

# Orange Coast Unitarian Universalist Church

## Peacemaking Policy

### **Congregant Participation in Orange Coast Unitarian Universalist Church's Peacemaking Process**

**Each member** – in his or her choice to participate in the Orange Coast Unitarian Universalist Church (OCUUC) community – is asked and expected to take responsibility for his or her actions and to honor the congregation's affirmation of peacemaking In accord with UU principles.

The Peacemaking Committee (PC) is charged firstly, with education about peacemaking and dissemination of peacemaking skills as widely and deeply within the congregation as possible, particularly among its leaders; secondly, with handling the details of conflict resolution as conflict arises; and thirdly, is mandated to pass on to the Serious Breach Of Covenant Team, (SBCT) as it feels necessary, cases it believes involve serious breaches of covenant.

### **Peacemaking Process**

A general overview of the flow of a conflict within OCUUC is attached as Addendum A. When a member of the church community finds herself/himself in serious conflict with another member or members of the community, it is expected that the person will approach the situation in a manner consistent with OCUUC's Covenant of Healthy Relations. In most cases this will mean going directly to the party with whom the member is in disagreement. This will be our expectation, and the PC will hold workshops during the year to share tools to help individuals further develop their peacemaking skills.

Alternatively, a member may choose to work with the PC. This is not to be done lightly, but after other means of resolution prove fruitless. The PC will meet with the parties seeking assistance in order to facilitate a negotiation or some other appropriate peacemaking process. Should it become necessary, the PC may utilize appropriate resources outside of the congregation. In such a case, the Minister would be informed.

In order to initiate the process with the PC, a member would first complete a request for peacemaking assistance, which would be reviewed by the PC in order to provide the appropriate assistance. The form is attached to this proposal as Addendum B. The PC would then approach the other party to ascertain whether that party would be willing to engage in the peacemaking process. If both parties agreed to engage in the process, then they would be expected to approach each other in a spirit of peace, patience, and humility, with each party owning his or her own part in the conflict.

If a party is not willing to participate in resolution with the facilitation of the PC, the PC's involvement would end and the request would be shredded.

All the conversations conducted by the Peace Committee are confidential.

## **Peacemaking Committee Specifics**

**Composition of Peacemaking Committee:** This Committee will be composed of three members, recruited and approved by the Board, who have the following qualifications:

- Professional training and/or comparable experience in conflict management or training, or willingness to be trained by a member of the PC or a professional within the church.
- Strong listening skills and demonstrated capacity for empathy.
- Demonstrated ability to establish trust and credibility by maintaining objectivity and neutrality.
- Demonstrated ability to conduct oneself according to the Covenant of Healthy Relations.

**Authority of the Peacemaking Committee:** The members of the PC, individually and collectively, shall be authorized to assist in the resolution of conflict between church parties when requested to do so by a party to the conflict. Any conflict with a staff member will be referred to the Minister. The PC member may suggest any appropriate process for peacemaking and will act in accordance with OCUUC's Covenant of Healthy Relations. The Committee will report to the Minister, and keep him/her informed about significant issues and concerns.

**Removal from the PC:** A member of the PC who is considered to be ineffective or to be behaving inappropriately in the role of PC member and/or with regard to OCUUC's Covenant of Healthy Relations may be removed from the Committee. This action requires a 2/3 vote of the Board of Trustees in a meeting called for the purpose of considering such a removal.

**Conflict of Interest:** In any situation where there is a conflict of interest involving a member of the PC or those empowered to select Committee members, the party with the conflict of interest will recuse him- or herself regarding that situation.

### **Serious Breach**

A "Serious Breach" is a serious departure from OCUUC's Covenant of Healthy Relations, in which a behavior threatens the emotional and/or physical security of members, staff, friends or guests which has gone beyond the parameters of behavior the Peacemaking Committee is meant to cover.

