

UCDSM Membership and this Group

The group is an official group of First Unitarian Church of Des Moines. All participants and page Administrators and moderators must be current members of UCDSM or UCDSM staff.

Continued membership in this group is not a right given by sole virtue of continued UCDSM membership. The moderators retain the right to remove people from the group based on the rules listed below.

Group Moderators and Administrators

Your Administrators are currently staff members Rev. Amy Petrie Shaw, Kerrie Lee, Devon McClurken, and Lyra Halsten. Administrators keep the page running and handle technical issues as they arise. Patty Notch and Deidre Fudge are the current Moderators, along with staff representative Rev. Amy Petrie Shaw. Please contact Moderators with questions or concerns about posts and responses. In some cases you may be referred to Rev. Amy Petrie Shaw or the Board of Trustees if there is a situation we cannot resolve.

Group Membership Requirements

ELIGIBILITY: Anyone who is a member of the UCDSM is eligible to join.

ADDING PEOPLE: Current members of UCDSM may be added to the group by any Admin. or Moderator. New members are asked by the Membership Coordinator if they wish to join, and are then added by the Membership Coordinator. To enter the group, all people are asked one question: "Are you a member of First Unitarian Church."

Belonging to this group is not a requirement of membership at UCDSM. If you wish to leave the group, click on the box that says "Joined" in the header, and select "Leave Group." If you have trouble, contact an admin (see above) and ask to be removed. We can do it easily for you.

Group Purpose

PURPOSE: This group is primarily for posting church and local events, requesting and subsequent sharing of resources and information, discussion of concepts, positions, and ideas within UCDSM and UUism, and sharing of ideas which might be of interest to the general UCDSM population.

DEBATE: This group is not by nature a think lab or debate club but brainstorming and disagreeing are not outside of the rules.

EXTENDED DISCUSSION OF A COMPLEX SUBJECT: This group is not the place for extended discussion of complex or nuanced subjects. Please see Rev. Amy Petrie Shaw to obtain a ZOOM link if you wish to

invite others into complex extended discussion. Moderators/Admins will remove posts over 1,000 words in length, including posts deliberately broken into pieces to avoid this restriction.

Group Rules

- **CONFIDENTIALITY:** Respect everyone's privacy. Being part of this group requires mutual trust. Authentic, expressive discussions make groups great, but may also be sensitive and private. What's shared in the group should stay in the group. Before posting events from this group in any other place, please check to confirm the event is open to non-members.
- **KINDNESS:** Be kind and courteous; We're all in this together to create a welcoming environment. Let's treat everyone with respect. Healthy debates are natural, but kindness is required.
- **WELCOME:** No hate speech or bullying. Make sure everyone feels safe. Bullying of any kind isn't allowed, and degrading comments about things like race, religion, culture, sexual orientation, gender or identity will not be tolerated.
- **PROMO ITEMS:** You are welcome to use this group to offer or sell an item to others at UCDSM before you offer or sell it someplace else, to advertise a yard sale, or to tell us once about a new business you found or are opening. This is not the primary purpose of the group, and all sales or promotion posts should be rare, meaningful to church members, and appropriate for all ages. Please do not use this group as a routine part of your personal commercial business marketing approach; repeated or ongoing sales attempts here as part of a business may be removed without notice.
- **MEMES:** We humor humor, but memes should be relevant to some shared interest, and not simply randomly funny. Memes make it difficult for those who use screen readers.
- **LENGTH:** Exceedingly long posts slow the group and are not usually read. Posts over 1,000 words will be deleted (on Facebook this would be a column approximately 18 inches long). Deliberately breaking one long post into multiple posts to avoid this rule will cause the entire group of posts to be deleted
- **IMPACT:** Be thoughtful about the impact of your words. If you hold a position of leadership or power in the church community, your words may gain unintended or unexpected impact. This can make people, especially those from marginalized groups, feel unwelcome or unwanted.
- **PRINCIPLES:** Postings should reflect our 7 UU Principles

Accountability and Welcome

We want this group to be accessible and welcoming to all members, and a way to find out about events, happenings, and ideas here at UCDSM. We do not want this group to cause harm.

Discussions about members of any recognized marginalized group (women, people with disabilities, black, brown, or indigenous people, LGBTQ+ people, the elderly) or any group often

marginalized within UU circles (Republicans, Theists) by people who do not hold these identities can often become harmful or painful for the members of the marginalized community and make them feel deeply unwelcome. We reserve the right for moderators or admins to close, remove, or otherwise address posts which are made by non-marginalized members which are intended to speculate about or comment on:

- The marginalized group's right to be present in UU or world spaces
- The marginalized group's right to be free from harassment
- The marginalized group's right to be self-determination
- The marginalized person or group's right to speak for themselves, individually and collectively
- Tone policing of a marginalized group or person
- Culture policing of a marginalized group or person

If You've Experienced Harm in This Group

If you've experienced harm in this group, you are not required to engage with the poster or commenter around that harm.

If you would like the harm addressed by the moderators, and they have not already noticed it and taken action, we ask that you do the following.

1. Give the link or describe the post to us so that we can temporarily shut down comments on the post if needed
2. If you are able, please explain the harm to the moderators. If you would find this easier through a third party, one can be arranged. If you cannot explain the problem, please recognize that the explanation of the harm to the group by the moderators may be flawed, or that no harm may be found to have occurred.

If you need additional support to deal with the harm caused by a post, we encourage reaching out to the moderators or to the Board of Trustees or Rev. Amy Petrie Shaw.

If there is additional harm due to incorrect following of these procedures, or the inadequacy of the procedures, the moderators will work with you to find a solution.

