

**First Congregational Church of Southampton, United Church of Christ
Behavioral Covenant (draft 7/19/22, revised 9/11/22)**

Introduction:

The behavioral covenants in this document came from a survey of values from the congregation taken on May 15, 2022. A behavioral covenant should reflect the values of the congregation with theological grounding, which help to clarify the covenant. A behavioral covenant serves as a general reminder of the values we desire for our life together.

Covenants

I believe we should hold each other, our leadership, our staff, our pastor, and our congregation in prayer. I will seek guidance through prayer. I will use prayer and discernment for congregational decisions.

“And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight to help you to determine what really matters, so that in the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God.” (Philippians 1:9-11)

I acknowledge that decisions require collecting information, a period of analysis and discernment and weighing potential consequences and that, while this may take some time, it is also not a process that is infinite. I will have patience to await the Holy Spirit during our discernment.

“Have nothing to do with stupid and senseless controversies; you know that they breed quarrels. And the Lord’s servant must not be quarrelsome but kindly to everyone, an apt teacher, patient, correcting opponents with gentleness. God may perhaps grant that they will repent and come to know the truth” (2 Timothy 2:23-25)

I own what I say and speak from my perspective alone. I will be open and honest in my communication and interaction with members and friends of this congregation. On those occasions when I may not articulate my perspective as clearly as I intended or when I misspeak, I would like to have grace extended to me.

“In everything do to others as you would have them do to you, for this is the Law and the Prophets. (Matthew 7:12)

I will treat everyone with respect and will refrain from judging a person’s words or actions, and I expect that I will be accorded the same respect.

“If we live by the Spirit, let us also be guided by the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, competing against one another, envying one another” (Gal. 5:25-26)

I will listen with an open mind and open heart. I am open to the movement of the Holy Spirit to release my long-held ideas and perspectives when other information presents a different perspective. I concede that I do not have all the answers.

“When pride comes, then comes disgrace, but wisdom is with the humble.” (Prov. 11:2)

We are a congregation of diverse ideas and opinions. I accept that disagreement and conflict are normal in a congregation, even though each person has the congregation’s best interest at heart. I resolve to address the conflict honestly with prayer and open communication, acknowledging there may be times when a resolution acceptable to all cannot be reached.

And God, who knows the human heart, testified to them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as he did to us, and in cleansing their hearts by faith he has made no distinction between them and us. (Acts 15:8-9)

I am grateful that I am a part of this congregation and for its love and support of my life and ministry. I am grateful for the wisdom I have gathered through my service to this congregation. In gratitude, I will use my spiritual gifts to further Christ's message of radical love in this congregation and in our community.

“Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly; teach and admonish one another in all wisdom; and with gratitude in your hearts sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs to God.” (Col 3:16)