

Faith Workers Bill of Rights

Preamble: The Faith Workers Bill of Rights, a Universal Affirmation of Dignity and Safety

Based on the experiences of many faith workers in The United Church of Canada, this Bill of Rights was created in order to ensure a positive, supportive working environment within Communities of Faith.

ARTICLE I: Right to Dignity and Respect

Faith workers and their families have the right to be treated respectfully, regardless of their theological position, cultural identity, race or leadership style.

Faith workers and their families shall not be subject to humiliation, gaslighting, passive-aggression or public shaming by members of their congregation, peers or governing bodies.

ARTICLE II: Right to Psychological and Physical Safety

Faith workers have the right to work in an environment free from bullying, harassment, discrimination and spiritual abuse.

Institutions must take firm and transparent steps to prevent and address psychological hazards as part of their duty of care.

Psychological Safety Statement At this ministry, we affirm that psychological safety includes the freedom to express respectful disagreement, constructive feedback or frustration—without fear of retaliation, misinterpretation or weaponization. Disagreement is not disrespect. Expressing concern is not insubordination. We commit to fostering an environment where emotionally honest communication is received with curiosity, not punishment, recognizing that it is essential to a healthy community life.

ARTICLE III: Right to Report Concerns Without Retaliation

Faith workers have the right to raise concerns about misconduct, discrimination or systemic injustice without fear of reprisal. Institutions must implement alternative, confidential reporting mechanisms and enforce a zero-retaliation policy, which means that no adverse actions can be taken against a faith worker member for reporting misconduct, discrimination or systemic injustice.

ARTICLE IV: Right to Due Process in dealing with complaints or allegations

Faith workers are entitled to fair, unbiased investigation processes when complaints or allegations arise. Trained, neutral professionals (agreed upon by both faith worker and governing body) must conduct investigations following trauma-informed and legally compliant procedures. Faith workers have the same legal rights as other workers who are protected under the provincial Employment Standards Act or equivalent.

ARTICLE V: Right to Institutional Transparency and Accountability

Faith workers have the right to clear policies, transparent and accessible complaint procedures and timely updates regarding any actions that affect their employment or reputation. Institutions must not misuse confidentiality protocol to protect harmful behavior or silence truth.

ARTICLE VI: Right to Recovery and Restoration If Harmed

When harmed, faith workers have the right to trauma-informed support, including access to therapy, spiritual care of their choosing and recovery leave. Institutions must take steps to repair harm, which may include public acknowledgment, compensation and reintegration options.

ARTICLE VII: Right to Stability If Termination Occurs

Faith workers whose roles require relocation have the right to employment security considerations, including their families. Appropriate severance will be provided to a faith worker losing their position when it is not due to constructive dismissal but is because of a Community of Faith closing or amalgamating with another Community of Faith and employment does not continue.

Termination decisions must account for visa, housing and financial implications.

ARTICLE VIII: Right to Identity and Expression

Faith workers have the right to serve without discrimination based on gender, race, ethnicity, disability, LGBTQIA2S+ identity or age. Institutions must ensure that their policies and culture reflect equity and inclusion at all levels.

ARTICLE IX: Right to Vocational Integrity

Faith workers must not be coerced into silence, forced forgiveness, forced gratitude or theological conformity that violates their conscience. They have the right to uphold justice, equity and prophetic witness, even when these challenge institutional or societal norms.

ARTICLE X: Right to a Safe Exit

Faith workers can end their service with dignity and without character assassination or economic ruin. Communities of Faith must provide accurate references, fair severance and transparent explanations to their communities.

Affirmation: Let this Bill of Rights declare foundational principles necessary to protect those who lead in faith. These rights do not elevate faith workers above others—they affirm that no one is beneath protection, dignity or justice, including those who serve.

Prepared by: Unifor Unifaith Community Chapter in Collaboration with The Canadian Institute of Workplace Harassment and Violence

Agreed upon by _____ Community of Faith Date: _____

Signature of Authorized representative of Community of Faith _____