

# ESMC CONFLICT RESOLUTION PROCESS

March 2024

The Goal of the ESMC Conflict Resolution Process is to provide an opportunity for anyone in our church community to address concerns and resolve differences with a Pastor or a staff member or a congregant. The process supports the early identification of conflicts and/or performance issues and follows the teachings of Mathew 18:15-17.

## **A. Conflicts Involving Pastors and/or Staff**

### **Step #1:**

Person with the concern (PWTC) will attempt to speak to the Pastor/staff person directly about the concern\*. The following norms are encouraged during such conversations:

- Speak with your mind and heart
- Listen for understanding
- Presume positive intentions on the part of the past/staff person

### **Step #2:**

If the matter is not resolved (or if there is a reason why this conversation doesn't happen) the person with the concern (PWTC) will contact a member of the Personnel Committee. The Personnel Committee member will support the PWTC as they attempt to resolve the matter. All reports of concern will be held in confidence.

### **Step #3:**

If the matter is not resolved to everyone's satisfaction, the PWTC will reach out to the Chair of the Personnel Committee to discuss the matter. The Chair will support the PWTC as they attempt to resolve the matter. All reports of concern will be held in confidence.

### **Step #4:**

If the matter is still not resolved, the Chair of the Personnel Committee will share the concern with the supervisor of the Staff member (or Council Chair if Lead Pastor). If appropriate, the Supervisor/Council Chair/Chair of the Personnel Committee will meet with the Pastor/staff member to discuss the concern.

The concern may be included in more formal process of a Performance Review for a Pastor/staff person, in particular if a pattern of problematic behavior is identified.

### **Step #5:**

If appropriate, additional supports may be offered such as a pastor, an elder, or the appointment of a neutral party to facilitate a conversation, e.g., a trusted congregant, MCEC representative, Community Justice Initiatives.

\*There is a recognition that certain dynamics may be at play that may discourage congregants from speaking directly with the Pastor/staff member in which case a congregant can speak directly to a member of the Personnel Committee. Members of the Personnel committee will take it from there.

## **B. Conflicts Among Congregants**

### **Step #1:**

Person with the concern (PWTC) will attempt to speak to the Congregant directly about the concern\*\*. The following norms are encouraged during such conversations:

- Speak with your mind and heart
- Listen for understanding
- Presume positive intentions on the part of the staff person/lay leader

### **Step #2:**

If the matter is not resolved (or if there is a reason why this conversation doesn't happen) the person with the concern (PWTC) will contact the Pastor or an Elder. The Pastor or Elder will support the PWTC as they attempt to resolve the matter. All reports of concern will be held in confidence.

### **Step #3:**

If appropriate, additional supports may be offered such as the appointment of a neutral party to facilitate a conversation, e.g., a trusted congregant, MCEC representative, Community Justice Initiatives.

\*\*There is a recognition that certain dynamics may be at play that may discourage congregants from speaking directly with other congregants.