

Central United Church, St. Thomas Conflict Resolution Policy

Disagreement between two parties is a natural part of our humanity. However, it is unhealthy to a community of faith for two parties to be in conflict without attempting to resolve their differences.

Matthew 18: 15 - 16 reads: “¹⁵If another member of the church sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If the member listens to you, you have regained that one. ¹⁶But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses.”

If you are in conflict with someone within the congregation, try to resolve your disagreement as soon as possible. **Do not discuss your problem with others.** Contact the other party and ask to meet with them to discuss the problem. Choose a neutral meeting place. **It is important to meet in person rather than by e-mail, text message or other electronic systems. These can be misinterpreted and cause further problems.**

If either party is uncomfortable meeting on your own, agree on a neutral third party to ask to be present at your meeting.

Give your conversation partner a chance to tell their side of the story/perspective. Listen with respect. Then describe for the other person why you are upset with something they said or did, what you heard and how you felt. Do not place blame. Use “I” statements. Speak respectfully and with trust.

When the dispute has been resolved, thank the other party for hearing your side of the story. Shake hands and agree to move forward in sharing in God’s work.

If you and the other party cannot resolve your problem, put your concern in writing with your signature, and submit it to the Chair of Ministry and Personnel. That person will determine the next steps. That may include a meeting with the Chair of M&P, or their designate, to try to resolve the disagreement. If this is not possible, they can refer the matter to an outside mediator or party, possibly from the Antler River Watershed Region.

If the concern is with a member of staff, a signed letter must be written to the Ministry and Personnel Committee who will attempt to resolve the situation.

A more formal process for resolving disagreements may be required. For this information, please refer to the Dispute Resolution Policy of the United Church of Canada: https://united-church.ca/sites/default/files/handbook_dispute-resolution.pdf