

# Staff Expectations and Covenant

Revised

2-6-14

## Faith United Methodist Church

*Our staff, along with our lay leaders, 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 and are held to higher standards. Paul sets forth lists of attributes of elders and deacons; leaders should be “above reproach” and “not be puffed up with conceit.” Peter, likewise, challenges leaders to be “examples to the flock” and 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.”*

*We model the Christian faith and the Christian life. As staff, we set the tone and pace and have a significant role in shaping the heart and character of the entire congregation. It is vital that we walk the Christian walk. Spiritually healthy leaders will produce a spiritually healthy church.*

*With this in mind, the following expectations and covenant were developed to guide our life together as a staff team. We use these standards to hold ourselves accountable to pursuing the Christian life. And we do so with gentleness and respect- recognizing that it is God’s grace that calls forth our faithful response, and it is God’s grace that brings such transformation in our lives.*

### **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 **General Rules** were designed to help Christians pursue this goal. As a Christian leadership team, we commit to:

#### **Avoid things which are inconsistent with the life of faith, separate us from God, and bring harm to others, such as:**

- Self-destructive behavior (addictive behavior, workaholism, poor self-care)
- Moral compromise (sexual misconduct, greed, dishonesty)
- Self-centeredness and pride
- Malice (harboring resentment, acting in anger, backbiting)
- Wasting of resources (the church’s, your personal resources of time, talent, finance)

#### **Do good of every possible sort and practice our faith, such as:**

- Live a life of love
- Share our faith inside and outside of FUMC
- Care for our families
- Build others up
- Be engaged with those in need, both inside the church and out
- Greet and welcome all people with special attention given to new people

#### **Pursue growth in our spiritual lives, such as:**

- Attend worship each weekend, except when sick or out of town
- Participate in a small group for accountability and spiritual growth
- Serve God with our time and talents outside of our ministry area
- Give in proportion to our income, with the tithe being the goal
- Spend time in prayer and personal study of the scriptures
- Attend the monthly prayer service in the chapel

## II. Attributes of a Staff Member

The following *attributes* describe essential aspects of how the staff team goes about our work. While not exhaustive, the list outlines important characteristics of our working culture. Because constructive feedback is so highly valued, we use this list as a consistent guide for professional development and employee evaluation.

### **Teachable**

Displays personal spiritual vitality and sets an example of personal faith.  
Constantly learns and improves; welcomes constructive feedback.  
Participates in continuing education opportunities

### **Heart**

Demonstrates Christ-like humility, integrity, respect and grace.  
Is quick to encourage others and eager to contribute to their success.

### **Reliable**

Fulfills commitments and meets deadlines.  
Responds rapidly and positively to coworkers and the congregation.

### **Initiating**

Involves others beyond one's team in order to collaborate, gather input and evaluate.  
Addresses conflicts in a healthy and appropriately assertive manner.

### **Versatile**

Willing to voice contrary opinions, and ultimately supports decisions when made.  
Has a "whatever it takes" approach; makes ministry happen within limited resources.

### **Engaged**

Centers efforts on achieving the church's vision, purpose and plans.  
Communicates a positive attitude about work, coworkers and work environment

## III. Qualities of a Healthy Staff Team

As a healthy staff team, we set the example for Christian community in the Body of Christ by engaging with one another regularly, growing in authenticity with vulnerability by practicing grace and love through covenant accountability and holy conferencing. The following qualities demonstrate our team spirit and health:

### **Together**

We spend time together regularly in staff meetings, gatherings, retreats, worship, celebrations and fellowship

### **Encouraging**

We encourage, support, minister to and pray for one another and our families

### **Attending**

We attend Ministry Council meetings and church-wide visioning/leadership workshops

### **Missional**

We serve the mission of the church as a team by equipping others to serve

#### **IV. The Faith and Character of a United Methodist**

Faith United Methodist Church (FUMC) as a United Methodist Church, expects our leaders to honor our denominational heritage and to pursue ministry in keeping with our tradition.

United Methodists are people who seek to love and serve God with our head, our heart and our hands. They are orthodox in faith, liberal in spirit, passionate and deeply devoted to Christ, and desire to be wholly surrendered to God. They bring together both the evangelical and social gospel – inviting people to a life-transforming relationship with Jesus Christ, and then equipping and challenging them to live their faith in the public sphere, being engaged in the issues of our time and seeking to shape a world that looks more like the Kingdom of God. Methodists have been known as “reasonable enthusiasts” – valuing both a personal, passionate faith and one that is intellectually informed. Methodists are constantly looking to connect our faith to the world in meaningful, relevant ways. Methodists value spiritual disciplines and a “methodical” approach to growing in the faith. They strive for both personal holiness and social holiness.

United Methodists are not afraid to ask difficult questions, to take on tough subjects, and to admit that they do not always understand the answers. They are “people of the Book” - holding the Bible to be the inspired Word from God and encouraging people to read, study and live by its words. “While we acknowledge the primacy of Scripture in theological reflection, our attempts to grasp its meaning always involve experience, tradition and reason. Like Scripture, these become creative vehicles of the Holy Spirit as they function within the church.”<sup>1</sup> Methodists also believe the Bible came to us through people who heard God’s Word in the light of their own cultural and historical circumstances. And hence, they study the scriptures carefully, making use of scholarship and asking critical questions. And, as Methodists encounter theological differences amongst Christians, they bear in mind John Wesley’s approach, “in essentials, unity; in nonessentials, liberty; in all things, charity.”

Methodists are people who love God with all their heart, soul, mind and strength and love their neighbors. They pursue acts of piety toward God and acts of mercy toward others. They value passionate worship, relevant preaching, small groups to hold Christians accountable to one another, the need to address the social issues of our time and the need to be people whose faith is firmly rooted in and built upon the scriptures. Methodists value the full participation of women and men, people of all races, classes and backgrounds in all facets of fellowship and leadership within the church and society.

This is our heritage, and it continues to shape Faith United Methodist Church in every area of our ministry.

## V. Denominational Standards of Practice

All staff members are encouraged to strive, with God's help, toward the highest standards of self-discipline and both personal and social holiness. For our ordained clergy, the denomination has specified certain standards of faith and practice. At Faith UMC, since clergy and lay staff share leadership somewhat fluidly, our church also calls upon lay staff members to strive toward these same personal standards. Additionally, commitment to uphold these standards is a position *requirement* for full-time program staff. Our denominational standards include the following\*:

For the sake of the mission of Jesus Christ in the world and the most effective witness to the Christian gospel, and in consideration of the influence of an ordained minister on the lives of other persons both within and outside the Church, the Church expects those who seek ordination to make a complete dedication of themselves to the highest ideals of the Christian life. To this end, they agree to exercise responsible self-control by personal habits conducive to bodily health, mental and emotional maturity, integrity in all personal relations, fidelity in marriage and celibacy in singleness, social responsibility, and growth in grace and in the knowledge and love of God.<sup>2</sup>

\* Additional information regarding the moral commitments of persons seeking ordination may be found in *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church*, paragraphs 304 and 310.

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### Staff Expectations and Covenant

I am committed to living my life and pursuing ministry consistent with these expectations, and desire to do so at Faith United Methodist Church in North Canton, Ohio. I understand this is not a contract and my status remains as an employee-at-will.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

<sup>1</sup> *2012 Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church*, ¶ 105, p.82

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*, ¶ 304.2., pp 219-220

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