

(continued from previous page)

focusing on the goal of building the Beloved Community within these walls and in the wider world.

For example:

- ◇ Participating in congregational life.
- ◇ Supporting leaders with constructive input and feedback.
- ◇ Becoming a leader by stepping up and helping out.
- ◇ As we are able, bringing an uplifting spirit to our community.
- ◇ Serving with compassion and commitment.
- ◇ Engaging with those I perceive as different from me.
- ◇ Supporting fellowship involvement in the larger secular and religious community.
- ◇ Promoting social justice programs.
- ◇ Actively confronting assumptions through careful examination of the forces that disadvantage some and privilege others within this congregation and in society.

Who can I talk to about the covenant? What if I need help working through a difficult conversation?

The MVUUF Right Relations Committee. To see their contact information, see the bulletin board near the Founders' Room.

Remember: This is an aspirational, living covenant that we hope to live up to at MVUUF. We will struggle, fail, and try again — together.

What is a covenant?

A covenant is an agreement. Some consider it an oath-bound relationship between individuals or a community. Whichever way you look at it, a covenant is an agreement that people choose to hold together so that they may be in a shared community together with purpose and understanding. Our seven Unitarian Universalist principles are a great example of a shared covenant that inspires a community and their actions.

Where did this covenant come from?

The MVUUF Board convened a small group around 2007 to research and develop a covenant. The group investigated and read covenants from all over the country. They also gathered input from the MVUUF community. All of the words and phrases that emerged from our community and those that resonated from the covenants at other congregations were all put together and grouped into themes. From that the phrases that make up our MVUUF Covenant of Right Relations was born. The phrases were then expanded with behaviors that could help us use the covenant in every-day situations.

Who uses the covenant?

If you attend any of our governance meetings around the fellowship, you may hear it read before the meeting starts. We begin our congregational meetings by reading this together. Covenant groups have also used this as a way to start their gatherings with the intention to keep in right relations with each other. You might also hear it at workshops, during classes being offered, or task force meetings.

Miami Valley Unitarian Universalist Fellowship



Covenant of Right Relations

As I enter this sacred space, I will do my part to create a loving, welcoming environment.

I promise to respect and nurture others in their spiritual journeys.

I will speak with directness, empathy, and kindness, especially in times of disagreement.

I will strive to understand other points of view, focusing on the goal of building the Beloved Community within these walls and in the wider world.

As I enter this sacred space, I will do my part to create a loving, welcoming environment.

For example:

- ◇ Greeting people warmly.
- ◇ Getting acquainted with others.
- ◇ Treating visitors as fellow worshipers.
- ◇ Welcoming newcomers into conversation.
- ◇ Accepting and embracing diversity, remembering that people can be diverse in many ways, such as:
 - ⇒ Ability
 - ⇒ Age
 - ⇒ Beliefs
 - ⇒ Economic status
 - ⇒ Ethnicity
 - ⇒ Gender identification
 - ⇒ Race
 - ⇒ Religion
 - ⇒ Sexual orientation

I promise to respect and nurture others in their spiritual journeys.

For example:

- ◇ Respecting different cultural and faith traditions.
- ◇ Embracing our spiritual diversity.
- ◇ Observing personal boundaries.
- ◇ Honoring confidentiality.
- ◇ Recognizing, encouraging, and appreciating the contributions and talents of other members.
- ◇ Challenging each other to grow.
- ◇ Remembering that everyone is both a student and a teacher in the search for meaning.

I will speak with directness, empathy, and kindness, especially in times of disagreement.

For example:

- ◇ Being gentle with one another when in conflict.
- ◇ Treating conflict as an opportunity to grow and explore a new direction.
- ◇ Focusing on issues and behaviors, not personalities.
- ◇ Testing personal assumptions; examining personal motives.
- ◇ Avoiding the divisiveness that comes from encouraging people to take sides.
- ◇ Speaking for your own experiences and understandings, using “I” statements rather than “You” statements.
Explaining how an action affects you “I felt” rather than blaming another “you did.”
- ◇ Making every effort to settle differences directly and openly:
 - ⇒ Knowing that we engage with different people at different levels, committing to holding safe, peaceful, respectful space within our diverse community.
 - ⇒ Consciously setting personal boundaries around what you share with and receive from others, understanding that healthy interactions cannot grow when people feel unsafe.
 - ⇒ Recognizing that a willingness to experience some discomfort is sometimes required for positive changes to occur.
 - ⇒ Considering, when feeling hurt, speaking directly to the person

- involved, while avoiding drawing others into conflict.
- ⇒ Considering asking the Right Relations Committee for help, especially when the conflict may affect congregational life.



I will strive to understand other points of view...

For example:

- ◇ Assuming that people have good intentions.
- ◇ Recognizing and respecting that people who share core values can hold different views about how to live out those values in the world.
- ◇ Demonstrating respect by listening without rushing to judgment.
- ◇ Listening compassionately and with an open heart and mind.
- ◇ Being receptive, listening with care and compassion.
- ◇ Staying engaged through difficult conversations, considering asking the Right Relations Committee for help as needed.
- ◇ Taking responsibility for hearing all sides.
- ◇ Being accountable for your own words and actions.
- ◇ Bringing a spirit of forgiveness for yourself and other.

(continued on next page)