



Parkdale United Church



BEHAVIOURAL COVENANT

So in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets"

(Matthew 7:12)

SPIRITUAL PRACTICE

When we gather for committee meetings, congregational functions and worship services at Parkdale United Church, we will follow the guidelines in this Behavioural Covenant.

RESPECTFUL LISTENING, SPEAKING and WRITING

- We will treat each other with respect and dignity, listening carefully to each other.
- We will refrain from personal, judgemental comments about others.
- We will name inappropriate behaviour.
- We will communicate with each other directly and respectfully.
- We will respect boundaries that are set by those with whom we are interacting.
- We will communicate respectfully in our body language and gestures.
- We will communicate respectfully in our written and digital communication including e-mails, on Facebook, Instagram and Messenger.
- Unsigned or anonymous letters, e-mails or social media correspondence will not be part of our practice.

DIVERSITY

- We will honour diversity.
- We will create a space where it is safe to express opinions and ask questions without judgement or disapproval.
- We will create an environment of openness and transparency.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

The conflict resolution model used for this document is based on *The Dispute Resolution Handbook (October, 2016) of The United Church of Canada. (Formatting Revised)*

- We acknowledge that conflict is a normal part of human relationships and organizations.
- In any conflict situation, all parties involved are encouraged to be open to change and deeper learning.
- When long term unheard and unresolved conflicts are revealed, we will make every effort to deal with them in a timely and loving manner, invoking the conflict resolution protocols outlined in this document.
- We will engage directly with the individuals involved in a conflict situation.
 - (a) Every effort will be made to resolve concerns, disagreements or conflicts openly and transparently unless confidentiality is required to ensure the safety of the individuals involved.
- We acknowledge the potential for hurt and pain when conflict arises and commit to dealing with such situations in a timely and appropriate manner.
 - (a) We will access conflict resolution resources to deal with a conflict situation that is beyond our ability to resolve.
 - (b) We recognize that in some situations the nature of the conflict requires the intervention of the police or courts (e.g. cases of child abuse, inappropriate sexual conduct).
- We will access the civilian authorities and the court of the United Church of Canada to assist in resolving such conflicts.
 - (a) We will accept responsibility for the work and decisions undertaken by our faith community. We will support these decisions.
 - (b) We will offer forgiveness to one another when mistakes are made and feelings are hurt, recognizing forgiveness is often a long and

difficult journey. We recognize forgiveness is sometimes unattainable and ultimately left in the hands of God.

- (c) We will pray for one another and with one another as we seek to resolve conflicts.
- (d) We will believe the best in each other and seek to conduct ourselves with humility and grace in all of our interactions with each other.
- (e) We will communicate decisions directly, openly and in a timely manner to those directly impacted by the conflict to ensure accountability and lessen conflict.
- (f) When conflict cannot be resolved at the moment or in the situation from which it arises, we will set an agreed upon time to deal with the conflict, thereby reducing the possibility for increased conflict with a prolonged passage of time.
- (g) If paid, accountable staff members are involved in an unresolved conflict situation with each other or the congregation. It may be brought to the Ministry and Personnel Committee who, in turn, have the authority to bring the conflict to the Board or the wider courts of the church, as deemed necessary.
- (h) Conflict situations that arise between congregational members that are unresolved may be brought to the Minister(s) of the pastoral charge who has access to wider resources for resolving conflict.

EXPRESSIONS OF APPRECIATION

- We recognize that our work as a community of faith is often difficult and demanding.
- We will, express our appreciation to one another, in concrete and specific ways.
- We will speak words of love and thankfulness to one another for our shared life and the work we carry out in the name of Jesus.

COMPLIANCE WITH THE BEHAVIOURAL COVENANT

- To ensure compliance with the covenant, we will conclude each meeting or gathering with a “check in” time to review the Behavioural Covenant
- We will offer mutual agreement when the covenant has been upheld.

- We will name those instances where we have contravened, whether consciously or with unintended actions, the intentions of this covenant. If persons are non-compliant with the articles of this covenant, we will invite them to make amends.
- If non-compliance continues, we will use the conflict resolution process outlined above to resolve difficulties.

This document is a living document and can be changed or revised with the approval of the Board.