

The Discernment Covenant

As members of First United Methodist Church entering the discernment process to consider staying with, or disaffiliating from the United Methodist Church, we understand there are difficult conversations ahead of us as a congregation.

As we move forward in this time of difficulty, we pledge as a congregation and as individuals:

1. To rely on prayer and study.

I will commit to praying and reading scripture to discern God's will for our church.

2. To act in good faith.

I will engage in good faith. I will be sincere, fair, open, and honest, regardless of the conversation's outcome.

3. To show respect.

I will show respect. I will be polite and give due regard to others' feelings, wishes, rights, or traditions.

4. To give the benefit of the doubt.

I will "give the benefit of the doubt" when someone says something that sounds unreasonable to me, recognizing that they may know something I do not. I will ask them to explain in more detail rather than assuming the worst about them.

5. To refrain from gossip.

I will refrain from gossip and be open and honest in all conversations.

6. To learn about the various perspectives on the topic.

I commit to attending information sessions offered by the discernment team and others in leadership.

7. To disagree constructively.

I will engage in carefully reasoned arguments. I will respond after restating what I have heard and ask for clarification.

8. To speak the truth.

I will not see this time as an opportunity to win an argument. I will speak what I genuinely believe is the truth and I will speak that truth in love.

9. To aim to discover the truth.

I will not enter a conversation to change anyone's mind to my way of thinking but to learn and get close to the truth of matters jointly.

10. To follow the Covenant, even when others fail to do so.

I will abide by the covenant regardless of whether another person breaks them. I will find kind and respectful ways to respond to others even when they fail to engage in discussion using the covenant we have all agreed upon.