



Phoenix Community Church United Church of Christ

Theology of the dissolution of a Marriage / Covenant Union

Our primary concern as Phoenix Community Church is caring for one another. This necessitates that all ritual acts in which we participate be approached with integrity and a sense of the sacredness of the event. Phoenix considers any union in which it takes part to be a holy and sacred commitment between two people whose intention is to spend the remainder of their lives together. It is not to be entered into without sincere, considered reflection.

We recognize, however, that even those individuals who enter covenanted unions with the sincerest intentions sometimes feel compelled to end those unions. We believe that such a step should be considered with the same, if not greater, solemn reflection that one engages in when approaching a covenant union.

Ideally, couples considering union ceremonies will consider as a part of their pre-covenant reflection the circumstances which would lead them to consider dissolution. (For example, would infidelity automatically call the continuation of the relationship into question?)

If, after careful and prayerful consideration, a couple concludes that the relationship cannot continue, Phoenix encourages them to identify ways in which the union can be ended with respect for the integrity of the vows made to one another. This may include, for example, a ritual of dissolution in which the couple formally release one another from the commitments made at the covenant ceremony. This may be a private ritual with only the pastor present, or it may include some of the community. Individual couples may identify other such means of formally dissolving their covenant.

The underlying goal should be to recognize that covenants, even those one can no longer honor, are holy and sacred human acts. It is appropriate, therefore, to address the ending of a covenanted relationship in a holy and sacred manner.