

# UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST CHURCH IN EUGENE

## Committee on Right Relations (CORR)

### Charter & Policy Documents

#### REVISION HISTORY

September 2022: Draft initiated by the “interim” CORR

March 21, 2023: first final policy submitted to the Board of Trustees

May, 2023: Policy Approved by BoT

# CORR CHARTER

*This document establishes the Committee on Right Relations (CORR), whose members are elected by the congregation. The Charter was approved by Board vote on March 28, 2023.*

## Purpose

*Why do we need a Committee on Right Relations?*

- To nurture the Beloved Community by facilitating harmonious relationships and mediating conflicts in the congregation.
- To be known, trusted, and available to all congregants, so that when conflict arises, congregants can seek support and advice before the conflict grows, and to seek transformative justice when harm has occurred.
- To create and hold brave space for congregants to bring concerns about the ministers and/or the Board of Trustees (the Board).
- To respond when racism and other systems of oppression influence actions of the congregation.
- To be stewards of the spiritual practices that build Beloved Community

## Composition

*How will the Committee on Right Relations be formed, and who can serve on it?*

- The senior minister will be an ex officio, non-voting member in compliance with the UUCE bylaws.
- Other ministers, including the ministerial intern, may be ex officio, non-voting members at the discretion of the senior minister, in accordance with the UUCE bylaws.
- CORR will be composed of five (5) voting members. These will be members of the congregation not currently serving on the Board of Trustees or the Leadership Development Committee.
  - We recommend voting members will have been active in the congregation long enough to understand congregational life and will have formed connections within the congregation. Three years of activity in the congregation are a guideline.
  - CORR work requires self awareness, emotional awareness, generous listening, loving presence, skillful facilitation and mediation, ongoing learning, and commitment to our mission, values, principles, and policies. Most of all, CORR work requires *willingness to do* and *willingness to learn*. CORR work can also require commitments of time. Additionally, members should be willing to remain neutral in disputes, apply best practices in building right relations, and willing to serve the entire congregation without prejudice.
  - Candidates for CORR membership will receive an outline of their work and responsibilities, and sitting CORR members will provide training and be available to candidates for questions.

## Term Limits

CORR members will serve staggered terms of three (3) years with the possibility of renewing for one additional term. No member will serve more than 6 consecutive years. Terms start at the beginning of the fiscal/church year. In order to assure continuity, the annual slate will include 2 members of the current CORR. Vacancies that occur during a calendar year will be filled by appointment by the Board of Trustees. The Board will consult with the sitting members of the CORR in appointing new members.

## Governance

*How, and to whom, is the Committee on Right Relations held accountable?*

- The Board will establish CORR as a standing committee of UUCE, in accordance with the UUCE bylaws.
- The Board will approve and oversee CORR's policies and procedures.
- CORR will be accountable to the congregation. It will operate independently of the Board to fulfill its purpose of receiving and responding to concerns about the Board, and will provide an annual report to the congregation.
- Voting members will be elected by the congregation in accordance with UUCE bylaws.
- When CORR responds to a concern about the senior minister and/or other CORR members, those persons become parties in mediation and as such will not function as a CORR member in any aspect of the mediation.
- CORR members will recuse themselves from any mediation in which they have a conflict of interest.
- Congregant grievances about CORR and/or its policies will be referred to the Board.

## Roles & Responsibilities

*What will the Committee on Right Relations do, and how will it fit with other UUCE groups and structures?*

We affirm that conflict is a natural part of human life, and it can be generative<sup>1</sup>. CORR works in cooperation with the Safety Committee, the senior minister, and the Operations Team to ensure our Beloved Community is safe and resilient. CORR and its policies and procedures are limited to:

- congregant concerns about ministers, staff, other congregants, and groups
- group concerns about other groups
- Situations of harassment and/or abuse
- Facilitation of harmonious relationships through education and programming

CORR members are tenders of the congregational covenant, calling us lovingly and without punishment back into covenant.

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<sup>1</sup> "capable of reproducing or creating; having the power or function of originating" from <https://www.callinginandup.org/pedagogy-guide/7-leaning-into-generative-conflict>

## Termination

CORR can only be dissolved by congregational vote at an official meeting, although activities of CORR may be suspended, if so directed, by an action of the Board pending the next called official meeting of the congregation.

# CORR POLICIES

*These are the Policies of the Committee on Right Relations (CORR).  
They were approved by Board vote on March 28, 2023.*

## Authority

CORR is established by the board through the 2023 Charter. This Charter is included at the beginning of this document and outlines CORR's purpose, composition, and structure.

