Church Covenant

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. 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. 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. 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. 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. 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. 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. 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.

Committee on Right Relations

The Committee on Right Relations (CRR) exists to help process conflicts between congregants and between congregants and the church’s staff, its executive team, and its board of trustees.

The CRR has designed a conflict resolution process for disagreements between congregants, or congregants and staff, or committees/groups. Most conflicts can be addressed either by:

1. Parties involved work it out. Parties resolve differences themselves. They receive education/training and apply Right Relations Guidance Coaching – one or both parties may benefit from the help of a person experienced with conflict resolution to help them gain additional skills or techniques to resolve the situation themselves.

2. Facilitated discussion with the help of a Right Relations Team member. In some instances, parties may simply wish to have a third party lead a conversation for the purpose of assisting parties in understanding/mediation.

If you would like to start a conversation, please email **crr.allsouls@gmail.com**. Confidentiality is assured. The CRR will neither disclose the names of parties involved nor the content or substance of matters brought to it unless disclosure is reasonably believed to be necessary to avoid physical or substantial financial harm, or is required by law.

Learn more about the church covenant and the Committee on Right Relations here:

https://all-souls.org/about-us/governance/right-relations/