



DOTTIE Welcome, overview of what COSM is doing (big picture) - reviewing and updating Covenant and Conflict policy. Remind that Covenant work builds on WWA. Refer to word cloud from Values responses (on screen)

JANE Overview of this workshop - overview of today's session, questions at end. Goal to engage you with us in this process

JANE - HAND OUT
NOTECARDS (pencils in pews)

Video: Meditation on Covenanting
Hilary Allen
UUA New England Regional Staff



Click here (skip ads):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1FWEArEvrJY>

DOTTIE introduce: in lieu of chalice and reading we are sharing this video. Speaker is Hilary Allen - NER UUA - it is part of Spiritual Leadership course CoSM members have been completing. Make yourself comfortable as Hilary brings us into a meditative space.

Why Focus on Covenant ?

JANE will describe why covenant is important—promise—not creedal—all uu's have a covenant—will find that in any uu church, but not the same creed—affirmation of faith is not a covenant—aspirational—how we want to be treated and to belong

- how do we live our UU values—starting with one another
- Reminder that UU is not Creedal, but Covenantal
- Affirmation of Faith vs Congregational Covenant
- Aspirational vs Behavioral (Liberating vs Restrictive)
- consider Lane's sermon



Resources for the Journey







Peterborough Unitarian Universalist Church

Who We Are!

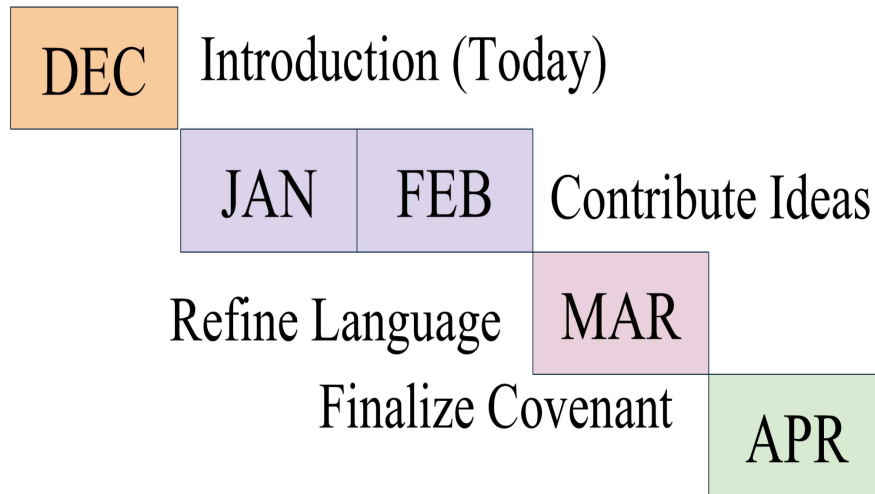
Final report of PUUC's "Who Are We?" process, May 2024

<https://uupeterborough.org/covenant>

MARK - move text to speaker notes

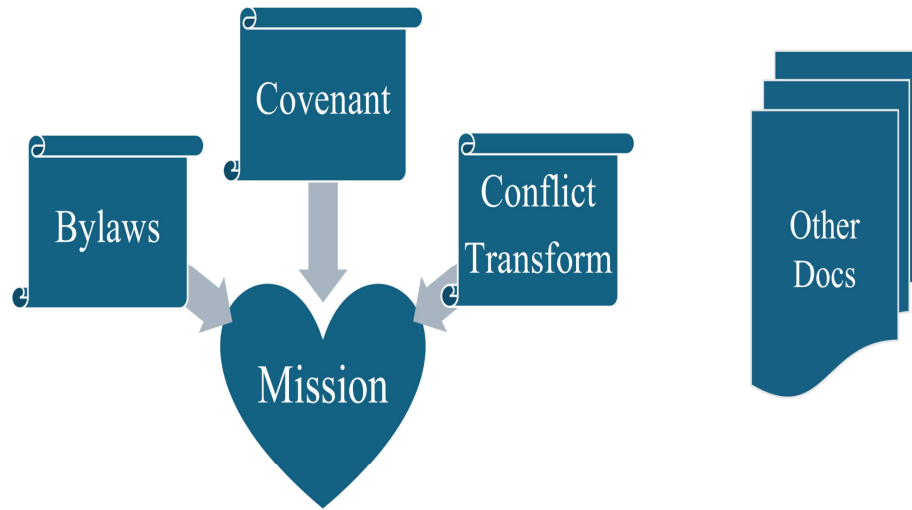
- UUA Publications and Training
- PUUC **Who We Are!** Report
- Samples from UU congregations
- Strong ministerial leadership
- ... and **Ourselves!**

