

A Minister's Covenant

Dear members and friends of the UU Church of Kent,

As I remind us during worship each week, we are a people of covenant. We make promises to one another about how we will be together and what we expect each other as a spiritual community. Ministers also make covenants with each other so that we have clarity about what we can expect in our relationships with each other and with congregations, especially those congregations we have previously served.

Melissa left as your settled minister three years ago this month. In the spirit of our UU Minister's Association code of ethics and best practices, she chose not to have contact with you for a period of three years in order to allow the next ministers called to serve this congregation the opportunity to enter into relationship with you. Now that the three years have passed, Melissa and I have been in contact about a covenant between us which invites her once again to be in contact with you and you with her, although your relationship will be different than it was when she was your minister. With her permission, I am sharing our covenant with you so that you understand how to be in relationship with her in an appropriate way and that our primary shared concern is the health and well-being of you, the congregation. As always, if you have any questions, feel free to contact me.

-Rev. Steven

A Covenant Between Previous Minister and Current Minister

Rev. Melissa Carvill Ziemer, Previous Minister
and Rev. Steven Protzman, Current Minister
Unitarian Universalist Church of Kent
Created November 1, 2019

Bound together in covenant as members of the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association, Rev. Steven Protzman and Rev. Melissa Carvill Ziemer are dedicated to the health and integrity of the Unitarian Universalist ministry. As a former settled minister of the Unitarian Universalist Church of Kent, Rev. Melissa shares a commitment to the health and flourishing of that congregation with Rev. Steven, the congregation's current settled minister.

Though Rev. Melissa has a full and active ministry in another Unitarian Universalist setting, she appreciates the opportunity to get a glimpse into the life and work of the congregation and its members and friends from time to time. And as their former minister, members of the congregation may enjoy the opportunity to get a glimpse into Rev. Melissa's life and ministry from time to time as well.

When Rev. Melissa has occasion to interact with members and friends of the congregation on social media or at in-person Unitarian Universalist events or congregational events (at which per Rev. Steven she is welcome to attend as appropriate), she will avoid engaging in any way that could be seen as influencing congregational affairs. She will also refrain from providing ministerial or pastoral services without consulting Rev. Steven and in such circumstances she will affirm Rev. Steven's role as the congregation's settled minister and refer requests to him.

Rev. Steven and Rev. Melissa pledge to uphold the Guidelines of the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association in our interactions with one another, with an emphasis on mutual respect, healthy boundaries and clear communication.

Should Rev. Steven have concerns about Rev. Melissa's interactions with the congregation or its members and friends, Rev. Melissa will defer to his concerns and the primacy of his role. Should either minister have concerns that this covenant is not being effectively maintained, they shall speak with one another directly and seek reaffirmation or renegotiation of this covenant with consideration for the health of the congregation and of Rev. Steven's ministry as central to their mutual concern.