## How to Contact CORR

Use this email to contact the entire group: [corr@uueugene.org](mailto:corr@uueugene.org)

## Introduction & Welcome

To covenant with one another is to engage in the spiritual and everyday practice of loving better. Although the UUCE Congregational Covenant expresses our written promise to each other, our true covenant lives and breathes in our actions.

In times of growth we will use it to deepen our bonds with one another and beyond, to the larger community; during times when we are loving well, it will inspire us to love better.

In times of conflict we will use it to guide us to embrace the conflict, moving towards seeking accountability and making amends. We expect this covenant to be challenging at times, but we also expect it to inspire us to strengthen our relationships and deepen our sense of community.

The Committee on Right Relations is here to help the congregation bring this Covenant to life, and when needed, to help congregants transform their relationships with one another.

## UUCE'S Congregational Covenant (approved by Board April, 2023)

As a beloved community empowered by love:

- We covenant to embrace the next person who is always arriving, open to the change they will bring.
- We covenant to trust others in their identity and truth, and work to be trustworthy.
- We covenant to speak our truth bravely and gently as we commune in love and peace.
- We covenant to make efforts to understand the views of others, and make amends when intentions and impact collide.
- We covenant to expand our connections with the larger community, with humility and empathy.
- We covenant to remember that how we are with each other is the foundation upon which we build the beloved community.

## Defining Right Relations

Unitarian Universalism is a covenantal faith, with covenants created and upheld between and among individuals and groups; that is to say, our faith lives and moves and has its being *in relationship*. Increasingly, we are called by prophetic people in our movement to build multicultural, antiracist Beloved Community, and UUCE is answering that call in our adoption of the 8th Principle; in our congregational covenant; in our Board's operational ends; and in myriad other developed and emerging ways, including this Committee on Right Relations (CORR).

The Article II Study Commission of the UUA has proposed *interdependence* as a core value, centered in love: "we honor the sacred interdependent web of all existence. With humility, we understand our place in the web. We covenant to care for and respect the earth and all beings by fostering relationships of mutuality. We work to repair the bonds we have broken." This builds on the 7th Principle of Unitarian Universalism, calling us to humility, accountability, and mutuality in our relationships. This is aligned with the Indigenous concept of *relationality*: in this interconnected web of existence, connections come with responsibilities - responsibilities to ourselves, to each other, to the land. The practice of *right relations* is rooted in Indigenous wisdom, and encompasses ways of doing relationships with responsibility and integrity.

We recognize right relations as the foundation of a healthy, thriving Beloved Community. We also recognize that in all human relations, conflict is inevitable. We know we're imperfect beings. We strive to dismantle perfectionism, and we affirm and promote the slogan of Welcoming Congregations like ours: "All of who you are is sacred. All of who you are is welcome." We believe that conflict can be generative, even transformative, and that we can hold each other in community and in love, and resolve our conflicts in ways that are just.

## Defining Transformative Justice

At the Unitarian Universalist Church in Eugene, our mission calls us to *transform ourselves*, and we embrace transformative justice as a practice within, among, and beyond our congregational relationships.

Transformative Justice, or *community accountability*, is a rich and evolving collection of practices that seeks to address and repair harm without creating more harm. Like Right Relations, Transformative Justice has been embraced by Unitarian Universalism and aligns with our values and visions, but it did not originate in our movement. We are grateful to the BIPOC-, LGBTQ+-, and women-led community organizations working for justice and sharing their learning; again, we accept their gifts with humility and intent.

*"Transformative justice is a way of moving into accountability, deepening relationship, clarifying boundaries, and opening the way for more collective possibilities."*

*- adrienne maree brown,  Holding Change: The Way of Emergent Strategy Facilitation and Mediation*

Principles of Transformative Justice:

- Accountability, not punishment
- We will not cancel us
- Community responsibility without involving institutions of the state
  - Transformative Justice is *radical*: it grasps at the root of how harm came to be; what will satisfy requirements for repair; how behavior needs to change to prevent future harm.
- Principled struggle

## Our Ideals and Practices of Beloved Community

### **A Culture of Welcome, Hospitality, and Invitation**

We practice hospitality, offering welcome, nurture and acceptance to all those who enter. And we expect to be changed by every person who joins the community. We actively invite people to participate in events and activities; we invite them into conversation and into our lives. We greet people warmly; regularly introduce ourselves to someone we don't know; treat one another kindly outside of the congregation as well as inside.

