Covenant of Right Relations, 2019

Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Redwood City

OUR UUFRC COVENANT

We support, challenge, and inspire one another. We assume best intentions, even when we disagree, and treat each other with compassion and respect. We give generously of our time and resources to sustain this vibrant Fellowship.

INTRODUCTION

Within the context of our UUFRC Covenant we have developed promises and ethical guides for six areas of relationships. These promises describe how we wish to engage as our best self in each of the specific areas:

- Member to Self
- Member to Member
- Member to Board of Trustees
- Member to Staff
- Member to Minister
- Member to Community

Below are the promises and ethical guides to ourselves for how we wish to engage with each other. We know that we will be challenged as we hold ourselves accountable in behaviors and attitudes that ask much of each of us. It is with humility that we seek the grace and thoughtfulness we will need to hold up our best selves in relationship with one another.

BACKGROUND

These promises were developed in a open workshop for our UUFRC community on January 26, 2019, attended by about 40 people. These promises can serve as references in everyday UUFRC activities or when we are having a relational difficulty. The Covenant of Right Relations is based on our principles and our own UUFRC Covenant. Our focus on this additional covenant is a critical building block to improve and sustain a culture of right relations within our Fellowship. That is also one of the reasons that each group may repeat and re-emphasize some of our same values in the situational areas.

After a bit of training for the purpose of doing this work, breakout groups addressed one of the six relational areas. Each group created three drafts of specific guidelines for when we interact with one another in the assigned relationship. After the breakouts, we reassembled together to review each group's statements and offer minor edits. Respecting the depth of each group's insight and the communal review, we agreed that the bullet points would stand as drafted for an up or down vote by the Fellowship.

This is a living document. These statements can change over time. This version of our Covenant of Right Relations is an excellent starting point for us now. After we settle our new minister, there will be a workshop opportunity for groups within each area (board, minister, etc) to create reciprocal covenants back to the membership.

Some caveats:
The word "Member" refers to a member of the UUFRC community which includes visitors, members, and friends. The items under Member to Board of Trustees could also refer more broadly to members who are part of the various committees.

The work of the breakout groups did not give a priority order to the bullet points.

COVENANTS BY AREA OF RELATIONSHIP

Covenant of Member to Self

In my relationship with myself, I promise to:

- Love and respect myself and others equally.
- Make my best effort to know my foibles and potential.
- Trust and honor my inner knowing.
- Honor my needs and take care of myself so I have more to give.
- Make friends with my assumptions, expectations and fears.
- Cultivate self-forgiveness and acceptance, while holding myself accountable for how I behave.
- Not take myself too seriously.

Covenant of Member to Member

In my relationship with other members, I promise to:

- Listen respectfully and avoid making assumptions.
- Interrupt politely during social interaction, as well as acknowledge people waiting to interject.
- Trust that fellow members have the best intentions.
- Recognize I have a role in this community – showing up matters.
- Follow through on commitments I make, and, if necessary, break commitments with care.
- Be open, honest and caring in communication with and about others.
- Allow fellow members the courtesy to tell their own story.
- Accept differences and strive to understand.
- Seek appropriate help if I have a conflict with someone and I cannot resolve it through direct address.
- Be welcoming to all.

Covenant of Member to Staff

In my relationship to staff, I promise to:

- Be aware of each staff member's assigned role and respect staff's role boundaries.
- Treat staff kindly, honestly and respectfully, understanding their work and personal lives are separate.
- Give staff the necessary time, resources and information, recognizing they may have competing priorities.
- Appreciate and support staff, remembering it is a privilege to have them as staff.
- Recognize staff programs and projects require volunteer efforts to be successful.
- Respect staff's expertise and make appropriate requests, not demands.
- Be constructive in conversations about and with staff members.

Covenant of Member to Board of Trustees

In my relationship with the Board of Trustees, I promise to:

- Trust and appreciate that the members of the Board of Trustees are giving of their time and resources for the best interest of the Fellowship.
- Be an engaged member of the Fellowship, including understanding our Vision, Mission, and Covenant.
- When I have a concern, engage with the Board of Trustees in a thoughtful and productive manner.
- Support our democratic process and respect the Board of Trustees' decisions, even if I do not agree with them.
- Be open and honest in my interactions with the Board of Trustees.
- Act in the best interest of the Fellowship in my interactions with the Board of Trustees.

Covenant of Member to Minister

In my relationship with our minister, I promise to:

- Understand that the minister is human and deserves the same care and support that I give every member of our community.
- Support the minister's role and respect the minister's calling and expertise.
- Engage in polite, respectful, and honest communication with our minister.
- Take my ministerial concerns directly to the minister or seek guidance from the Committee on Ministry if I cannot resolve my concerns through direct address.

Covenant of Member to Community

In my relationship with the larger community, I promise to:

- Treat all with kindness, dignity, compassion and respect.
- Listen and respond with kind curiosity and empathy, and to assume best intentions.
- Show up and act for democratic principles, justice, equity, peace, and inclusion.
- Model care in using resources, keeping the long-term health of the Earth in mind.

We will strive to make these promises part of our UUFRC culture by opening our meetings with our Covenant, referring to the relationship goals, and encouraging ourselves and each other to make these promises part of our everyday interactions.

Adopted by the Fellowship on _____, 2019