

United Church of God, *an International Association*

PROCEDURE FOR MEMBER APPEAL TO THE COUNCIL OF ELDERS

Preamble

This document describes the process to be used by church members when they wish to appeal what they perceive to be mistreatment through the improper use of disciplinary measures. It should be read in conjunction with the document "Policy for Member Appeal to the Council of Elders".

Process

1. The individual must first communicate (verbally, as well in writing or by email) with the local pastor and seek resolution by openly discussing all matters that relate to the issue. (If the problem is a matter between the individual and the pastor himself, then the process begins with step 2, (providing the principles outlined in the "Criteria" section above have been followed.)
2. If the problem is not resolved at the local congregational level (step 1), the appealing Church member should communicate (verbally, as well as in writing or by email) with the regional pastor and the Ministerial Services Team (or international equivalents) responsible for the congregation in which the problem occurred. They should openly discuss all matters that relate to the issue of appeal. The regional pastor and the Ministerial Services Team (members of the team who have not been involved with the case thus far will be assigned to work with the case at this level) or international equivalents will confer in order to attempt to resolve the issue. In facilitating a resolution, the regional pastor and Ministerial Services Team (or international equivalents) must include the input and determination of the local pastor (if step 1 was not skipped because of the involvement of the local pastor in the issue). This should take no longer than **45 days**.
3. If the problem is not resolved at the second step and the Church member wishes to appeal to the Council of Elders, he/she must request a Member Appeal Form (attached) from the secretary of the Council of Elders. The appealing member must then submit the completed form via the secretary of the Council of Elders. This should take no longer than **30 days**.
4. The Member Appeal Form goes initially to the Ethics Committee of the Council for transmission to the Member Appeal Committee (MAC). This should take no longer than **15 days**.
5. In facilitating a resolution, the MAC must include the input and determination of those responsible for the ruling at the second step of this policy. The MAC shall review the written reports of the previous steps and, if necessary, conduct interviews and undertake any additional fact-finding it deems necessary to arrive at a proper decision. (If National Councils are responsible for the area, they should be involved in this step prior to the MAC receiving the case.) This should take no longer than **90 days**.

6. The decision of the Council of Elders, via the Member Appeal Committee, is final and binding on all parties. The case may only be reopened at the Council's discretion if substantive, new and relevant facts are discovered.

NOTE:

Upon entrance into an appellate process the pastor and/or elders of the appealing member's congregation should consider resolution of this matter to be a top priority in their ministry. The same ministry should provide him/her with spiritual support (e.g. telephone contact, personal visits, sermon tapes) while the appeal process is ongoing.

Both the ministry and the appealing member should exercise good faith and appropriate behavior throughout the appeal and support the ultimate decision. The pastor should agree with the appealing member what constitutes appropriate behavior during the appeal process. For example, not discussing the situation with other church members, etc. Any disagreement as to what constitutes appropriate behavior should be clarified with the regional pastor (or international equivalent).

Non-compliance by the member will result in termination of the appeal. Ministerial non-compliance will be dealt with by Ministerial Services (or international equivalent) and the Council will facilitate the continuation of the appeal.

Regardless of the time-lines included at certain steps of the process, it is incumbent upon all parties to the appeal to act expeditiously in order to conclude the appeal process without undue delay.

All information submitted in connection with an appeal to the Council of Elders must be kept in confidence. All parties involved at each level must document their opinions on the matter in writing. Materials submitted may not be reproduced by any means, except as such reproduction is necessary to facilitate a determination.

MEMBER APPEAL
To the Council of Elders
United Church of God, *an International Association*

Name of Appealing Member: _____

Home Address: _____

Phone: _____ **E-Mail:** _____

Pastor's name: _____

Elder(s)' name(s) involved: _____

The Issue(s):

With whom did the issue(s) arise?

Please clearly state what you are appealing:

(Please turn this page over to complete the form.)

Have you sought resolution as explained in the Member Appeal Policy? (Explain):

The Results:

Please list the titles of any attached documents:

Please feel free to add additional pages for more space to explain any of the sections above.

I, the undersigned, am the member who is appealing the decision or action described above or in any attachments. I have read the above and state that it is true, correct and complete to the best of my knowledge. *I agree to abide by and to accept the decision of the Council of Elders in this case.* I understand that failure to sign this statement and to make this commitment shall mean that the Council of Elders will not hear this appeal and that the decision which I am appealing will automatically become final.

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____
Appealing Member