

Grace Church, Bath Maine
Vestry Covenant
Ratified November 2021

Jesus said: I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. John 13:34

The vestry of Grace Church, Bath Maine, desires to live in the spirit of love reflected in the decisions we make together, the way we treat each other and as an example in the life of the congregation. By way of ever deepening our awareness of this covenant, we will read it at the beginning of each meeting.

Our meetings and conversation will be shaped in love, listening and the development of trust. We will:

Be present and prepared for all meetings unless otherwise prevented, .

Surround our conversations with prayer, beginning with prayer and something of spiritual focus. Leadership will be shared among vestry members and the PIC.

Speak to one another with love and respect, using “I” statements.

Allow for any member to call for silence and prayer during a meeting.

Listen to God and to one another, first to understand another’s point of view before formulating our own response.

Strive to fully understand and clarify the issues at hand.

Be willing to admit when we are wrong.

Be honest and transparent in all vestry business:

At the end of each meeting, we will identify bullet points to identify what needs to be communicated to the parish;

We will not discuss anonymous comments: we will bring comments or issues only on behalf of named parishioners, or remind them that they are welcome at a meeting

Respect confidentiality when dealing with personnel or other sensitive business, or when vestry members have shared something personal

Remember that humor can be a way of not taking ourselves too seriously!

Our life in the parish will be shaped by love. We will

Be faithful in attending services, whether in person or on ZOOM in order to be a visible part of our life together, and to be fully informed by our worship in order to make faithful decisions.

Be intentional about being part of creating a loving, creative environment in the parish.

Honor vestry decisions, even if we disagreed, as we leave the meeting

Agree to consider meeting minutes within a week of the meeting, so that the parish can get information as soon as possible.

Refrain from “parking lot” conversations with other vestry members or members of the parish.

The technical aspects of our vestry structure will be shaped by love in order to develop trust and transparency. ***Recognizing that we are writing this in the midst of a pandemic, and that conditions and circumstances may change and evolve as we emerge***, we will:

Submit any written reports at least a week ahead of time to give time for careful reading and consideration

Allow for Vestry votes to take place to take place over email. This will be a regular procedure for consideration of vestry minutes. Otherwise, while allowed, it is ideal for votes to take place in the context of full discussion, and not used to take the place of that fuller discussion.