COVENANT of HOSPITALITY AND WELCOMING
for the Illinois Conference, UCC

Seeking to be faithful together, we covenant with one another to be attentive to these guidelines as we make decisions for the Illinois Conference. In a spirit of trust and love, we will:

Give them a hearing (John 7:51)
Listen before answering (Proverbs 18:13)

1. Treat each other respectfully so as to build trust, believing that we all desire to be faithful to Jesus the Christ.
    - We will keep our conversations and communications open for honest exchange
    - We will not ask questions or make statements in a way which will intimidate or judge others
2. Listen. Listen. Listen.
    - We will try not to formulate what you want to say while someone else is speaking
    - We will NOT assume the motivations or experiences of others
    - We will seek clarification if needed
3. Be open to new learnings from various perspectives.

Hospitality: Extend Hospitality always to strangers and guests
"for I was a stranger and you welcomed me: - Matthew 25:35
"Do not neglect to show hospitality to stranger, for by doing that some have entertained angels without knowing it" – Hebrews 13:2

4. Receive invited guests with loving hospitality as someone invited to your own home or church.
5. Show a welcoming attitude of ministry to all guests.
6. Help to create and sustain a welcoming, hospitable respectful and caring environment, setting for the invited.

Speak the truth in love (Ephesians 4:15)

7. Share our concerns in a spirit of love and respect in keeping with Jesus' teaching.
8. Focus on ideas and suggestions instead of questioning people's motives, intelligence or integrity.
    - We will not engage in name-calling or labeling of others prior to, during or following the discussion.
9. Speak for ourselves only, expressing our own thoughts and feelings, referring to our experiences. We will avoid broad generalizations.

Maintain the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace (Ephesians 4:3)

10. Seek to stay in community with each other though the discussion may be vigorous or full of tension.
    - We will be ready to forgive and be forgiven
11. Respect the decision of the majority, and if we disagree with it and wish to change it, work for that change in ways which are consistent with these guidelines.
12. Include our disagreements in our prayers, not praying for the triumph of our viewpoints, but seeking God's grace to listen attentively, to speak clearly, and to remain open to the vision God holds for us all.