

The Watermen's Stewardship Covenant (Evangelical) (Tangier Island, Chesapeake Bay)

The Watermen's Stewardship Covenant is a covenant among all watermen regardless of their profession of religious faith. As watermen we agree to:

- 1) be good stewards of God's Creation by setting a high standard of obedience to civil laws (fishery, boat, and pollution laws [e.g., laws against dumping things overboard]), and
- (2) commit to brotherly accountability. If any person who has committed to this Covenant is overtaken in any trespass against this Covenant, we agree to spiritually restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness. We also agree to fly a red ribbon on the antennas of our boats to signify that we are part of the Covenant.

For the professing Christian waterman, this Covenant additionally means that we agree to set a high standard of obedience to God's laws and, therefore, to civil laws. We agree to walk a crucified and resurrected life--a selfless life--that is yielded to the leading of the Holy Spirit. We agree to fly red ribbons, which additionally symbolize the blood covenant for which a great sacrifice of God--His only begotten Son--was made.

As Christians we understand that through this Covenant that each of us shall give account of himself to God. Therefore we do not judge one another, rather, we resolve not to put a stumbling block or cause to fall in our brother's way (*Romans 14:12-13*).

We agree to "let love be without hypocrisy. We abhor what is evil and cling to what is good" (*Romans 12:9*) and commit to "not destroy the work of God for food [crab/oyster/fish/clam]" (*Romans 14: 20*).

Proverbs 23:4-5 states that we are not to overwork to be rich and this because ["riches can disappear as though they had the wings of a bird!" We shall "love the LORD your God and keep his requirements, his decrees, his laws and his commands always"

(*Deuteronomy 11:1*), for "blessed are they whose ways are blameless, who walk according to the law of the Lord. Blessed are they who keep His statutes and seek Him with all their heart" (*Psalms 119:102*), "For if my people who are called by My name will humble themselves and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land" (*2 Chronicles 7:14*).

The psalmist exclaims "Oh, how I love your law! I meditate on it all day long" (*Psalms 119:97*).

Women's Stewardship Commitment

The Watermen Community's Women's Stewardship commitment is a commitment among all women regardless of their profession of religious faith. As wives of watermen who have committed to the Watermen's Stewardship Covenant or as women of the watermen community, we agree to be supportive of our husbands and/or relatives by

- 1) being good stewards of our financial, human, and natural resources under our care;
- 2) practicing contentment by reducing our demands for and consumption of material goods that are fulfilling unnecessary wants rather than necessary needs;
- 3) reusing and recycling as many materials as possible;
- 4) willingly obeying all civil laws;
- 5) purchasing things for children that are fulfilling their needs and some wants rather than their every want; and
- 6) teaching our children to be content and to be good stewards of Creation (fishery, island, and so forth).

For professing Christian women, this commitment is considered a covenant with God and means that we additionally agree to pursue a crucified and resurrected life--a selfless life--that is yielded to the leading of the Holy Spirit. We agree to pursue *Exodus 20:17*--to not covet anything of our neighbors. "For where envy and self-seeking exist, confusion and every evil thing will be there.

But the wisdom that is from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, willing to yield, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality and without hypocrisy" (*James 3:16-17*).

We will seek to practice contentment in obedience to God and for the sake of our husbands and children, God's Creation, and our heritage.

"Godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content" (*1 Timothy 6:6-8*).

We are called to "train up a child the way he or she should go and when they are old they will not depart from it" (*Proverbs 22:6*).

Therefore, we agree to teach our children to live the selfless life, obedience to the commandments of God, to care for Creation, and to be content in all things so that the Creation is not pressed relentlessly.

We agree to set a high standard of obedience to God's laws and, therefore, to civil laws. By humility and the reverence of

the Lord are riches and honor and life (*Proverbs 22:4*).

"A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches, loving favor rather than silver and gold" (*Proverbs 22:1*).

"Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord and He will lift you up" (*James 4:10*).

*Note: This covenant was signed by Watermen from communities on Tangier Island, Chesapeake Bay, in 2002.
For background, see the film, ["When Heaven Meets Earth."](#)*