

CARE Covenant

Congregational Commitments, Affirmations, Responses and Education to Address Domestic Abuse in the Church

We, a covenant group of churches and church leaders in the Upstate of South Carolina who are committed to recognizing and responding effectively to domestic abuse, understand and agree to the following:

Understanding & Affirmations

- We understand that domestic abuse is a pattern of coercive behavior in a marriage or intimate partner relationship, whereby the abuser keeps his or her spouse or partner subordinated and under control through various forms of abuse (emotional, verbal, psychological, spiritual, sexual, financial, social, and/or physical).
- We affirm the God-given value and equal significance of every person, each of whom is created in the image of God.
- We affirm that God's word regarding marriage in no way condones abuse of any kind, including manipulation or control by fear.

Commitments

- We commit to show our care for victims of domestic abuse by preaching, teaching and raising awareness about healthy relationships and the wrongs of domestic abuse.
- We commit to deal with domestic abuse as a sin instead of simply offering platitudes, holding abusers accountable and settling for no less than consistent and fruit-bearing repentance.
- We are committed to teach and uphold God's will for mutual love and respect within the covenant of marriage. Therefore, in circumstances of domestic abuse, we commit never to put the institution of marriage above the safety and needs of the victim.
- We commit to receiving education to recognize the dynamics of domestic abuse and to adopt best practices for congregational responses that provide awareness for the congregation and support for victims reaching out to the church for help.

Responses

- We will take seriously the statements of any individuals who share that they feel unsafe or fearful in their marriage or relationship, recognizing all forms of domestic abuse as destructive (including emotional abuse, verbal abuse, coercive control and intimidation).
- We will respond responsibly to the information we receive from those who disclose domestic abuse, helping the victim to report to legal authorities when necessary and providing community resources as needed.
- We will support those who have been abused, no matter how well abusers may present themselves, refraining from any pressure for quick forgiveness and reconciliation.

By signing this CARE covenant, I agree to its affirmations, commitments and responses regarding the issue of domestic abuse. I will strive to learn about the issue of domestic abuse and how congregations can best respond, working to create a community of faith where victims feel safe and supported.

Name: _____ Signature: _____

Congregation: _____ Email Address: _____