Timeline and Outcomes: Target Vote at Annual Meeting



- December – Introduction (TODAY)
 - Jan, Feb – Contribute ideas & feedback
 - March – Refine Language
 - April – Finalize Covenant
- Goal is adoption at Annual Meeting in May

Interdependent Documents Support Mission



MARK, invite Steve and conflict trans

Other Docs:

Policies

Employment

Guidelines

...etc

SAMPLE COVENANTS

DOTTIE - Before we open up for questions and discussion, we wanted to share some sample covenants that we have found through our research. We want you to get a birds'-eye view, so look at length, accessibility, think about the ability to remember. DO NOT TRY TO READ THEM - this PPT will be available if you want to study the samples. We chose 2 examples from one congregation to show the development over time (longer with behavioral expectations - shorter and more aspirational). Since we are moving toward the aspirational model, with the conflict transformation process (as Steve and Peter explained) addressing the strategies for addressing any behavioral concerns, we have additional examples of that type. At the end is the current PUUC Covenant of Right Relations.

- Explain the alternative covenant styles (long/short)
- Explain Covenant vs Conflict Transformation Documents

Belfast, ME (2012)

CONGREGATIONAL COVENANT OF RIGHT RELATIONS

A covenant of right relations is an agreement to strive toward behavior that creates and maintains vibrant spiritual community—welcoming, safe, respectful, and compassionate. The covenant sets a higher standard than anyone can meet all of the time, but each individual's willingness to aspire to these guidelines will strengthen relationships and build community within our congregation.

Our Unitarian Universalist principles affirm our individual worth and rights to engage in free and responsible searches for meaning and to exercise our own consciences. This and our humanity guarantee that we will, at times, have differences and conflict. Consciously practicing right relations will help us to avoid unnecessary conflict and to grow in caring and commitment when our differences deeply challenge us.

As members and friends of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Belfast, we agree to live and work with this covenant, revisiting it in the varied contexts of our church life.

In this spirit, we covenant:

1. To recognize that our church's ministry runs through all we do.
2. To bring love, humor, and creativity to our work and celebrations.
3. To practice respect and compassion for all, including those whose beliefs or backgrounds differ from our own.
4. To foster hospitality, welcoming all members, friends, and visitors and encouraging them to engage in congregational activities, with hope that no one feels he or she is a stranger.
5. To respect and nurture our children and youth in their growth and explorations of values and beliefs, actively seeking ways to give to and receive from them.
6. To practice stewardship by giving of our time, talent, and treasure to our church, contributing to our larger community, and protecting the Earth.

7. To have faith in the goodness of others and acknowledge our own mistakes, recognizing that we all are imperfect and evolving, and practicing forgiveness.
8. To make room for healthy dissent, listening open-heartedly, talking with rather than about one another, staying engaged when in conflict, and seeking mediation from a third party when conflict cannot otherwise be resolved.
9. To express gratitude and support to our church's staff and to members and friends who volunteer in our programs and governance.
10. As individuals, to examine frequently whether we stand in right relations with other members of our beloved community, taking personal responsibility for our feelings and actions.

This covenant was adopted by our congregation on December 12, 2012 and is subject to revision when the congregation calls for it.

Belfast, ME 2023

The Unitarian Universalist Church of Belfast Maine is a spiritual community that believes in the sacred practice of honoring an agreed upon set of promises to guide our individual behavior and all that we do together.

