

Relational Covenant for High Country United Church of Christ

1. We practice compassionate community more than being right, committing to share our voice and to keep our mind and heart open for change.
2. We honor the divinity in each person and will faithfully invite diversity of persons and thought, holding space for ideas and visions unfamiliar or confusing to us.
3. We will practice curiosity and seek understanding instead of debate and judgment.
4. We will practice healthy communication skills, speaking as effectively as we can from our own perspectives and lived experiences, while actively listening to others as well.
5. We will offer pauses and silence when necessary, to foster better understanding, listening, and the greater good of the group.
6. We will receive and ask for help when we need it.
7. We will hold ourselves accountable for our active or passive presence in the group, maintaining our own boundaries and respecting the boundaries of others.
8. We will hold confidences when appropriate and safe. We will not gossip.
9. We will remain open to feedback to increase self-awareness of our biases, privileges, and flaws in order to promote justice, transformation, and communal well-being.
10. We recognize that intent and impact do not always match, and feedback about our impact can offer information that helps us to strengthen and repair bonds.
11. We will be respectful of minority views, especially when consensus cannot be reached.
12. We will intentionally and persistently engage in difficult conversations with empathy and respect, recognizing that growth and better solutions can result.

As part of our 2020 decision to become a WISE congregation (Welcoming, Inclusive, Supportive and Engaged for Mental Health), the people of High Country United Church of Christ agreed to develop a Relational Covenant. Kay Pranis, a national leader in restorative justice and peacemaking circles, describes the essence of relational covenant agreements as being “shared values in action, expressed in a practical manner.” They can help us live out our values around honoring each other, making space for everyone, understanding the impact we have as well as intent, and appreciating both our differences and our similarities in order to connect. HCUCC’s WISE team met with Rev. Rachel Keefe of Living Table UCC in Minneapolis to learn how they use a relational covenant to deeply enrich their ability to connect with one another even during challenging conversations. During the spring of 2021, HCUCC hosted listening sessions, offering all congregational members and friends the opportunity to contribute to the first iteration of this “living document.”

Amendments to this document may be proposed or screened by the WISE team and approved by the church council.

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