

## **Baptist Union of Wales Ministry Code**

### **As Ministers of the Baptist Union of Wales we agree together:**

1. To follow Jesus faithfully in all aspects of our lives and to be accountable to each other for doing so.
2. To be active members of a Baptist Church in membership with the Baptist Union of Wales.
3. To endeavour to live out the Ethical Code of Good Practice for Accredited Ministry.
4. To be supportive of Baptist colleagues in ministry through, for example, prayer, attendance at ministers' gatherings, development of supportive relationships and mentoring.
5. To support through prayer and practical ways the life of our family of churches including attendance at the Annual Assembly and Association meetings.
6. To engage in continuing ministry development.
7. To participate in healthy practices of ministry such as regular review, retreat and supportive relationships e.g. peer to peer mentoring.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*if you'd like to know more about these practices, please contact the Ministry Coordinator*

### **Ethical Code of Good Practice for Accredited Ministry**

#### **1. Taking Care of Ourselves**

- 1.1 We strive to keep spiritually healthy through a regular discipline of the study of God's word, private prayer, reflective reading, personal witness and openness with colleagues.
- 1.2 We give time to develop our theological knowledge and pastoral and missional skills through private study, study weeks, sabbaticals and participation in continuing ministry developmental opportunities.
- 1.3 We strive to keep physically and emotionally healthy by taking care of our lifestyles, taking at least one day off per week and ensuring that we give sufficient time to our family and friends.
- 1.4 We participate in some form of supportive, accountable and confidential community of co-leaders so as to help us increase our self-awareness and recognise the dynamics at work in our relationships with others.
- 1.5 We strive to be exemplary Christians.
- 1.6 We strive to undertake all administrative tasks conscientiously, dealing with correspondence efficiently and with courtesy.
- 1.7 We respect the laws of the land but we will challenge injustice and stand up for righteousness.
- 1.8 We gladly conform with all aspects of safeguarding legislation and best practice.

## **2. Taking Care of Others**

- 2.1 Our interactions with others should be modelled on the example of Christ who showed love, acceptance and sacrificial commitment equally to everyone He engaged with.
- 2.2 We will be approachable to all who need support and pastoral care ensuring that our words and actions reflect an attitude of respect, understanding, honesty, forgiveness and grace.
- 2.3 We will demonstrate a genuine commitment to the equality of all persons irrespective of race, creed, religion, sexual orientation, disability, language and gender in our attitude, words and behaviour.
- 2.4 Our position of church leadership will be humbly executed, seeking to encourage and facilitate the abilities of others, and to bring glory to the Lord Jesus Christ.
- 2.5 We will provide a safe space for people to seek help and will not abuse the position of trust we are placed in. Our physical contact will be fitting to the professional relationship we have with another person. We will be mindful of best times and places to meet with people, especially those who are vulnerable, or in situations where allegations of inappropriateness could be brought against us; remembering that we not only **do** what is right and Christlike in our dealings with others but are careful to be **seen** to be doing it as well.
- 2.6 We will handle all confidential information carefully, ensuring the G.D.P.R. or other legal requirements upon us are met, as well as morally safeguarding the information to prevent inappropriate disclosure. Care will be taken to put physical and electronic safeguards in place for documentation and consideration given to those around who could overhear conversations in public locations.
- 2.7 Disclosures made to us concerning the welfare of children and vulnerable adults will be acted on immediately in accordance with the guidelines issued by the Interdenominational Protection Panel.
- 2.8 Where investigations against us are instigated by the police or social services we will notify The General Secretary within 24 hours of becoming aware of it.

## **3. Commitment to the local and wider church**

- 3.1 We exhibit, through our words and deeds, a deep commitment to the unity, welfare and mission of the church through which we have been called to serve. We endeavour neither to speak ill of the church or organisation we have been called to love and serve, nor other Baptist churches and ministers.
- 3.2 We will endeavour to lead worship, to offer pastoral care, to engage in outreach, and to empower God's people for ministry and mission to the very best of our ability.
- 3.3 We seek to lead the church by providing a clear articulation of a vision and strategy, and with a deep commitment to proclaiming afresh the Good News of Jesus.
- 3.4 We will be conversant with the Safeguarding policy of our church (or organisation e.g. Local Health Board) and will ensure that it is known in the church.