### **Move toward a Multicultural Congregation**

We work to foster a multicultural and multigenerational community that sees diversity in all its manifestations as a sign of our strength.

We engage with those who are different from us; challenge bigotry in all its forms; work to challenge embedded systems of supremacy and privilege; actively confront our assumptions through critical and studied examination of the forces that disadvantage some and privilege others.

### **Listening and Speaking**

We listen with respect and attention and speak with care. We listen intentionally and compassionately; encourage people to speak without blaming or judging them when they do.

### **Serving Our World**

We serve the UUCE community and the larger world with generosity and good humor, and we will acknowledge the service of others. We honor all levels of service to the congregation; solicit the input of others; encourage people to make choices that balance their needs with the needs of others; invite others to join us in our activities; honor the right of others to say no.

### **Working with Conflict**

We know that conflict is a natural part of living in community. We resolve conflicts directly, using openness and compassion. We make every effort to settle differences directly and openly; stay engaged with each other through difficult conversations; hold ourselves responsible for hearing all sides.

## **Forgiveness**

We acknowledge our mistakes and shortcomings and are willing to forgive those of others. We acknowledge our own and others' imperfections; forgive ourselves and others; are accountable for keeping our promises; lovingly call each other to account for behavior that is hurtful to others.

## **Solidarity and Accompaniment**

We support each other in times of joy and need. We help each other in times of crisis; recognize each other's talents; remind others of the spark of divinity within them; embrace our different cultural and faith traditions; challenge each other to grow.

## **The Committee's Operational Guidelines**

The CORR will:

1. Receive requests for assistance via a group email. The current CORR Facilitator will respond to this request and will open a discussion with the whole group to determine what assistance and resources are needed.
2. Be guided in its work by the UUCE Covenant, UU Principles, UUCE Mission, and by its own policies.
3. Facilitate communication to the congregation regarding the Conflict Resolution Process and the CORR Policy.
4. Facilitate education and training in the areas of conflict, beloved community, covenant, and transformative justice.
5. Work with staff to maintain a page on the UUCE website with education materials.
6. Recruit ad-hoc volunteers to assist in carrying out its policies and processes.
7. Engage in self-education and group training programs.
8. Be empowered to refer any conflicts for which a resolution cannot be reached to the Board of Trustees for disposition.
9. Ensure that all voices are heard and that the best practices of conflict resolution are applied, mindful of systemic patterns of power and privilege .
10. Encourage the framing of conflicts as opportunities for healing and building community rather than judgements about who is right or wrong.
11. Recuse themselves from any issue to which they are a party or a stakeholder. Any CORR member may declare a conflict to exist for him/herself or for another member, and recusal will follow.
12. Meet at least quarterly, and practice a shared leadership model or consent decision making.
13. Be held accountable to the congregation by reporting on activities annually and through the democratic process of elections.
14. Submit an annual budget request to fund training, resources, and outside consultants.
15. Develop additional procedures and update these policies as needed.



## Scope of the CORR's work

- The scope of the Committee's work is limited to the interactions of UUCE congregants: with other congregants, with groups, with the ministers, with staff, and includes conflicts between groups.
- The scope does not cover conflicts between staff, between ministers, and between ministers and staff, as these are covered in the UUCE Personnel Policy.
- This policy and process does not cover complaints regarding matters of UUCE policies. Such complaints may be addressed to the Board of Trustees, per the UUCE Governing Policies.
- This policy and process does not supersede authorities given to the Board of Trustees under the UUCE Governing Policies. If a conflict arises that the CORR considers beyond its purposes, scope or skill level, it may refer the matter to the Board of Trustees.

## What is Conflict?

Conflicts arise because of differences of ideas, how these ideas are expressed, and how they are received. Conflicts arise within the larger context of how power imbalances and oppression have shaped our language, our lives, and our relationships.

It is assumed that most conflicts will be resolved by intentional efforts on the part of individuals and groups at UUCE, relying on the UUCE Covenant and UU Principles to guide the process, and with a foundational commitment to principles of respect, compassion, and dignity in our relationships.

## The Conflict Resolution Process

### Purpose of this Process

The purpose of the UUCE Conflict Resolution Process is to guide our church community towards a healthy approach to the management, resolution, and transformation of conflict. We have designed this process with the goal of guiding, building, and repairing relationships after harm has been done.

