

What Is Covenant?

Unitarian Universalists, including our Community, are covenantal, not creedal. Rev. Lisa Ward, minister at First Parish in Milton UU, differentiates covenant from creed:

A Covenant Invites Relationship

"A covenant is not a definition of a relationship; it is the framework for our relating. A covenant leaves room for chance and change, it is humble toward evolution. It claims: I will abide with you in this common endeavor, be present as best as I can in our becoming. This calls for a level of trust, courage and sacrifice that needs to be nurtured, renewed and affirmed on a regular basis.

- A creed creates a static truth, something that does not incorporate new insights and realities. *A covenant is a dance of co-creation, keeping in step with one another in the flow of our lives.*
- A creed seeks uniformity and a unison voice. *A covenant seeks harmony and a shared voice. Sometimes we may arrive at a unison, but it is not required.*
- A creed gives authority to the statement. *A covenant gives authority to shared intention.*
- A creed creates an "us" and "them." *A covenant invites relationship.*
- A creed is a prescription that must be relied on. *A covenant relies on the treasures of shared truth.*

...Truth is ever-changing in our seeking to understand because of our limited perspectives—we grow into a deeper sense of the meaning of all things when we take our journeys seriously, with full heart and mind."

We speak, as Rev Victoria Stafford reminds us, "not in the binding language of contract, but in the life-sustaining fluency of *covenant* . . . covenant is the work of intimate justice."

Covenants at UU Santa Fe

Covenant of Right Relations

- Treat one another with respect and civility
- Behave with integrity and responsibility
- Cultivate openness and transparency
- Make official decisions through the democratic process

Board of Trustees Covenant

We covenant to work together with compassion and care, guided by our UU values. We will listen with open hearts and minds to each point of view; speak with respect for each one present and absent; follow a democratic process in decision making; and treat each other with kindness.

Pilgrim Covenant (used during Ingathering of New Members)

We covenant to walk together in the ways of truth and affection, justice and love, as we know them now or may learn them in the days to come, that we and our beloveds might be fulfilled and speak to the world in words and deeds of peace and goodwill—adaptation by Alice Blair Wesley and Rev. Gail Marriner

Program Council Covenant

When we collaborate to create the programs of UU Santa Fe, we make this covenant:

- To bring open minds and hearts
- To work hard and be helpful
- To listen, then think, then speak
- To be kind to each other
- To assume good intentions and be forgiving
- To laugh and have fun
- And to think outside the box.

During 2022-2023 the UU Santa Fe community will be exploring the concept of covenant in more depth, which may result in a new congregational covenant.