

A Behavioral Covenant for
First Congregational Church of West Tisbury, MA draft

“But speaking the truth in love, we must grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ...”
Ephesians 4:15

Embracing God's gift of Jesus' life as our example, and the Holy Spirit as our guide, our mission is to be a church that attracts, welcomes, serves and supports all ages and all people, ever challenged to live in harmony and joy with greater faith, hope and love. As disciples of Christ, we covenant to embody our mission by:

Speak...

- Talking directly to one another, in good faith and assuming the best of intentions;
- Sharing honestly, and also about our disagreements;
- Accepting responsibility for expressing our hopes, needs and concerns; and
- Speaking with respectful, kind, and loving words, tones and actions.

The truth...

- Recognizing that each person's story and accepting the reality of our differences of interpretation, opinion and experience;
- Reaching out on a continual basis to understand the truths we may not want to hear, including concerns or grievances;
- Being as transparent and inclusive as possible in all aspects of our congregational life to maintain an environment of trust; and
- Striving to stay grounded in facts through direct conversations.

In love...

- Listening to each other quietly, respectfully, and with compassion and empathy;
- Welcoming new ideas and perspectives;
- Focusing more on listening than on talking; and
- Giving each other the benefit of the doubt.

As a community of faith,,,

- Airing facts and acknowledging feelings so all can move forward to learn, heal and accomplish the goals of the Church;
- Establishing constructive means of communication and procedures for sharing ideas, concerns and grievances;
- Offering regular opportunities to speak and be heard, both in individual and small group settings;
- Supporting one another, respecting those in leadership positions, and working as a team,
- Drawing all members into the life of the Church and helping each to discern the faithful use of talents, interests and energy;
- Choosing the path of forgiveness, personally and collectively; and
- Seeking God's presence and guidance through prayer in all that we do.