

Epworth Church Volunteer Leader Covenant

Vision: Explore Faith and Embrace Community

Mission: Inviting All, Belonging, Connecting to God, and Caring

At Epworth, our leaders fulfill the biblical role of equipping people for the work of the ministry, from Ephesians 4:12-13: “His purpose was to equip God’s people for the work of serving and building up the body until we all reach the unity of faith and knowledge of God’s Son. God’s goal is for us to become mature adults—to be fully grown, measured by the standard of the fullness of Christ.” This passage also includes the role of all our volunteers: serving and building up the people of God into unity, while becoming mature adults and reflecting Jesus to others.

As leaders and volunteers, we work together with our pastors, staff, and leadership to live out our vision of Exploring Faith and Embracing Community, by fulfilling our mission of Inviting All, Belonging, Connecting to God, and Caring. **We set the tone** and pace for the entire congregation. **We model** the faith, the behavior, the life, and the attitude of a Christian for our congregation and our community. **We shape** the heart, character, and life of this community. For this reason, it is vital that we **walk the Christian walk**. Spiritually healthy leaders will produce a spiritually healthy church, which will contribute to a spiritually healthy community.

To help us live out these standards, we developed the following covenant to guide our life together as leaders. We use these standards to hold ourselves accountable to live as a part of a loving community as we live into this beloved community. We also recognize that God’s grace empowers us to be faithful, God’s grace allows us to forgive and reconcile, and God’s grace brings transformation in our lives. (In the Methodist tradition, we call these aspects of grace: prevenient, justifying, and sanctifying grace.)

As followers of Jesus in the Methodist tradition, we seek both personal and social transformation. We do not shy away from engagement in justice issues of our day, and we approach these social concerns through a lens of love. When we encounter theological differences, we attempt to follow the adage: “In essentials, unity; in nonessentials, liberty; in all things, charity.” We value the full participation of women and men, and all people regardless of age, race, class, background, sexual orientation, and gender identification.

Jesus summarized the goal of the Christian life with two commandments: love the Lord our God with all your heart, soul, mind, and strength; and love your neighbor as yourselves. John Wesley spoke of this goal as sanctification, Christian perfection, or holiness. Our Methodist tradition offers three General Rules designed to help Christians pursue this goal. As leaders we pursue these “rules” as we grow in faith and service together. We have organized our covenant around these three rules.

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1) Do no harm. Avoid:

- a) Self-destructive behavior (addictive behavior, poor self-care)
- b) Moral compromise (sexual misconduct, greed, dishonesty)
- c) Self-centeredness and pride (refusing to see your ministry in the context of the whole ministry effort of Epworth)
- d) Malice (harboring resentment, acting in anger, backbiting)
- e) Gossip (which harms both the person and the church and ministries)

2) Do good:

- a) Love everyone with the radical love of Jesus
- b) Respect everyone and accept differences as part of God's diverse creation
- c) Publicly support Epworth, our pastors, staff, leaders, and other volunteers, including accepting a decision as your own, even if you disagreed
- d) Handle conflict one-on-one, speaking directly to the person (Exceptions: speak to teachers when dealing with children in the Boys and Girls Club or Preschool and when conflict continues, contact Epworth's Lay Leader for assistance)
- e) Always assume positive intentions and build others up
- f) Maintain confidentiality when it is warranted
- g) Ask for clarity when you do not understand
- h) Care for ourselves, our spouse, partner, and family members
- i) Be engaged with those in need, both inside the church and out

3) Stay in love with God:

- a) Attend worship
- b) Engage in close Christian friendships for spiritual growth in a small group
- c) Serve God with our time and talents
- d) Give in proportion to our income, with the tithe being the goal
- e) Spend time in prayer, meditation, and the personal study of scripture
- f) Grow in the fruit of the Spirit: goodness, patience, kindness, faithfulness, self-control, love, joy, peace, and gentleness

Covenant: I have read the above and I commit to living my life and pursuing ministry in a way that is consistent with these expectations. I desire to serve under this covenant at Epworth.

Name: _____

Ministry Area: _____

Signature: _____ Date: _____