

# Rule of Christ *A Biblical Process for Dealing with Conflict*

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Members of the faith community known as First United Methodist Church of Arlington Heights (FUMCAH) are a nurturing and inclusive community, actively connecting faith and life, and empowering our congregation to serve in the world. This is the mission of our church.

A basic tenet of our Christian community is that each and every member may anticipate kindness and compassion from others, growing in an environment of love and trust. As is the case with all things fashioned by humankind, maintenance is required. To that end, what follows is a methodology suggested for respectful conflict resolution when issues arise, as they most surely will.

## **Step One: Look at Yourself (Matthew 18: 8-9)**

Jesus tells us to take time to examine our role in the conflict. Ask yourself:

- Is harm being done? To whom?
- Can I let it go? (If the answer is yes, there is no need to confront the other person.)

*If not*

- What may the other person perceive that I have contributed to this problem?
- What does God see?

Use the Discernment Journal to reflect on these questions to gain insight for the next steps. At this point, you may see things in your own behavior that needs changing. Resolve to do that. Think through what it is you hope to communicate with the person with whom you are in conflict, and what you would like to see as an outcome. Based on these insights, consider how you can change your own behavior.

## **Step Two: One on One (Matthew 18: 15)**

The purpose of the second step is to resolve the conflict... not to get mad or to get even. Remember to:

- Speak for yourself by starting your sentences with "I"
- Work hard to understand the other person's point of view
- Work together to create solutions

*If not resolved by a one-on-one conversation...*

## **Step Three: Get Some Objective Help (Matthew 18:16)**

Others can help the two parties see possibilities. You can invite someone to come with you as you meet with the other person to help mediate or facilitate the process.

To do that:

- Make sure you have done steps 1 and 2 first.
- Write a one page summary of your concern and give it to the mediator. See attached form.
- The mediator will meet with both parties to facilitate a conversation.

*If not resolved by involving a mediator...*

## **Step Four: Take It to the Church (Matthew 18: 17a)**

Use the resources of the Church. This might be the time to bring in the appropriate leaders in the church. Church Council Chair, Staff Parish Relations Chair or the Lead Pastor are all appropriate contacts, as well as the District Superintendent.

*If not resolved by outside help from the wider church...*

## **Step Five: Shake the Dust (Matthew 18: 17b)**

There are some issues that cannot be resolved. The church should remember its mission. Let go of the anger and disappointment at the unresolved issues and move on with your ministry. Don't allow the conflict to contaminate the fellowship at FUMCAH. Remember that we are called to love everyone, even those we in conflict with.

## **Step Six: God is There (Matthew 18:20)**

Remember God's powerful promise to be with us in the midst of our problems. The Church belongs to God, and God is always present and working, regardless of our flawed behavior.