



Spokane First Presbyterian Church

Covenant for Service

We, First Presbyterian Church of Spokane, affirm the one God, sovereign Creator, Redeemer and Sustainer of the universe. Out of great love, God took the human form of a servant, reconciling this fallen and broken world to himself through the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, so that all who believe in him may receive the gift of eternal life.¹ Through the gift of faith, we respond to God's invitation to become fully-devoted followers of Jesus Christ; to share this good news with others, love God and our neighbor, care for the sick and broken-hearted, feed the hungry, work for justice on behalf of the oppressed, seek peace and reconciliation, and be good stewards of all God's creation.² We acknowledge that we live in a culture where self-focus is preeminent and where selflessly following Jesus Christ in our own strength is impossible; and we acknowledge that only by the power of the Holy Spirit who lives in us can we find the strength to follow Christ and live according to his principles instead of the dictates of this culture.³

With God's grace, we commit to a ministry of service based on the vision and guidelines of this covenant.

VISION

We, First Presbyterian Church, desire to develop fully-devoted followers of Jesus Christ:

- By encouraging those of every age, through prayer, word and action, to gain an increased passion for sharing the good news of the Gospel, and to be personally involved in some form of service in the name of Christ.
- By integrating service into every area of the life of the church, recognizing that prayer and service in Christ's name have the power to transform both the giver and the receiver.

¹ *John 3:16*: For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

Philippians 2:6-7: Christ Jesus ... though he was in the form of God ... emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness.

Colossians 1:19-20: For God was pleased to have all his fullness dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through his blood, shed on the cross.

² *Book of Confessions 4.086*: Because just as Christ has redeemed us with his blood he also renews us through his Holy Spirit according to his own image, so that with our whole life we may show ourselves grateful to God for his goodness and that he may be glorified through us; and further, so that we ourselves may be assured of our faith by its fruits and by our reverent behavior may win our neighbors to Christ. (Heidelberg Catechism)

³ *Philippians 4:13*: I can do all things through him who strengthens me.

- By receiving the courage the Holy Spirit gives us to recognize and resist our own and our culture's preoccupation with self-interest and material possessions, and instead, to serve those who are in need and seek justice and mercy for oppressed people.⁴
- By working, as God's people, to transform our society and culture by being witnesses of Christ's Kingdom.⁵

GUIDELINES

We, First Presbyterian Church, commit to uphold the following principles as we minister in service:

Evangelism: We seek to share the Good News of Jesus Christ with one another, our community and the world through word and action, and we will do so with love and respect.⁶ We believe one of the goals of evangelism is to establish regenerating communities of believers in all groups of people in our society and the world.⁷

Relationships: We will work to develop interdependent relationships with the organizations and individuals we support and serve, and emphasize the importance of relationships in evangelism. Relationships between our congregation and those we support will be an important consideration in the process of allocating our financial resources.⁸

Servant Leadership: We will raise up servants who, like Christ, are characterized by humility, receptiveness, accountability to the body of Christ, and an eagerness to affirm the gifts and ideas of others.⁹

Ministry of Presence: We aspire to be a light to the City of Spokane, a welcoming place for all, and a place of refuge for the poor, the broken and the strangers who come to us. We commit to make First Presbyterian Church a place that receives all people and points them toward Christ. And we accept the Lord's challenge to develop and implement a strategy for ministry to the downtown area of Spokane using our resources and facilities as well as partnering with other churches and agencies.¹⁰

Witness to the City: We seek to take the love of Christ into the city, nurturing the community life of Spokane by encouraging dialogue among the cultural, political, economic and spiritual dimensions of public life, working for peace and reconciliation and encouraging wise stewardship of God's creation.¹¹

⁴ *Micah 6:8:* ... And what does the Lord require of you; but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?

James 1:27: Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to care for orphans and widows in their distress, and to keep oneself unstained by the world.

Brief Statement of Faith, 10.4: ... the Spirit gives us courage to pray without ceasing, to witness among all peoples to Christ as Lord and Savior, to unmask idolatries in Church and culture...and to work with others for justice, freedom, and peace.

⁵ *Book of Order G-2.0500a:* In its confessions, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) expresses the faith of the Reformed tradition. Central to this tradition is the affirmation of the majesty, holiness, and providence of God who creates, sustains, rules, and redeems the world in the freedom of sovereign righteousness and love. Related to this central affirmation of God's sovereignty are other great themes of the Reformed tradition: *G-2.0500a. (4):* The recognition of the human tendency to idolatry and tyranny, which calls the people of God to work for the transformation of society by seeking justice and living in obedience to the Word of God.

⁶ *Matthew 5:16:* In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven.

⁷ *Matthew 28:19-20:* Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you....

⁸ *John 13:35:* By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.

⁹ *Mark 10:45:* For the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life a ransom for many.

¹⁰ *Matthew 25:40:* I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did it for me.

1 Peter 4:9-10: Be hospitable to one another without complaining. Like good stewards of the manifold grace of God, serve one another with whatever gift each of you has received.

¹¹ *Jeremiah 29:7:* But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare.

Empowering the Body of Christ: As our inward journey moves us toward being fully-devoted followers of Jesus Christ, we are called to the outward journey of service to others and we acknowledge the gifts given each person by the Holy Spirit for that purpose. Therefore, we commit to encourage and support each other by striving to:

- Inspire and educate through Biblical teaching about service and provide opportunities to discern individual gifts and each person's calling from God.
- Value the gifts of each person, young or old, and provide a wide variety of opportunities to serve, recognizing the great diversity of gifts, passions and levels of experience.¹²
- Provide opportunities to serve that challenge us to grow by exposing us to Christ's unique work in different cultures, not only in other parts of the world but locally as well.
- Celebrate the varied acts of service performed by individuals and support those called into long and short-term commitments to serve through prayer, regular encouragement, and financial resources.

Ministry Focus: We seek to provide opportunities to serve that challenge us as a congregation, stretching us to a point of being dependent on the Holy Spirit. We will emphasize those service opportunities that provide personal involvement for us. We will maintain a commitment to local, regional and global opportunities, recognizing our unique call to serve our immediate neighborhood, downtown Spokane. And, we will maintain a commitment to both denominational and non-denominational ministries.

¹² **1 Corinthians 12:4-6:** Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone.