

Core Values

Draft January 2017

1) GOD'S WORD

We believe that **God has spoken, and continues to speak, to all of His people through the Bible.** (2 Timothy 3:14-17; Hebrews 4:12-13)

- a) So the Bible and its teachings are central to our ministries and gatherings as a church.
- b) We encourage all of our people to read and study the Bible, whether it is individually, in small groups, or as a church, using the languages and tools that are best suited to them while also being accurate and clear in the expression of God's message in His Word. (Acts 17:10-12)

2) HOLY SPIRIT

We believe that **God the Holy Spirit empowers and guides His church** through the Bible and through His presence among us.

- a) While we have structures that help make us orderly (1 Corinthians 14:26-33), our **ultimate hope is in the work of the Holy Spirit** among us (Acts 1:8; 6:1-6; 1 Thessalonians 1:5).

3) DIVERSE UNITY

We **deeply value our unity in Christ in the midst of the richness of diversity of His body and in our congregation.** We value the diversity of culture, age, educational level, socioeconomic status, kinds of work and careers, and so on. When we cherish diversity, it will help prevent us from drifting away from Christianity to something else (for example, nationalism, or Christianity limited by one's own cultural perspectives, or confusing cultural values as Christian values). We believe that what **makes us the same as human beings** (in particular, we are made in the image of God yet spoiled by sin, so we are in need of a savior, and Jesus Christ is the Savior for all who believe) **is more fundamental than all of the differences between us.**

Diversity provides other rich benefits to the Body of Christ. Through diversity, we personally learn and experience the wonderful reality that the image of God is in every person despite our many differences, and we can show that reality to the world around us (Galatians 3:28). We can visibly demonstrate how God values all people in contrast to how the world values people (James 2:1-4). We can benefit from the variety of gifts that God gives in order to understand and minister to others' needs (Romans 12:4-8). We are better able to understand, love, and serve the peoples of many nations with whom we are to share the Gospel (Matthew 28:19-20). Finally, we can gain a more complete view of

God and His wisdom, and we can demonstrate that manifold wisdom to the world and even to heavenly powers (Ephesians 3:10).

We also recognize the complexity that diversity can bring. The challenges of living as a diverse group of people and loving each other, helps us to focus more on Christ, which is the only common reason that we come together.

- a) We **pursue unity in Christ** in the midst of this rich and growing diversity. All who are in Christ have received the same Spirit, so in Christ there is neither Jew nor Gentile, slave nor free, male nor female. We are all one in Christ (Galatians 3:28). So we strive to keep the unity of the Spirit (Ephesians 4:1-3).
 - b) We **intentionally pursue diversity** in Christ in all aspects of our life as a church, including our leadership selection, our ministries, and times together (Acts 6:1-6).
 - c) We endeavor to **walk in humility**, valuing others above ourselves, willing to listen and learn before we seek to help others understand. (Philippians 2:1-4)
 - d) We value “**healthy discomfort**” that is a mark of putting the needs and concerns of others before our own (such as singing songs of different styles and cultures, including readings and prayers in different languages, and sometimes being more expressive and sometimes more reflective), as well as the “**healthy comfort**” of receiving care in a way that fits who we are. This is an expression of healthy hospitality (Romans 12:13-21).
 - e) We believe that differences are sometimes an indication of something better, that sometimes they are an indication of something that is simply different, and that sometimes they are an indication of something that is less good. So **we place each part of each difference under God**, pursuing the values expressed in His Word with great humility. (Galatians 1:8-9; Titus 1:10-16)
- 4) **PRIESTHOOD OF ALL BELIEVERS**
- We believe that **God equips all of His people in various ways to lead and/or to serve in the church**, including men and women, the older and the younger as well as all people irrespective of their experience with English and the length of staying in the US.

- a) So we endeavor to **recognize God’s equipping of each of His people**, to participate in His work of equipping people, and to empower people who are in the processing of being equipped to lead and to serve. (Ephesians 4:1-16)
- b) We endeavor to engage in frequent, meaningful dialogue together as a congregation about issues that are important to us as a church.
- c) We endeavor to learn from believers from around the world. We as a church in the US have much to learn from brothers and sisters of other parts of the world, and so we are eager to welcome them as a part of our body.

5) WHOLENESS OF OUR HUMANITY GIVEN TO GOD

We believe that **the Gospel addresses the whole person**, including **head** (that is, knowledge and ever deepening theology), **heart** (that is, rich fellowship with God and people), and **hands** (that is, love for God and people put into action). (Luke 10:27-28; Mark 12:28-34)

- a) We walk in the tension of perfect justice and rich mercy.
- b) We seek to live for the good of people beyond ourselves.
- c) We work to build relationships and interactions beyond Sunday morning.