

## State College Evangelical Free Church Relational Commitments

*We love because He first loved us (1 John 4:19).*

Our church is trusting God to make us into a community of grace that reflects the power of the gospel of Christ in our lives. As we stand in the light of the cross, we realize that love, forgiveness and reconciled relationships are the norm for the people whom God has reconciled to himself through the sacrifice of his only Son (John 13:34-35; Eph. 4:29-32; Col. 3:12-14).

Therefore, looking to God's Word for guidance, and relying on the power of God's Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves to care for one another in a way that will honor God, promote justice, reconcile relationships, and advance our witness for Christ. As God gives us his wisdom and grace, we solemnly and joyfully commit ourselves to actively teaching and encouraging one another to live out the following covenant:

- We will actively seek to encourage and build others up (Hebr. 10:25; I Thes. 5:11).
- We will not pass judgment on our fellow servants over matters of conscience, but rather decide never to put a stumbling block in the way of a brother (Rom. 14).
- We will believe the best about others. (1 Cor. 13:4-7).
- We will each examine our own faults before focusing on what others may have done wrong (Matt. 7:3-5).
- We will seek to overlook minor offenses (Prov. 19:11).
- If an offense is too serious to overlook, we will forgive as Christ forgave us; freely offering forgiveness and granting it when others repent (Eph. 4:32).
- If an offense is too serious to overlook, or if we think someone may have something against us, we will go promptly to seek reconciliation (Matt. 5:23-24; 18:15).
- When we offer words of correction to others, we will do so graciously and gently, with the goal of serving and restoring them. (Prov. 12:18; Eph. 4:29; Gal. 6:1).
- When approached by a brother or sister with correction or rebuke, we will ask God to help us resist prideful defensiveness and to welcome correction with humility (Ps. 141:5; Prov. 15:32).
- We will refrain from all gossip, backbiting and slander (Eph. 4:29). If any of us has a problem with others, we will talk *to* them, not *about* them. We will not listen to gossip, but will encourage others to speak directly with those with whom they have a concern.
- As Christ considered our interests above his own, we will also endeavor to look out for others' interests (Phil. 2:3-4).
- We will pray for one another. (Ephesians 6:18)
- Knowing this is not an exhaustive list, we will "over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity" (Col 3: 14)

We acknowledge our need for the Gospel of grace and the power of the Holy Spirit operating in our lives daily in order to live out this covenant

Adapted from *The Peacemaker: A Biblical Guide to Resolving Personal Conflict*, by Ken Sande (Baker Books, 3<sup>rd</sup> Ed. 2004).