



Commission on a Way Forward

Council of Bishops



THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Accountability Covenant

What are the covenantal practices that are so essential to our work together that we must perform them with excellence in order to fulfill our mission?

We covenant to pray for one another, for the Commission, for the United Methodist Church, for the mission of Christ, and for a way forward together.

We covenant to attend all meetings unless unexpected urgencies prevent us, to prepare adequately for meetings by reading assigned books or papers, to stay engaged and focused, to participate actively in learning experiences and conversations, and to follow through with any assignments or projects that we agree to accept. We will offer our best and highest to the work of the Commission as servants of Christ and leaders of the church.

We covenant to treat one another with respect, to assume the best in others, to represent one another in the best possible light, to speak the truth with love, and to practice and expect trustworthiness. We will each do our part to offer grace, to create an atmosphere of hospitality, and to moderate our anxiety through mutual encouragement, good humor, and with genuine love for one another.

We covenant to listen actively to others, to seek first to understand rather than to be understood, to ask for clarity or help from others, to remain attentive to cultural, language, and contextual diversity, to be patient with one another, and to foster hopefulness and mutual encouragement.

We covenant to maintain strict confidentiality, and so we will avoid inappropriate sharing of personal information, stories, or perspectives of other members without their consent. We will not share information about the work of the Commission that the Commission or its moderators have not granted permission for release.

What behaviors are so harmful that they put the success of our mission at risk?

We covenant to avoid harmful speech toward or about others on the Commission, during our meetings and outside our meetings. We will refrain from blaming others, misrepresenting others, making judgments about others, or using derogatory speech about others or the Commission.

We covenant to avoid the practices of interrupting others, ignoring others, discounting others, speaking for others, or exhibiting dominating or domineering behavior. We shall practice self-monitoring, gently holding one another accountable for divisive or hurtful behaviors.

We covenant to avoid dividing into factions, politicizing our processes, and retreating into camps and silos based on ideology or regional affinities. We will intentionally seek to cultivate deeper relationships with those we do not know rather than merely spend time with those we already know.

We covenant to restrain ourselves from distracting behaviors during our meeting sessions so that we may remain attentive to one another and to our work. We will refrain from checking emails, reading online news, and otherwise letting ourselves become distracted for outside obligations.

We covenant to abide by the agreed-upon protocols for sharing news, information, or photos on social media.

Additional Commitments:

We will use Matthew 18 as a model for how to work with each other.

Members who determine that they cannot continue to serve on the Commission will inform the Moderators of their decision, and the Moderates will communicate this to the other members of the Commission. Members who leave the Commission are asked to maintain the Accountability Covenant. The Commission would like to honor the service and contribution of those who decide to leave by surrounding them and sustaining them with prayer at their final meeting with the Commission.