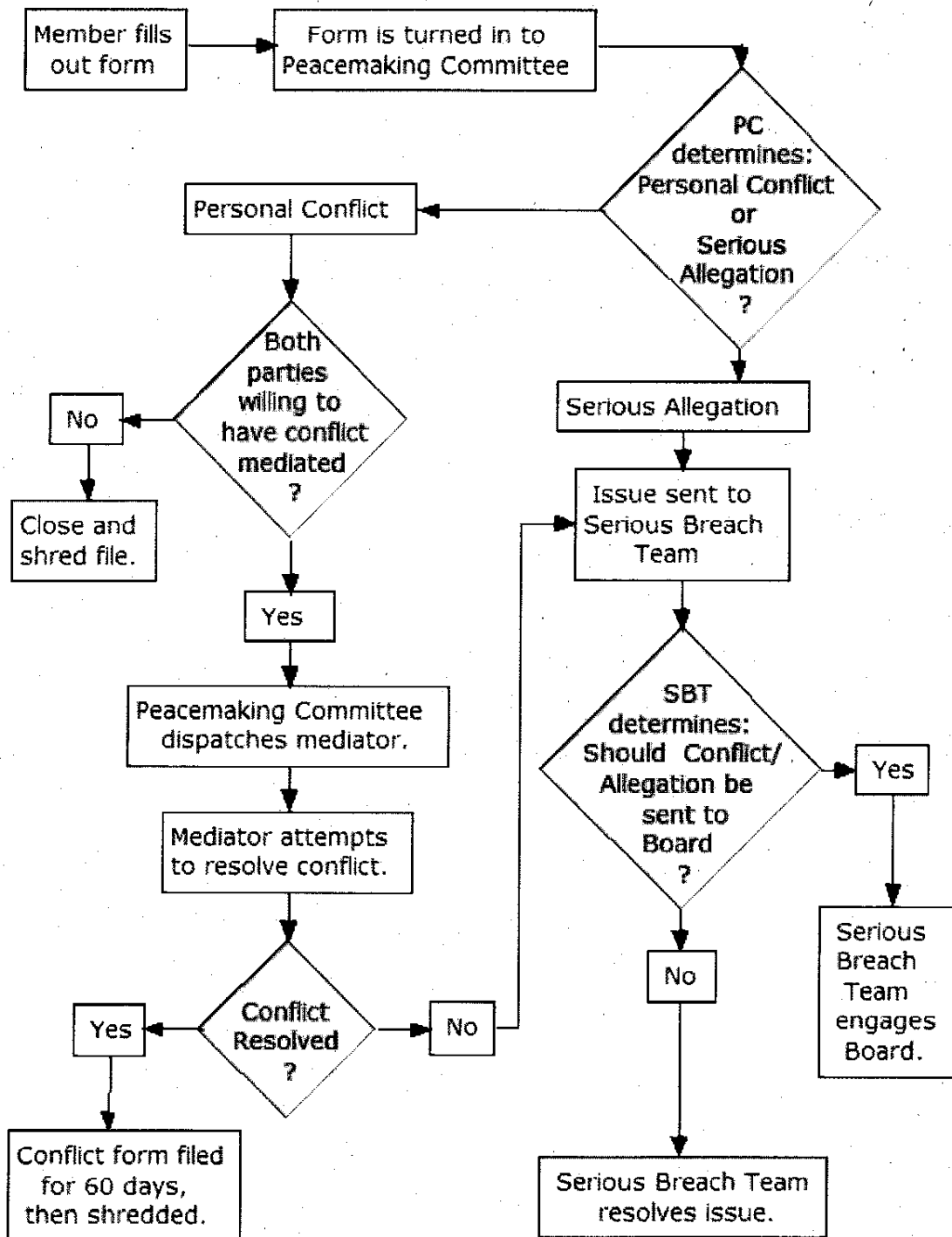
A policy for serious breach of covenant is defined in a separate Standing Rule.

**ADDENDUM A**

*Any conflict with a member of Staff will be referred to the Minister.*

*Any matters in the Peacemaking Process pipeline that require church expenditures must be approved by the Board.*

**OVERVIEW / DECISION TREE FOR PEACEMAKING COMMITTEE PROCESS**



**ADDENDUM B: OCUUC Peacemaking Assistance Request**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Person with whom I am in conflict: \_\_\_\_\_

Person's status in church: ( ) Member ( ) Friend ( ) Visitor ( ) Staff\*

( ) Other: \_\_\_\_\_

\*Please note: Any conflict with a member of Staff will be directed to the Minister.

Briefly describe the conflict as you see it.

Briefly describe the conflict as you think the other person might see it. It's OK to guess if you don't know.

If it is not resolved, how might this conflict worsen or otherwise interfere with your positive experience as a member of OCUUC?

If it is addressed directly, how might this conflict worsen or otherwise interfere with your positive experience as a member of OCUUC?

What efforts have you made to try to resolve the conflict?

Is the other party aware that you have a conflict with him/her?

Peacemaking assistance involves using a neutral third party to facilitate:

- A voluntary, informal opportunity to resolve conflict between individuals
- A safe and respectful environment for sharing differences
- An improved understanding of each person's needs
- Possible solutions for resolution
- Creation of mutual agreements
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Peacemaking assistance is **not**:

- An investigation
- Intended to determine right or wrong
- Intended to be a win/lose outcome

Are you willing to participate in this peacemaking experience?     Yes                       No

Are you willing for a member of the Peacemaking Committee to invite the person with whom you are having conflict to be involved in this process?  Yes             No

*Note: The Peacemaking Committee cannot become involved unless you indicate "Yes" to each of the above questions.*

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Signature

Date