

Commitment to Peacemaking and Reconciliation

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called sons of God (Matt. 5:9).

Our church and school is committed to building a “culture of peace” that reflects God’s peace and the power of the gospel of Christ in our lives. As we stand in the light of the cross, we realize that bitterness, unforgiveness and broken relationships are not appropriate 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, we look to the Scriptures and the Holy Spirit for guidance on how we can respond to conflict in a way that will honor God, promote justice, reconcile relationships, and preserve our witness for Christ. As God gives us his wisdom and grace, we are committed to actively teaching and encouraging one another to live out the following principles of peacemaking and reconciliation. Our hope and values would be that a process of personal peacemaking would be pursued as far as possible before seeking assisted peacemaking:

Personal Peacemaking

- Whenever we are faced with conflict, our primary goal will be to glorify God with our thoughts, words and actions (1 Cor. 10:31).
- We will try to get the “logs” out of our own eyes before focusing on what others may have done wrong (Matt. 7:3-5).
- We will seek to overlook minor offenses (Prov. 19:11).
- We will refrain from all gossip, backbiting and slander (Eph. 4:29-32). If we have a problem with others, we will talk to them, not about them.
- We will make “charitable judgments” toward one another by believing the best about each other until we have facts that prove otherwise (1 Cor. 13:7).
- 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 a word of correction to others, we will do so graciously and gently, with the goal of serving and restoring them, rather than beating them down (Prov. 12:18; Eph. 4:29; Gal. 6:1).
- When someone tries to correct us, we will ask God to help us resist prideful defensiveness and to welcome correction with humility (Ps. 141:5; Prov. 15:32).
- When others repent, we will ask God to give us grace to forgive them as he has forgiven us (Eph. 4:32).
- When we discuss or negotiate substantive issues, we will look out for others’ interests as well as our own (Phil. 2:3-4).

Assisted Peacemaking

- When two of us cannot resolve a conflict privately, we will seek the mediation of wise people within our church and/or school community and listen humbly to their counsel (Matt. 18:16; Phil. 4:2-3). If our dispute is with a school or church leader, we will look to other school or church leaders for assistance.

- When informal mediation does not resolve a dispute, we will seek formal assistance from our school and church leaders or people they appoint, and we will submit to their counsel and decision (Matt. 18:17-20).
- When we have a business or legal dispute with another party, we will make every reasonable effort to resolve the conflict within the church/ school through biblical mediation or arbitration, rather than going to civil court (1 Cor. 6:1-8). If the other party attends another church, our leaders will offer to cooperate with the leaders of that church to resolve the matter. The Rector and Vestry are the final arbiters for St. Peter's Episcopal Church and School.
- If we have a legal dispute with or within our church or school and cannot resolve it internally through the steps given above, we will seek to obey God's command not to go into the civil court (1 Cor. 6:1-8). Instead, we will attempt to submit the matter to mediation and, if necessary, legally binding arbitration.

Above all, we pray that our ministry of peacemaking will bring praise to our Lord Jesus Christ and lead others to know his infinite love and peace.