3.5 In times of conflict between others and ourselves in the church or workplace, we will seek appropriate help from the Baptist Union of Wales and other relevant bodies, agencies etc.

3.6 We are committed to supporting local colleagues in ministry by practical encouragement, by faithful attendance at ministers' gatherings, by prayer and by striving to hold one another accountable to Christian standards.

3.7 We are committed to playing our part in the wider life of our Union.

3.8 On leaving the church, workplace, or on retirement, we will do all we can to leave with grace, with encouragement and with the maximum opportunity for a new ministry to begin well.

#### **4. The Commitment of the local and wider church to the accredited minister**

4.1 Where agreed, we will expect from the local church appropriate financial remuneration and the support and understanding of our calling, following the recommended 'Terms of Appointment' set by the Baptist Union of Wales.

4.2 It is reasonable for us to expect from the local and wider church the necessary time and resources for continuing ministerial development.

4.3 Where appropriate, we will expect support and understanding from colleagues in Baptist ministry, our local Baptist Association in which we serve and the staff of the Baptist Union of Wales.

#### **5. Social Media**

*Social media is interactive and instant - a powerful tool which Churches and Ministers can use as an opportunity for Mission. As Ministers we are encouraged to embrace the digital age. There are so many positives, but we must be aware of the many pitfalls too.*

*When Social Media is used correctly it can be seen as a power for good. It can build relationships and maintain those relationships. It gives access to support networks, providing a platform to discuss professional issues and share good practices as well as an excellent place to find resources and information.*

#### **We commit to:**

1. Be considerate with who or what we associate with online, always maintaining respectful boundaries with others whether they are part of our local church or not.
2. Be respectful to not post, re-post or share sexually explicit, hateful, abusive, inflammatory, threatening or otherwise disrespectful content.
3. Be honest. We will not mislead people about who we are.
4. Be kind, treating others how we would wish to be treated and always striving to assume the best in people.
5. Be aware, that if we have a criticism or critique of a post, we will consider whether we would say it 'in person', remembering that the tone we use could be misleading or misinterpreted.

6. Be responsible, for the things we do, say, and write. Text and images shared can be public and permanent, even with privacy settings in place. If we are ever in doubt, we will not post it.
7. Be the Ambassador of the Christian message. Our personal lives can be easily mixed up with our 'professional' lives so we will 'pause' and take a moment to think before we post.
8. Discuss the point well. Online can be a good place to discuss and disagree on certain topics, but it is important to not get carried away and apply the same values we use when discussing face to face. Again, we will 'pause', take a step back and be careful how we express our opinions.
9. Credit others. If we have used other people's work or statements during our online posts we will always respect copyright and give credit where it is due. We will be careful not to release sensitive or confidential information. When stating any facts online we will be wary of the source or content before putting our name to it.
10. No rule breaking. Every social media platform has their own rules, terms, and conditions. Whilst posting we will be aware that people can report us for the breach of these T&C's. Similarly, if we read a post that we believe breaks the rules of the various Social Media platforms we recognise we have a responsibility to report it.

Before posting, I will always think:

- Is this my story to share?
- Would I want my mum to read this?
- Would I want God to read this?
- Would I want this on the front page of a newspaper?

### ***6. Baptist Union of Wales Complaints procedure***

As Christians, we seek to live well with each other. We recognize, however, that from time to time we get things wrong and when that happens we want people to feel able to contact us so that when possible we can put things right. We aim to resolve all matters as quickly as possible and all complaints will be reviewed so as to ensure that we learn from those rare occasions when people have had cause to feel dissatisfied with any aspect of our work or conduct.

Wherever possible we would encourage you to seek to resolve your complaint informally before taking the formal steps outlined below.

Complaints will be kept confidential save in so far as is necessary for them to be properly investigated. We also expect the complainant to maintain confidentiality so as to ensure that any investigation undertaken can be done without unnecessary hindrance.

#### **How to Complain**

We will deal with complaints about the applications of our procedures or decisions made which directly relate to the complainant; the conduct of staff employed by the BUW and the conduct of trustees and others who are appointed to serve on a voluntary basis on boards, committees and working groups. If your complaint is about a Minister please refer to the next section.

