

GUIDELINES FOR NURTURING COMMUNICATION AT OAK GROVE

Oak Grove United Methodist Church values meaningful input from congregants. The church seeks conversations that build the Body of Christ and equip the church for effective ministry.

We recognize that personnel, financial, and other administrative issues tend to evoke strong emotions within churches. Conflict in any organization, including a church, is normal. Conflicts can be harmful, causing pain and schism. Conflicts also provide opportunities for new insights and growth. Successful resolution of conflict can bind people together in a powerful way. Often the difference between successful and unsuccessful resolution is how we frame the conversation. To that end, the church has adopted the following guidelines for communication among its members and from members of the congregation to church committees.

No individual member of a committee can speak for the group as a whole.

When a congregant has an issue with another person, the congregant should follow three steps.

- 1) The congregant should address his/her concern directly with that person with whom s/he is having a disagreement.
- 2) If satisfactory resolution cannot be obtained there, the congregant should meet with the Senior Pastor.
- 3) If the Senior Pastor cannot satisfactorily resolve the issue, the congregant should write a letter to the appropriate church committee. In writing a letter the author represents only him/herself and not “many people who agree with me.” If others agree with the author, they should follow these three steps individually.

All committee meetings of Oak Grove United Methodist Church are open to the congregation with the exception of all SPR meetings, all Nominations Committee meetings, and potentially executive sessions of the Board of Trustees to discuss legal issues. Personnel matters – staff and volunteer – are confidential. Due to confidentiality, information about salaries and benefits, disciplinary proceedings and other personnel actions cannot be shared. Recognizing that the Nominations Committee and the SPR Committee often cannot share all of the information at its disposal, the congregation and committees operate within a context of mutual trust.

Because of the size of Oak Grove, it is usually not possible for the committee to allow church members to speak at meetings. However, the committee welcomes written communication addressed to the chair of the committee.

If a church entity wishes to address a concern to another committee, the leader of the group should first talk directly to the person involved, then to the Sr. Pastor before writing a letter.

Letters should be addressed to the chairperson of the committee and either mailed to the home of the chairperson or given to the Sr. Pastor.

In all communication, Oak Grove seeks to honor Christ and each other in the following ways.

- We seek to be respectful of all persons.
- We seek to be open and honest.
- We state our position clearly based on facts, and we recognize the value of ideas different from ours.
- We value the feelings and concerns of those who do not agree with the majority and respect their rights of conscience.
- We do not make statements that judge or intimidate others.
- We listen to one another. Listening without argument does not imply agreement.
- We seek a consensus, but even if we disagree, we abide by and support the decision of the group.
- We seek to stay in community with one another even though we may strongly disagree.