

Our Guiding Values

Anchor Point

Cultural Unity Team

1. We see every person through the biblical lens of equality, value, and worth in the sight of God.

- a. Genesis 1:27 (all scriptures NIV unless otherwise noted) = "So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them."
- b. Additional Scriptures:
 - i. Galatians 3:26-28 = "So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, 27 for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."
 - ii. 1 Peter 1:18-19 = "For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your ancestors, 19 but with the precious blood of Christ, a lamb without blemish or defect."

2. We stand against racism, prejudice, discrimination and favoritism in any and every form.

- a. James 2:1-4, 8-9 = "My brothers and sisters, believers in our glorious Lord Jesus Christ must not show favoritism. 2 Suppose a man comes into your meeting wearing a gold ring and fine clothes, and a poor man in filthy old clothes also comes in. 3 If you show special attention to the man wearing fine clothes and say, "Here's a good seat for you," but say to the poor man, "You stand there" or "Sit on the floor by my feet," 4 have you not discriminated among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts? ...8 If you really keep the royal law found in Scripture, "Love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing right. 9 But if you show favoritism, you sin and are convicted by the law as lawbreakers."
- b. Additional Scriptures:
 - i. Acts 10:34-35 = "Then Peter began to speak: "I now realize how true it is that God does not show favoritism 35 but accepts from every nation the one who fears him and does what is right."
 - ii. 1 John 3:15 (NLT) = "Anyone who hates another brother or sister is really a murderer at heart. And you know that murderers don't have eternal life within them."

3. We believe that God has a special heart for the minority, marginalized, and poor among us and are committed to pursuing biblical justice for them.

- a. Deuteronomy 10:18-19 = "He defends the cause of the fatherless and the widow, and loves the foreigner residing among you, giving them food and clothing. 19 And you are to love those who are foreigners, for you yourselves were foreigners in Egypt."
- b. Additional Scriptures:

- i. *Leviticus 19:33-34 = "When a foreigner resides among you in your land, do not mistreat them. 34 The foreigner residing among you must be treated as your native-born. Love them as yourself, for you were foreigners in Egypt. I am the Lord your God."*
- ii. *Proverbs 31:8-9 = "Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. 9 Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy."*

4. We choose compassion instead of indifference, and acceptance instead of judgement, as we make it our goal to have equal concern for each other in the body of Christ.

a. 1 Corinthians 12:26 = "If one part suffers, every part suffers with it."

b. Additional Scriptures:

- i. 1 Corinthians 9:22 = "I have become all things to all people so that by all possible means I might save some." (This applies to strengthening each other in the church as well.)
- ii. Romans 15:7 = "Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God."

5. We reject humanistic solutions to spiritual problems and choose to follow the ways of God instead of the ways of the world to build unity and love in the church of Jesus Christ.

a. Colossians 2:8 = "See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the elemental spiritual forces [or basic principles] of this world rather than on Christ."

b. Additional Scriptures:

- i. 1 Thessalonians 5:2-22 (NLT) = "but test everything that is said. Hold on to what is good. 22 Stay away from every kind of evil."
- ii. 1 Corinthians 1:18-19 = "For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God. 19 For it is written: "I will destroy the wisdom of the wise; the intelligence of the intelligent I will frustrate."
- iii. James 3:13-18 = "Who is wise and understanding among you? Let them show it by their good life, by deeds done in the humility that comes from wisdom. 14 But if you harbor bitter envy and selfish ambition in your hearts, do not boast about it or deny the truth. 15 Such "wisdom" does not come down from heaven but is earthly, unspiritual, demonic. 16 For where you have envy and selfish ambition, there you find disorder and every evil practice. 17 But the wisdom that comes from heaven is first of all pure; then peace-loving, considerate, submissive, full of mercy and good fruit, impartial and sincere. 18 Peacemakers who sow in peace reap a harvest of righteousness."

6. We stand against oppression of all kinds, but refuse to categorize anyone in America as oppressed or oppressors based on what sociological group they happen to belong to, and refuse to assign preconceived ideas to anyone based on their group identity (race, gender, etc.)

- a. Isaiah 1:17 = "Learn to do right; seek justice. Defend the oppressed. Take up the cause of the fatherless; plead the case of the widow."
- b. John 7:24 = "Stop judging by mere appearances, but instead judge correctly."

- c. Romans 14:10 = "You, then, why do you judge your brother or sister? Or why do you treat them with contempt? For we will all stand before God's judgment seat."

d. Additional Scripture:

- i. 1 Samuel 16:7 = "But the Lord said to Samuel, "Do not consider his appearance or his height, for I have rejected him. The Lord does not look at the things people look at. People look at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart."

7. We will confront racism, prejudice, discrimination and favoritism in the church as sins that must be repented of, and then forgive the repentant offender, extending the grace of God to them and believing they can change, as opposed to the popular notion that people cannot change and diverse groups cannot be united in love. We believe in the power of reconciliation bought by Jesus' blood on the cross.

- a. Luke 17:3-4 = "...If your brother or sister sins against you, rebuke them; and if they repent, forgive them. 4 Even if they sin against you seven times in a day and seven times come back to you saying 'I repent,' you must forgive them."

b. Additional Scriptures:

- i. Colossians 3:8-15 = "But now you must also rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. 9 Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices 10 and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator. 11 Here there is no Gentile or Jew, circumcised or uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave or free, but Christ is all, and is in all. 12 Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. 13 Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. 14 And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. 15 Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace."
- ii. 1 Timothy 1:13-14 = "Even though I was once a blasphemer and a persecutor and a violent man, I was shown mercy because I acted in ignorance and unbelief. 14 The grace of our Lord was poured out on me abundantly, along with the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus."

8. We reject the popular notion that one group of people has the moral high ground over another and therefore more of a right to speak and be heard than another group, but embrace the biblical principles of mutually healthy communication.

- a. James 1:19-20 = "My dear brothers and sisters, take note of this: Everyone should be quick to listen, slow to speak and slow to become angry, 20 because human anger does not produce the righteousness that God desires."

b. Additional Scriptures:

- i. Proverbs 12:18 = "The words of the reckless pierce like swords, but the tongue of the wise brings healing."
- ii. Proverbs 18:13 = "To answer before listening – that is folly and shame."

iii. *Proverbs 29:11 = "Fools give full vent to their rage, but the wise bring calm in the end."*

9. We believe that we must get to know each other better in order to truly understand where we're coming from. Therefore, we are committed to practicing humble curiosity about the things we don't know, in order to grow in our understanding, compassion, and love for each other.

a. *Proverbs 20:5 = "The purposes of a person's heart are deep waters, but one who has insight draws them out."*

b. *Romans 12:15 = "...mourn with those who mourn."*

c. *Additional Scriptures:*

i. *1 Corinthians 12:22-23a = "On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, 23 and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor."*

ii. *Proverbs 18:2 = "Fools find no pleasure in understanding but delight in airing their own opinions."*

10. We embrace the unity that Jesus bought with his own blood on the cross and commit to forging that unity and connection between our diverse members in the church.

a. *Ephesians 2:14-16 = "For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, ¹⁵ by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, ¹⁶ and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility."*

b. *Additional Scriptures:*

i. *Philippians 2:1-4 = "Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, 2 then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. 3 Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, 4 not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others."*

ii. *Ephesians 4:3 = "Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace."*