

A Covenant for Our Serving & Leading Together
The Council of Christ First, Mississauga
(Adopted March 2023)

The Nature of Our Covenant

(adapted from text by The Very Rev. Dr. Richard Bott)

Covenant is at the heart of what it means to be in Christian community, because covenant – whether promises made with one another, intentionally or willingly entered into, in which we call upon God as witness; or promises made between us and God – not only defines the relationship we desire, but names that relationship sacred. Never perfect, for we live in an imperfect universe, ours is a relationship so important that we covenant to do our best to live it in Christ's Way; and we trust that when we lose our path, our covenant calls us back again.

In this covenant, as congregational leaders serving together on the Council of Christ First, The United Church of Canada, we call upon the presence of God – Creator, Christ, and Holy Spirit – to witness our commitment, and hold us together: in the difficult times and in the joyful ones. May these words not only sit upon the firm foundation of Christ's love but add to the strength of this household of faith, helping to bring healing and hope to all the Creator's creation.

Our Promises to God

We promise to pray, alone and together, to thank God and to ask for God's help in our lives and in our work for our Church, and we promise to do our best to listen to, and live faithfully by, God's answer to us.

Our Promises to Our Church Family

We promise to demonstrate our leadership and commitment to our Church by our example.

We promise to listen to, respect, and support our Church staff so that their efforts can be most productive.

We promise to try to discover what is best for our Church as a whole, not what may be best for us or for a small group in the Church.

Our Promises to Each Other

We promise to respect and care for each other, in our preparations, our reporting, our behaviour, our presence, our honouring of others' time and space, our words, and our attitudes.

We promise to treat our time on this Council as an opportunity to make an important gift to our Church.

We promise to listen and respond with humility, patience, courage, and compassion, with an open, nonjudgmental mind, to the words and ideas of others in our Church and on this Council.

We promise to honour confidentiality and mutual accountability, as part of this sacred responsibility.

We promise to offer and receive trust, to uphold consultation and collaboration, and to respect the mandates of Committees and their processes.

We promise to discuss, debate, and disagree openly in Council meetings, expressing ourselves with clarity, honesty, empathy, and kindness, doing our best to share with our Council colleagues our diverse points of view, and speaking for ourselves with first-hand knowledge while not taking things personally.

We promise to support the final decision of this Council, whether it reflects our view or not.



*Adapted, with thanks, from:

- Gilbert R. Rendle's 'Behavioral Covenants in Congregations: A Handbook for Honoring Differences' (Alban Institute, 1998)
- 'Our Commitment as God's Diverse Church' by The Rev. Dr. Michael Blair & The Rev. Steve Willey, Toronto, 2008
- 'A Service of Covenant' at Grace United Church, Burlington, January 22, 2023