

ASW Resolution & Reconciliation Procedure

In any community, from time to time, problems occur. Human brokenness plays out resulting in upset and pain. Given this reality, we want our church community to be skilled at finding resolution and reconciliation.

Jesus himself gives us some very practical instructions on this:

"If your brother or sistersins, go and point out their fault, just between the two of you. If they listen to you, you have won them over. But if they will not listen, take one or two others along, so that "every matter may be established by the testimony of two or three witnesses." If they still refuse to listen, tell it to the church; and if they refuse to listen even to the church, treat them as you would a pagan or a tax collector."
(Matthew 18.15-17)

The following progression shows how we seek to live this practically within the community of All Saints, and how it is practised within the Church of England:

What should we do if something or someone has upset/hurt us?

1. **In the first instance please do go and talk just with that person*.** Tell them how what they said or did made you feel. In most cases people have no idea that they have caused upset and are so grateful that you've given them the chance to apologise and make things right. You will probably grow closer as a result.

*Note: Jesus' teaching works well on an everyday peer to peer level, but it can be more difficult in situations where power is imbalanced. If you have reason to feel unable speaking to someone 1-1, then you may want to include a friend or skip to step 2.

2. **If matters cannot be resolved through the first step, then involve another person to act as a mediator.** Our clergy and churchwardens** are all briefed and experienced in this kind of role, and are available to be involved in this way. With their help you can decide on the best course of action to take. This may include enabling further communication, facilitating a meeting and/or documenting a situation to be followed up at a later date. In more serious or difficult situations they can help involve the wider diocesan structures.

**Of course, many of the problems or hurts we can experience within church life may well have to do with the conduct/words/decisions of clergy members or churchwardens. In such situations be encouraged all the more to seek resolution and reconciliation via this progression, with full permission to involve another trusted friend as is helpful.

3. **Where problems or conflicts cannot be mutually resolved at the most local level, the Area Dean or Archdeacon can be informally involved to help.** These are senior clergy within the diocese who can mediate on behalf of the Bishop.
4. **Beyond this, the Church of England has a formal process for instances of serious misconduct by clergy called the Clergy Discipline Measure.** This is a legal process triggering a formal investigation. More details are available here: <https://www.churchofengland.org/about/leadership-and-governance/legal-services/clergy-discipline>