

First Church of Christ in Mansfield Center
(Congregational) United Church of Christ

**Our Covenant
For Working and Worshipping**

In a spirit of trust and love, promising to treat each other respectfully, we will:

- Listen without judgment
- Value one another's ideas and feelings
- Speak honestly and directly, and
- Foster growth and understanding among us, so that our actions and intentions embody God's vision.

Speaking

- We will communicate directly to each other using the first person, listening with the same intensity as we speak.
- We will ask questions for clarification in order to confirm that we have understood correctly and will ask others to do the same.
- We will speak the truth, as we perceive it, in love, speaking from factual information.
- We will take responsibility for expressing our concerns.
- We will be aware of our own feelings, and be sensitive to the feelings of others.

the truth

- We will be active participants in the decision-making processes of our church.
- We will accept that the expression of opposing view is necessary as a step toward honest communication, striving for understanding.
- We will encourage the voice of dissent in our willingness to hear the spectrum of views.
- We will clearly define issues that are within the boundaries of congregational discussion.

in love

- We will affirm each person's ideas equally before offering them our own opinion.
- We will support each other with presence and participation in the life of our church.
- We will recognize the will of the congregation and support it within the bounds of our individual conscience.

As members of a Christian community, we promise, with the help of God, to live this covenant in order to do God's will in the life of our church.

SUGGESTION FOR LIVING OUT THE COVENANT

We will work to create an environment of respect and support, and to foster open communication.

We will be intentional in our decision making process through the following actions:

- We will provide written materials before discussions, being conscientious in studying the written materials before discussion.
- We will give enough time for individuals to absorb the information.
- We will plan ahead so that there are enough meetings/occasions for dialogue to allow for adequate discussion, and so that there is adequate time for dissemination of information through the newsletter and Sunday bulletins.
- We will allow time for “key” decisions to germinate.
- We will ensure that the covenant is followed during the decision making process.
- We will, in cases of individual conscience and/or issues that shape church identity, strive for consensus.
- We will always remain open to reconsideration of congregational decisions at any time.