

## A "BEHAVIORAL COVENANT"

*A covenant is a set of promises, vows we make to each other and to God as a community of faith. We believe that we, together, are the body of Christ, and our unity as a congregation is important. Therefore, we believe it is essential to cooperate with each other in a spirit of good will, putting the needs of others and the welfare of our Church community before our own. In order to encourage each other to have the courage to "speak the truth in love" for the greater good of the church rather than individual interests, we seek to create an atmosphere of trust, openness, and Christian fellowship and commit to the following as part of our covenant together:*

- We will first speak directly to any person with whom we have a problem before complaining to another – stopping harmful gossip and rumor should be our priority. Included in this is our use of phone calls and emails – phone calls and emails will be used in constructive ways, such as for the sharing of committee minutes, but will not be used for gossip.
- We will listen to others with respect using active listening (Use "I" statements, maintain eye contact, try to understand the other person's intentions, ask clarifying questions when needed, and listen from the heart).
- We will affirm and validate a person's ideas before stating something negative, accentuate the positive in what the other is saying.
- We will demonstrate openness and honesty with each other, acknowledging our own feelings and sharing them honestly and in the first person, instead of keeping "secrets".
- We will strive to understand another person's point of view with sensitivity.
- We will speak from the facts ("direct observable data"). Sticking to what we know to be true.
- We will not air disagreements outside this body, nor engage in any attempts to enflame our personal disagreements by drawing others into them, splintering our unity, or urging others to "pick sides".
- We will work towards solving problems as they occur using a four-step process (Understand the facts, share desired outcomes, generate creative options and commit to action).
- We will hold others and ourselves accountable if our words and actions do not exemplify covenant behavior---unacceptable behaviors that are the opposite of those described here---each of us is responsible for keeping the covenant.
- We will forgive each other and ourselves when we break this covenant, allowing others to take a "time out" and giving each of our members the opportunity to learn and try again.