

LEADERSHIP COVENANT

Sterling United Methodist Church

Adopted by Administrative Council June 24, 2014



Covenant Overview

The concept of a covenant between God and His people is one of the central themes of the Bible. In the Biblical sense, a covenant implies much more than a contract or a simple agreement between two parties. There are many examples of covenants in the Bible, some of the most famous being God's covenants with Noah (Gen 9), and with Abraham (Gen 12), the Mosaic covenant of which the Ten Commandments is the foundation (Exo 20), and the New Covenant (Heb 8) between God and humankind based on the death and resurrection of his Son, Jesus Christ.

In the church, a covenant is a solemn agreement between the members of a church to act together in harmony with the precepts of the gospel. The United Methodist Book of Discipline (pp 93-94) describes this relationship this way:

In covenant with God and with each other:

We affirm our unity in Christ, and take faithful steps to live more fully into what it means to be a worldwide church in mission for the transformation of the world.

We commit ourselves to crossing boundaries of language, culture, and social or economic status. We commit ourselves to be in ministry with all people, as we, in faithfulness to the gospel, seek to grow in mutual love and trust.

We participate in God's mission as partners in ministry, recognizing that our God-given gifts, experiences, and resources are of equal value, whether spiritual, financial, or missional.

We commit ourselves to full equity and accountability in our relationships, structures, and responsibilities for the denomination.

We enter afresh into a relationship of mutuality, creating a new sense of community and joyously living out our worldwide connection in mission for the transformation of the world.

Sterling United Methodist Church Leadership Covenant

At Sterling UMC our lay leaders and staff fulfill the biblical roles of elders and deacons, shepherds and teachers. Throughout the New Testament, leaders are called to be examples to the rest of the church. As leaders, they are held to higher standards than other members. Paul sets forth lists of attributes of elders and deacons in his letters to the early church. Leaders should be "above reproach" and "not be puffed up with conceit" among other things. Peter, likewise, challenges leaders to be "examples to the flock" and to exercise leadership with a willing heart. Because leaders are held to a higher standard, James says, "not many of you should become teachers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly."

As leaders, we set the tone and pace for the entire congregation. We model the Christian faith, the Christian life, and the attitude and heart of a Christian for our congregation. We shape the heart, character and life of this Christian community. For this reason, it is vital that we walk the Christian walk. Spiritually healthy leaders will produce a spiritually healthy church. Likewise, leaders who fail to walk with Christ will have devastating consequences.

With this in mind, the following covenant is being adopted to guide our life together as leaders. We use these standards to hold ourselves accountable to pursuing the Christian life. And in so doing, we recognize that it is God's grace which calls forth our faithful response, and it is God's grace which brings such transformation in our lives. Current leaders are being asked to prayerfully consider making this covenant at this time, and as new leaders are asked to serve at SUMC by the Nominations Committee, accepting this covenant will be a required step to taking on those leadership roles.

I. The Goal of the Christian Life: Sanctification

Jesus summarized the goal of the Christian life with two commandments: Love the Lord our God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength; and love your neighbor as yourselves. John Wesley spoke of this goal as *sanctification, Christian perfection, or holiness*. In our Methodist tradition, three principles were designed to help Christians pursue this goal. As leaders we pursue these principles as we grow in faith and service together.

- A. Avoid those things which are inconsistent with the life of faith, separate us from God, and bring harm to others, such as:
 - 1. Self-destructive behavior (addictive behavior, poor self-care)
 - 2. Moral compromise (sexual misconduct, greed, dishonesty)
 - 3. Self-centeredness and pride
 - 4. Malice (harboring resentment, acting in anger, backbiting, gossip)
 - 5. Wasting of resources (the church's, or personal resources of time, talent, finance)

- B. Do good of every possible sort, such as:
 - 1. Live a life of love
 - 2. Share our faith inside and outside of Sterling
 - 3. Care for our families
 - 4. Build others up
 - 5. Be engaged with those in need, both inside the church and out

- C. Pursue growth in our spiritual lives, such as:
 - 1. Attend worship each weekend, except when sick or out of town
 - 2. Engage in close Christian friendships for spiritual growth and accountability in a small group
 - 3. Serve God with our time and talents
 - 4. Give in proportion to our income, with the tithe being the goal
 - 5. Spend time in prayer and the personal study of scripture

II. The Heart and Attitude of a Leader at SUMC

- A. What is the heart and attitude of a Sterling leader?
 - 1. Humble (servanthood)
 - 2. Positive
 - 3. Joyful
 - 4. Committed to Christ
 - 5. Supportive of the mission, vision and values of Sterling United Methodist Church

- B. How will Sterling leaders live toward one another?
 - 1. Demonstrating respect and grace
 - 2. Accepting differences
 - 3. Maintaining appropriate confidentiality
 - 4. Publicly supporting other volunteer leaders, pastors and staff members
 - 5. Going directly to the individual whenever a problem arises

Covenant:

I have read the above and aspire to live my life and pursue ministry in a way that is consistent with these expectations, and desire to do so at Sterling United Methodist Church.

Signature

Date