

## *Covenant of Holy Manners*

We believe, that to remain a healthy Parish Council we look to Scripture as the foundation for our dynamic ministry together. We seek to be faithful together; we covenant with one another to be attentive to the following guidelines in our conduct as members of the Parish of French Village Parish Council, with one another. In a spirit of trust and love, we will:

<b>Guiding Scripture Passages:</b>	<b>Reasoning:</b>	<b>Value:</b>
Luke 10:27 1 Corinthians 13	The Love of Jesus is large...and needs to be large enough in our own hearts to encompass those whom we could find least or last or lost whom God calls "my children."	Love
Ephesians 4:29	We seek to build each other up and not tear individuals down.	Respect
Ephesians 4:3	We respect and honour the office of ordained people and other lay leaders.	Honour
Ephesians 4:15	We welcome an exchange of ideas, even those that seem to be in conflict to allow for open communication and shared listening so that there is free expression of beliefs and ideas using kind language with measured tone and without physical aggression.	Listening
1 Peter 4:10	God's call always involves service to others. It always leads us beyond ourselves and our own needs and desires. It is never solely for us, but always has some benefit for other people.	Service
Philippians 2:3-4	We promise to offer our opinions with clarity and humility; giving others an opportunity to speak.	Humility
Romans 5:1-5	We choose to rejoice, for God has poured out his love and grace to us.	Celebration & Praise
Matthew 6:9-11	We promise to support each other through prayer. We do this to comfort each other and deflect whatever damage we may have unintentionally done to one another.	Prayer
Luke 4:18	We will grow in Christian faith and love.	Faith

We will seek to stay in community with each other though the discussion may be vigorous or tension filled. We will be ready to forgive and be forgiven. "Whenever two or three of you come together in my name, I am there with you." (Matthew 18:20)

Signed by: \_\_\_\_\_, Member of Parish of French Village Parish Council

Name: \_\_\_\_\_, please print, Dated \_\_\_\_\_.

(found at: <http://asburyumcjvl.org/holy-manners-because-it-matters> amendments made by Parish Council 8 Sep 2013

*Ashbury United Methodist Church's Wisconsin Parish Relations Team and Church Council 2011)*

**Putting the Covenant of Holy Manners into Practice, what is a Covenant Moment?**

Holy Manners is an agreement or covenant, about how we work together in Parish Council. There are times in the life of every council when there will be differences and disagreements. What matters is how we handle these differences and disagreements, and how we treat others with whom we disagree. The Covenant of Holy Manners sets out our ideal. The following shows some healthy ways that we can deal with these times in our church life. We will individually consider and constrain our behavior to conform to this covenant. Should a member discern a breach of this covenant, we would ask for a *Covenant Moment*

### Person to Person:

- ❖ Pray for guidance, wisdom, courage and love for ourselves and anyone else who may have a different point of view.
- ❖ Clarify the issue before raising a concern:
  - Take a cooling off period if required.
  - Consider whether it's important enough to raise a concern.
  - Sometimes we need to move on and forgive if necessary.
- ❖ If we are still dissatisfied, speak directly with the person who has the ability to directly address the issue.
- ❖ In the event the issue remains unresolved, invite a wise third person to participate in the discussion as a mediator.
- ❖ Focus on finding solutions to problems, rather than questioning another's character, faith or motives.
- ❖ Do not expect others to resolve it without you. Do not draw people in who are not involved. Do not gossip behind people's backs.
- ❖ Use the governance structure of the church.
  - Contact appropriate clergy for pastoral matters. Clergy will respect healthy privacy, but not participate in unhealthy secrecy.
  - Contact the archdeacon for broader pastoral matters.
- ❖ Use good listening techniques.
- ❖ As much as possible use six days of the week for church business, and keep worship and fellowship a priority for Sunday.
- ❖ Respect the personal space of others.
- ❖ If you have a concern or an idea, be sure to identify yourself.

### In Groups:

- ❖ Observe the direction from the chair. The job of the chair is to help identify the agenda and then move through it, discerning and deciding together by consensus.
- ❖ Actively participate in meetings at which decisions are made.
- ❖ Use "I" statements; for example: "I think....." not "Some people think....."
- ❖ Speak your personal opinion during discussions, but once the group has made its decision, do not undermine it.
- ❖ Groups should respond to inquiries or concerns in a timely & respectful manner.
- ❖ If you are responsible for a job on behalf of a group, follow through in a timely manner.
- ❖ Make an effort to communicate clearly in a variety of ways in the parish. For example: an announcement after church services, at a group meeting or in the church bulletin.
- ❖ Do not engage in a side conversation when someone else is speaking.

### *In the event of a Breach of the Covenant:*

*If individually or within a group, an individual's behaviors have been deemed in a breach of this covenant, or if words used have been abusive and tearing down of individuals rather than speaking to the issue, or if an individual becomes physically aggressive, they will be asked by Council to remove themselves as voted by a majority of Council members present, from the group or setting for a minimum of one meeting of Parish Council or until meetings between that individual, the Rector and an*

*appointed task force, to include at least one wise person who was not present, can review the issue and re-educate about appropriate behaviors and the maintenance of the covenant. At which point, if the individual has been receptive and willing; the individual will be re-welcomed into the Parish Council. If a re-occurrence of the breach occurs it will be the responsibility of the Rector and Council Chair to decide whether it would be of benefit to the individual or the council to allow for re-admittance.*

