Dove of the Desert
United Methodist Church

"Increasing Love for God & Neighbor by
Going Deeper, Reaching Farther, Transforming Lives"

Relational Covenant for Dove of the Desert United Methodist Church

As parishioners of Dove, we want to create a loving Christian community wherein we demonstrate love for one another and support individuals on their journey to be effective disciples for Christ.

When such a diverse and dedicated group of individuals strives to further the work of Christ, conflict may be inevitable.

We understand, however, that addressing our differences in healthy ways creates opportunity for growth, creativity, and greater understanding.

This relational covenant is a set of promises concerning how we interact with each other to build healthy relationships and promote effective communication within our church family.

OUR COVENANT:

We agree to abide by the following promises:

1. We keep God central in our interactions
2. We honor each person's intrinsic value as a Creation of God.
3. We respect differences in each other's ministries, gifts, personalities and Christian walk.
4. We deal directly with one another as the primary means of increasing understanding and resolving conflict.
5. We are individually and collectively accountable for upholding this covenant.

In honoring our covenant:

1. **We keep God central in our interactions**
   a. We are mindful of God's presence in communication and process.
   b. We pray at the start of meetings.
   c. We ask ourselves, "How and where is God leading us?"

2. **We honor each person's intrinsic value as a Creation of God.**
   a. We desire the highest good for one another.
   b. We extend grace to others, assume good intent, and give the benefit of the doubt.
   c. We speak and act in ways that express our love and respect for one another.

3. **We respect differences in each other's ministries, gifts, personalities, and Christian walk.**
    a. We are united by our Christian faith under the umbrella of the United Methodist Church.
    b. We affirm our differences as good, valuable, and essential for our shared ministries.
    c. We don't demand that others believe exactly the same as we believe or use the same terminology we use.
    d. We accept that others may be in different places in their Christian walk.
    e. We realize that diversity of opinion prompts consideration of multiple solutions and increases the likelihood of better decisions.

4. **We deal directly with one another as the primary means of increasing understanding and resolving conflict.**
    a. We go directly to the person with whom we need to talk. We do not take our issues to others with the expectation that they will resolve the problem for us. We don't complain to others about situations when we haven't dealt directly with the person involved.
    b. We name, identify, and are honest about our feelings so that understanding is increased. We share our interests and intentions openly and honestly. We speak for ourselves and not for others.
    c. We maintain confidentiality when appropriate.
    d. We avoid gossip. (We don't start it, don't listen to it, don't pass it on.) We ask "Is it true? Is it good? Is it useful?" before sharing or listening.
    e. If we need help dealing with someone, we may seek coaching on better ways to communicate. A good coach advises but does not directly intervene.
    f. When facing a sensitive interaction, we communicate in the most personal, direct way possible. (Speaking face-to-face helps us to respond to another's unspoken reaction; phone conversations allow less of this awareness, paper communications even less so, and email is often a potentially volatile medium due to its immediacy and its impersonal nature.)

5. **We are individually and collectively accountable for upholding this covenant.**
    a. A covenant is an unconditional promise; we keep the agreement even if others break it.
    b. We help each other keep the covenant by questioning perceived breaches as noticed and by being open to others' concerns about our own actions.

January 19, 2017
Approved by Church Council
Dove of the Desert United Methodist Church