In the spirit of the UUCE Covenant and Unitarian Universalist Principles, this policy and process seeks to:

1. Foster and maintain harmonious relations within the congregation
2. Address conflict through education, facilitation and training for the congregation and its leaders
3. Establish a congregational process and structure for resolving conflicts

If you would like to start a conversation, please email [corr@uueugene.org](mailto:corr@uueugene.org). Confidentiality is assured. The CORR will neither disclose the names of parties involved nor the content or substance of matters brought to it unless disclosure is reasonably believed to be necessary to avoid physical or substantial financial harm, or is required by law.

## Three Levels of the Process

The Conflict Resolution Process consists of three levels. When a conflict arises between groups or individual congregants, the process may involve as many levels as are needed to resolve the conflict. Throughout the process, all relevant persons, including members of the CORR, will be treated with respect and compassion consistent with the UUCE Covenant and UU principles. In some cases, the CORR may determine that a structured process is needed and invite affected parties to submit a request.

Those seeking to use this process will:

- Acknowledge personal responsibility and identify necessary steps to resolve the conflict.
- Use the conflict to mend relationships and provide healing
- Use conflict as an opportunity for deeper understanding and spiritual growth

**Level 1. We Work It Out.** People involved will work to resolve differences themselves. It is assumed that congregants will use their best problem-solving skills to try to resolve conflicts, so the expectation is that the vast majority of conflicts will be resolved at this level directly by the people involved, without external intervention. In many instances, this will be achieved utilizing the knowledge, skills and abilities obtained through CORR's education and training efforts. Suggestions for how parties can resolve conflicts themselves are provided in Appendix A.

**Level 2. We Need Help.** Either individual or group may request education, training, or coaching from the CORR. One or both parties may benefit from a person experienced with conflict resolution to help them gain additional skills or techniques to resolve the situation themselves. If assistance is requested, the CORR is available to take an educational and facilitative role in helping congregants manage conflicts.

**Level 3. We Need Mediation** - Parties may simply wish to have a third party lead a conversation for the purpose of assisting them in reaching resolution. Either party may initiate a request for a CORR led mediation and conflict resolution process.

Both parties must agree before commencing with this process. In some cases, CORR may determine that a more deliberative process is needed and invite affected parties to submit a request.

### When the parties seek a recommendation from CORR, CORR will:

1. Send a written notice to request participation from all parties involved in the conflict.
2. With the consent of all parties, conduct outside information gathering, which may include interviews, meetings, discussions and review of relevant documents.
3. Prepare a written plan as to what CORR believes should be done and submit it to all parties for consideration. CORR will also meet with the parties and provide them with an opportunity to discuss the written plan.

4. If appropriate, the matter will be forwarded to the UUCE Board to be pursued under other existing policies.

## How to Ask for Help

1. A confidential request for assistance may be submitted to the CORR via their group email ([corr@uueugene.org](mailto:corr@uueugene.org)) or by contacting one of its members or the ministers.
2. One member of the CORR will follow up to gather additional information and to determine if it is within the scope of this policy. Depending on the need, one or more members of the CORR will meet with the requestor, and where appropriate, conduct preliminary fact gathering.
3. For each request received, the CORR may suggest next steps. Options include:
  - Coaching – one or both parties may benefit from the help of a person experienced with conflict resolution to help them gain additional skills or techniques to resolve the situation themselves.
  - Facilitated Discussion – In some instances, parties may simply wish to have a third party lead a conversation for the purpose of assisting parties in understanding each other and the issues, and potentially reaching resolution.
  - Voluntary Mediation – Mediation seeks to focus on parties' willingness to solve the problem rather than finding out if someone is guilty or at fault. Since it is a collaborative effort between the parties in dispute, the mediation process helps the parties clarify misunderstandings and improve communication. The parties themselves determine the resolution.
4. CORR may assign a mediator, coach and/or facilitator, depending upon the recommended next steps presented above.

## Confidentiality

### Guiding Principle (confidential vs secret)

Confidentiality has to do with stewardship of information. Therefore, in responding to a conflict or complaint, this process should be confidential, but not secret. The CORR may be given information in confidence, which means that we are entrusted with overseeing that information. But there may be circumstances that require that we disclose or discuss this information to help people get the help they need. We do not need to disclose names or particulars to do that. A secret means not disclosing any information regardless of the context. Confidentiality is intended to protect the process, but once the process is completed, people need to know what happened. This ensures the integrity of the process. All parties involved will be made aware of these confidentiality procedures.

