



FOURTH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

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April 24, 2024

Dear Members and Friends of Fourth Presbyterian Church,

About 14 years ago, as Fourth was beginning the search for a new pastor, the Session adopted a statement of values to be included in the church information that was circulated among potential candidates. The statement included brief descriptions of the following values: Christ-Centeredness, Inspiring Worship, Theologically Grounded, Nurture, Diversity, Stewardship, and Christian Education. It articulated God's work in and through the congregation and expressed a vision of Christian community that resonated with those whom God eventually called to serve as pastors, leaders, and members of Fourth.

As the vision and mission of the church grows and evolves, these values remain at the heart of our identity. At the same time, we recognize that there are certain important aspects of our life together that need fuller expression. Over the past year and a half, the Diaconate and Session have been prayerfully discerning how to articulate these elements, especially our theological grounding, our spiritual rootedness, our understanding of diversity and belonging, and our missional vision. So this statement of values is not entirely new. It is rather a "refresh" of the values we have been striving to embody in our life together. As such, the statement is holistic. No single value makes sense on its own. Each is part of a larger whole and is integrated into the broader narrative of our life together.

Finally, a statement like this one is not the end of the conversation about our values, but a fresh starting point for ongoing conversations. This expression of faith and mission is a marker set down on the path of our shared journey, professing how we see and hear the Spirit at work with us in this time and place, forming us into the people God is calling us to be. We invite you to ponder these words. What do you hear? What do you see? How might God be speaking to you, inviting you, comforting you, or challenging you? We also invite you to join the pastors on May 12, for a conversation about this statement of values and the Spirit's work's among us.

With gratitude for God's abundant grace, striving for the unity of the Holy Spirit, we offer this statement for the edification of the church and each us as followers of the way of Jesus Christ.

On behalf of the Session and the Diaconate,

Rev. Dr. Mike Hoyt
Pastor

Rev. Jackie Putnam
Associate Pastor

FOURTH PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Statement of Values

As a community gathered in the name of the Triune God, we strive to be:

A Worshiping People: We worship the God of grace revealed in Jesus Christ. Inspired and guided by the Holy Spirit, we orient our lives toward God through song, prayer, hearing and interpreting the scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, celebrating the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, and committing our whole selves to lives that respond to God's grace. Our worship keeps us grounded in faith, growing in love, and steadfast in hope.

Reformed and Reforming: We are dedicated to becoming the church Christ calls us to be in this time and place; we strive to be biblically-grounded, intellectually honest, rooted in the Reformed theological tradition while being enriched by the voices of other faith traditions. We pass on our faith from generation to generation in ways that challenge and encourage all members toward maturity in Christ and the discernment of God's will for all of life.

Spiritually Open: We believe God's Spirit is at work in and among us; we seek to open ourselves to the leading of the Spirit, who inspires, comforts, confronts, challenges, encourages, and strengthens us to become the people God calls us to be. We trust the One who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine (Ephesians 3:20).

Diverse and Inclusive: We affirm and invite the full belonging of people of all races, ethnicities, cultures, ages, sexual orientations, gender identities, abilities, educational attainment, and socioeconomic status in this faith community, promoting the equitable participation of all in the life of this congregation, including worship, sacraments, membership, ordination, marriage, teaching, preaching, fellowship, committees, leadership, and employment.

Compassionate: We care for one another in prayerful and practical ways, offering kindness and support to each other when we suffer from illness, bereavement, loss, grief, and life transitions. We rejoice with those who rejoice, and suffer with those who suffer. We bear one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ (Galatians 6:2).

Engaged in God's mission: We answer Christ's call to live as faithful stewards of all God has entrusted to us, to do justice, alleviate suffering, care for creation, work for reconciliation, promote peace, and bear active witness to God's love for the world; we participate in local, regional, statewide, and global efforts to seek just and equitable policies and practices that promote the common good and honor the image of God in all people.