

First Parish Brewster Unitarian Universalist

Charge to the Right Relations Team

Revised (March 2026)

The well-being and strength of the First Parish Brewster (FPBUU) community depends on a recognition of fellowship among members, staff, ministers, friends, and volunteers which thrives in an atmosphere of trust, respect, and cooperation. Within such an atmosphere, differences of opinion and their resolution through compromise and consensus can enhance a sense of community. However, differences or misunderstandings that go unresolved can threaten the social fabric of our church community. We recognize that conflict will arise from time to time and, when it does, tending to the conflict is paramount.

For those times when any of us may want assistance in resolving such conflicts in a healthy manner, the Board of Trustees (BOT) has established a Right Relations Team. The Right Relations Team (RRT) is available to:

- Be a resource for FPBUU members, staff, ministers, friends, and volunteers to help manage conflicts, grief, grievances and other communications in a healthy manner. This may include facilitating congregation-wide gatherings, offering deep listening and providing education and training in right relations.¹ The RRT will not act as an adjudicatory body rendering decisions.
- Assist individuals and groups in dealing with conflict in a right relational way.
- Be a resource to the BOT when requested, by assisting in developing policies regarding conflict resolution and disruptive behavior.
- Provide input to the BOT on revisions to this charge which the BOT may want to authorize as the needs of the congregation change and as the RRT is called to meet those changing needs.

The RRT will include a minimum of three members of the FPBUU community who are skilled in mediation, conflict resolution and group facilitation. Additional members will be affirmed by standing RRT members and approved by the BOT.

When the RRT begins working with staff around a conflict involving another staff member, supervisor, or minister, we will let them know that in addition RRT support, the staff member should review the Personnel Manual. We will also share with the staff member the relevant section(s) in the Personnel Manual.

An RRT member may find that they cannot be impartial concerning an issue brought to them. If there is a conflict of interest or personal involvement, the RRT member will recuse themselves from participation.

Information shared with the RRT by parties seeking assistance will be held in strict confidence, including that such information will only be shared with other RRT members on a need-to-know basis.² If there is imminent danger of serious harm or other ethical obligation that requires disclosure, information may be shared with a minister, BOT Officer or legal authority.

The RRT shall develop guidelines, procedures and protocols for carrying out its functions, all of which shall be consistent with the provisions and scope of this charge, and which shall be subject to review and approval by the BOT.

For matters unrelated to specific facilitation or assistance requests, e.g. when meeting as a Team itself, the RRT will strive to make decisions by consensus. If two-thirds of the RRT decides that an immediate decision should be made, they may revert to voting. When voting, a two-thirds majority is necessary to pass a proposal.

¹ "Right Relations" refers to a way of being characterized by respect, reciprocity, and healthy relationships with all of creation, including the human and more-than-human world. It emphasizes interconnectedness, interdependence, and a commitment to fostering positive relationships through intentional actions and awareness of one's impact on others and the environment.

² A "Need to Know" determination will be made by the RRT Chair and the RRT member handling the issue/concern/conflict. Information is determined "Need to Know" if it is required to better serve the parties involved and/or the Congregation. The RRT shall pause and seek discernment from one another when a "Need to Know" determination is unclear.

The RRT will meet regularly for team building, skill building, and triaging issues that arise in the Congregation. Funds may be requested from the FPBUU budget to provide training for RRT members.