

Sacraments of Grace Policy and Procedure

Policy: The assembly shall have a policy that addresses the administering of the Sacraments of Grace. Only an Awakening Together (AT) Ordained Minister is permitted to administer and/or perform the Sacraments of Grace.

Procedure I: The Awakening Together Sacraments of Grace are as follows:

- A. Solemnizing a marriage ceremony.
 - a. It is each minister's responsibility to know and follow the laws in the state in which he/she lives and/or plans to solemnize a marriage.
- B. Officiating funeral services and memorial services.
- C. Administering Awakening Together spiritual counseling services
 - a. Spiritual counseling services must be in accordance with Procedure II.
- D. Performing a baptismal ceremony
 - a. Baptisms must be in accordance with Procedure III.

Procedure II: The Awakening Together standards and expectations regarding spiritual counseling are as follows:

- A. Awakening Together ministers are authorized to provide spiritual counseling, but Awakening Together ministers are not marital counselors, family or troubled teen counselors, addiction counselors, psychological or clinical therapists or financial advisors and are not permitted to administer those types of counseling.
- B. As a spiritual counselor/mentor, the Awakening Together minister acts as a temporary external form of spiritual wisdom for one who is having difficulty recognizing inner spiritual wisdom due to current mental and/or emotional obstacles.
- C. The primary goal of the Awakening Together minister as a spiritual counselor/mentor is to help the individual become Self-reliant with inner spiritual wisdom. The two primary means for achieving this goal are:
 - a. Assisting the individual to let go of untruth.
 - b. Helping the individual embrace truth and ideas that point toward truth.
- D. "Being an Awakening Together Minister", which is a course in the Minister Preparation Program (MPP) details Awakening Together's standards and expectations regarding spiritual counseling. Awakening Together Ministers are required to follow the spiritual counseling criteria set forth in that course.
- E. Every state has a statute that identifies persons who are under a legal duty to report abuse of at risk adults and/or children under specific circumstances. Whether members of the clergy are required to report suspected abuse varies from state to state. Members of the clergy must know and understand their responsibility regarding the reporting requirements. Also, while in the majority of states failure to report other criminal activity isn't illegal, a small minority of states have enacted laws punishing individuals who fail to report certain types of crimes to the authorities. Ministers should review their state's penal code or consult with an attorney to determine whether their state has a failure to report law.

Procedure III: The Awakening Together standards regarding baptism are as follows:

- A. An Awakening Together minister may baptize any AT member who wishes to be baptized as a symbol of his/her commitment to let go of individual thinking in deference to spiritual intuition in order to awaken to one true Self.
- B. It is left to the discretion of the Awakening Together minister to determine if he/she will baptize a non-member (friend) who wishes to be baptized as a symbol of his/her commitment to let go of individual thinking in deference to spiritual intuition in order to awaken to one true Self.
- C. Awakening Together does not keep records of baptized individuals, and baptism is not required in order to be a member or minister in Awakening Together.
- D. If an Awakening Together member (or friend) requests baptism, the baptismal ceremony may be any ceremony that suits the heart of the one being baptized. It may be a sprinkle-baptism or immersion-baptism, as desired by the one being baptized.
- E. Baptism must be a spiritual decision made by the one being baptized. With the exception of infants, Awakening Together does not place a minimum age on individuals being baptized. Any child or adult who feels an inner calling to be baptized per this policy and can state their decision to do so may be baptized by an Awakening Together minister.