

# **Calvary Episcopal Church**

## **Resolution Procedures and Guidelines**

July 2007

In keeping with our Mission Statement: to grow together in faith through nurture, education, and worship; we know that as we move forth in our spiritual journey there will be times when differences of opinion will occur occasionally causing conflict that is difficult to resolve.

- Differences of opinions, or “conflicts” as most people call them, are typically seen in a negative vein. This is not the most productive way to look at it; rather, conflict provides us with an opportunity to use what Jesus has taught us to attain an outcome that the people involved can live with peacefully.
- It is in this spirit that these procedures and guidelines have been developed so that they can aid those involved to help move parishioners, lay leaders, staff, vestry and the Rector and/or clergy through conflicts or disagreements in a productive way.

We recognize that people process and work through things differently and are not always ready to deal with the issues at hand in the same way or at the same time.

- All parties need to feel comfortable before beginning the resolution process or moving ahead to the next step within the process.
- If an individual feels that the process outlined below will not be advantageous in helping them work toward reconciliation, they are asked to offer alternatives that are agreeable to all parties.
- In cases where an individual does not feel comfortable beginning the resolution process, they will be offered up in prayer, and all parties will be asked to try to maintain a peaceful atmosphere while remaining open to beginning the resolution process at such time when everyone is comfortable to do so.

Note: 1/2009 – Please read Matthew 18:10-22

## **Procedural Steps for Resolving Conflict**

- Step One:** Address the issue with the individual you disagree with directly.  
Use the guidelines listed below to help you. If you are unable to resolve the issue after following the guidelines;
- Step Two:** Ask to meet with the Coordinator, Director, or Vestry Representative of the area that the problem exists in. Be sure all parties involved are present and try to use the guidelines below to help you work through the issues;
- Step Three:** If the issues are of a personal nature and/or there is no Coordinator, Director, or Vestry Representative that would be knowledgeable about the issues, consult with the Wardens as to whether it is a pastoral issue requiring the Priest's attention or if the issue should be directed to a mediation committee as convened by the Wardens. Again, the guidelines should be followed as indicated below;
- Step Four:** If the Wardens and Rector are party to the conflict and cannot attain resolution among themselves, they shall, with the consent of the Vestry, seek assistance from a mediation team of 1-3 mutually selected persons from within the parish. If this is not possible, they shall ask the Vestry to consider mediation assistance from an outside source.
- Step Five:** If the issue can not be resolved within a small group setting, as indicated above, the Vestry will be presented with the issue and determine the appropriate next steps to resolve the issue. If a Vestry decision is needed, it will be decided by majority vote at the next scheduled Vestry meeting.

## **Guidelines for Resolving Conflict**

- 1) Recognize when there is conflict and acknowledge there is a problem
- 2) Determine if action is needed and what type (e.g. third party to assist)
- 3) Address the conflict at the lowest possible level
- 4) Include everyone involved in analyzing and solving the problem
- 5) Provide all parties involved with a chance to discuss their perception of the problem and to have their thoughts/feelings/ideas about the issue be addressed in a fair and thoughtful way.
- 6) Ensure relevant information/knowledge is shared with all parties involved
- 7) Ensure the problem definition is agreed to by all parties involved
- 8) Ensure the mutual search for solutions is engaged in
- 9) Ensure one solution for each problem is chosen by the total group by consensus
- 10) Follow-up with the parties involved to see if the resolution worked or if anything else is needed to attain closure in the issue
- 11) Help each other assess and recognize their role in the issue and take responsibility for it.

# Guidelines for Group Meetings

- 1) Start and end with prayer
- 2) Have an agenda for the meeting
- 3) Trust each other and agree up front on what is confidential, and what should be communicated to the parish
- 4) Stay focused on the goal/outcomes; be aware of time
- 5) Be honest and faithful servants
- 6) Use good communication skills
  - a. make sure we really listen to each other
  - b. it's OK to express your feelings
  - c. let the other person finish what they're saying before you start
  - d. be as specific and concise as possible in describing your issue/concern
- 7) Attempt collaborative problem solving if possible
- 8) Assign one person to take meeting notes or minutes including
  - who was present and absent,
  - what decisions were made,
  - indicate who will perform the tasks decided upon.

The minutes/notes should be distributed within a week of the meeting.