All Souls Church Unitarian Covenant

Preamble

To covenant with one another is to engage in the spiritual and everyday practice of loving better. Although this document expresses our written promise to each other, our true covenant lives and breathes in our actions. In times of growth we will use it to deepen our bonds with one another; during times when we are loving well, it will inspire us to love better; and in times of conflict, we will use it to guide us. We expect this covenant to be challenging, but we also expect it to inspire us to strengthen our relationships and deepen our sense of community. The spirit of the document and the specific examples of behavior come directly from contributions of the All Souls community. We commit to living and working with this draft covenant, adjusting the ideals, and expanding the examples to make it truly our own.

Our Ideals and our Living Practices

With examples from the congregation

Welcoming and Hospitality

We practice hospitality, welcoming all those who enter.

Ex. Greet people warmly; get acquainted with others; treat visitors as fellow worshipers; welcome newcomers into conversations; treat one another kindly outside of church as well as inside.

Furthering Diversity

We work to foster a multicultural and multigenerational community that sees diversity in all its manifestations as a sign of our strength.

Ex. Engage with those who are different from us; challenge bigotry in all its forms; work to empower those who are disempowered; actively confront our assumptions through critical and studied examination of the forces that disadvantage some and privilege others.

Listening and Speaking

We listen with respect and attention and speak with care.

Ex. Assume that people have good intentions; listen intentionally and compassionately; encourage people to speak without blaming or judging them when they do.

Serving Our Church Community

We serve our church community with generosity and good humor, and we will acknowledge the service of others.

Ex. Honor all levels of service to the church; solicit the input of others; encourage people to make choices that balance their needs with the needs of others; invite others to join us in our activities; honor the right of others to say no.

Working with Conflict

We resolve conflicts directly, using openness and compassion.

Ex. Make every effort to settle differences directly and openly; stay engaged with each other through difficult conversations; hold ourselves responsible for hearing all sides.

Forgiveness and Reconciliation

We acknowledge our mistakes and shortcomings and are willing to forgive those of others.

Ex. Acknowledge our own and others' imperfections; forgive ourselves and others; be accountable for keeping our promises; lovingly call each other to account for behavior that is hurtful to others.

Solidarity and Accompaniment

We support each other in times of joy and need.

Ex. Help each other in times of crisis; recognize each other's talents; remind others of the spark of divinity within them; embrace our different cultural and faith traditions; challenge each other to grow.