

## **Engaging in Conversations Regarding Human Sexuality**

Create a Covenant together by:

- Adapting/adjust covenant for your context (see below)
- Creating your own covenant as a group by answering the following questions:
  - What do you expect from your facilitator?
  - What can your facilitator expect from participants?
  - What do the participants expect from one another?

How to have a [Talking Circle/Fishbowl Conversation](#):

### **Guidelines and Discussion Rules**

(Adapted from pp. 86-87 of *Living Faithfully* and *Disciple Study*)

- Our purpose is not to convince one another, but to listen to one another and to learn from one another.
- We want to be intentional about this being a safe space to share our beliefs and experiences. Holding confidence when personal stories or experiences are shared.
- Listen respectfully and actively and with an ear to understanding others' views, by not interrupting or thinking of what you're going to say while someone else is listening.
- When speaking, commit to learning, not to debate. Comment in order to share information, not to persuade. Avoid blame, speculation, inflammatory, or degrading language.
- No Christian has a monopoly on understanding either God's Word or the words of the Scripture. This includes biblical scholars and the most unlearned Christian. All of us must listen to one another as we seek to understand the richness of God's gifts.
- Different biblical understandings can remain among us, but we can still be warm Christian friends. In fact, as we grow to better understand our differences, we can grow in our appreciation of another.

### **Covenant**

We recognize that though united through God our Creator, Jesus our Savior, and the Holy Spirit our Sustainer, we are a diverse group of believers. We acknowledge, honor, and seek forgiveness for the harm that has occurred through words, actions, inactions, and strife. We appreciate those who hold diverse theological beliefs within the Dakotas United Methodist Connection. We seek a way forward that is filled with grace and love; knowing the possibility that our friends, family, neighbors, clergy, and fellow church members may choose to join or stay with an expression of Methodism different than what I choose. We, the people of the Dakotas United Methodist Connection, covenant to:

Respect all expressions of Methodism sharing our common Wesleyan heritage, while

- Doing no harm -- by resisting the temptation to judge, shame, speak poorly of, or try to convince people to change their mind;
- Doing good -- by showing grace and respect to those who think differently than I and expressing Christ's love to all people; and
- Staying in love with God -- by encouraging, supporting, and cooperating with all people who call themselves Methodists to focus on and achieve the mission to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.