

Presbytery of the Miami Valley Presbytery Covenant

We believe that God calls all people into covenant. In this way, God called the people of Israel to be God's people saying:

Hear, O Israel: The LORD is our God, the LORD alone. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might.¹

We are called as disciples into a new covenant given by God's free grace in the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the second person of the Trinity. Our bond together as people of faith was given to us from Christ himself as he told his disciples:

Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches.²

Thus, the church as the community of disciples is bound together in covenant and united as the body of Christ. While the call to ministry from the Holy Spirit may be understood in a diversity of form and expression, the church commits itself to connectional relationship as the Apostle Paul reminds us:

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we are all baptized into one body.³

In covenant, the presbytery is the community of congregations gathered for particular ministry and shared calling. Ministry occurs among the disciples of the visible church within the covenant instituted by God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Thus, the church is dependent upon God, as well as upon other congregations of disciples, in witnessing to the in-breaking of God's Kingdom into our world. It is by this act of covenant that the presbytery itself comes into life.

The presbytery prepares, equips, nurtures, and connects congregations in their ministries for God's mission.

The Presbytery of the Miami Valley calls the ruling elders and sessions of its congregations along with all teaching elders to a continually renewing sense of covenant as the embodiment of Christ's church.

This covenant is a reaffirmation of our ordination vows promising *to share in government and discipline, serving in the councils of the church.*⁴ By this covenant, we commit together to that which might bring fulfillment to the presbytery's purpose and shared ministry.

We commit to prayer, encouragement, and support for our work of the presbytery

We commit ourselves to regular and active attendance at meetings of the presbytery

We commit our participation in the work of the presbytery councils, committees and commissions

We commit financial resources to our shared purpose as the presbytery

We commit, as ruling and teaching elders, to the nurture and care of our colleagues in ministry in this presbytery

In this covenant we confirm the promises we have made, and we live in the hope that by God's grace we will continue to make and uphold these promises to each other united as the church, the visible body of Christ in the world.

¹ *Deuteronomy 6:4-5 NRSV*

² *John 15:4-5 NRSV*

³ *1 Corinthians 12:12-13a NRSV*

⁴ *Book of Order W-4.4003i(1)(3)*