

Volunteer Leader Covenant

The United Methodist Church of the Resurrection

Our lay leaders, along with our staff, fulfill the biblical roles of elders and deacons, shepherds and teachers. Throughout the New Testament, leaders are called to be examples to the rest of the church. As leaders, they are held to higher standards than other members. Paul sets forth lists of attributes of elders and deacons in his letters to the early church. Leaders should be “above reproach” and “not be puffed up with conceit” among other things. Peter, likewise, challenges leaders to be “examples to the flock” and to exercise leadership with a willing heart. Because leaders are held to a higher standard, James says, “not many of you should become teachers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly.”

As leaders, we set the tone and pace for the entire congregation. We model the Christian faith, the Christian life, and the attitude and heart of a Christian for our congregation. We shape the heart, character and life of this Christian community. For this reason, it is vital that we walk the Christian walk. Spiritually healthy leaders will produce a spiritually healthy church. Likewise, leaders who fail to walk with Christ will have devastating consequences.

With this in mind, the following covenant was developed to guide our life together as leaders. We use these standards to hold ourselves accountable to pursuing the Christian life. And in so doing, we recognize that it is God’s grace which calls forth our faithful response, and it is God’s grace which brings such transformation in our lives.

I. The Goal of the Christian Life: Sanctification

Jesus summarized the goal of the Christian life with two commandments: love the Lord our God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength; and love your neighbor as yourselves. John Wesley spoke of this goal as *sanctification, Christian perfection, or holiness*. In our Methodist tradition, three **General Rules** were designed to help Christians pursue this goal. As leaders we pursue these “rules” as we grow in faith and service together.

A. Avoid those things which are inconsistent with the life of faith, separate us from God, and bring harm to others, such as:

1. Self-destructive behavior (addictive behavior, poor self-care)
2. Moral compromise (sexual misconduct, greed, dishonesty)
3. Self-centeredness and pride
4. Malice (harboring resentment, acting in anger, backbiting)
5. Wasting of resources (the church’s, or personal resources of time, talent, finance)

B. Do good of every possible sort, such as:

1. Live a life of love
2. Share our faith inside and outside of Resurrection
3. Care for our families
4. Build others up
5. Be engaged with those in need, both inside the church and out

C. Pursue growth in our spiritual lives, such as:

1. Attend worship each weekend, except when sick or out of town
2. Engage in close Christian friendships for spiritual growth and accountability in a small group
3. Serve God with our time and talents
4. Give in proportion to our income, with the tithe being the goal
5. Spend time in prayer and the personal study of scripture

II. The Heart and Attitude of a Leader at Resurrection

A. What is the heart and attitude of a Resurrection leader?

1. Humble (servanthood)
2. Positive
3. Joyful
4. Committed to Christ
5. Devoted to the purpose and vision of the Church of the Resurrection

B. How will Resurrection leaders live toward one another?

1. Demonstrating respect and grace
2. Accepting differences
3. Maintaining appropriate confidentiality
4. Publicly supporting other volunteer leaders, pastors and staff members
5. Going directly to the individual whenever a problem arises

III. The Faith and Character of a United Methodist

The Church of the Resurrection is a United Methodist Church. We expect our leaders to honor our denominational heritage and to pursue ministry in keeping with our tradition.

United Methodists are people who seek to love and serve God with our head, our heart and our hands. They are orthodox in faith, liberal in spirit, passionate and deeply devoted to Christ, and desire to be wholly surrendered to God. They bring together both the evangelical and social gospel – inviting people to a life-transforming relationship with Jesus Christ, and then equipping and challenging them to live their faith in the public sphere, being engaged in the issues of our time and seeking to shape a world that looks more like the Kingdom of God. Methodists have been known as “reasonable enthusiasts” – valuing both a personal, passionate faith and one that is intellectually informed. Methodists are constantly looking to connect our faith to the world in meaningful, relevant ways. Methodists value spiritual disciplines and a “methodical” approach to growing in the faith. They strive for both personal holiness and social holiness.

United Methodists are not afraid to ask difficult questions, to take on tough subjects, and to admit that they do not always understand the answers. They are “people of the Book” - holding the Bible to be the inspired Word from God and encouraging people to read, study and live by its words. “While we acknowledge the primacy of Scripture in theological reflection, our attempts to grasp its meaning always involve experience, tradition and reason. Like Scripture, these become creative vehicles of the Holy Spirit as they function within the church.”¹ Methodists also believe the Bible came to us through people who heard God’s Word in the light of their own cultural and historical circumstances. And hence, they study the scriptures carefully, making use of scholarship and asking critical questions. And, as Methodists encounter theological differences amongst Christians, they bear in mind John Wesley’s approach, “in essentials, unity; in nonessentials, liberty; in all things, charity.”²

Methodists are people who love God with all their heart, soul, mind and strength, and love their neighbors. They pursue acts of piety toward God and acts of mercy toward others. They value passionate worship, relevant preaching, small groups to hold Christians accountable to one another, the need to address the social issues of our time, and the need to be people whose faith is firmly rooted in and built upon the scriptures. Methodists value the full participation of women and men, people of all races, classes and backgrounds in all facets of fellowship and leadership within the church and society.

This is our heritage, and it continues to shape the Church of the Resurrection in every area of our ministry.

Covenant:

I have read the above and am committed to living my life and pursuing ministry in a way that is consistent with these expectations, and desire to do so at the United Methodist Church of the Resurrection.

Name

Date

¹ 2004 Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church, ¶ 104. ²¶ 102.