

Covenant for Christian Community at the United Church of Christ in New Brighton

This covenant expresses the values we wish to embody in our formal and informal relationships at UCCNB. Because there is a difference between values and behaviors commonly held in secular society, and those we hold as a community of faith, we have outlined some of ways we will live out our values together – in our one-on-one relationships, and in our committees and congregational relationships. Covenants are voluntarily undertaken rather than legally binding. We at UCCNB, by adopting this covenant, say to each other, and to all who come into this community that we seek to be safe and welcoming, respectful of one another, and honoring of the God who calls us together and of the mission to which we are called.

In all settings we will strive to:

- *Use “I” language, taking responsibility for our own opinions and ideas.*
- *Express our opinions and preferences without judging those of others.*
- *Treat with respect those who disagree with us.*
- *Not generalize, speak for others, blame or shame others.*
- *Recognize that whenever a new person joins the church or a group within the church a new group has come into being.*
- *Honor confidentiality in situations where it is required and in any situation where harm may result from extending the circle of those with whom information is shared.*
- *Assume the best about others and check out our perceptions with persons who appear to be intending hurt or offense.*
- *Deal with conflict as directly as possible, avoiding gossip or drawing in uninvolved people.*
- *Acknowledge anger and hurt honestly while attempting to seek solutions for the good of all.*
- *Listen, take responsibility, and express regret when someone is hurt by our words or actions.*
- *Be ready to forgive and be forgiven when we experience or cause hurt.*

In Committees, Council , Congregational Meetings, or other groups we will strive to:

- *Attend as much to the process as to the content of our meetings, nurturing our relationships as well as accomplishing our tasks.*
- *Follow the model of sacred conversations when possible (ensuring that everyone who wishes to speak is given the opportunity before others speak for a second time on the same issue).*
- *Respect our decision-making processes, expressing our opinions freely, but honoring decisions once they are made.*
- *When committee membership changes (even by one person) all present will introduce themselves. Assumptions that things will be done as they have in the past will be discussed, with openness to new ideas.*

At the close of meetings, we will consider how well we have honored this covenant.

In the Ministries of the Church we will strive to:

- *Respectfully support those whom we have called into positions of leadership.*
- *Try to discern what is best for the whole congregation and its mission, not just what is best for us as individuals or for small groups within the congregation.*
- *Provide ample opportunities for any who wish to speak to decisions that will affect the whole congregation.*
- *Allow time (when possible) between making a decision that will affect the whole congregation and implementing that decision.*