

Existing Covenants: Statements and Samples

1. We would like to share with you some of what we have learned from church groups who already have working covenants that guide their meetings and interactions. They include the Church Council, Coordinating Team, Staff, Numinous Circle, Chalice Circles, and RE classes, among others.

You see statements posted around the room. These statements are taken from existing covenants at UUCB. They are intended as points for discussion; they are not intended to be rated or ranked; they are just a sampling. In this next activity, you will have a chance to reflect on these statements in small groups.

* We value equally relationship, process and task.

* We see leadership and teamwork as spiritual practice.

* We encourage speaking and knowing when not to speak, in the interest of effective decision-making for the common good.

* We approach concerns and issues with direct communication, working toward resolution.

* We practice sensitivity to differences, cultural and otherwise.

* We practice open communication with appreciative listening, honesty, compassion, and transcendence of self-interest.

* We will honor our commitments as volunteers. We will support each other and proactively offer and receive assistance whenever individual responsibilities feel overwhelming.

* Our meetings will be a "safe room." While we may talk in generalities of our discussion with others, we will not tell others the details of who said what if that would betray a reasonable expectation of confidentiality.

* We recognize that our work is an opportunity for us to mindfully transcend our limits.

2. I would like to ask you to walk around the room, read each statement, and then choose one that speaks to you in some way--maybe it holds personal relevance or you are in strong agreement with the statement or you simply find that you are drawn to it. Then, when you are gathered in small groups--we will come around and try to balance numbers (about 4 people)--discuss your thoughts about the statement. Share why/how it speaks to you, what values you think it manifests, how it might relate to creating beloved community and to church work, etc. (You will have about 10 minutes; I will let you know the time remaining.) Then, we will gather back together and share. (Direct people)

3. I'd like to ask you to share some of your reflections on these covenanting statements: What did your dialogue with each other bring up? What are your thoughts or observations about the statements?

4. Can I ask those who belong to groups whose committee or church work is guided by covenants to share how their covenant has shaped your work together? I had the privilege of hearing the Church Council talking about how their covenant has shaped their interactions and I was moved by their remarks. I learned that its value is not the beautifully written document but in the process and the intentionality in creating those statements.

5. I have copies of covenants to share with you--Council, Coordinating Team, Staff, Numinous Circle, Chalice Circle sample... You will notice differences in focus, dependent upon the nature of the particular group, but the commonality is apparent--the covenant is an expression of how people will be with each other (pass out samples).

Existing Covenants at UUCB:

Covenant of the UUCB Council

Covenant of Numinous Circle

Covenant of the UUCB Staff