

## The Presbytery of Eastern Virginia

**Mediation and Reconciliation  
Sub-Committee (MARS) is  
under the authority and  
guidance of the Committee on  
Ministry**

*Mediation And Reconciliation*

*“It shall serve as an instrument of presbytery for promoting the peace and harmony of the churches, especially in regard to matters arising out of the relations between ministers and churches. Its purpose shall be to mediate differences and reconcile persons, to the end that the difficulties may be corrected by the session of the church if possible, that the welfare of the particular church may be strengthened, that the unity of the body of Christ may be made manifest.”*

**G-11.0502(i)  
Book of Order**



*“But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body’s growth in building itself up in love.”*

**Ephesians 4:15-16**

There are five levels of conflict; resolution is easiest when the conflict is at a low level.



**Level One – Problem to Solve:** There is a problem to solve and there is disagreement on goals, values and needs; short-lived anger quickly controlled.



**Level Two – Disagreement:** Real disagreement; mixing of personalities and issues; problem cannot be clearly defined; distrust beginning; less mixing with the other side.”



**Level Three – Contest:** Begin the dynamics of win/lose. Resistance to peace overtures; focus on persons representing the “enemy;” not able to share emotions/feelings constructively.



**Level Four – Fight/Fight:** Shifts from winning to getting rid of persons); no longer believe other can change, or want to change; cold self-righteousness; will not speak to other side.



**Level Five – Intractable:** No longer clear understanding of issue; personalities have become the issue; conflict now unmanageable; relentless obsession in accomplishing the objective(s) at all costs; vindictive; no object control of emotion.

## 1. Purpose

- To partner with our brothers and sisters in Christ in resolving conflicts in the church and working towards reconciliation.

## 2. When to contact MARS

- Whenever conflict cannot be reconciled (as early as Level Two) one or both parties are encouraged to consult with MARS to consider options for resolution.

## 3. How is mediation process started?

- The Pastor and/or Session of a church make a request in writing on church letterhead. It must be signed by the Clerk of the Session and sent to:

*The Presbytery of Eastern Virginia,  
Committee on Ministry/ MARS  
801 Loudoun Avenue  
Portsmouth, VA 23707*

A member of MARS will be assigned as contact/liaison person.

## 4. What services are provided?

- Identifying the issues that need to be dealt with in the church.

Developing a plan of action to improve the situation with those who are responsible for, and affected by, the problems.

Helping the session, the pastor(s), the staff and the congregation face, deal with, and make decisions concerning issues and behaviors that affect the church.

Assisting in the development and implementation of strategies to improve communications within the church and setting positive directions for the future.

## 5. How much will it cost?

- MARS freely offers its service as part of its commitment to the Church of Jesus Christ. There are often ancillary costs for copying, resource materials and meeting expenses. All such cost will be negotiated.

## 6. Who are the members of MARS?

- The Committee on Ministry selects pastors and elders in good standing, experience in the PCUSA, knowledge of Presbyterian polity and training in and commitment to conflict resolution.

## 3. Who may I contact with questions?

- The Rev. Dr. J. Richard Short, General Presbyter or the Rev. Mary Newbern-Williams, Associate Presbyter at (757) 397-7063 or E-mail: [Infor@pcusa-peva.org](mailto:Infor@pcusa-peva.org).

## Resources

- *Conflict Management In Congregations*  
Edited by David Lott Alban Institute

*The Five Dysfunctions Of A Team*  
Patrick Lencioni, Jossey Bass 2002

*Transforming Conflict In Your Church*  
Marlin E Thomas. Herald Press  
Scottsdale AZ

*Welcoming Resistance*  
William Chris Hobgood, Alban Institute

*When Better Isn't Enough*  
Jill Hudson, Alban Institute

## Other Conflict Resolution Resources

- The Alban Institute provides workshops and conflict resolution consultants. For more information call the Rev Kathryn Palen at 1-800-486-1318 Ext 227.