

First Unitarian Universalist Society of Marietta
Conflict Resolution and Grievance Procedure
Adopted by the Board of Trustees, April 9, 2003

1. All congregants and staff members are expected to endeavor to settle differences and conflicts by use of clear, direct, honest and loving communication with the parties concerned. The grievance procedure should be followed in cases where such communication fails to bring satisfactory resolution.
2. Any grievances must be submitted to the Committee on Ministry. If needed, to meet this requirement, congregants appointed by the Committee on Ministry will provide assistance. The person initiating the action and any associates who wish to participate in this action must sign the written grievance document. The document must indicate the date on which it is properly submitted.
3. Any grievance between any parties of the FUUSM community must be submitted in this documented form to the Committee on Ministry. All church leaders are expected to immediately direct matters of unresolved conflict which come to their attention to the Committee on Ministry for review and resolution. All individuals in good standing with the Unitarian Universalist Minister's Association shall retain her/his right to involve a Good Offices colleague for assistance.
4. The Committee on Ministry shall review and deliberate upon the documented issue and make recommendations for resolution of the conflict to the parties concerned. The person(s) submitting a documented grievance may be asked to appear before the Committee on Ministry for clarification. The Committee on Ministry will write a report of their findings and recommendations for resolution and submit this to all parties involved.
5. When expedited action is called for due to the egregious nature of the conflict or grievance, the Committee on Ministry may choose to immediately refer the matter for action by the Board of Trustees without further action within the Committee on Ministry.
6. A grievance not resolved with action and support by the Committee on Ministry may be appealed, in writing, to the Board of Trustees. In such cases, the Committee on Ministry will be asked to submit a written report of its findings and actions in the matter to the Board. The persons(s) submitting a documented grievance may be asked to appear before the Board for purposes of clarification. The Board reserves the right to involve resources outside the congregation, such as the District Consultant of the Ohio Meadville District.
7. The person(s) submitting a grievance for resolution will be notified in writing of the Board's decisions regarding the documented issue within 90 days from the date of the submission to the Board.

8. The decisions of the Board are final unless appealed by the following process: The issue may be resubmitted to the Committee on Ministry one time only, according to the above procedure, and will be accepted for reconsideration only if new and significant data or information is presented. The Committee on Ministry will make further recommendations to the Board.
9. The Board retains final authority in matters of grievance. After one appeal with additional information has been reviewed, there shall be no further presentation of this issue verbally or by document at any time.
10. Violation of this procedure shall be considered grounds for review initiated by the Committee on Ministry, which may recommend further action to the Board.
11. If this issue is submitted to secular courts of law, the mandates of such courts shall be followed by all parties, unless the Board duly determines to initiate contrary actions, and are willing to sustain lawful consequences.
12. In matters involving conduct of the minister, it is understood that such matters may be referred to the Ministerial Fellowship Committee (MFC) of the Unitarian Universalist Association of Congregations. Procedures for filing such complaints are delineated in Section 14 of the “Policies of the Ministerial Fellowship Committee” which is on file at the church office.
13. All persons involved in any part of the above process are responsible for their own prayerful or self-reflective conduct and attitude during the handling of any grievance. It is expected that all congregants and spiritual leaders shall regard each other with love and respect, even during times of stressful conflict. It is also expected that official decisions of the Board will be honored fully, whether agreed with or not. Anyone unable to maintain such attitudes and behavior is expected to seriously reconsider their commitment to this congregation, or transfer their membership to another congregation.