

Hamline Church Leadership Relationship Covenant

Created Nov. 19th, 2013

Updated October 2016

***And Moses' father-in-law said to him, "What you are doing is not good. You will surely wear yourself out, both you and these people with you. For the task is too heavy for you; you cannot do it alone....You shall look for able people, people who fear God, are trustworthy, and hate dishonest gain. You will set them as officers.....so it will be easier for you. They will bear the burden with you...and you will be able to endure and all these people will go to their homes in peace" (from Exodus 18)*

As members of Hamline Church United Methodist, we are called to love one another as Christ loved us and to make Christ's love real in the ways we relate to each other in our congregation and the world around us.

As leaders, we have been asked to serve and guide our faith community to be the Body of Christ. As the Body of Christ we seek to include and value each other, to treat one another with mutual respect and courtesy, and we strive to reject, resist, and refrain from acts of hostility in all of our relationships. Relational aggression* must not be present in our life as the Body of Christ.

Therefore we covenant together (1) to deal with our differences in a spirit of mutual respect and (2) to refrain from actions that destroy the emotional and physical well being of others—actions that are inherently contradictory to the fundamental Christian precept to "love thy neighbor as thyself."

As we live according to this covenant, the following principles will guide our actions:

1.) Mutual Respect for One Another – Seeing the "Christ" in the other and honoring the brokenness in ourselves, knowing we are all on this road together.

2.) Assertiveness & Empathetic/Active Listening

- A. **Assertiveness** – taking responsibility for your thoughts and feelings by using "I" statements, instead of "you" statements. The first is proactive, the other is reactive. We seek to lead with proactive communication.
 - a. Ex: *I'm feeling confused about the proposal. It's my understanding the church wants to be more visible to the community but I'm having a hard time seeing how this connects to that. I'm needing more clarification.*
- B. **Active/Empathetic Listening** – attentively listening to the other speak without interruption, then restating what was heard to make sure what was heard was actually what was said.
 - a. Ex: *If I understand what you said, you want more clarification on my proposal because the connection between it and the church's desire to be more visible to the community isn't readily apparent. Is that correct?*

3.) Forgiveness/Rule of Christ – Deciding to give up negative thoughts and "ill will" towards someone who or an event/interaction that has

offended you. Conflict is inevitable. Hurt feelings and misunderstandings are inevitable. But as leaders, we seek to follow the Rule of Christ when these conflicts/misunderstanding arise. We do so because as disciples, we are called to model the Love of Christ for each other and the world.

(See attached sheet for Rule of Christ guidance)

4.) Curiosity & Compassion – Coming to each meeting and interaction with an air of openness and the assumption of best intentions from

one another. As the famous wisdom quote reminds us: *Be kind, for everyone you meet is fighting a hard battle.* We seek to be a Council that understands “everyone we meet is fighting a hard battle” and therefore interact with curiosity and compassion, instead of judgment and rigidity.

5.) Joy – Because God through Christ loves us first, and is not merited on anything we do (i.e. Grace), as the Council we seek to meet together

grounded in the Joy that comes from knowing God’s Grace. Even during hardships and when difficult decisions arise, we seek to navigate through them together with that spirit of Joy.

By entering this covenant, we will affirm and support each other in our respective faith journeys.

** We define “relational aggression” as unacceptable behavior on the part of any and all members of the congregation toward another member or group of members or toward any member of the community at large.*

Relational aggression, includes, but is not limited to:

- intimidation: either physical or verbal, written or spoken
- verbal abuse: name-calling, threats or disparaging language, whether to a person’s face or behind his or her back
- physical abuse: either implied, so that a reasonable person would infer intent to do harm, or physical contact that a reasonable person would reject

PURPOSE OF LEADERSHIP COVENANT

This Leadership Covenant will be used to:

- Educate our congregation on leadership qualities
- Hold each other accountable
- Provide a guide for training in leadership development
- Used by the Committee on Nominations and Leadership Development as a guide in recommending candidates for leadership positions
- Provide a guide to members in determining for themselves if they want to be part of leadership in our Church
- Establish the ideal or vision we have for leaders of our Church