#### **Procedure (BUW General)**

1. Please provide a written summary of the event(s) that have led you to make the complaint, including necessary dates, witnesses, details about steps taken to resolve the matter and desired outcome which should be sent to the General Secretary at BUW, Y Llwyfan, College Road, Carmarthen.(judith@ubc.cymru) If the complaint is in relation to the General Secretary then it should be sent to the Chair of the Trustee Board.(Details are available from y Llwyfan).
2. Your complaint will be acknowledged within 5 working days.
3. An investigation will be initiated into the complaint and two BUW representatives will be appointed to undertake the investigation.
4. A meeting will be held with the complainant. The complainant can have someone to accompany them.
5. A meeting will be held with the member of staff/volunteer in question and/or in relation to a decision or procedure. The member of staff/volunteer can have someone to accompany them.
6. If the complaint is found to be justified, the investigator will agree any necessary further action with the complainant and inform the member of staff/volunteer accordingly.
7. We will aim to have completed the investigation within one month.
8. A written record will be kept of the complaint and outcome.
9. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome then the complainant could take the complaint to an appeals panel.

#### **Appeals Procedure (BUW General)**

1. If the complainant is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation then he/she may put their case in writing to an Appeal Panel. This needs to be done within 1 month of the date the outcome of your complaint was sent to you. The Appeal Panel will be made up of the Chair of the Trustee Board along with two other BUW representatives. The Appeal must set out your grounds of appeal and what you consider would resolve your concerns.
2. If the Appeal is found to be justified, the appeal panel will agree any necessary action with the complainant and inform the member of staff/volunteer accordingly.
3. The Appeal Panel will seek to come to a decision within one month.
4. The decision of the Appeals Panel is final and no further appeal is possible.

#### **How to Complain about a BUW Minister**

If you have reason to complain about a Minister, you need to establish whether the Minister is an Accredited Baptist Union of Wales Minister. You can do this by contacting the BUW office at Y Llwyfan, College Road, Carmarthen.

You might discover that the Minister is not an accredited BUW Minister as some BUW churches choose to appoint non-accredited Ministers or Ministers who are accredited through other Unions or denominations. In such cases the Union has no jurisdiction in relation to their competence or behaviour. If you have a complaint in relation to an unaccredited BUW Minister then you will need to contact the secretary or one of the deacons at the local church. Should you wish to discuss the matter with BUW, we will seek to help and advise you as far as possible, but we will be unable to deal with the matter formally.

If the individual in question is an accredited BUW Minister then you should follow the procedure as outlined below:

#### **Procedure: Ministerial Complaint**

1. Please provide a written summary of the event(s) that have led you to make the complaint, including necessary dates, witnesses, details about steps taken to resolve the matter and desired outcome which should be sent to the General Secretary at BUW, Y Llwyfan, College Road, Carmarthen ([judith@ubc.cymru](mailto:judith@ubc.cymru)) or the Ministry Co-ordinator ([revmarcowen@gmail.com](mailto:revmarcowen@gmail.com))
2. Your complaint will be acknowledged within 5 working days.

3. Depending on the nature of the complaint it might be appropriate to refer the matter to the local church for consideration. You will be informed of this and the underpinning reason.
4. If it is appropriate that the BUW deals with the matter then an investigation will be initiated into the complaint and two BUW representatives will be appointed to undertake the investigation.
5. A meeting will be held with the complainant. The complainant can have someone to accompany them.
6. A meeting will be held with the Minister in question. The Minister can have someone to accompany them.
7. If the complaint is found to be justified, the investigator will agree any necessary further action with the complainant.
8. We will aim to have completed the investigation within one month.
9. If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome then the complainant could take the complaint to an appeals panel.

#### **Appeals Panel (Ministerial)**

1. If the complainant or minister is not satisfied with the outcome of the investigation then he/she may put their case in writing to an Appeal Panel. This needs to be done within 1 month of the date the outcome of your complaint was sent to you. The Appeal Panel will be made up of the Chair of the Trustee Board along with two other BUW representatives. The Appeal must set out your grounds of appeal and what you consider would resolve your concerns.
2. If the Appeal is found to be justified, the appeal panel will agree any necessary action with the complainant and inform the minister accordingly.
3. The Appeal Panel will seek to come to a decision within one month.
4. The decision of the Appeals Panel is final and no further appeal is possible.