

OUR COVENANT

As people of many nations, languages, tribes and cultures from the Presbyterian Church in Canada, with an evangelical, traditional, orthodox understanding of the Triune God, the authority of scripture, classical Reformed theology and church polity, we are at a watershed moment in the Presbyterian Church in Canada. Whatever happens as General Assembly decides on important issues, change is at hand. With humility, we are called to love and lead well in the midst of this crisis.

There are four paths that the Holy Spirit may lead us in the near future:

1. **DÉTENTE**: stay and pray - remain within the PCC, praying for a move of the Holy Spirit to bring revival, renewal, and a re-ordering of our foundations and polity, in accord with the revealed truth in the Trinity and the scriptures.
2. **DETACH**: remain within the PCC, but in a relationship that is an administrative one, regarding pensions, benefits, and matters such as mortgages and loans. Function in the courts of the church as called upon, detaching from denominational resources, mission work etc, and choosing to support resources and relationships aligned with our convictions. "Detaching" will have various expressions and outcomes, and will require prayerful conversation among those who feel to pursue this path. Whatever "detach" looks like in practice, the covenant commits us to a high standard of Christlike behaviour.
3. **DEPART**: leave the PCC and become part of something new, or another denomination, as led by the Spirit. To depart responsibly will involve polity matters, plus financial considerations that are negotiated with a reasonable and gracious attitude.
4. **DISCERN**: take more time to prayerfully discern next steps.

As we navigate the path forward, we are called to walk and talk in a manner that honours Christ, and is in keeping with the scriptures we trust as God-inspired and authoritative in all aspects of life and faith. **Guiding texts for us might include the following:**

³⁸⁻⁴² “Here’s another old saying that deserves a second look: ‘Eye for eye, tooth for tooth.’ Is that going to get us anywhere? Here’s what I propose: ‘Don’t hit back at all.’ If someone strikes you, stand there and take it. If someone drags you into court and sues for the shirt off your back, giftwrap your best coat and make a present of it. And if someone takes unfair advantage of you, use the occasion to practice the servant life. No more tit-for-tat stuff. Live generously.

⁴³⁻⁴⁷ “You’re familiar with the old written law, ‘Love your friend,’ and its unwritten companion, ‘Hate your enemy.’ I’m challenging that. I’m telling you to love your enemies. Let them bring out the best in you, not the worst. When someone gives you a hard time, respond with the energies of prayer, for then you are working out of your true selves, your God-created selves. This is what God does. He gives his best—the sun to warm and the rain to nourish—to everyone, regardless: the good and bad, the nice and nasty. If all you do is love the lovable, do you expect a bonus? Anybody can do that. If you simply say hello to those who greet you, do you expect a medal? Any run-of-the-mill sinner does that. ⁴⁸ “In a word, what I’m saying is, grow up. You’re kingdom subjects. Now live like it. Live out your God-created identity. Live generously and graciously toward others, the way God lives toward you.”

Matthew 5:38-48 (MSG)

²¹ For God called you to do good, even if it means suffering, just as Christ suffered for you.

He is your example, and you must follow in His steps.

²² He never sinned, nor ever deceived anyone. ²³ He did not retaliate when He was insulted, nor threaten revenge when He suffered. He left His case in the hands of God, who always judges fairly. ²⁴ He personally carried our sins in His body on the cross so that we can be dead to sin and live for what is right. By His wounds you are healed. ²⁵ Once you were like sheep who wandered away. But now you have turned to your Shepherd, the Guardian of your souls.

1 Peter 2:21-25 (NLT)

¹³ You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love. ¹⁴ For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: "Love your neighbour as yourself." ¹⁵ If you bite and devour each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.

²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³ gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.

²⁴ Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵ Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. ²⁶ Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.

Gal 5:13-15, 22-26 (NIV)

We seek to honour and obey the Triune God, to live according to the Holy Scriptures in every aspect of life and faith, and conduct ourselves, publicly and privately, in a manner that honours Christ Jesus and follows His way.

At this time in our denomination's journey, we covenant with God and with one another to walk whatever path the Lord leads us on, with integrity, humility, trust, grace and hope.

This means:

1. We will guard our speech, in what we write, post on social media, preach and teach, so that our words encourage and build up. We will always speak the truth in love, demonstrating a graciousness and quiet confidence in our Sovereign God that will astonish those who believe differently.
2. We will seek the good of the PCC, and our own congregations, Presbyteries and Synods. We will be honest and honourable in all our dealings with everyone, especially with those who hold a position or office in the PCC. We will do what is truly right, generous and grace-filled.
3. We will truly repent of and thus change any un-Christlike actions, attitudes and speech towards others in the PCC who oppose, insult, mock, shame or shun us in any way. We will not employ those methods in any of our dealings with anyone. We will not coerce, threaten, or demean others, both those who are like-minded, and those who are choosing another way.
4. We will hold one another accountable to uphold our covenant. We will speak the truth in love to one another, for the glory of God and the good of God's people.
5. We will guard our hearts and our lives, and pursue a transforming relationship with our Lord and Saviour, in the power of the Holy Spirit. We will pray for the fruits of

God's Spirit to be evident in our lives, as we navigate and lead through this very difficult season in the Church's life.