

Seeking to be the Vibrant Body of Christ:

A Relational Covenant for Faith Presbyterian Church in 2009

LOVE; A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all people will know you are my disciples, if you love one another. John 13:34-35

NEW LIFE; Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, [this one] is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us a ministry of reconciliation. 2 Corinthians 5:17-18

GRACE; For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith and this not from yourselves, it is the gift from God not by works, so that no one can boast. Ephesians 2:8-9

As the people of God, we are called to live a life distinct from the world. We believe God's Word, and we want to glorify God in our relationships, in a spirit of prayer, trust and love, seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit through His grace. As we try to be faithful, disagreements and tensions are inevitable. God promises to be with us in times of disagreement and calls us to reconciliation. Because we believe these things, we covenant to do the following:

<p>...Pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests....</p> <p><i>Ephesians 6:18</i></p>	<p>P R A Y</p>	<p>Seek God's guidance for our disagreements – praying not for our own triumph, but for our openness to the vision God holds for us all.</p> <p>Ask God for help in identifying our own motives and bringing them in line with His, recognizing it is His church, not ours.</p>
<p>Give them a hearing... listen before we answer.</p> <p><i>John 7:51 and Proverbs 18:13</i></p>	<p>L I S T E N</p>	<p>Trust that we all desire to be faithful to Jesus the Christ, treating each other respectfully as children of God.</p> <p>Listen to all positions, focusing on ideas and suggestions instead of questioning motives and character.</p> <p>State what we think we heard and ask for clarification before responding, in an effort to be sure we understand each other.</p>
<p>Speak the truth in love.</p> <p><i>Ephesians 4:15</i></p>	<p>S P E A K</p>	<p>Share our concerns directly with individuals or groups with whom we have disagreements.</p> <p>Share our personal experiences about the subject of disagreement so that others may more fully understand our concerns.</p> <p>Acknowledge where we agree as well as where we disagree ... but seek to stay in community even when the discussion is vigorous or tense.</p>
<p>Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors.</p> <p><i>From Matthew 6:12</i></p>	<p>R E C O N C I L E</p>	<p>Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up. (James 4:10)</p> <p>Seek to forgive and be forgiven, acknowledging this as the only path to true reconciliation while letting go of any and all anger.</p> <p>Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ. (Ephesians 5:21)</p> <p>Seek consensus found through reconciliation with God and each other.</p>
<p>Maintain the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.</p> <p><i>Ephesians 4:3</i></p>	<p>S E E K U N I T Y</p>	<p>Acknowledge and be sensitive to the feelings and concerns of those who do not agree with the majority.</p> <p>Abide by the decision of the majority. If we disagree with it, work for change in ways that are consistent with the spirit of unity.</p> <p>Carry forward the ministry of reconciliation as Christ's ambassadors into the church and into the world, praising God for His abundant love.</p>

Seek to live life in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ so that you will be found standing firm in one spirit and striving side by side with one mind. (Philippians 1:27)