

---

## The Conference Goal:

Our goal as an Annual Conference is to empower healthy conflict resolution in congregations. We invite you to be in prayer when disagreements arise in your community of faith. Open your heart to God's voice as you seek wisdom, patience, understanding and healing.



**Baltimore-Washington Conference**  
7178 Columbia Gateway Drive, Suite D,  
Columbia, MD 21046.

---

## Healthy Congregations

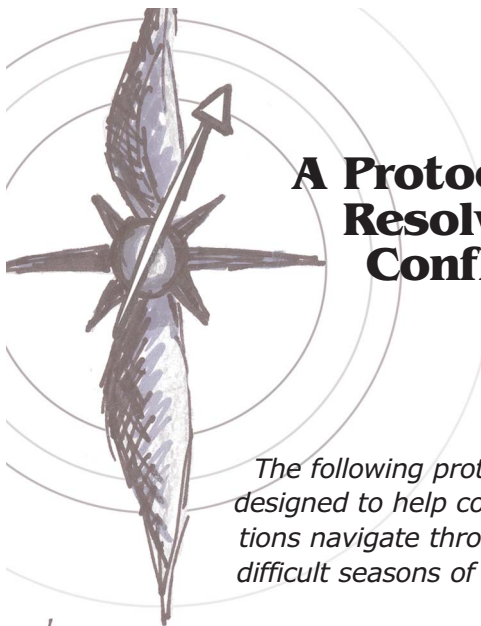


**C**onflict is a natural part of life. It should be expected when new ideas come into contact with established routines, when innovation knocks into tradition, whenever two ideas seek to share the same space and attention, and when there is misunderstanding.

In churches, conflict can be a positive catalyst for change and serve as a mechanism for creating the momentum necessary for transformation to occur.

At other times, however, conflict can be destructive when it is not processed through healthy means and creates dissension within the Body of Christ. At those times, a clear process for healthy conflict resolution will empower a church to move through the difficulties so that it might increase its ability to effectively grow disciples of Jesus Christ and bear Acts 2 fruits.

A faint, light-colored graphic of several concentric circles is visible in the bottom right corner of the page, partially overlapping the text.



## A Protocol for Resolving Conflict

*The following protocol is designed to help congregations navigate through the difficult seasons of conflict.*

### Step 1 – **Communicate**

**B**egin with prayer for yourself and the individual with whom you have a conflict. Invite God to share wisdom, enable understanding and an openness to communication that resolves differences. When you have a concern about an action of the pastor, staff member, or parishioner, speak directly to the individual. Share your concern and how you have been affected, and share the change you hope will occur. Listen to the other person and work to identify a “win-win” solution. Hopefully, there will be forgiveness, new patterns of living, and reconciliation. If this does not occur, move to Step Two.

### Step 2 – **Companions**

**C**ommunicate with the Chair of the Staff-Parish Relations Committee that you would like to bring a concern to the committee. Again, pray that God will

help you to bring the healing. The SPRC chair will convene a meeting with representatives from the SPRC to hear a full sharing of the concern as well as a response. The committee will reflect with both parties on what they hear and will identify the steps that will be taken to resolve the issues. There must be a prayerful commitment for reconciliation to occur. If the pastor is a part of the conflict, he/she is to contact her/his District Superintendent prior to the meeting.

### Step 3 – **Council**

**I**f there is still no resolution, both parties will meet with the SPRC chair, the officers of the Administrative Council (chair, vice-chair, secretary and treasurer), and the lay leader of the church, to work through the process recommended in Step two. This group of church leaders will be the final decision making body on the matter. When the pastor is involved in the conflict, the District Superintendent is to be notified five (5) days before the meeting by the pastor and the Administrative Council/Church Council chairperson. The superintendent will determine if she/he needs to be present. If the issue is still not resolved, the superintendent will establish any additional steps that may be taken.

Behaviors that are not helpful to healing include: letter writing campaigns, circulating petitions, calling Conference officials (the Bishop and District Superintendent), and gossiping.

### **Our Vision:**

Become Like Christ through our Congregations and Ministries.

### **Our Values:**

The Baltimore-Washington Conference holds these seven values: growth, unity, authenticity, risk-taking, diversity, disciple-making, servanthood.

### **A Scriptural Guideline:**

Matthew offers us the wisdom of Jesus on the subject of managing conflict.

*“If a fellow believer hurts you, go and tell him – work it out between the two of you. If he listens, you’ve made a friend. If he won’t listen, take one or two others along so that the presence of witnesses will keep things honest, and try again. If they still won’t listen, tell the church.”*

- Matthew 18:15-17,  
*The Message*