To that end, we covenant to:

- Practice love, respect, and compassion for everyone;
- Listen open-heartedly;
- Address conflict directly, with kindness and curiosity;
- Talk with, rather than about, one another;
- Have faith in the goodness of others, acknowledging our own mistakes and practicing forgiveness;
- Take responsibility for our feelings and actions.

Milford, NH

In our interactions at UUCM, we promise to:

- Actively reach out to each other.
- Listen and hear.
- Speak directly, with honesty, compassion and curiosity.
- Assume we are all doing the best we can.
- Keep an open mind.
- Accept and appreciate each other.
- Serve our community with generosity and good humor.
- Be responsible and accountable for our choices.
- Forgive each other and ourselves.

Ellsworth, ME

UUCE Congregational Covenant (accepted 10/2017)

We covenant as a loving community to:

- Be kind in word, tone, and deed;
- Communicate directly, and with honesty and thoughtfulness;
- Value a diversity of perspectives;
- Assume the best intentions in one another;
- Respectfully speak up when we are hurt and listen when we cause hurt; and
- When conflict arises, work constructively toward healing and forgiveness.

Peterborough, NH

Covenant of Right Relations

Peterborough Unitarian Universalist Church

As Unitarian Universalists, we are a people not of creed, but of covenant. What we hold in common is not a single theology, but a commitment to the Seven Principles of Unitarian Universalism. The first principle states that we “covenant to affirm and promote the inherent worth and dignity of every person”, and the fourth states that we affirm and promote “justice, equity, and compassion in human relations.” These are not just ideals for how we interact with the rest of the world, but for how we interact with each other, here in this congregation.

Theologian Martin Buber is reported to have said that human beings are “promise-making, promise-keeping, promise-breaking, promise-renewing” creatures. A written covenant of right relations helps make clear what promises we are making, how we keep them, and how we renew them when they are broken.

The most important element of all those steps is respectful communication. When people speak passionately about subjects important to them, it is possible for disagreement to become conflict, and for people to be hurt by the way in which disagreement is expressed. When practicing right relations, people can disagree without being disagreeable. This is an important part of what we commit to with this covenant.

Covenant, however, is about more than just how to handle disagreement. It is about how to live out our commitment to our principles, so that we are in all cases striving to treat each other with the utmost respect and dignity, and are practicing compassion with each other.

As members and friends, lay leaders, minister, and staff of the Peterborough Unitarian Universalist Church, we commit to this covenant with each other. It applies to all of our relationships within the congregation. It exists to help us fulfill our mission statement, which includes the commitment "to nurture a loving, inclusive, spiritual community." We do not always live up to our ideals, but we know we can choose to grow in a manner that promotes a religious community grounded in love and justice. In pledging to follow these guidelines, we will serve our own spiritual development, one another, our religious home, our local community, our larger faith, and our world.

I will....

- communicate directly, respectfully and honestly in a spirit of loving kindness, in words, tone, and body language
- be friendly and welcoming to all members and visitors, and get to know them as individuals
- encourage and support the involvement of everyone in the life of our congregation honoring the boundaries and expressed wishes of others
- allow all a chance to speak, and listen so that all are heard and understood
- be curious and appreciative about perspectives that differ from my own, including the words and ways people choose to express their spirituality

- honor the contributions and needs of those who have been historically marginalized in society and our congregation
- be thoughtful and caring about how and when I share others' stories
- stay in conversation with others even when this feels difficult or stressful, within the limits of safety and respect, recognizing that uncomfortable conversations are sometimes necessary
- communicate with care and respect if my feelings have been hurt, and if I hurt others' feelings, acknowledge this and respond with care and respect
- follow through on my commitments and take responsibility for my words and actions
- address, as soon as possible, when I experience or witness behavior that seems contrary to this covenant
- accept reminders when I fail to live up to this covenant and both apologize, when warranted, and seek to make amends

THOUGHTS?

NEXT STEPS

Questions? Comments? Anything come up for you? Remember to check Zoom participants if any. Notecards? Look at samples on web, follow Cresset updates, etc Collect notecards if any addtl questions



THANK YOU