

COVENANT OF CO-MINISTRY

[Name of Minister]
and
[Name of Minister]
[Name of Congregation]

United in our call to serve the spirit of love and justice through the vocation of ministry in the liberal religious tradition, we, the co-ministers of the **[Name of Congregation]**, covenant with one another:

- To conduct ourselves with integrity, honoring the trust placed in us;
- To embody in our lives the values that we proclaim on behalf of our faith;
- To support one another in collegial respect and care, understanding and honoring the diversity within our association;
- To hold ourselves accountable to each other for the competent exercise of our vocation;
- To use our power constructively and with intention, mindful of our potential unconsciously to perpetuate systems of oppression;
- To seek justice and right relations according to our evolving collective wisdom, and to refrain from all abuse or exploitation;
- To cultivate practices of deepening awareness, understanding, humility, and commitment to our ideals;
- To labor earnestly together for the well being of our communities and the progress of Unitarian Universalism.

- To ask ourselves – what is best for the congregation when matters are confusing about who should do what or when things should be handed off.
- Alright friends, we (Sharon Wylie and I) have made another attempt at getting this right, doing our best to incorporate and address the feedback we've received, plus adding in a couple other pieces for good measure. Below is our revised policy for the group. If there's more feedback that indicates a need for further revision, we'll revise again.

Guiding Policy:

- Our intention is to make sure that this collaborative workspace be welcoming to all colleagues, especially those with marginalized identities. In support of this goal, we want our collegial interactions here to minimize harm to each other.
- We use the word “harm” in this document, unless otherwise noted, to mean negative impacts to those with marginalized identities. Such impacts include the hurt that comes from having needs ignored; the exhaustion that comes from being asked or expected to provide emotional labor to explain or defend lived experience; and the loss of trust that comes when a request to stop inflicting harm is ignored.
- We are also aware that some group members simultaneously hold both privileged and marginalized identities. When we use the phrases such as “identity privilege” or “group members with identity privilege,” we’re aware that some group members might be functioning in one conversation from a place of identity privilege, and in another conversation from a marginalized identity.
- First, it is our policy going forward that group members with identity privilege must be open to receiving feedback and critique about the potential to cause harm or actual harm caused in their posts or comments. We remind our colleagues with identity privilege that engaging in these kinds of conversations can be challenging, and might

not always feel comfortable. We encourage colleagues to lean into any discomfort being experienced, and try to listen to what is being offered.

- Second, beyond receiving, group members with identity privilege must also be willing to genuinely engage with the feedback and critique. Genuine engagement entails a willingness to listen and honestly consider the feedback or critique being offered. Reflective dialogue and curious disagreement are welcome and encouraged. Sharing that you are listening and reflecting on what is being said is also acceptable. Dismissal, arguing without listening, and defensiveness will not meet the standard of genuine engagement.
- Third, when group members with identity privilege are receiving feedback that feels uncomfortable or overwhelming, it is a good practice to ask for help and to accept offered help. Such help will often occur in a space outside our group—a phone conversation, an email exchange, etc. The moderators are happy to close comments on a thread when there are colleagues who need time to process the feedback being offered and/or need time to accept and receive offered help. Commenting may subsequently be reopened if and when conversation can continue.
- Fourth, if you are a group member with identity privilege and are not willing to receive and genuinely engage with feedback and critique about harm, then we ask that you not post or comment, though you are welcome to stay in the group as an observer.
- Fifth, if you are a group member with identity privilege and you refuse to engage with feedback and critique about harm, the moderators will engage with you, remind you of this policy, and offer you a chance to genuinely engage. If you decline to genuinely engage after this reminder from the moderators, you will be removed from the group. Please note that simply responding does not qualify as “genuine engagement” – as noted above, it matters what you say and how you respond.
- Sixth, it may be possible for someone with identity privilege to genuinely engage while also continuing to share words and/or act in

ways where the impact is harmful to others. After having received a request from the moderators to cease and desist, if the impact of the words and/or actions of such a group member continues to be harmful, said member will be removed from the group. We hope not to have to get this point; however maintaining a welcoming space for all is our highest priority

- As always in a group composed entirely of UUMA members, we remind everyone that we are all bound by our UUMA covenant. For all members of the group, we expect generally that we will treat one another with kindness, compassion and respect, in ways that do not cause each other harm in the broadest meaning of the word. If more general harm is being inflicted outside of specific dominant-identity/non-dominant-identity power dynamics, such as name-calling or other inappropriate personal attacks, the moderators will address such behavior immediately up to and including removing members from the group if necessary.
- We implement this policy moving forward with the intent of honoring the relationship and connection between colleagues as we engage in the work of creating meaningful worship for our congregations and unique ministry settings. We hope it will offer an appropriate amount of accountability while still allowing us to have conversations about nuanced and complicated topics, and perhaps even the occasional difficult one.
- *Your moderators are also aware that we both check off most of the inherent identity privilege boxes – white, straight, cis-gendered. If we have erred in this policy, or if it needs modifying or updating, we welcome feedback on it, especially from colleagues with one or more marginalized identities. We have already made significant edits based on feedback we have received, and will make more if need be.*
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inflicted outside of specific dominant-identity/non-dominant-identity power dynamics.

- We hope this covenant offers an appropriate amount of accountability while still allowing us to have conversations about nuanced and complicated topics, and perhaps even the occasional difficult one.
- Reflective dialogue and curious disagreement are welcome and encouraged. Sharing that you are listening and reflecting on what is being said is also acceptable.

We recognize that none of us is perfect and all are works in progress. We hold one another in love as, through fidelity to this covenant and our Code of Professional Conduct, we aspire to grow in wholeness, and bring hope and healing to the world.

Signed,

[Name of Current Minister]

[DATE]

[Name of Departing Minister]

[DATE]