The **Board members** will read Reverend Harding's notes from the webinar she attended and come to the next Board meeting with their comments and questions.

Rich will prepare a report showing how often, over the past year, visitors have become members.

Steve will follow-up with Tonia on a few set-up issues.

Steve will inform Pierce Regnier of the Board's decision to allow the hiring of members.

Steve will talk with Pierce to ensure that there is still a place in the Barn where we can lock up church property as needed.

Andrea will send the note card Publisher file to Susan; **Susan** will order 1,000 note cards & envelopes from the printer.

The **Board** will develop a conflict resolution process within the next 90 days; then, the Board will appoint someone to finalize the document. The final document will be submitted to the congregation for their approval. **Board members** will bring examples of conflict resolution processes to the next Board meeting.

Steve will speak at the November 15th service concerning the Board's goals of congregational growth.

Steve will submit to the Board potential dates for Board and congregational retreats.

Closing Reading and Adjournment

A closing reading was presented by Reverend Harding. Diana moved to adjourn the meeting and Teresa seconded the motion. The next board meeting will be held at 7:00 pm on November 19, 2009.

Respectfully Submitted,

Andrea Mills
PCUUC Administrator

Worship Committee's Contribution to the PCUUC "Growth" Theme

10/22/09 Board Meeting

While fostering spiritual growth via engaging, educational and challenging services is an obvious contribution, the worship committee strives also to contribute to membership growth. Membership growth can be supported by the creation of worship opportunities that motivate members and visitors to "come back for more."

Committee goals for fiscal year 2009-2010:

- Experimentation with new worship formats.
- Formulating worship that incorporates multiple senses—sight, smell, sound and perhaps touch.
- Engage more of the congregation to actively participate in worship services perhaps via readings, members of the congregation other than Worship Committee members serving as service leaders and other opportunities.
- Create an environment in which various members of the congregation are heard from on Sunday mornings, while managing well-structured Sunday services.
- Commissioning of a new chalice for the congregation.
- Creation and execution of speaking and presentation training program for lay leaders and service leaders (all members of the congregation will be invited regardless of desire to service as a lay speaker or service leader).
- Considering new mechanisms and venues for congregational feedback on worship preferences and needs

Worship Committee Needs for 2009-10:

- Pursue chalice fundraising ideas
- Openness to new worship experiences and willingness to offer timely feedback

October Board Report -- Reverend Elizabeth Harding

Completed Activities

Obtained speaker for worship cmte Oct. 25, Nov. 8, Jan 10

Condolences to Cubit family –pastoral care

Comte meetings attended

Officiated wedding Sept. 26, Sept. 5

Updated VM service to reflect my relationship w/PCUUC

Connected Social Action cmte with Equality Illinois for congregational opportunity

Attended monthly minister's cluster meeting Sept. 16

Attended Oct 5-8, CMwD Chapter Retreat

Attended Small Congregations Webinar, notes available

Ongoing Activities

Developed script and OOS for emergencies w/worship cmte

Updating wedding packet

Developing service for Nov. 15 to memorialize R. Rogers

Developing the possibility of podcasting for the congregation

Upcoming Activities

Pulpit Supply Kenosha WI Nov. 8

Preaching PCUUC Oct 4, Oct 18

Opportunities: The opportunities remain the same for the congregation as my previous Board Reports.

Compensation Consultant available to help congregation as they work with the Minister around growth and support of both congregation and Minister

Rev. Matthew Johnson-Doyle available to talk with congregation as part of Board Retreat

10 Best Practices for Small UU congregations

Introduction

- Strength is not related to size. Strength or vitality has more to do with positive energy, the ability of a congregation to care for one another and serve others beyond the congregation.
- Small congregations may have the potential to be more intergenerational.
- Small congregations can be quite well known in their communities; being able to build relationships with other community organizations and having a presence or influence in their community that is larger than their actual size.
- Small congregations can provide many opportunities and practice for leadership development and faith development for members (some members in large congregations do not get that opportunity – especially for preaching).

