



# A Code of Conduct for Church Councils (Template)

## Draft Format

### Enclosed:

- Section 1: UCA Safe Place Statement
- Section 2: Responsibilities of a Church Council
- Section 3: **A template for a conversation as the Church Council works towards developing their own Code of Conduct.**
- Section 4: Purpose and Responsibilities of a Church Council

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The Uniting Church in Australia believes that all people are made in the image of God, and as such we accept every individual regardless of race, age, creed or gender.

As a Christian community we believe that God reaches out to us in love and acceptance, and that our relationships with each other should express love and respect and not be abused.

As a community of faith we are committed to providing a place in society where human beings can explore what it means to be made in the image of God.

As an expression of this commitment, the Uniting Church in Australia recognises its responsibility to provide worshipping and pastoral communities that are free from abuse and that provide safe environments for all people to explore and express their faith in the Gospel.

(Safe Place Position Statement developed by the UCA Commission on Women and Men in 1997)



RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE CHURCH COUNCIL (See Para 24, Constitution)  
Regulation 3.1.2

(a) The Church Council shall give priority in its life to building up the Congregation in faith and love, sustaining members in hope, and leading the Congregation to a fuller participation in Christ's mission in the world. This priority shall be reflected in the agenda of its ordinary meetings.

(b) The responsibilities of the Church Council include:

(i) sharing with the Minister(s) in mission and in the pastoral care and spiritual oversight of the Congregation;

(ii) nurturing the members and adherents in their growth in grace;

(iii) making decisions in accordance with the Regulations concerning baptism, confirmation and membership, and the keeping and reviewing of the rolls of the Congregation; (See Part 1 of these Regulations)

(iv) assisting the Minister(s) in the conduct of worship and in the administration of the sacraments;

(v) determining the time and place of services of public worship;

(vi) carrying out its functions in accordance with the Regulations concerning applicants for the specified ministries;

(vii) managing the financial affairs and the general administration of the Congregation including the reception, preparation and presentation of all necessary budgets, statements and reports;

(viii) arranging for audit, presentation and examination of the accounts of all the funds of the Congregation; (See Reg. 3.8.7)

(ix) managing and controlling property in accordance with the Regulations; (See Reg. 4.4.1)

(x) preparing and presenting to a meeting of the Congregation an annual report concerning the life and work of the Congregation including its worship, mission and service, and making recommendations with regard to the program for the ensuing year;

(xi) exercising oversight of the appointment of officers and leaders of Congregational organisations;

(xii) referral of matters to Presbytery as prescribed;

(xiii) discipline of members (See Reg. 5.1.2 – 5.2.5);(xiv) carrying out its functions in relation to Ministers-in-Association (See Reg. 2.11.1).

*Constitution and Regulations (2018) Para 3.1.2*



PUT YOUR OWN STATEMENTS  
HERE!

As members of the Riverview Church Council we shall

- Undertake all the responsibilities of the Church Council as outlined in the Regulations of the Uniting Church.
- Plan wisely that the mission of God may flourish and prosper amongst us and in our community.
- Hold the spiritual and material well-being of the people of Riverview Uniting Church close to our hearts.
- Be accepting of difference and to celebrate it, whilst continuing to put our minds to always being an inclusive community.
- Prepare for the meetings prayerfully.
- Maintain confidentiality (as required) re matters discussed at Church Council
- Make decisions with integrity, justice and compassion.
- Exercise wise stewardship of the Church's resources, always considering how best to serve God's mission.
- Undertake to become familiar with the necessarily requirements of UCA regulation and the law of the land.
- Ensure that the necessary governance and compliance undertakings of a Church Council are rigorously observed, including matters of care and protection for children and vulnerable adults, worker health and safety, human resource management and volunteer management and support.
- Ensure that we have complied with the necessary training in the areas of Child Safe Environments and Called to Care.
- Refrain from engaging in bullying, emotional abuse, harassment, sexual or physical abuse of any person, any age, including family members, including the use of electronic media such as email and social media.
- Undertake to take opportunities for teaching and learning so that the Church Council will continually improve its oversight of the Congregation.
- Engage in continuous positive communication and problem-solving with our ministry leaders.
- Continually review our roles and responsibilities as a Council and as individuals.
- Seek help from the Presbytery when it may be advised.
- Use the Manual for Meetings as much as possible.
- Indicate to the Chairperson if we believe we have a conflict of interest with any matter before the Council. That is, if our relationships or history or needs may compromise our capacity (or the perception of our capacity) to act solely in the interest of the Riverview Uniting Church.

