

**Rule of Christ Conflict Resolution Process
Coon Rapids United Methodist Church**

Guidance from Matthew 18:15-20

Purpose of Rule of Christ Conflict Resolution Process:

To enable a means to resolve concerns and conflicts at Coon Rapids United Methodist Church in a manner that is guided by scripture with a focus on God's will, personal responsibility, empathy, open communication and love of one another.

Scripture (New International Version (NIV))

Matthew 18:15-20 The Message (MSG)

¹⁵⁻¹⁷ "If a fellow believer hurts you, go and tell him - work it out between the two of you. If he listens, you've made a friend. If he won't listen, take one or two others along so that the presence of witnesses will keep things honest, and try again. If he still won't listen, tell the church. If he won't listen to the church, you'll have to start over from scratch, confront him with the need for repentance, and offer again God's forgiving love.

¹⁸⁻²⁰ "Take this most seriously: A yes on earth is yes in heaven; a no on earth is no in heaven. What you say to one another is eternal. I mean this. When two of you get together on anything at all on earth and make a prayer of it, my Father in heaven goes into action. And when two or three of you are together because of me, you can be sure that I'll be there."

The Problem:

I have a concern or am in conflict about something/with someone at Coon Rapids United Methodist Church.

Process for Resolution

Begin with Step 1. If unresolved, proceed through the next steps consecutively until resolution.

- 1) Discern God's will. Complete a Concern Summary Form to help identify the concern or conflict.
Ask:
 - a. Can I let it go?
 - b. What part am I responsible for?
 - c. What does God want?

2) Go to the other person involved in the concern. (Matthew 18: 15)

- State the concern and try to resolve the conflict between the two of you.
- Plan ahead and practice what to say.
- Plan to meet in a neutral location.
- The goal of the meeting: Discuss and work together to find a solution that satisfies both.
- Begin the conversation in prayer.
- Share using "I" statements (example: I feel "X" when "x" happens).
- Work hard to understand the other person's position.
- Listen carefully and ask questions to help clarify the understanding: ("Could you help me understand...?", "Could you tell me more about...?")
- Determine together if the matter is resolved and if each party is satisfied and can move forward.

3) Seek objective help from the appropriate ministry area of the church (Matthew 18: 16)

- a. Set up a meeting with the appropriate ministry area and the Pastor. Revisit the Concern Summary Form and update as needed. Provide this document to the ministry leader and Pastor prior to the meeting. You may bring one or two others to this meeting who can act as listening parties to the conversation. All invited will be made aware of who will attend and that it will be a closed meeting.
 - Begin the meeting in prayer.
 - Goal of the meeting is to work toward resolving the conflict so that both parties are satisfied and can move forward.
 - Agree upon which parts of the meeting are confidential.
 - Agree upon which parts of the meeting may be shared with the congregation, if required by United Methodist polity or other legal/moral considerations.
 - Assign responsibilities for all areas of follow-up needed for resolution.

4) Take it to the church (Matthew 18:17a)

- a. The ministry area, the person(s) bringing the concern and the Pastor set up a meeting to discuss with the Coon Rapids United Methodist Church Executive Board or Staff Parish Relations Committee, if staff related.
 - i. Prior to this meeting, a written statement describing the concern is provided to the Executive Board members or Staff Parish Relations Committee Chair.
 - ii. One or two others acting as listening parties may participate in the meeting.
 - iii. All invited to the meeting will be made aware of who will be attending and that it will be a closed meeting.
 - Begin the meeting in prayer.
 - Goal of the meeting is to work toward resolving the conflict so that both parties are satisfied and can move forward.

- Agree upon which parts of the meeting are confidential.
- Agree upon which parts of the meeting may be shared with the congregation. The Executive Board will assist the parties in defining the conflict and in producing and carrying out mutually agreed upon steps toward resolution.
- A mediator or conflict resolution specialist may become involved.

iv. If the matter remains unresolved, steps may need to be taken in accordance with The Book of Discipline, para. 221 of the United Methodist Church.

5) Shake the Dust (Matthew 18: 17b)

All individuals involved in the matter will try their best to:

- a. Let go of related anger, resentment and hurt feelings.
- b. Understand that some matters may not be resolved despite our best efforts.
- c. Refocus on the mission of Coon Rapids United Methodist Church: to introduce unbelievers to Jesus, and to lead believers to become Disciples of Christ.

ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURES

Colossians 3:12-15

¹²Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. ¹³Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. ¹⁴And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. ¹⁵Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful.

Philippians 2:1-42

Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, ²then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. ³Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, ⁴not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.

Romans 12

⁹Love must be sincere. Hate what is evil; cling to what is good. ¹⁰Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves. ¹⁷Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. ¹⁸If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.

Romans 14

Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification.

**COON RAPIDS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
RULE OF CHRIST CONFLICT RESOLUTION PROCESS**

CONCERN SUMMARY FORM

Your Name: _____

Name of the person(s) this concerns:

Briefly describe the issue: (Use only one sentence. This will help you focus.)

Your position on the issue:

Your perception of the other person's position on the issue:

Is there history behind your concern? Is this history impacting your reactions?

What steps have you taken to resolve and communicate this concern with the parties involved?

What have the two of you agreed to?

What remains to be resolved?

State your concern as a need. (It is very important to be concise in this statement. It will provide clarity for future committee evaluation, if needed.)

I need...