

“SPEAKING THE TRUTH IN LOVE”

A Covenant for Christian Communication* (adopted by FFC Church Council 11/10/20)

“...speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and knitted together by every ligament with which it is equipped, as each part is working properly, promotes the body’s growth in building itself up in love.” (Ephesians 4:15-16)

As members of the Franklin Federated Church,

We will speak...

- a. We will communicate calmly and directly to each other using the first person. (For example, in response to someone saying words that “sting,” we might say, “I know it’s not your intention, but when you said X, I felt hurt [or dismissed or attacked or put down.]”)
- b. We will listen without interrupting (unless someone is breaking this covenant and needs to be asked to rephrase or take a “time out” to cool down).
- c. We will ask questions for clarification in order to confirm that we have understood correctly and ask others to do the same.
- d. We will value all opinions and recognize that everyone is equally important.
- e. We will communicate with each other as if we were standing face-to-face with Jesus, asking what would God have us do, and seeking God’s voice in the other person.
- f. We will take responsibility for our own speech, stopping ourselves if/when we notice our own words escalating tension or breaking this covenant.
- g. We will recognize that our words--and how they are presented--have consequences.

The truth...

- a. We will be as honest as we can with each other.
- b. We will strive together to understand and speak from factual information, rather than leaping to conclusions based on assumptions or speculation.
- c. We will speak only for ourselves, not speculating about what others may think.

In love...

- a. We will speak to each other with respect.
- b. We will affirm the merit in another person’s idea or concern before we note its weaknesses.
- c. We will open our minds and listen to understand one another’s point of view, but don’t necessarily have to agree.
- d. We will honor an apology by listening, responding, and making a sincere effort to forgive, asking for God’s grace and strength to help us.
- e. We will love one another and love people where they are in their journey.

**Based on a covenant used by Tabernacle Congregational Church, UCC, in Salem, MA, which was based on Ephesians 4:11-15.*