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**In the execution of those duties we undertake to:**

- Care for each other.
- Pray for each other and the Riverview Uniting Church.
- Treat each person with respect, teaching and exercising power respectfully, responsibly and with accountability.
- Listen to each other attentively and sensitively. We shall seek first to understand, and then to be understood.
- Avoid undermining the integrity of the Council in any way.
- Remaining loyal to the decisions made by the Council, even if we personally have disagreed with the outcome.
- When our relationships become strained we will engage in further open conversation so that we might reach consensus.
- Deal with the inevitable conflicts effectively, openly and with grace. We shall do this by going first to any person with whom we have a conflict in order to communicate about that difference. When another Councillor approaches us with an issue, we will engage in a collaborative matter so that together we may understand our differences and find reconciliation, of not agreement.
- Seek first the kingdom of God ... for the sake of Jesus, the Christ, and his reign on earth and to “do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with God.”
- Seek the involvement and contribution of the whole body of Christ in the life of the Church, according to the gifts and graces that have been given to members of our community.

**We ask the members of the Riverview Uniting Church to pray for us, and with us, and to contribute with joy to the life of our faith community.**



PURPOSE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF A CONGREGATION (See Para 23,  
Constitution)

Regulation 3.1.1

(a) **A Congregation**, as the embodiment in one place of the one holy catholic and apostolic church, shall be those members and adherents who worship, witness and serve as a fellowship of the Spirit in Christ, and who meet regularly to hear God's Word, to celebrate the sacraments, to build one another up in love, to share the wider responsibilities of the Church, and to serve the world, and who are recognised as a Congregation by the Presbytery.

(b) **In fulfilling its purpose a Congregation shall:**

- (i) bear witness to that unity that is both Christ's gift and his will;
- (ii) build up the members and adherents in faith and love;
- (iii) sustain the members and adherents in hope;
- (iv) nurture the members and adherents in their growth in grace;
- (v) equip the members and adherents for engagement in worship, witness and service in the world as they participate in the mission of Christ;
- (vi) discipline its members in love;
- (vii) maintain pastoral oversight;
- (viii) encourage each member and adherent to participate in the life of the Congregation and endeavour to provide opportunity for that participation; and
- (ix) provide means whereby the members and adherents may be sustained in fellowship, in prayer and in confession, in baptism and in the Lord's Supper, in mutual reception of and mutual exertion in the Gospel proclamation and service.

(c) The responsibilities of a Congregation include:

- (i) participating in shared responsibilities with any related Congregations;
- (ii) fulfilling the ministry of the Church in and to the community;
- (iii) appointing Elders and other members of the Church Council, and members of other bodies, as required; (See Reg. 3.3.2)
- (iv) appointing member(s) to the Presbytery; (See Reg. 3.3.4)

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(v) making arrangements to call a Minister in accordance with the Regulations; (See Reg. 2.6.6)

(vi) providing facilities and resources in support of the work of the Congregation, including stipends and allowances and other provisions for the support of the ministry, provided that stipends shall be the first charge on the funds of the Congregation;

(vii) meeting as required to transact business that belongs to the Congregation;

(viii) advising the Church Council on property matters affecting the Congregation;

(ix) maintaining all necessary and appropriate relationships with the Presbytery and other councils and bodies;

(x) such other things as are consistent with the purposes of the Church and not the specific responsibility of any other council or body within the Church.

*Constitution and Regulations (2018) Para 3.1.1*