1. Pay attention to the Stories we tell about the congregation.

- The stories (descriptions or statements) that are repeated are our strengths to each other and the community - they can encourage us or stop us.
- When leadership or lay members get tired or discouraged it is too easy to focus on failures which are hard to overcome and hard to enter into as a newcomer.
- Learn from what has failed in the past and try to state what your greatest strengths are. Introduce yourselves and your work from that strength and also with your hopes and dreams.

2. Mission, Vision, Purpose.

<http://www.uua.org/documents/congservices/visionmissioncovenant.pdf>

The congregation will be more powerful when it clearly states its hopes and dreams in the form of mission, vision, and purpose. Without these or a clear understanding of its reason for being, decisions can be made out of fear, based on what has always been done, or by the strongest personalities. Having a clearly stated mission, vision and/or purpose will help the congregation make decisions based on its best intentions rather than its habits.

Getting into a new habit of using the statement might take practice.

- Print the statement(s) in the order of worship
- Make it available at Board meetings
- Read it out loud at the start of meetings
- Ask one person to make it their job to help the group remember to focus on it when they are working on a problem
- When a decision has been made check to make sure it supports the stated mission or dream

3. Create a Covenant.

<http://www.uua.org/documents/congservices/visionmissioncovenant.pdf>

The covenant is a promise of how we intend to behave with one another. It can be critical to support the health and vitality of a congregation.

- Learning to live what we say we believe may be one of the greatest gifts to ourselves and our larger communities, and one of the most difficult jobs of a congregation.

How do we balance individual and community needs?

How do we honor tradition and new practice?

- A covenant will support our effort to be truthful and compassionate with one another as we work through these and many other challenging things.

4. Create process for what to do when we fall away from our covenant. Creating the covenant is just the first important step.

1. Respectfully remind all involved of the covenant.

One reason it is helpful to have is that when things are not going well, it is possible to respectfully, even gently, remind a person that we all agreed to try to treat each other in a particular way.

2. Ask what is needed to get back into covenant.

A person or group can be asked what they might need to try to get back into covenant (Ask what is happening? A short break? Silence? Prayer or song? Apologies or acknowledgement of something difficult? A private conversation? Protein? Stretch? Etc.)

3. Try to do what is identified.

Try to let people do what they say they need to do without rescuing them.

4. Start again, if appropriate, perhaps rereading the covenant.

If it is not appropriate to start again immediately, make it clear how the continued conversation will be set up for later.

5. It helps a great deal if the leadership can remain calm.

5. Too much to do? Try re-evaluating how things are done.

- a. Are there more jobs than energy to do them? Are there more jobs than you really need to have?

b. Do you need to reorganize to pare down the work? One good resource is the Small Talk Newsletter and list serve

<http://www.uua.org/leaders/leaderslibrary/leaderslibrary/interconnections/41809.shtml>

- c. Is it time to temporarily let go of or just clarify some jobs?

d. Can the jobs be created as time specific tasks rather than open-ended and very broad?

e. How can leaders support each other as volunteers with thanks, information, and the like?

- f. Build in rest and Sabbath time for the congregation and leaders.

g. Invite people to do work that is meaningful and helps connect them to the purpose of the congregation.

6. Increase opportunities to share deeply.

- Leaders of small congregations sometimes think that being small automatically fills people's need for deep connection. It is likely not true, especially as tasks can overwhelm the desire to connect.
- Consider ways to increase those opportunities to share such as small group ministry <http://www.uua.org/leaders/leaderslibrary/smallgroup/21822.shtml> or personal testimonials in church.

7. Be as non-anxious as possible. Invite people into leadership for your congregation who are good at this.

- When leaders are able to listen without a knee-jerk reaction, it is more likely that tensions will be managed without escalation, and that people will feel more heard even when they disagree strongly with each other.
- There are lots of techniques to practice and build this skill and two that are popular among UU leadership include Leading Change in the Congregation by Gilbert Rendle <http://www.uuabookstore.org/searchproducts.cfm> and a DVD of UUUniversity 2007 <http://www.uuabookstore.org/showproducts.cfm?FullCat=92>
 1. 'Getting on the balcony' is one of the most useful techniques. This concept is drawn from the work of Ron Heifetz on adaptive leadership. The idea here is that a leader can get some perspective about what is happening 'on the dance floor' better by 'going up to the balcony.' To do this, leaders need to be able to lessen their own emotional investment or entanglement. More of the work of Ron Heifetz <http://www.google.com/search?hl=en&source=hp&q=ron+heifetz+adaptive+leadership&aq=1sx&oq=Ron+Heifetz&aqi=g-s1g-sx5>
 2. Communicate, communicate, communicate. It is so easy in small congregations to assume everyone knows everything and to forget that unless a decision is made formal and advertised, that informal habits can take over. Communicating often and clearly will help bring anxiety down!