## Guidelines for the stewardship of information:

- Meeting minutes will not include details of concerns received or conflict mediations, except in cases where a referral must be made to the Board for a member's expulsion in accordance with UUCE bylaws.
- CORR members will readily discuss their process and sources consulted, and be open and available to questions from congregants.
- Conversations with members of CORR are confidential, and details will not be shared without the explicit consent of the person(s) involved in the conversation.
  - If the mediating CORR member(s) believe(s) it to be important to discuss the issue with other members of the CORR, they will secure consent from all persons involved *before* involving other CORR members.
  - Success stories and growing edges will emerge from conflict mediation. In some cases, it may be beneficial to the congregation to learn these stories. Sharing, even anonymized, *shall not happen* until and unless explicit, informed consent is secured from all persons involved.
- CORR members will produce the minimum necessary written documentation during conflict mediation; store documents safely and out of sight; and destroy documents at the conclusion of mediation.
- CORR members will store electronic documentation securely; will limit access to CORR members with a need to know.
- At the conclusion of a matter, CORR is responsible for destroying referrals, notes, written reports, notes taken and any other documentation produced or received during the conflict resolution process, unless there is the possibility of legal matters, retention is expressly requested by all parties, or required by law.
- Under no circumstances will any CORR member have access to documents concerning any matter from which they are recused.
- Exceptions to this confidentiality would be made in cases which might involve criminal activity, including abuse or maltreatment of a child or other vulnerable person.

## Amendments

The UUCE Board of Trustees and the CORR are jointly responsible for maintaining and upholding this policy and process. Amendments to this policy and process shall be recommended by the CORR and approved by the Board of Trustees.

## Resources Used

All Soul UU Church  
Williamsburg UU  
UUA

# Appendix A: Level 1 Suggestions

## Suggestions for Conflict Self-Resolution (Level 1)

- Consider consulting with members of the CORR for feedback and support prior to meeting.
- Talk directly with those with whom you are in disagreement
- Examine the roles of each party in the conflict
- Reflect on why the matter is important
- Acknowledge your role in the conflict
- Agree on a mutually acceptable time and place to talk in private as soon as possible
- Use “I” statements and active listening in discussions (e.g. “I felt that I was prejudged and anything I said was going to upset you.”)
- Seek to understand the perspective(s) of the other person(s)
- Consider putting thoughts in writing, if direct conversation is too difficult
- Listen actively and carefully to the other person(s).

### **Tips for Active Listening include:**

1. Be with the other person, fully present and focused.
2. Give the other person good eye contact. Don't let your eyes roam around the room.
3. Take some notes, but don't look at other papers or reports. Don't take such detailed notes that you are missing the overall message.
4. Let the other person talk, and don't worry about filling the lulls between sentences.
5. Ask clarifying questions, as opposed to questions that contain a judgment
6. Mentally put yourself in the other person's shoes.
7. Respond to what the other person is saying.
8. Eliminate distractions, such as phone and notifications from apps.

# APPENDIX B: Mediation Framework

Proposed Mediation Agenda

Date and Time

Unitarian Universalist Church of Eugene

Committee on Right Relations (CORR)

Materials needed: pen/paper for notes (for all present)

- Opening, Introductions, and Preliminary Considerations (10 minutes)
  - Opening Words/Chalice Lighting
  - Mediators: [Mediator names]
  - Participants
  - Purpose of Mediation
  - Good Faith Intention
  - Review and approve agenda
  
- Part One (30 Minutes) "Identifying Issues and Concerns"
  1. Each participant will have approximately 10 minutes to present their perspective (of what happened)
    - No interruptions from the other party
    - Mediators may ask questions for clarification
    - Mediators may request re-phrasing to remove toxic remarks
    - Mediators may interrupt proceedings to de-escalate feedback
  2. Description of issue(s) or concerns/worries
  3. Proposals for remedy or resolution
  
- Break (10-15 minutes)
  - Participants will adjourn to separate spaces and refrain from interaction with each other during the break
  - Mediators will adjourn to compare notes, assess need for individual caucuses, and opportunities for progress
  
- Part Two (60 minutes) "Progressing towards Resolution"
  - Individual caucuses, if needed
  - Mediators summarize with participants understanding of the issues and/or concerns (spoken and un-spoken)

- Participants and mediators may pose questions to each other for clarification and understanding
  - Mediators summarize common ground, suggested remedies or resolutions
  - Mediators lead discussion about opportunities for progress and/or resolution
  - Parties agree upon resolution and/or next steps including additional meetings
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- Closing
    - Assessments of process
    - Closing
      - Closing words
      - Extinguish chalice