If the initial cause of harm is caused by a moderator's statements, we encourage you to seek guidance from the Board of Trustees or Rev. Amy Petrie Shaw

Before Posting

When posting, especially about issues related to marginalized identities, we ask that you stop, think about it, and consider whether processing your question or comment in this space may cause harm.

We ask that people consider:

- 1) Whether their comments/questions are better made/asked elsewhere or are more appropriate to a personal Facebook page.
- 2) Whether there is research and learning they can do on their own before posting.
- 3) If the post is from a place of support and appreciation for the people in the group that their post addresses and not from a negative perspective
- 4) How similar posts have been received here

Deleting Posts

If you find your words have caused harm, please do not just delete them. Instead, if you delete, put a notation in the spot of your deletion to indicate hurtful words were removed. This will help avoid a “gaslighting” effect wherein people think that the person reacting to the hurtful words was seeing things that weren’t there.

Deleting whole posts or replies without notation or comment may be cause for moderator action, up to and including removal from the group if there is a repeated pattern.

Closing Posts

The moderators may close some posts deemed too harmful, or when the original poster or a commenter is not respectfully engaging the feedback.

In addition, if group members are receiving constructive or teaching feedback that feels uncomfortable or overwhelming, they may decide to ask for a post to be closed while they seek outside sources of learning and feedback. It is a good practice to ask for help and to accept offered help. Such help will often occur in a space outside our group—a phone conversation, an email exchange, a conversation in a private group, etc. The moderators will close commenting on a thread when there are people who need time to process the feedback being offered and/or need time to accept and receive offered help. Commenting may subsequently be reopened if and when conversation can continue.

In other words, if you make a mistake and people try to tell you about the harm you caused, learn from it and do better. If you need time to think about what you are being told, that is fine.

Repeated Offenses

If a member repeatedly creates posts that cause harm and refuses to have genuine engagement in the group, particularly if the posts are within a short time-span, this may be cause for removal from the group for some length of time.

Moderator Process for Problematic Posts

Possible Actions by Moderators and the Reasons for Them:

First, there are several types of complaints we might receive, or posts which we might feel discomfort for where we do NOT choose to step in. Reasons that are not sufficient for our stepping in include:

- 1) Individual discomfort with the content or tone
- 2) Challenging of institutional paradigms or the status quo
- 3) Difficult conversations occurring
- 4) General disagreement
- 5) Failure of a commenter or poster to respond to others
- 6) To create orthodoxy or right speech.

The reasons that the moderators can step in include, but are not limited to, the following:

- 1) Removal of a non-member
- 2) Bullying
- 3) Attacks on individual people
- 4) Individual complaints to the moderators and/or tagging of moderators for response
- 5) Posts which are causing direct pain to individuals, going beyond “ouch”
- 6) Insistence on orthodoxy or right speech
- 7) Posts that are of a type specified as not within the group purpose (i.e. repeated random memes, advertisements or sales pitches, posts over 1,000 words)

There are seven different types of actions the moderators can take, and they are somewhat hierarchical in order. All of the actions in numbers 4-7 would be very rare.

1. **Moderator commenting as a moderator:** When a post starts to become heated, or individual attacks start happening, you may see a moderator comment reminding us to heed our guidelines, or asking for people to cool off, or otherwise stepping in with a reminder.
2. **Closing a comments thread:** When posts get too far off topic or starts to have subtopics, we might ask people to move comments on a subtopic to its own post.
3. **“Closing” a post:** The moderators may close a post, which keeps it posted but bars future comments on the post. Some reasons this action might be taken include:
 1. The post has become very heated and we want to give members a time to cool down.
 2. We have questions about the post and want to seek the guidance of the other moderators or outside guidance from the Board or Senior Minister.
 3. We need time to contact specific members about content in the post.
 4. The post has moved so far out of covenant that there feels like no way to return the conversation to covenant without further injury. This is often based on number of complaints, the intensity of violation, and the potential for further damage.

4. **Removing a post:** In some cases the moderators might find that simply closing a post does not feel sufficient, and may remove it. Some reasons this might occur are:
 - When the level of injury feels particularly extreme.
 - Direct definite slurs, attacks, or name-calling.
 - When the post is of a type specified as outside the group purposes in the “Group Information” document – i.e. repeated advertising posts
 - When injury is still happening even after closing a post.
5. **Removing a member temporarily:** The moderators reserve the right to remove a member from the group for periods of 1 day to 90 days. This generally happens after repeated violations of group rules, and repeated problems with posts that brought the response of removing or closing posts. We will have spoken to you directly about posts several times before things reach this level.
6. **Removing a member permanently/long-term:** The moderators reserve the right to remove a member from the group. This generally happens after repeated violations of group rules, and repeated problems with posts that brought the response of removing or closing posts. We must have spoken to you directly about posts several times before things reach this level.
7. **Temporarily closing the group or requiring admin approval for all new posts:** If the moderators feel that they cannot provide the group with adequate coverage and that the group is in general becoming too heated, they may close the group for periods of times. Closing the group will require the direct permission of the Board of Trustees

If you are confused about or disagree with any moderator decision, you may contact the moderators by private message, and we will clarify or review the decision with you. Moderator decisions do not require approval by the entire Facebook group or the Board.

Reinstatement Procedures

When a member is removed from the group for a limited time, the member may be re-added to the group at the end of that time at their request.

If they were removed for a hurtful interaction with another person, they must:

- Apologize to the other person in writing
- Agree that they will not respond to that person in the group until that person responds to something they have written first
- Request to be re-added to the group