

First United Methodist Church, Duluth

Congregational Covenant

Reverence, Refuge, Resource

First United Methodist Church is an inclusive, Christ-centered community of faith, a worshipping community that seeks to honor God (*reverence*) by welcoming, loving, encouraging, and serving others. We meet people where they are in their spiritual journey.

We are a Reconciling Congregation, and all persons, without regard to race, sexual orientation, economic condition, or religious background, are invited to participate in our ministries and programs, and to become members of our congregation.

We offer *refuge* to all who enter from what can be a mean-spirited, judgmental, uncertain world. In this sheltering place, acceptance, gratefulness, and laughter abound.

We are a *resource* for life's journey, offering thoughtful engagement with Scripture and Christian tradition, thoughtful conversation and reflection, and meaningful friendship. We seek to link Christian spirituality with concern for justice and the wellbeing of our community and all creation.

The Covenant

When persons join First United Methodist Church they pledge to support the church through their prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness. This covenant shapes our life and work together in support of those commitments. We welcome people to join this covenant, to join us in this journey, even when they choose not to officially become members of the congregation.

In brief, we pledge:

- To seek to love our neighbors in the spirit of Jesus.
- To follow the Scripture's guidance by sharing what God gives us – time, money, skills, and other resources.
- To give all newcomers the joyous welcome of Christ.
- To celebrate our friendship in Christ together in worship, and to share the joy of our faith and community by inviting others to these celebrations.
- To support the growth of a thoughtful, passionate, compassionate faith in all who come to First UMC. We understand that the journey of faith is enhanced by the wholesome use of spiritual disciplines such as regular prayer, Scripture reading, study, participation in small groups, and acts of compassion and justice.
- To support the mission of First UMC **to welcome all people, to be guided by the teaching and unconditional love of Jesus, and to inspire all to live as faithful disciples of Jesus Christ.**
- To pray regularly for our church, its mission, its members, its leaders, and its staff.

What does that mean for us? Explanation and Development

- We share Christ's mission of service to the world, and we ask the Church's support for loving our neighbors in the spirit of Jesus and finding ways to serve them. We support members individually serving the community outside the church, and we support having projects available for members to work on together. We will share our experience of service with one another in a variety of settings, including during Discipleship Moments at our worship services.

- Sharing is a joy of friendship and God gives generously to us so that we can enjoy giving generously in return. By giving gifts to relieve the needy, to better the lives of others, to establish justice, and to spread the Gospel, we are sharing with God. Following Scripture's guidance, we intend to

share what God gives us – time, money, skills, and other resources – for the purposes to which God draws us. We ask the church's support as we seek to grow in gratitude and generosity. As an important part of our giving we pledge to support First United Methodist Church, and will inform the administrative associate of the specific amount. We ask the church to tell us periodically how our pledge stands.

- We pledge to give all newcomers the joyous welcome of Christ. All who so desire may choose to become members of our congregation. Members and friends alike help us continue to grow in being a place of reverence, refuge, and resource.

- We will celebrate our friendship in Christ together at worship on Sundays and at other appropriate times. We will share the joy of our faith and community by inviting others to these celebrations.

- Because God is drawing everyone into deeper friendship, we support the growth of a thoughtful, passionate and compassionate faith in all who come to First UMC. We understand that the journey of faith is enhanced by the wholesome use of spiritual disciplines such as regular prayer, Scripture reading, study, participation in small groups, and acts of compassion and justice. We will share our gifts for small group leadership in response to God's Spirit. We ask the Church's support in furthering our journey of faith.

- We will take responsibility for the guidance and direction of the church. We support its mission to **welcome all people, to be guided by the teaching and unconditional love of Jesus, and to inspire all to live as faithful disciples of Jesus Christ.** We understand that First UMC is a reconciling congregation committed to inclusivity, compassion, and justice in the name of Jesus.

- We will participate in the annual selection of our Church Council and will support the Council in directing the work of First United Methodist Church. We will pray regularly for our church, its mission, its members, its leaders, and its staff.

This shared covenant supports the commitments made when one becomes a member of First United Methodist Church—commitments to support the church through prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness. We welcome people to join this covenant, to join us in this journey, even when they choose not to officially become members of the congregation. Together, as members and friends of First UMC, we will support and pray for one another as we seek to fulfill our covenant commitments.

If a time comes when we no longer believe First UMC is deepening our relationship with God or enhancing our faith, we will notify the pastor of our intention to leave the membership of the church. The pastor, in turn, makes a commitment to help members find new Christian communities of faith if they desire to change their church membership.