

Co-Ministry Covenant between Rev. Suzelle Lynch and Rev. Denise Cawley, Unitarian Universalist Church West, Brookfield, WI – 2021-22

As partners in professional ministry at Unitarian Universalist Church West in Brookfield, WI, and as colleagues who aspire to a relationship of mutual care and respect, and as advocates of integrity in ministry, the Rev. Suzelle Lynch and the Rev. Denise Cawley covenant with one another to strive for the following:

SHARED MINISTRY

We commit ourselves to co-ministering, as individuals and as a team, with the whole congregation. We recognize as valid and valued our different styles of ministry, our different ministry gifts and limitations, and our individual calls to ministry. As Rev. Suzelle moves toward retirement on January 31, 2022 and Rev. Denise continues in full-time contract ministry with UU Church West we commit ourselves to the interdependent goals of a good ending of Rev. Suzelle's ministry with UUCW and the thriving of Rev. Denise's continuing ministry with UUCW.

We recognize the unique circumstances of our co-ministry. We recognize the power differentials between us. Rev. Suzelle has been the called senior minister of UUCW for more than 17 years, and holds identities privileged by race, class, and sexual orientation. Rev. Denise was UUCW's Assistant Minister, holds multiple marginalized identities, and serves as minister via a contract with the Board of Trustees. We hold each other as equal partners in this ministry and will strive for clarity of roles and responsibilities as Rev. Suzelle releases leadership of ministry areas and tasks to Rev. Denise over the weeks leading up to January 31, 2022. Open and frank discussion on these issues and decisions is expected; in all cases we will ask ourselves what is best for the congregation. Once a decision is reached we will both support it. If we are in disagreement, we will seek professional coaching to come to a shared plan. We will guard against triangulation and other unhealthy forms of feedback between each other, the Board of Trustees, and in the congregation as a whole. We will meet at least weekly to tend to the work of shared ministry and transition.

COMMUNICATION AND FEEDBACK

We covenant to treat one another with kindness, compassion and respect, in ways that do not cause each other harm in the broadest meaning of the word, including harm caused by specific dominant-identity/non-dominant-identity power dynamics. We will cultivate a relationship of honesty and trust, seeking feedback and using one another as sounding boards and engaging in reflective dialogue with curious disagreement encouraged.

PROFESSIONAL BOUNDARIES

We will help each other to maintain meaningful and appropriate professional boundaries, including the setting of limits, in the interest of maintaining our mental, emotional, and physical well-being and enhancing our work and relationship with the congregation. This commitment includes an obligation to keep, and to help each other keep, a Sabbath.

CELEBRATING THE STAFF'S MINISTRIES

We will strive to appropriately recognize and support the work of our non-ordained colleagues. We recognize that their efforts, while often less visible and acclaimed, are no less important to the success of the church than are our efforts. We recognize that teamwork is essential. In support of our broader Staff Covenant, we will work together to promote healthy and respectful staff relationships.

ANTI-RACIST, ANTI-OPPRESSIVE LEADERSHIP

We covenant to gently and continually call one another into fidelity to our commitment to a ministry that is anti-racist and anti-oppressive, recognizing that the governance systems of UUCW were modeled after and within patriarchal, white supremacy culture systems. We recognize that employing anti-racist, anti-oppressive collaborative leadership is key to the health of the congregational system and takes focus off individuals.

UUMA COVENANT

We also affirm that our relationship as colleagues is subject to the Covenant of the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association, which reads as follows:

United in our call to serve the spirit of love and justice through the vocation of ministry in the liberal religious tradition, we, the members of the Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association covenant with one another:

- To conduct ourselves with integrity, honoring the trust placed in us;
- To embody in our lives the values that we proclaim on behalf of our faith;
- To support one another in collegial respect and care, understanding and honoring the diversity within our association;
- To hold ourselves accountable to each other for the competent exercise of our vocation;
- To use our power constructively and with intention, mindful of our potential unconsciously to perpetuate systems of oppression;
- To seek justice and right relations according to our evolving collective wisdom, and to refrain from all abuse or exploitation;
- To cultivate practices of deepening awareness, understanding, humility, and commitment to our ideals;
- To labor earnestly together for the well-being of our communities and the progress of Unitarian Universalism.

We recognize that none of us is perfect and all are works in progress. We hold one another in love as, through fidelity to this covenant and our Code of Professional Conduct, we aspire to grow in wholeness, and bring hope and healing to the world.

The Rev. Suzelle Lynch, Co-minister _____

The Rev. Denise Cawley, Co-minister _____

Date _____