

## **Church Group Expectations**

- We are welcoming, inclusive, open, and non-judgmental
- We arrive on time
- We stay focused on the purpose of the group
- We are welcome to share or not as is comfortable for us
- We practice confidentiality, what is shared in the group, stays in the group
- We end on time

## **The Importance of Confidentiality**

The Episcopal church in Maine is committed to Safe Church training and policies for the protection of all its members, the clergy, and the church. Part of Safe Church policy is the establishing of clear confidentiality covenants in all groups that operate under the umbrella of the church and are known to be part of the ministry of the church. Unless the group's purpose is church business whose purpose is to provide information to the whole church body, confidentiality is to be maintained.

A healthy Christian community is a safe place of mutual care. As Christians we have an obligation to protect the personal information of others. We understand that we do not have a right to know any information about others and commit ourselves to protecting any information that is shared in the group as a sign of love and respect.

The simplest way to maintain confidentiality is to agree to the policy that **“What is said in the group, stays in the group.”** This promotes trust and a sense of safety. Confidentiality protects the members of the group as well as anyone mentioned there. It also protects the church from accusations which can lead to legal difficulties.

**Confidentiality is a great gift we offer one another to create and maintain a safe environment.**

The Rev. Stephanie Batterman, Deacon  
Grace Episcopal Church  
Bath, Maine