

Policy Title: Misconduct of Church Minister

Congregation Effective Date: March 2018

Policy Number: 5.2

Revisions: New

Purpose: Reporting & processing procedures to address the misconduct of a Church Minister

Board Review: December 2017

Congregations' Acceptance: TBD

POLICY STATEMENT: All FPBUU Ministers shall conduct themselves in accordance with the FPBUU Code of Ethics and the guidelines of the Unitarian Universalist Minister's Association (UUMA).

PROCEDURES: Under this policy, the FPBUU encourages its Minister(s) to nurture safety within Ministerial Relationships by being attentive to self-care, education, maintaining appropriate boundaries, and the importance of referring those in need to supportive and helpful resources. Failure to do so may be considered misconduct, unethical, and incompetent. The Board, when it has credible evidence that a minister has engaged in misconduct, may suspend, pending further investigation.

1. Any person connected with FPBUU, for example members, friends, leaders or staff, who feels the minister has engaged in unethical conduct may report this concern to the FPBUU Board President or if the Board President is unavailable or possibly involved in the reported incident, the Past president on the Board. The Board President will keep confidential the person reporting the concern and ensure there is no retribution to that person as a consequence of the report. Upon receipt of any concern of ministerial misconduct, the Board President will investigate the concern to determine its merits. After the investigation concludes (note Guidelines below), the Board President will make a recommendation, in executive session, to the FPBUU Board of Trustees of what appropriate action should be taken in response to the reported misconduct. Possible recommendation responses include:

- a) Provide feedback to the minister and monitor the situation going forward,
- b) Take no action (likely due to lack of credible evidence of misconduct),
- c) Recommend that the Board discuss the findings from the Board President with the minister in Executive Session,
- d) Recommend to the Board that the Unitarian Universalist Association (UUA) / Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association (UUMA) get involved.

2. All Board discussions of minister misconduct reports shall be conducted as part of its Executive Session to protect those involved in the complaint.

3. The Board president will communicate a decision by the Board back to the person(s) initiating the misconduct report within 30 days of receipt of the report and if appropriate, notify the congregation of the Board's decision once the decision has been reached.

4. Sexual Exploitation or Sexual Harassment by a minister is not addressed in this policy but is addressed in FPBUU's Sexually Safe Congregation Policy # 3.3.

GUIDELINES:

- Suggested violations constituting misconduct may be:
 - 1. The FPBUU Minister violates the FPBUU Code of Ethics.
 - 2. The FPBUU Minister violates UUMA Guidelines / Code of Conduct:
<https://uuma.site-ym.com/?guidelines>
- UUA & UUMA reporting process:
 - 1. The UUA has a hot line: Monday-Friday during regular business hours, and will work with the FPBUU Board to assist in determining a resolution to the misconduct complaint. The UUA offers completely confidential listening, and can explain the process for filing a complaint at <https://www.uua.org/safe/misconduct/complaint-process> [Link active as of April 2018]
 - 2. In addition to the UUA, the UUMA may be contacted for additional consultation. <http://www.uuma.org/>

3. If the Board concludes that no action should be taken, there would be no communication with the congregation except for informing the person alleging misconduct about the decision.
4. In cases where misconduct of a minister has been established, the Board will determine whether to notify part of or all of the congregation its decision and the method by which this notification will be carried out.

STANDARDS

- FPBUU Code of Ethics
- UUMA Code of Conduct

DEFINITIONS

“TBD”