

COVENANT OF RIGHT RELATIONS

First Unitarian Church of Portland
Approved May 7, 2025

Preamble

A **covenant** is a set of promises we make to one another in community. To be in **right relations** is to experience a sense of wellbeing that results from our efforts to bring our best selves to all our interactions and to resolve conflicts in a constructive way. Thus, to **covenant** with one another about right relations is to engage in the spiritual and everyday practice of building and maintaining healthy connections.

We covenant to build a religious community guided by love and sustained by respectful relationships. Believing that building healthy relationships is a spiritual practice, and in celebration of the common purpose that unites us, we will do our best to abide by this covenant.

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 to healthy repair.

We expect this covenant to challenge us, but we also expect it to inspire us to strengthen our relationships and deepen our sense of community. We commit to living and working with this covenant, adjusting the ideals, and expanding the examples to make it truly our own.

We engage in this work consistent with Unitarian Universalist values and principles.

Our Ideals and our Living Practices

We covenant to adopt the following practices of right relations:

I. Creating an Environment of Right Relations

1. **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.

2. **Furthering Multiculturalism and Anti-Oppressive Practices:** We foster a multicultural and multigenerational community that sees diversity in all its manifestations as a sign of our strength. We acknowledge power imbalances and work to empower those who are disempowered. To be anti-oppressive, we challenge bigotry in all its forms, and actively confront our assumptions through critical and studied examination of the forces that disadvantage some and privilege others.
3. **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.

4. **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.

5. **Tending the Greater Good:** We notice and bring to light concerns about matters which may threaten the wellbeing of the church; we act with consideration for others and the community as a whole.

II. Responding when Conflict does arrive

6. **Seeking to Maintain and Restore Right Relations:** We strive to bring our best selves to all our interactions; we offer grace to ourselves and others when we falter; we recognize that mistakes happen and we seek and offer forgiveness when they do.
7. **Working with Conflict:** We seek to resolve conflicts promptly and directly, with a spirit of inquiry, openness and compassion. We seek to repair relationships constructively.

We stay engaged with each other through difficult conversations, holding ourselves responsible for hearing and understanding all perspectives.

We engage and listen with intention, dealing directly with those with whom we've fallen out of right relations whenever possible. In this work, we:

We acknowledge our own part, accepting responsibility for behaviors that have impacted others, whether intentional or unintentional.

We are creative in problem solving, and aim for solutions that work for all involved.

We ask for help and support when needed.

8. **Mindful of Information Sharing:** We share information thoughtfully and with purpose to others, and we respect agreed upon confidentiality.
9. **Forgiveness and Reconciliation:** We acknowledge our mistakes and shortcomings and are willing to forgive those of others.

Acknowledge our own and others' humanity and mistakes; seek and offer forgiveness; be accountable for keeping our promises; lovingly call each other to account for behavior that is hurtful to others.

10. **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.