

## **A Communications Covenant for the Vestry of Grace Memorial Episcopal Church**

*“...encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing.”  
--1 Thessalonians 5:11*

As members of the Vestry, we have been given a great honor and a great responsibility. We pledge ourselves to work together with mutual respect and support in these tasks to which we have been called. In order to clarify that pledge, we enter into the following covenant as individuals and as a Vestry.

In all of our work together, we will strive to build up community and support one another.

- We practice gratitude. We name our thanksgiving for God’s presence in our community and our thanksgiving for one another.
- We practice problem solving. When we critique we also offer a suggestion.
- We hold Grace and one another in prayer.

*“If another member of the church sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone.” --Matthew 18:15*

We know that not only disagreements but also conflict will sometimes arise as we carry out our responsibilities. Conflicts are a normal, healthy, and universal element in community – including in Christian community. When we encounter conflict with prayerfulness, mutual respect, and openness, there can be an opportunity for generativity, an occasion in which we learn about God and one another. In order to foster such positive outcomes, we commit to the following.

- We will share feedback in a timely fashion.
- We will engage in conflict directly. If Member A has a problem with Member B, A will speak to B privately. If A does not know to begin such a conversation with B, then A will ask for help in doing so. Given their susceptibility to mis-interpretation, we will refrain from using forms of electronic media (such as email or text message) to address conflict.
- We will maintain appropriate confidentiality but will not give or receive anonymous criticism.
- When we are in doubt about the intentions behind someone’s words or actions, we will ask about them rather than rushing to form an ungenerous interpretation on our own.

Finally,

- We will model these promises in our actions and, thereby, invite our fellow parishioners to adopt these promises as their own.
- We will review these promises regularly and amend them as needed.
- We will forgive ourselves and one another when we fall short of these promises.