

# Park Avenue Church Community Agreements

## A Lenten Journey

**T**he Season of Lent is a 40-day journey of self-reflection, of spiritual examination. While that is a healthy and necessary exercise, we don't

examine ourselves in isolation. Instead, we are invited to lay our lives alongside the life of Jesus. It is a sobering exercise to say the least. And yet, what we discover in this examination of his life and ours, is not condemnation or recrimination. Instead, we are overwhelmed, the

farther we go on this journey with him, by the depths of love he has for all of us. Lent is a time for getting our spiritual house in order, that is true.

But above all, Lent is an invitation to once again commit to love like Christ loves. So, it is a good time to focus on the practice of the three Community Agreements at Park Avenue Church: *Do no harm, do*

**Community Agreements**

**PARK AVENUE**  
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

- 1** **Do no harm**  
Aim to do no harm to myself, no harm to others, and no harm to God.
- 2** **Do good**  
Make an effort to do all the good I can, in as many ways as I can.
- 3** **Stay in love with God**  
Be intentional about growing in my love for God.

*good, and stay in love with God.* You're invited to use this tool over the next 40 days to do just that.

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## How to use this tool to practice the Community Agreements

Below you will find four elements for focusing on the daily practice of the Community Agreements during Lent: A prayer based on Romans 12, each of the three community agreements, followed by a brief scripture and daily reflection questions.

During Lent, at the end of each day or at a convenient time, begin by slowly praying the Romans 12 Prayer. Follow that by using the questions to reflect on your practice of the each agreement.

You may want to write your reflections in a journal or use an app on your phone or tablet. Also, you may find it helpful to look back every few days on what you have written to notice some patterns in your experience.

Keep in mind that the daily reflection questions are merely a way to get you started prayerfully thinking about each agreement. Feel free to go beyond them. You may find they stir some other questions for you. As the daily prayer from Romans 12 says, be open to readily recognize what God is saying to you and quickly respond to it.

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## Daily Practice

### **Begin by slowly praying the Romans 12 Prayer**

God of love and life, will you help me take my everyday, ordinary life and place it before you as an offering. Open me to embrace what you are doing for me, within me, and around me. Help me to fix my attention on you, readily recognize what you want from me, and quickly respond to it. Your love is at the center of who I am. By your grace, move me to love you, others, and myself from that centered place.

May my love be genuine.

May I let go of what is evil in me,  
and open myself to what is good.

By your Spirit in me, may I truly love others:

not just to tolerate them but to honor them.

Give me your zeal, your energy, the true desire to serve you.

Give me the faith to rejoice with hope,

to be patient in suffering, and to persevere in prayer.

Help me take the opportunities I will have today

to contribute to the needs of those around me...

to extend hospitality to strangers...

to bless those who oppose me — to bless and not to curse them.

I am mindful of those who rejoice, and I rejoice with them.  
I am mindful of those who weep, and I weep with them.  
May I be present for them today.

Give me your grace to live this day in harmony with others.  
I do not need to pretend that I am wiser than I am.  
Help me not to be haughty  
but to know that the lowly are my peers.

Give me grace to not repay evil for evil,  
but to focus on what is good for the sake of all.

Give me grace to live peaceably with all.  
Give me your grace to feed the hungry even if they oppose me,  
to give drink to the thirsty even if I do not like them.

I pray that I will not be overcome by evil,  
but that I may overcome evil with good,  
by the grace of your love in me.

Amen.

## **Reflect on your practice of each Community Agreement**

**1. Do No Harm** | Aim to do no harm to myself, others, or God.

**Scripture:** Don't hit back; discover beauty in everyone. If you've got it in you, get along with everybody. Don't insist on getting even; that's not for you to do. "I'll do the judging," says God. "I'll take care of it" (Romans 12:17-19).

### **Daily Reflection Questions**

- ❖ In my thoughts, words, or actions, how did I choose to do no harm today, even if tempted to do otherwise?
- ❖ What did I learn from this practice today?

**2. Do Good. |** Make an effort to do all the good I can, in as many ways as I can.

**Scripture:** Whoever does good is from God (3 John 11). We are God's works of art, created in Christ Jesus to do good things. God planned for these good things to be the way that we live our lives (Ephesians 2:10).

### **Daily Reflection Questions:**

- ❖ In my thoughts, words, or actions, where (or to whom) was I able to do good today?
- ❖ Where do I see the potential to do good tomorrow?

**3. Stay in love with God. |** Be intentional about growing in my love for God.

**Scripture:** Seek the LORD and LORD's strength and presence continually. (Psalm 105:4)

**Daily Reflection Questions:**

- ❖ What spiritual practice(s) helped me to grow in my love for God today?
- ❖ How have I been open to embracing God's grace for me and being gracious with others? Where have I struggled to be open?

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## Other Resources

Reuben Job, *Three Simple Rules*

Community Agreements Sermon Series on the Park Avenue Church Youtube Channel

- ❖ [Community Agreements: Do No Harm](#) | January 28, 2024
- ❖ [Community Agreements: Do Good](#) | February 4, 2024
- ❖ [Community Agreements: Stay in love with God](#) | February 11, 2024