8. Dealing with rather than ignoring difficult personalities

- Small congregations think of themselves as being able to take everyone in and love one another. It is likely that different family upbringing and different regions of the country manage this differently, but ask yourself, when someone is acting in a way that is really not ok, what are you inclined to do?
- Many small congregations are full of people who want only to be kind, but when someone is not able to act within the covenant you have agreed upon, they may need

clear help being able to do that. Kindness is not always being nice. If we tend to think it is more kind to just ignore bad behavior, two things could happen:

1. the individual who may need outside help to be in covenantal relationship may get worse or feel people are insincere since the person may know they are off
2. some members or newcomers may feel unsafe and leave

- Invite the person(s) in your congregation most skilled at helping people with difficult personalities to create some guidelines and possibly do some training for the whole congregation in practicing honest, compassionate and accountable relationship.
- Contact your District Office.
- Consider adopting and implementing a disruptive behavior covenant* that will help create a sense of safe limits and guidelines to respond when a person occasionally cannot act within the covenant. Examples of Policies or procedures can be found through your district office or at <http://www.uurestoration.us/documents/09-01>
[27 UUCR Procedure for Addressing Disruptive Behavior COM final.pdf](#)

9. Work with tension around change –

Leadership will help bring tension in the congregation down as they are themselves less anxious and when they

- Communicate regularly and in many ways
- See and articulate the value in the different perspectives (what will be gained either way, what could be lost either way) An excellent resource for this is the book Polarity management: identifying and managing unsolvable problems By Barry Johnson
- Help congregation focus on larger vision
- Make the process and time-line for decision-making and change clear and up front
- Include lots of opportunities for listening without making decisions
- Include opportunities to discuss how change is going
- Ask for help from your district staff

10. Increase opportunities to play together and celebrate who you are together.

The desire to “do church right” can sometimes distract members and friends of all ages from knowing who they are and why they come together in the first place!

- Plan ahead for church year – be sure to schedule some celebratory and fun events far in advance.
- Some congregations have had success lightening the load by doing fewer worship services and occasionally having small group ministry or intergenerational celebration and sharing instead of worship.

- Others do their accustomed number of services and add fun events immediately before or after.

Whatever you choose, pay attention to whether your congregation celebrates and plays enough together.

Board Report October 2009 -- Laura Tomsy, DRE

Current Activities:

- Planning for Thanksgiving Service
- Reworking Pre-Teen group strategy
- 2009-2010 RE Curriculum Handouts – World Religions
- RE Brochure Update
- 2010 Youth Trip to Boston Planning
- RE Web Updates
- DRE Annual Review Process
- Working closer with committees to integrate RE
- Create long-term schedule for Adult RE Sundays

Completed Special Activities:

- First Adult RE Sunday – 12 in attendance
- Children's RE – October attendance average 5
- Find & Train new Nursery staff
- New book kick-off for group
- RE Growth Plan Discussion
- Monthly Book Group Meeting
- Safety Plan Update – Add Web Policy
- Church Year Calendar Planning
- Annual Picnic

Regular Activities:

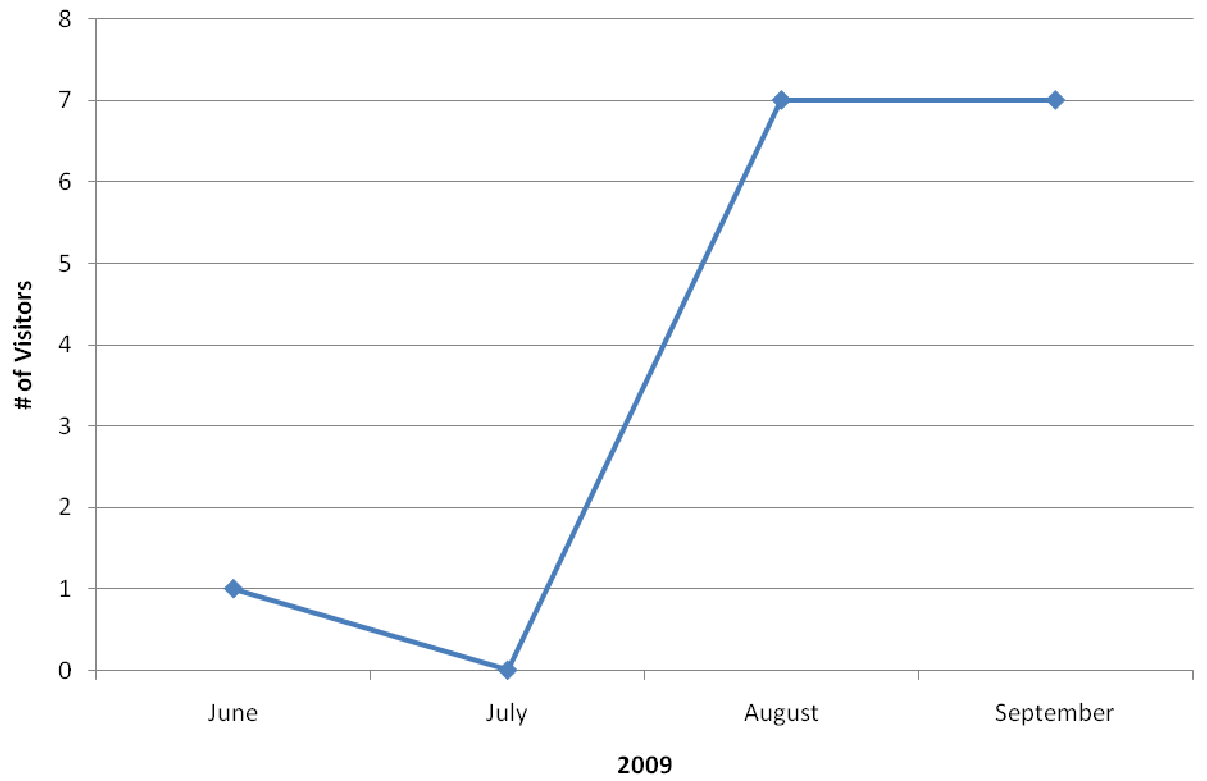
- Weekly Children's RE lesson plans, teacher coordination, activity prep, and parent handouts
- Monthly RE Committee Meetings
- Monthly Board Meetings
- Monthly Staff Meetings
- Various Committee Meetings as time permits/as requested
- Adult Education development and coordination
- Nursery Supervision
- Story for All Ages – as requested
- Newsletter
- Timesheet & Expenses
- Room/Gym Rental Coordination & Reporting

Activities on Horizon:

- Fair Trade Booth – Social Action Project for PCPSA

- Update & Publicize Lending Library
- Family Worship & Quarterly Get-Together
- Recruit more teachers
- Seeker & Mentors Program
- RE Program Outreach
- Men's Group
- Mother/Daughter Group
- Father/Son Group
- Drumming Group
- Pagan UU Group

Visitor Statistics



FOR CONSIDERATION OF THE PCUUC
BOARD OF DIRECTORS AT THEIR
MEETING OF
October 22, 2009

The Covenant adopted by the Board of Directors on April 15, 2008 (the "Covenant") by the Board of Directors of PCUUC is the product of considerable thought, and expresses principles which are binding upon all members of PCUUC.

At this time the proposed Resolution of Conduct concerns the exercise of the power and the authority of the Board of Directors to establish clear cut procedures in the event of an infraction of the principles set forth in the Covenant.

If the Board of Directors votes in favor of the proposed Resolution, it is voting in favor of Law and Order, reserving the Power of Remedial Action to the Board, creating procedures for resolving disputes, and complying with the By-Laws of PCUUC.

