

How We Live and Work Together in the Episcopal Diocese of Southern Virginia



As Episcopalians in the Diocese of Southern Virginia, we believe our life together must be shaped by and reflect the values revealed in our baptismal promises:

- ✦ To proclaim by word and example the Good News of God in Christ;
- ✦ To seek and serve Christ in all persons, loving your neighbor as yourself; and
- ✦ To strive for justice and peace among all people, and respect the dignity of every human being.

Norms

A pattern for living

Our baptismal values provide the foundation for norms that govern the ways we strive to live and work together as Christians. Our goal is to live out these principles in our work together in the Diocese, making them a pattern of living in prayer, word, and action, with individuals being consistently invited and challenged to live into the larger vision of our Diocese rooted in the Baptismal Covenant.

You are encouraged to post the norms in your meeting rooms, to refer to them as you go about the Church's business, and to offer feedback on your experiences.

What YOU can do as one individual...

You can contribute to responsible and assertive problem solving in your individual relationships by:

- Discussing what is bothering you only with those who can do something about it.
- Allowing someone to complain to you only when you can do something about the matter. Not permitting complaints when you can do nothing to change the situation.
- Asking others "How might I/we help you think of ways to do something about your concern?" or "What do you propose to do about this matter?"

Group Meetings

Vestry meetings, committees, convocations, commissions, Diocesan Councils

Effective outcomes and the use of our time in determining appropriate courses of action are promoted when we:

- Develop and distribute an agenda/time table in advance.
- Start and end on time
- Come prepared
- Attend regularly
- Notify the chair when unable to attend
- Participate actively without monopolizing discussion time
- Work together to agree on actions
- Identify person(s) responsible, goal(s), and completion dates for every proposed action
- Distribute minutes and to-do lists in a timely fashion.



Norms

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Listen attentively

Honor the ideas and concerns of others by listening with care.

Practice courtesy

Observe relaxed courtesy in every gathering.

Respect all opinions

Respectfully include all opinions, even when there is disagreement.

Speak for self only

Listen and speak from an "I" position (but do not speak for anyone else).

Model transparency

Act with honesty, openness, directness.

Honor confidentiality

Respect private or personal confidences when appropriate.

Share decision-making

Share the power by including all persons affected by the process of decision-making.

Refrain from judgments

Resist speculation or censure about the motives or spiritual maturity of others.

Communicate consistently

Make careful, consistent communication a priority.

Challenge in love

Challenge the times when we are not living up to our norms, speaking the truth in love.

Admit responsibility

Be publicly accountable for errors, seeking to learn from mistakes.

Forgive generously

Forbear and forgive each other's failings, with God's help.

Be open to the new

Be receptive to exploring new ideas and possibilities.



Created by the Transition Team and adopted by the
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