

Lay Community of St. Benedict:

01. Welcome and Mutual Respect

Review cycle: 1 year	Last reviewed: Feb 2024	Next review: Feb 2025
Owner	Council & Trustees	

The LCSB welcomes all who wish to grow in the Christian life, building on the principles of the Rule of St. Benedict. The Community's roots lie in the Catholic Church, but people of all Christian traditions are welcomed to full membership.

This openness, which is central to our Community life, means that the Community is founded on loving care and respect for one another, including mutual respect for personal as well as denominational beliefs. This accords with Benedictine teaching; Members "should anticipate one another in honour; most patiently endure one another's infirmities, whether of body or of character; vie in paying obedience one to another—no one following what he considers useful for himself, but rather what benefits another" (RoSB, 72).

In the LCSB, this requires us to observe both personal and ecumenical tolerance. The Community has been likened to an oasis, where people are joined by a love, a trust, a belonging. We are also joined by commitments to pray together, to support one another, to hospitality, and to spread the Word; but given our diversity, we will not always agree on everything.

This document seeks to express how we as a Community aim to remain in love even when we disagree.

First, the LCSB respects the conscience of each individual; and the LCSB will not seek to impose any beliefs, nor will it pressurise anyone to endorse something that goes against their religion or beliefs.

Secondly and similarly, the LCSB respects the official positions of different Christian denominations and their authority as regards their congregations; and the LCSB as an organisation will not take a position, or be used as a platform, to pressurise or campaign on controversies either within or between denominations.

Thirdly, LCSB's principles of welcome and mutual respect for all mean that Members are free to hold, and express, their personal beliefs; however, this does not mean the LCSB as an organisation is also taking a position on the subject, either in favour or against (excepting only where a position has been expressly agreed by Council and the Trustees).

Fourthly, LCSB expects its Members always to express their views to one another in love and with sensitivity, recognising that some others may be upset or offended; at times holding back, and at all times taking especial care not to ask others to join in meetings or prayers that they may be unable to agree with.

These principles are based on a belief that our diversity is to be treated as a gift, not a problem.

"Our diversity is one of our greatest treasures. Our lights are not all the same. We may have differing spiritualities and different paths to walk, chosen by God. We are a colourful tapestry. It is through this variety of gifts that we support and learn from one another, and are encouraged to continue our journey." (LCSB Council, 2010).