



CHURCH OF THE NAZARENE

G L O B A L M I N I S T R Y C E N T E R

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A COVENANT OF COMMUNITY CONVERSATION

Come Let Us Reason Together

May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer (Psalm 19:14, NIV).

The Church of the Nazarene offers a message of hope, transformation, and reconciliation to a world that is deeply divided by political, theological, and cultural differences. We are radically committed to our Articles of Faith and to our Core Values as a Christian people, a Holiness people, and a Missional people. We passionately embrace our mission “to make Christlike disciples in the nations!”

In our efforts to maintain our identity and fulfill our mission we are always open to any grace-filled respectful communication. We are grateful for the conversation with each other in the Church of the Nazarene and with other brothers and sisters in the broader Christian community. Too often, however, our communication has reflected the divisions of our cultures rather than the unity we have in the body of Christ. The Apostle Paul urges all those who claim the name of Christ to “*let your conversation be always full of grace... so that you may know how to answer everyone*” (Col. 4:6 NIV).

In an effort to fulfill Christ’s purposes:

I. We affirm that each of us is created in and reflects the image of God. The respect we owe God should be reflected in the honor and respect we show to each other. “*With the tongue we praise our Lord and Father, and with it we curse human beings, who have been made in God’s likeness ... this should not be*” (James 3:9–10, TNIV).

II. We recognize that we cannot function together as brothers and sisters of the same community unless we are mindful of the way we treat each other. In pursuit of the common good in our life together, each of us must therefore “*put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body*” (Ephesians 4:25, NIV). “*Give preference to one another in honor*” (Romans 12:10, NASB).

III. We commit that our dialogue with each other will reflect the Spirit of Jesus. We are encouraged to be “*quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry*” (James 1:19, NIV). “*Get rid of all bitterness, rage and anger, brawling and slander, along with every form of malice. Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you*” (Ephesians 4:31–32, TNIV).

IV. We pledge that when we disagree, we will do so respectfully. We will not falsely impugn others' motives, attack others' character, or question others' faith; instead we humbly recognize that in our limited, human opinions "*we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror*" (1 Corinthians 13:12, NIV). We will therefore "*be completely humble and gentle ... patient, bearing with one another in love*" (Ephesians 4:2, NIV).

V. We will embrace Christ's admonition that we speak confidentially TO others prior to speaking ABOUT them to the church. "*If a fellow believer hurts you, go and tell him—work it out between the two of you*" (Matthew 18:15, MSG).

VI. We will carefully guard our hearts and the language we use in expressing our differences. "*Above all else, guard your heart, for it is the wellspring of life*" (Proverbs 4:23, NIV).

VII. We commit to pray daily for our political and spiritual leaders—those with whom we may agree, as well as those with whom we may disagree. "*I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made ... for kings and all who are in high positions*" (1 Timothy 2:1–2, ESV).

VIII. We believe that it is more difficult to hate others, even our adversaries and our enemies, when we are praying for them. Together we strive to be faithful witnesses to our Lord, who prayed "*that they may be one*" (John 17:22, ESV).

IX. We pledge to God and to each other that we will lead by example in a time where civil discourse seems to have broken down. We will model a better way of treating each other in our faith communities, even across religious and political lines. We strive to create safe congregations that are sacred spaces for common prayer and community conversation as we come together to seek God's will for our future together. "*Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves*" (Philippians 2:3, NIV).

X. We commit to bear witness to Christ's presence and the Kingdom of God in this world. Recognizing that the world is watching, we seek to be authentic Christ followers who recognize "*how good and pleasant it is when the people of God live together in unity*" (Psalm 133:1, TNIV).