



# St. Philip's Episcopal Church

## Membership Covenant

*A covenant involves a mutual agreement between two parties. As a member of St. Philip's, you enter into a relationship with the church and we believe it is important to name the expectations that we have of the church and that the church has of us.*

### WHAT THE CHURCH EXPECTS FROM YOU

The minimum standards for active membership at St. Philip's are simple and are spelled out in the Canons of the Episcopal Church:

1. Be baptized in the church or have your baptism recorded here.
2. Be confirmed or received by the bishop at Confirmation.
3. To be a **Communicant**, you need to receive communion in the church at least three times in a year.
4. All communicants of this Church who for the previous year have been faithful in corporate worship, unless for good cause prevented, and have been faithful in working, praying, and giving for the spread of the Kingdom of God, are to be considered **Communicants in Good Standing**.

The Baptismal Covenant is the core understanding of how we live out our Christian life. We affirm our belief in God in the words of the Apostles' Creed. And we make five promises:

1. To continue in the apostles' teaching and fellowship, the breaking of the bread, and the prayers;
2. To persevere in resisting evil, and, whenever we fall into sin, repent and return to the Lord;
3. To proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ;
4. To seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving our neighbor as ourselves;
5. To strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being.

Active discipleship means going beyond the minimum standards of membership and striving to live into the promises of the Baptismal Covenant. To be an active, growing disciple, we believe it is important to engage in the following:

- Regular attendance and participation in worship;
- A practice of personal daily prayer;
- A practice of faithful Christian stewardship;
- Participation in Bible Study or other ongoing education and formation;
- Participation in a ministry or group within the church;
- Participation in a ministry or group that serves those outside the church.

Obviously, there are seasons in our lives when we can't do all of these. But these make up the elements of a rule of life that over time can transform our lives and help us to grow spiritually.

#### **WHAT YOU CAN EXPECT FROM THE CHURCH**

We want St. Philip's to be a place where you can find a spiritual home and where you can live out these promises and grow into the full stature of Christ. We make the following promises to you:

- We will strive to make St. Philip's a safe place for all people. We follow the Safe Church policies of the Diocese of Michigan aimed at preventing sexual abuse and harassment, and will work to ensure the highest ethical standards for all clergy, staff and volunteers.
- We will strive to offer worship that is a joyful expression of our Anglican tradition and is aimed at glorifying God and building up the Body of Christ.
- We will strive to offer a variety of education programs for all ages to help all of our members grow in knowledge and faith.
- We will strive to assist our members in finding ways to serve God's people in our immediate community, the region, and beyond.
- We will offer pastoral care as needed to all of our members, making sure that every member has access to the sacraments and experiences the love of God in community. At a minimum, we will work to ensure that those who cannot attend church receive communion regularly and that those who let us know they are in the hospital will receive a visit.
- We will strive to communicate clearly and regularly about the ministries, programs, and events happening at church.

#### **A Word about Conflict:**

We believe that conflict is a natural and normal part of life in community. Jesus invites us to speak the truth in love. If you find yourself in conflict with another parishioner, the clergy, or a statement by the church, we invite you to have a conversation with our priest or other leaders. We promise to listen respectfully and to make changes where appropriate. In cases of conflict between members, we promise to do what we can to facilitate reconciliation. Conflict, when handled well, can be the process by which we grow into a healthy and loving community.