

The St. John's United Church of Christ Behavioral Covenant

St. John's Vision

We are called to love, to learn, to worship and to witness in Christ as a congregation that welcomes everyone, and seeks service that will advance God's realm on earth.

St. John's Mission

To grow in love of God and neighbor.

The Purpose of Our Behavioral Covenant

Do to others as you would have them do to you. (Luke 6:31)¹

²² *...the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness,* ²³ *gentleness, and self-control... (Galatians 5:22-23)*

We, the congregation of St. John's United Church of Christ, covenant with one another to exalt the fruit of the Spirit practicing discernment in our interactions with one another, fostering abiding fellowship, discipleship, mutual respect, and enduring love. We recognize that inconvenience, disagreement, and conflict are potentials. This covenant serves as our commitment to a culture of care in all settings, and interactions among the leadership, staff, tenants, visitors, guests, and congregants of St. John's United Church of Christ. We seek to serve as a safe-place where faith, harmony, and joy abound for all.

Holy Manners for Our St. John's United Church of Christ Faith Community

You must understand this, my beloved brothers and sisters: let everyone be quick to listen, slow to speak, slow to anger, for human anger does not produce God's righteousness. (James 1:19-20)

This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you. (John 15:12)

¹ Biblical references for this document are taken from the NRSVue Bible as found on Bible Gateway.
<https://www.biblegateway.com/versions/New-Revised-Standard-Version-Updated-Edition-NRSVue-Bible/>

Together, we are called:

We are called to love one another for we are all created in the image of God.

We are called to unite in fellowship, friendship, and faith as family and a caring community.

We are called to welcome and affirm congregational inclusion, equity, and diversity.

We are called to act with compassion and empathy.

We are called to promote truth, honesty, and fairness, and foster trust and transparency.

We are called to value others, especially their thoughts, ideas, and experience, and endeavor to engage in open, clear, respectful, and constructive communication.

We are called to be open minded, withholding judgement, as we seek to understand as well as being understood, and to hear as well as be heard.

We are called to be respectful in matters of misunderstanding or disagreement and avoid creating further conflict.

We are called to accept responsibility for our thoughts, feelings, and actions, and forge a path to forgiveness, should conflict arise.

We are called to act in peace and love, for the benefit of the greater good.

Closing Statement

...walk in a manner worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love,³ making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. (Ephesians 4:1-3)

We pray always for God's guidance as we love, care, support, and pray for one another.

References:

*A Sure Foundation: Resources for the relationship between Pastors and Congregations*²

*A Discernment Travelogue: Practices for Small Groups, Large Groups, Church Committees, Prayer Circles, and Individuals.*³

*Covenant: A Study for the UCC by Jane Fisler-Hoffman*⁴

*Behavioral Covenants in Congregations: A Handbook for Honoring Differences by Gilbert Rendle*⁵

² A Sure Foundation: Resources for the relationship between Pastors and Congregations. <https://ucctcm.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/A-Sure-Foundation.pdf>

³ A Discernment Travelogue: Practices for Small Groups, Large Groups, Church Committees, Prayer Circles, and Individuals. <https://pccucc.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Discernment-Travelogue.pdf>

⁴ Fisler-Hoffman, Jane, *Covenant: A Study for the UCC*. United Church Press, 2008. ISBN 978-0-8298-1794-2.

⁵ Rendle, Gilbert, *Behavioral Covenants in Congregations: A Handbook for Honoring Differences*. Albion Institute, 1999. ISBN 1-56699-209-5.