

**Creating a Healthy Congregation**  
**Bradford Community Church Unitarian Universalist**  
**Our Congregational Covenant**  
**Adopted May 8, 2016 by Unanimous Vote**  
**Those Voting Signed the Covenant**

PREAMBLE

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We the members of the Congregation of Bradford Community Church Unitarian Universalist, pledge to speak with respect and listen with love. Our goal is to relate to one another with empathy and compassion, with an open mind and a caring heart.

We pledge to bring our *best selves* to our relationships in our beloved community, including worship, fellowship, committee work, and even beyond our four walls.

When we cannot bring our *best selves* to our relationships, we will strive; nevertheless, to provide positive communication and action, and hope others will understand and promote empathy in our relationships.

We recognize that Bradford Community Church Unitarian Universalist will change over time, and for change to be positive, we must have: **Vision, Passion and Commitment.**

OUR EXPECTATIONS

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We will strive to see others' perspectives, knowing that to be understood, we must first understand.

We will strive to be flexible and spontaneous, so we may reach the best possible outcome.

We will strive to support one another, because we care for one another.

We will strive to nurture acceptance of diversity in others and ourselves.

We will respect confidentiality.

We will strive to cooperate with others.

We will communicate with respect and love.

We will accept others' gifts and contributions with gratitude.

We will be open to change—change is inevitable.

We will show respect for others during worship by turning off our cell phones and refraining from texting.

RESOLUTIONS

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When conflict arises we will:

Model the church's congregational covenant.

Be open to others' perspectives.

Assume the best intentions.

Have the courage to speak up in a caring way.

Stop and take a breath when there is disagreement or conflict.

Have the courage to say, “ouch” when someone is doing something hurtful. “Ouch” acknowledges the disagreement and gives everyone the time to resolve the conflict.

Use “I feel” statements, “I don’t feel safe right now,” or “I don’t think this is how we treat each other in a healthy congregation.”

Avoid “You” statements.

Deal directly with the other person involved.

“Reflect on and repeat” what we think we heard.

Clarify our thoughts and share them—ask, “Does this make sense?”

Follow the universal adage: It is better to “be kind” than to “be right.”

Apologize when we hurt someone’s feelings.

Call each other to accountability when we are not living our congregation’s covenant.

#### ADDENDUM—“RESET CANDLE”

If conflict cannot be solved by our **RESOLUTIONS**, an intragroup process called “Reset Candle” will guide us.

The process promotes understanding and a way through conflicts. *Reset* means, “set something right,” retune, make right.

A reset candle calls us to consciously and intentionally realize that we are family with interconnected, intertwined lives, and the circle of love is far more important than any conflict.

Convene around a table, if you are not already around a table.

Light a candle. The flame reminds everyone that we are in this together; like the elements that combine to provide a flame, we are here, in a meeting, to make a difference in the church.

Sit quietly for a while.

Ask the group to move away from the table. Perhaps a fifteen (15) minute break.

Extinguish the candle.

Reconvene in silence.

Relight the candle.

Look at the person(s) next to you as more valuable than the issues.

Share one’s thoughts; use “I” statements.

Respond to negativity with kindness and love, acknowledge them.

Take another break to calm down, if the disagreement and conflict continue.

Extinguish the candle.

Reconvene in silence.

Relight the candle.

Begin again, remembering those with whom we work are more precious than any decision or activity.