

OUR CORE VALUES

Boundaries, Procedures, Concerns

We agree this is how we will work together and communicate as a congregation, church council and staff.

Adopted by the Bethlehem Church Council in December 2014

Value # 1: We will communicate freely.

- We will practice direct, face-to-face communication.
- We will take upon ourselves the responsibility for understanding and will seek clarification when necessary.
- We will ask ourselves what others need to know from us to do their jobs well – and will take the initiative in communicating it to them.
- We will ask ourselves what we need to know from others to do our job well – and will take the initiative in asking for that information.
- We will endeavor to communicate in a timely fashion, respecting the time-sensitive nature of much that we need to share with each other.
- We will acknowledge and respect the feelings of those with whom we communicate.
- We will endeavor to ensure that all people who are impacted by a decision are consulted as part of the decision-making process.

Value #2: We will work through relational issues.

- We will commit ourselves to creating an atmosphere of personal and professional respect in the workplace.
- We will always assume good will on the part of those we work with and will take the initiative in seeking clarification and understanding.
- We will always avoid triangulation and will speak personally, or with a third party present, with individuals with whom we have a problem.
- When conflict cannot be resolved on the personal level, we will take the initiative in seeking third party mediation of the conflict.
- We will take the initiative in seeking prompt resolution of all conflict.
- We will commit ourselves to the idea that conflict – when properly managed – can be healthy and an impetus to positive growth.
- Senior Staff should clarify for program and support staff the channels/systems for resolving serious conflict.

Value #3: We will keep our commitments.

- We commit ourselves to be men and women of integrity whose “yes” means “yes” and whose “no” means “no.” This means that we will be realistic in our personal and professional commitments.
- As an organization we give people the right to responsibly “revisit” their commitments.
- We will ensure that if any other staff person is professionally involved in a commitment we are making they will be consulted or informed in the commitment-making process.
- We will respect each other’s schedules.

Value #4: We will lead through servant hood.

- We affirm the example of Christ (Philippians 2:5-8) as the model of our servanthood.
- Following the example of Christ, we will accept suffering as normative for Christian servant leadership, but we reject both masochistic suffering and a “victimization” mentality.
- We will lead by example, unashamed to do whatever needs to be done for the greater good of the whole Body of Christ in obedience to God.

- Our servant leadership will model health to the congregation. That is, we will understand and respect our limits and the limits of others.
- We affirm the other-directedness of servant leadership, however, we understand that our responsibility is to – and not for – people.
- Our servant leadership will be authoritative but non-authoritarian.

Value # 5: We will staff (professional or volunteer) on the basis of spiritual, personal, and professional gifts.

- We will implement procedures for discerning gifts before staffing (professional or volunteer).
- We will seek appropriate personal and professional gifts/skills as well as spiritual gifts in staffing decisions.
- We will develop and support appropriate career development plans for paid staff.
- We will develop and support appropriate leadership training plans for volunteer staff.
- With respect to volunteer staff we will 1) avoid a “warm body” approach to staffing; 2) avoid the use of guilt, shame or coercion to fill slots; and 3) be sensitive to the personal situation and “energy levels” of volunteers.
- We will develop and maintain a database of spiritual, personal, and professional gifts with the goal of maximizing participation and minimizing burn-out.

Value #6: We will value creativity and risk-taking.

- We will create structures, e.g., teams, for fostering and supporting creativity.
- We will encourage brainstorming and creative problem solving.
- We will budget “seed money” for experimental ministries; however, we affirm that creativity does not always take money.
- We will create an ethos within which: 1) we are encouraged to step outside of our “comfort zones”; 2) we see failure as neither final nor fatal, but as an opportunity to learn what works and what doesn’t; 3) creativity and risk taking is driven by human need; 4) we are willing to bury old projects/ministries in order to move forward with new and more responsive projects/ministries.
- We will avoid “micromanagement.”

Value #7: We will value excellence.

- We affirm that our commitment to excellence is driven by 1) our commitment to the glory of God; and 2) our commitment to the world that God loves.
- We affirm that excellence does not mean perfection.
- We understand that across different ministries and within different contexts definitions of excellence may differ. Therefore we commit ourselves to ongoing collegial conversation on the nature of excellence.
- We understand the pursuit of excellence to be objective/goal driven and commit ourselves to the ongoing clarification and articulation of ministry goals and objectives.
- We are committed to the notion that form follows function/essence.
- We are committed to developing both objective and subjective tools/methods of assessing the effectiveness of our ministries/programs. The purpose of assessment is to assure ourselves that 1) we are doing what we said we would do; and 2) what we said we would do is, in fact, the right thing to do.
- We will develop and utilize “listening posts” in the congregation and in the larger community.
- We affirm that excellence in ministry will always demand ministries and programs with theological integrity and relevance, and we, therefore, commit ourselves to careful, collegial theological reflection about what we do, why we do it, and how we do it.

Value #8: We will value honest feedback and evaluation.

- We will foster an environment of safety and respect within which feedback and evaluation are welcomed rather than perceived as threats.
- We will pro-actively seek feedback from those in a position to give it.
- We will adopt the attitude that “bad news is good news,” for we cannot correct faults/problems/conflicts that we are unaware of.
- We will avoid defensiveness when receiving feedback from others.
- When giving feedback we will focus on strengths/successes as well as on areas needing attention/improvement.
- We affirm that helpful feedback has a “constructive” component and will seek to make constructive comments when giving feedback.
- We will take the initiative in holding “debriefing” sessions involving key persons in events/ministries/programs that we are responsible for.

Value #9: We will value loyalty to the head leadership.

- We are committed to public support and respect for senior leadership.
- We are committed to and will work for the success of all leaders.
- We will be proactive in our response to leadership.
- We will pray for all leaders in the church.
- We will embrace the vision cast by our senior pastor. This does not imply an uncritical acceptance, but does imply that, where there is serious disagreement, staff and council members will have the personal integrity to respect and publicly support the “common vision” of the community. If they cannot do this, they should resign.
- We will actively seek to keep senior leadership “in the loop” so that there are no “surprises” with respect to ministries, programs, or pastoral care issues.

Value #10: We will value a healthy, balanced lifestyle (spiritually, emotionally, intellectually, and physically).

- We will observe a regular Sabbath rest.
- We will worship regularly.
- We will care for our bodies with regular exercise.
- We will care for our minds with intellectual pursuits.
- We will establish healthy boundaries between 1) work, 2) church, and 3) our personal lives, recognizing that effective boundaries are flexible and not rigid.