



## Our Congregational Covenant

LOVE IS THE SPIRIT OF THIS CHURCH,  
AND SERVICE IS ITS LAW; THIS IS OUR  
GREAT COVENANT: TO DWELL TOGETHER  
IN PEACE, TO SEEK THE TRUTH IN LOVE,  
AND TO HELP ONE ANOTHER. <sup>1</sup>

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**Our congregation** is bound not by creed, but by covenant; each to each and each to all, by freely chosen and life-sustaining interdependence. <sup>2</sup>

**Our Congregational Covenant** is a living, breathing aspiration, made new every day. It can't be enforced by consequences but it may be reinforced by forgiveness and by grace, when we stumble, when we forget, when we mess up. <sup>3</sup>

**Our Congregational Covenant** is a promise we keep to ourselves, about the kind of persons we want to be, about the kind of life we mean to have, together with other people, and with all other living things.

**Our Congregational Covenant** gives us some specific ways to help us live our 7 principles, a written document, agreed to by us. It is deeper and more significant than social politeness. It is not a set of rules but speaks instead of "holy manners"-- the manners of a faith community. It provides one pathway to spiritual growth, leads us to engage with one another openly and honestly. It enables us to disagree in a climate of mutual trust and respect that helps to strengthen our UUFBC community.

### **Within this climate:**

- All are comfortable voicing their thoughts;
- All are heard with respect;
- People talk to each other, not about each other;
- Conflict centers on ideas, not personal attack;
- Conflict becomes a means of positive growth, not destruction.

As a member of UUFBC, I will strive to:

- Take responsibility for my statements and actions;
- Speak only for myself, not for someone else, unless so directed by that person or group;
- Respectfully speak up when I am uncomfortable with a statement or pending decision;
- Listen intently and respectfully with an open heart and an open mind when another is speaking;
- Mindfully consider the ideas and opinions of those who disagree with me;
- Withhold unsolicited personal judgments and examine my assumptions and personal biases;
- Attempt to be a non-anxious presence. I will try to listen and respond objectively. When I feel tension or negative emotions rising within myself, I will step back, take a deep breath, and try to regain control before I speak;
- Always try to assume the best intentions of another's words or actions;
- Recognize that the work we do together is sometimes difficult, and that it is important that we "stay at the table" together. This may require patience and courage;
- Always be aware of the pitfalls of triangulation. When a problem arises between another group member and me, I will endeavor to speak directly and privately with that person. If that is impossible, I will enlist the help of a neutral third person to mediate between us;
- Respect the confidentiality of group discussions on sensitive topics;

- Share pertinent, non-confidential information with the whole group as that information becomes available;
- Follow through in a timely manner on tasks and responsibilities and promptly notify those depending on me when I am unable to do so;
- Support group decisions once they become final. <sup>4</sup>

1 James Vila Blake 1894

2 Theologian Rebecca Parker

3 Rev. Victoria Safford

4 UU-Transylvania County and UUC - Cherry Hill