

Covenant of Conduct for Discernment Process

As Christians called to model the body of Christ, we will:

- Be intentional in developing relationships with one another in order to build and maintain Christian community and foster trust, even when discussion may at times be tense;
- Rely on prayer, Scripture, listening, and deep engagement with Christ and each other;
- Act in a spirit of truth and love, honoring the truth that God works through each member of the body;
- Engage in conversation and ongoing study together in such areas as Scripture, theology, church, vocation, and gifts of the Holy Spirit;
- Share adequate information with the whole body;
- Learn about the various perspectives on the topic;
- Use I-messages to speak openly and transparently regarding one's intentions, concerns, values, and interests;
- Speak from our personal experiences related to the subject;
- Listen attentively and with respect and openness to our sisters and brothers, believing that all desire to be faithful to Jesus Christ;
- Respond after restating what we have heard and asking for any clarification when discussion is intense or we are working through conflict and misunderstanding is likely;
- Focus on ideas instead of questioning people's motives, intelligence, or integrity;
- Share all documents and processes that the discernment group produces with SCC session and NPSP Council/COM. Some may also go to the whole SCC congregation and/or Presbytery;
- When in doubt about whether to share a document, members will ask the discernment group for permission to share;
- Members of the discernment group from NPSP will be added to SCC contact list for newsletter and other info and are invited to attend worship at SCC during the discernment period;
- Members of the discernment group from SCC will be added to the NPSP contact list for weekly e-news and presbytery meetings and other general contact info;
- Members of the discernment group from SCC will strive to attend at least 1 presbytery meeting during the discernment period whether you are a commissioner or not;



- SCC will send minister and elder commissioners to NPS Presbytery meetings during the discernment period (February 2009 and May 2009);
- Remain open to the vision God holds for us all and to find win/win solutions where possible;
- Honor and fully participate in the process agreed to by all parties;
- Stay open in mind and heart to unanticipated outcomes of our discernment process until the group comes to a place making, resting, and approving a recommendation;
- Articulate what the largest portion of the body senses is the leading of the Holy Spirit.

Many items of this covenant were adapted from *Guidelines for Communal Discernment (2008)* by Rev. Victoria Curtiss, p. 14. Presbyterian Distribution Service, PDS# 24358-08-007.