If the Board of Directors votes against the proposed Resolution, the Board would be voting in favor of vigilantee action, in favor of actions which violate the Covenant, and in favor of lynching mobs. The Board would be abrogating its responsibility and authorizing congregation members to bully, harass, and intimidate other members. Each member of the Board of Directors would be in violation of the first paragraph of the April 8, 2008 Covenant.

If the Board of Directors takes no action, it would be, in effect, voting against the Resolution and in favor of anarchy. The Board has the authority to vote on the Resolution line by line.

1. The Covenant is a Statement of Principles which all members promise will guide their lives. In paragraph 1 of that Covenant, a member promises:

“... I will not denigrate others nor will I support the denigration of others by my silence.”

In paragraph 5 of that Covenant, a member promises:

“... Without ridicule or intimidation, I will encourage the expression of opposing points of view.”

2. The Covenant does not provide any remedial action by the Board of Directors in the event a member of the congregation, or a Committee Chairperson, or a Board of Directors member violates the Covenant.

3. The Covenant does not mention any sanctions to be imposed by the Board of Directors in the event of a violation by a member of the congregation, or a Committee Chairperson, or a Board of Directors member violates the Covenant.

4. The Covenant does not set forth any procedures for filing a complaint with the Board nor any procedures for the Board to hold a trial or hearing concerning the complaint.

5. The Covenant does not mention what action a congregation member (including Board Members) or Minister should take when he or she sees a congregation member harassing and belittling another congregation member.

6. When a Chairperson calls a special meeting. The matters to be discussed are limited to the matters specified in the Notice of Special Meeting. The Chairperson cannot deceptively call a Special Meeting as a subterfuge for the Chairperson's real purpose of creating a public platform for the purpose of denigration and humiliation of a member of the committee. This conduct is an Abuse of Authority, which is extremely serious. It will cause members to not want to be members of committees, and perhaps cause some members to leave PCUUC.

7. When a Board Member and / or Minister is present at a Church meeting or committee meeting, when he or she sees another congregation member harassing and belittling another congregation member, the Board Member and / or Minister should take prompt steps to stop such harassment and belittlement. The Covenant provides **"I will not support the denigration of others by my silence"**.

RESOLUTION

Whereas PCUUC is a voluntary religious fellowship; and

Whereas the members of the PCUUC Committees are volunteers; and

Whereas it is to the best interests of PCUUC to maintain a harmonious relationship among the members of a committee, to encourage its fellowship members to participate as members of various committees without fear;

BE IT RESOLVED:

No member of a committee, including the Chairman of the committee, at a committee meeting, shall express anger, hostility, animosity, or disgust at a member or person visiting the committee meeting. Such hostile committee member is requested to express such feelings to the "victim" member in another way of communication and / or at another venue.

No member of a committee, including the Chairman of the committee, at a committee meeting, shall conduct himself or herself in a manner which belittles another member or person visiting the committee meeting.

Any member of a committee who has such hostile feelings against another member or visitor shall not express such hostile feelings, either orally or otherwise: in front of fellowship members either at the committee meeting, or fellowship function; or if the hostile member is acting as a service leader, from the pulpit.

If the hostile member is the Chairperson of the committee, the expression of such anger or hostility to or about a fellowship member or visitor at a committee meeting shall constitute an Abuse of Authority. In the event the Board of Directors determines such Chairperson has committed an Abuse of Authority, the Board of Directors shall issue a Warning Letter to the Chairperson and impose such sanctions as the Board of Directors determines appropriate.

The cause or reason or basis or excuse for the offender's hostility is irrelevant and shall not be a mitigating factor. The acrimonious act or words is the offense. If the Board of Directors determines such negative, offensive conduct requires Sanctions, the Board of Directors may require the offender to attend Anger Management Classes, in addition to other Sanctions imposed by the Board of Directors. Other Sanctions may include requiring an oral apology by the offending member, in front of the fellowship at a church religious service, to the victim member. Other Sanctions may include relieving the offending member as a member of the committee or as Chairman of the committee. Other Sanctions as the Board of Directors determine are appropriate.