

UNITARIAN CHURCH OF LINCOLN

MOTION FOR CONSIDERATION AT THE ANNUAL MEETING: MAY 14, 2017

Motion to adopt the “Covenant of Right Relations” and supporting “Statements of Intent” as presented by the fair witnesses in the CRR documents dated April 26, 2017, and to:

1. Place the Covenant of Right Relations (CRR) on display in the entry of the church
2. Include the CRR and Statements of Intent in the UCL Handbook (under development)
3. Recognize the CRR and Statements of Intent as living documents to be liberally deployed and discussed in our shared congregational life
4. Provide for the evolution of both as need and changing circumstances warrant.

COVENANT OF RIGHT RELATIONS

Within and beyond the walls of the Unitarian Church of Lincoln, we honor the principles and sources of Unitarian Universalism. We covenant to treat one another as we would wish to be treated: with respect, regard for healthy boundaries, accountability, open-mindedness, and equanimity, freely offering our tangible and sustained stewardship and engagement to realize our vision and mission.

We strive to be guided in our thoughts, words and actions by these attributes and the supporting Statements of Intent upon which we have mutually agreed. In day-to-day practice, we covenant to begin our interactions with an assumption of best intentions, to truly listen to one another rather than awaiting our turn to talk, to assure that what is true for each of us is heard and considered, and to share only our own stories, honoring the privacy of others.

These are our aspirations.

STATEMENTS OF INTENT*

RESPECT

The first and second principles of our faith call us to uphold the inherent worth and dignity of every person and to employ justice, equity and compassion in human relations. Being true to these principles calls each of us to...

T.H.I.N.K. before we speak; is it True, Helpful, Inspiring, Necessary, Kind
provide empathy, time and support to fellow members, staff and minister
be as honest, authentic, and transparent as possible with ourselves and others
forgive ourselves and others for missteps and ask others for forgiveness
recognize our needs and talents whether physical, spiritual, emotional, mental, or financial
and give ourselves and others privacy and time to support those needs
honor all levels of service to the church and offer/accept invitations to participate at
UCL without guilt, charitably recognizing “no” as a valid response

HEALTHY BOUNDARIES

In addition to lending support to the 1st and 2nd principles, establishing and honoring healthy boundaries helps build trust among us and helps each of us engage in more constructive and effective problem-solving, and conflict-resolution when needed. To that end, we will...

tell our own stories and refrain from speaking for or about others
share our needs directly and clearly with member, Board, staff and/or minister entrusted to
address those needs, even knowing our needs may not be met in every case
learn and respect limitations of staff, minister, and volunteers, and make commitments on their
behalf only with their consent
do our part to ensure a workplace and place of worship free of harassment
use agreed-upon procedures and channels to address concerns about conduct or performance
of leaders, staff or minister
acknowledge the limits of pastoral counseling and seek professional help when needed

ACCOUNTABILITY

Our search for truth and meaning is both free AND responsible. The extent to which each of us claims responsibility for this covenant, helps us maintain healthy relationship norms for our church. As we practice respect and healthy boundaries, each of us must strive to hold ourselves and one another accountable with care and compassion. We will work to...

practice UU Principles in our daily lives within and outside the walls of UCL
be prepared to participate knowledgeably and thoughtfully in church and community life
accept responsibility for our own words and actions, acknowledge mistakes honestly and
make constructive efforts to correct them
keep our promises to one another and the larger community
honor and embrace our vision and mission statement
advocate for ourselves when we need pastoral care or other support
collaborate with the Board and other leaders to create a positive climate and sense of community
recognize and focus on what we *can* do, build on the good and maintain hope

STEWARDSHIP

Whether through time, talent or treasure (or more than one of these), each of us contributes to the common good as our personal circumstances allow. This means together we will strive to...

provide for pay and benefits consistent with UUA guidelines
care for the church grounds and facilities as we take care of other things we value
support professional membership and development for staff, minister and lay leaders
recognize our responsibility to support childcare and instruction for children and youth
give a positive response when the Board and other leaders call for help
remain committed to the church community as fully as possible even in times of difficulty,
acknowledging that together we are stronger and heal more fully

OPEN-MINDEDNESS

Our many sources remind us that insight comes from multiple persons, faiths, times, places and bodies of knowledge. In order to truly accept one another and encourage our spiritual growth as the 3rd principle calls us to do, we will strive to...

be informed and think through our positions, then listen and hear before responding
openly share our beliefs and support others' sharing their beliefs/spiritual journeys
examine the forces that disadvantage some while benefitting others

work to overcome our prejudices and strive to be inclusive of diverse theologies, cultural heritages, sexual orientations and gender expressions, as well as varied social and political perspectives to name only some
embrace freedom of expression from the pulpit and in the community, including dissent
be open to that which both affirms and challenges our growth

EQUANIMITY

The graceful, generous handling of conflict and challenge may be one of the hardest tasks of relationships whether within or outside the confines of the church community. Yet, it is essential to maintaining trust and shared forward momentum. So, we strive to...

begin our interactions with an assumption of best intentions
offer positive reinforcement and kudos to Board, staff, volunteers and minister
provide direct, authentic, open-minded, respectful and constructive input
embrace and navigate conflict amicably, compassionately and without passive aggression
attempt to resolve one-on-one concerns member-to-member when possible before consulting others
participate in, and advocate financial support for, skill-building related to conflict management for Board members and church leaders alike, then support and utilize congregational methods for moderating disagreements between parties in conflict

ENGAGEMENT

In part, this is expressed in our mission statement in the words “show up”. Talking the talk is important but without walking the walk, we don’t really have the chance to live our principles fully (or model them in the larger community). So, we strive to...

give time and attention to eBlasts, board minutes, newsletter articles, Town Halls, and congregational meetings so we are informed and can participate in church governance
acknowledge, welcome, and seek to know and build relationships with Members and Friends
educate ourselves on social issues, speakout and act out civilly against injustice and participate in activities and organizations that support UU principles
open ourselves to engagement with the larger UU faith and share our experiences
participate in training/activities that ready us to take on leadership roles
offer time and financial support when possible for any member who is willing to advance through the leadership “life cycle”
assist with and support outreach and ministry of UCL

*We have benefited from guidance received from the published Covenants of Right Relations of the following churches:

All Souls Church Unitarian, of the District of Columbia

All Souls Unitarian Church Indianapolis

Atkinson Memorial Church of Oregon City, Oregon

Unitarian Universalist Church of Lexington, Kentucky