

**Community Norms – Trinity Episcopal Church, Shelburne**  
**Written and Approved by Trinity's Vestry and The Rt. Rev. Shannon MacVean-Brown, Bishop**

Welcome to Trinity Episcopal Church in Shelburne. We are delighted to have you join us for liturgy, learning, and ministry together. Our vestry, with the support of our Bishop, has adopted these "Community Norms," which are intended to guide our parish life. As followers of Jesus, we are committed to loving God and one another. As disciples we actively work to create a safer world of hope, justice, and love for all people. Our Community Norms focus on communication, respect, and commitment. We recognize that leadership for our parish life rests with our vestry and rector, and is overseen by our Bishop of Episcopal Diocese of Vermont. Please read and reflect on these norms to discern whether you are comfortable being a member of this parish.

1. We acknowledge that our relationship with God in Jesus Christ guides our behavior and ministries.
2. We respect the dignity of every human being and strive for justice and peace among all people.
3. We commit ourselves to respectful, thoughtful communication, acknowledging the harm that misinformation can cause. We are guided by the wisdom of *Ephesians 4:29*:

*"Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen."*

To this end, we do not disparage anyone in our community and refrain from spreading inflammatory speech in or about our parish community. We build and nurture a community of sacred trust.

4. If there is conflict in need of resolution, an issue to be addressed, or questions or concerns to be heard, we agree to communicate directly and respectfully with the person or group responsible for that area of ministry. We agree to speak honestly, listen compassionately with an open mind, and honor their response.
5. We are careful not to use email, social media, and other forms of public communication in ways that may spread misinformation or create disharmony within the membership of our parish.
6. We commit to work together in a positive spirit, seeking creative approaches to challenges, concerns, or problems.
7. We offer our time, talents, and financial resources freely and generously to support our parish life.

8. We work actively to uplift those in any trouble, sorrow, need, sickness, or other adversity.
9. We acknowledge that our church is both a community of members and a work environment. By both our speech and action we work to assure a safe church environment in both respects, free of any form of intimidation or abuse.
10. As Christians, we commit to a life of continual prayer, reflection, and learning to deepen our relationship with God and strengthen our bonds of Christian affection and commitment to each other.

Please Note:

Our parish church is a place where we have committed to being known by our love. As such, our church must be a brave and safe space for open and honest interactions. To this end we covenant not to tolerate mean or hurtful behavior of any kind.

If you are already a member of our parish and feel you cannot uphold these Community Norms, please speak with the rector about how to transfer your membership to a parish that better suits your needs.