

## The Joe! Study: Covenant as the Heart of the Matter

“The days are coming,” declares the LORD, “when I will make a new covenant with the people... I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts.” Jeremiah 31: 31-33

Over the coming weeks, please continue to review, pray and reflect upon your chosen expectations of one another and the parish. The expectations flow from what we as a community have spotlighted as the heart of the matter here at Saint Joseph. Your chosen expectations will serve as a resource for reflection, action and future planning.

One of the outcomes of your chosen expectations will be the formation and publication of a Parish Covenant. A Covenant is a promise, a pledge, a bond that intentionally calls and recalls a people to a way of being a people, a community. Our faith traditions are rich with covenants between God and His people. Covenants set before us expectations. In our scriptures, covenants are sealed in with God using blood. For our ancestors in faith, blood equals life! (In our community, we will use ink and the waters of our baptism!)

Covenants are important from a practical point of view. Our signature to this Covenant forms an R.S.V.P. of sorts. It says, “Yes, I am really showing up!” From a person moving to this community for the first time, to the readers of this article, to the person sitting next to you, to a wide range of ministers and widely varied ministries, for a Pastor and Pastoral Council who are planning and visioning, for a Finance Council who are budgeting, for all... a Covenant calls, clarifies, and unites.

In our Scripture, Covenants do offer clarity of expectations and declare relationships. For us as parish, embracing a Covenant is a wonderfully simple courtesy for one another, and a delightful gesture of renewal and recommitment.

R.S.V.P. stands for a French phrase, “répondez, s’il vous plaît,” which means “please reply.” It is what God asks of His people. In that same Spirit, here in Libertyville, it is what we are asking of one another! In the near future, we will ask one another to R.S.V.P.

As the Joe! Study continues to unfold, please see next weekend’s Carpenter and the parish website ([www.stjoseph-libertyville.org](http://www.stjoseph-libertyville.org)).