

Our Covenant

We love the Lord Jesus Christ and seek to love our fellow Christians in obedience to his new commandment (Jn. 13: 34-35). We love The Church of Jesus Christ, praying for its peace and seeking its good (Ps. 122: 6, 9 NRSV). We recognize as members of the church those who, by confession of faith, by example of life and by partaking in the sacraments, profess the same God and Christ with us (Calvin). We therefore covenant together on the basis of our faith in God and his Son, Jesus Christ. We affirm our roots in the Holy Catholic Church and the teaching of the Nicene and Apostles' Creeds. We value our Reformation, Methodist and Congregational heritages. We are in essential agreement with the Doctrine of the Basis of Union of the United Church of Canada. We understand essential agreement to include at least these five beliefs:

- belief in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments as the primary source and ultimate standard of Christian faith and life;
- belief in the one only living and true God, the Father Almighty, the Creator who is above all his works and in them all, and out of whose great love for the world has given his only begotten Son to be the Saviour of sinners;
- belief in the Lord Jesus Christ, the Word made flesh, the only Mediator between God and humanity, the eternal Son of God, who was crucified for us, rose from the dead, and is with us by the power of the Holy Spirit;
- belief in the Holy Spirit, who proceeds from the Father and the Son; who, through our exalted Saviour, was sent forth in power to convict the world of sin, to enlighten human minds in the knowledge of Christ, and to persuade and enable people to obey the call of the Gospel; and who abides with the Church, dwelling in every believer as the spirit of truth, of power, of holiness, of comfort and of love;
- belief that the moral law of God, summarized in the Ten Commandments, testified to in the prophets and unfolded in the life and teachings of Jesus Christ, stands for ever in truth and equity, and is established by faith.

We covenant to live in fellowship with our brothers and sisters in Christ and to seek to do justly, to love mercifully, and to walk humbly with God (Micah 6: 8). We affirm that we must demonstrate God's love visibly by caring for those who are deprived of justice, dignity, food and shelter. We affirm that the proclamation of God's kingdom of justice and peace demands the denunciation of all injustice and oppression, both personal and structural. We affirm that faithfulness to God as Creator includes commitment to environmental stewardship.

We covenant to cooperate with the existing courts and human laws of the United Church as far as our confession of faith in Jesus Christ allows. Our prime loyalty is to Jesus Christ, the Head of the Church. We make the following declarations:

- Because Jesus said, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me" (Jn. 14: 6 NRSV), we affirm the uniqueness, indispensability and centrality of Jesus Christ. It is therefore a contravention of our faith to say that other religions and ideologies are equally valid ways to God however ethical they may be.
- Because Scripture says "the Word became flesh" about Jesus alone (Jn. 1: 14-18), we affirm that Jesus is God's only son and that we are God's children by adoption (Rom. 8: 15, Gal. 4: 5, Eph. 1: 4-5). It is therefore a contravention of our faith to speak of a repeatable and continuing incarnation of God in the world in human beings or even in loving people.
- Because we see God's intended pattern from the beginning of creation in scripture (Genesis 1:27-28, & Genesis 2:20b-24), and Jesus recognized God's institution of marriage from the beginning (Mt. 19:4-6), and because holiness and sexual self control are linked (1 Thess. 4: 3-8, 1 Cor. 6:9-11), we hold that as a matter of belief, doctrine and religious practice, our congregation reserves the celebration of marriage for the covenant relationship between a man and a woman to the exclusion of all others.
- Because scripture points toward an exclusive relationship between one man and one woman, and because of the depth of the relationship, "... and the two will become one flesh" (Gen. 2:24 and elsewhere), and because Scripture speaks

clearly about sexual relationship outside a covenanting relationship as adultery, fornication and sexual immorality (Exodus 20:14, Gal. 5:19-21, 1 Cor. 6:9-11), we hold that this unique, wonderful, mysterious bond must only happen within the protection, freedom and blessing of the covenant relationship of marriage.

- Our clergy and staff will arrange for, officiate at or take part in the solemnization of celebration of a marriage only when it conforms to our covenant statement on marriage and will only ordain, commission, settle or appoint those who share this belief and religious practice.
- We seek to walk with all brothers and sisters as they discern how to live out their Christian faith under the light of God's word and the power of His grace. We covenant to work as Jesus' disciples in the United Church and in the universal Church, praying that we may have the grace to love one another as Christ loved us.

We covenant to support and counsel one another, remembering that if one suffers, all suffer, and if one rejoices, all rejoice (1 Cor. 12: 26). We will do this through local congregations and by encouraging associations and fellowships among those of like mind and heart. Specifically we intend to hold periodic conferences and to facilitate communication of resources that will build up the Church.

And we covenant to pray Christ's prayer that all may be one, so that the world will believe (Jn. 17: 11, 20-23). We are here for the sake of the world which God so loved (Jn. 3: 16). In the words of Jesus Christ: "all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." (Mt. 28: 18-20 NRSV).

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit, as it was in the beginning, is now and will be forever. Amen.

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