

Conflict Resolution Protocol

The following protocol has been adopted by the Pastor Parrish Relations Committee (PPRC) of St. John's United Methodist Church. It is intended to provide Biblical instruction for resolving conflict between people who call St. John's their church home, including: frequent visitors, members, staff, and pastors.

In all things, we seek to be obedient to God's Word in Holy Scripture. We believe that Godly results only come about when we practice Biblical principles for holy living. Therefore, we will follow Jesus' instruction for conflict resolution amongst believers found in Matthew 18.15-20.

General Instruction

- If you are upset with someone, Jesus says you must share your feelings with them before you share them with anyone else.
- Gossiping, slandering, and speaking poorly of another is expressly forbidden. It is the responsibility of the whole church to discipline a brother or sister who participates in such practices.
- If someone shares their anger/hurt with you about a third person, gently cut them off by asking, "And what did they say when you shared this directly with them?" Remind them that Jesus explicitly instructed us to follow his protocol for conflict resolution. Offer to get them a copy of this document.
- If someone is upset with a staff member or pastor and shares with you, remind them that they are to go directly to the person. If they express reservations, offer to go with them. If they still refuse – let them know that you love them, but can no longer listen to them on this issue until they are willing to follow Jesus instruction.
- Failure to hold your tongue until speaking with the person with whom you are upset is the most likely way to spoil any chance of resolution and will likely result in a negative outcome for the slanderer.

Conflict with another member or a staff person

1. BEFORE you speak to anyone else, go directly to the person with whom you are upset. Speak to them sharing how their words/behavior makes you feel. Seek resolution and restoration of the relationship.
2. If the two of you are unable to satisfactorily resolve the conflict and restore the relationship, come together to the pastor. He/she will work to assist you in resolving the conflict and restoring the relationship. (Here the pastor serves the "elder" function of Matthew 18)
3. If the three of you are unable to satisfactorily resolve the conflict, the pastor will invite the PPRC (in part or whole) to resolve the conflict. Their decision on the outcome shall be final. (Here the PPRC serves as the "church" function of Matthew 18)
4. Remaining in the community will necessitate all parties abiding by the PPRC's final decision.

Conflict with a pastor

1. BEFORE you speak to anyone else, go directly to the pastor with whom you are upset. Speak to them sharing how their words/behavior makes you feel. Seek resolution and restoration of the relationship.
2. If the two of you are unable to satisfactorily resolve the conflict and restore the relationship, come together to the Chairman & two designated members of PPRC. They will work to assist you in resolving the conflict and restoring the relationship. (Here the PPRC serves the "elder" function of Matthew 18)
3. If the three of you are unable to satisfactorily resolve the conflict, the PPRC Chairman will invite the entire PPRC to resolve the conflict. Their decision on the outcome shall be final. (Here the full PPRC serves as the "church" function of Matthew 18)
4. Remaining in the community will necessitate all parties abiding by the PPRC's final decision.