

**Congregational Meeting Minutes:
Core Values Exercise March 12, 2011**

Individual and group responses to core values framework

Present: Alan Newton (consultant), Sonya Stauffer Kurtz, Roger Kurtz, Walt Nickeson, Kathy & Mark Shelly, Chrissie Walls, Rob & Wendy Shelly, Jason Poole, Amy Durkee, Bob & Jen Carter, Anthony Ricciuti, Nancy Price, Drew Langdon, Judy Bernhart, Michael Brennan

Core Value 1: Covenantal Community

1. *As the body of Christ, we strive to celebrate, nurture, and utilize individual gifts and calls to ministry.*
2. *Like Jesus, we seek to be servant leaders expressing our gifts in ways that support and build up the community.*
3. *We try hard to create a place of welcome and acceptance extending hospitality to all who enter.*
4. *We work at building and sustaining relationships, which involves caring for the physical, emotional, and spiritual needs of one another*
5. *We seek to give and receive counsel from one another.*
6. *We value, nurture, and include children in the life of the church.*

Red group

- The list does capture our values
- Tension between whether we can live out values ad hoc or need structure
- Set apart leadership?

Blue group

- General – this is a lot to work at and hold dearly
- Anthony, Jen, Judy “we have experienced all of these”
- Questioned “give and receive counsel” (Sonya: this is from our baptismal vows. We pledge to “give and receive counsel in the congregation”)
- Children – a large number work at this, but we don’t always succeed. Sometimes this seems aspirational
- Children really care about each other ... enjoy each other’s company (comes in part from adults’/group nurture)
- Risk involved with utilizing individual gifts
 - person’s gift may take a lot of time to be expressed
 - gift is so recognized, that now that person is the only one doing that task
 - person’s gift may not be welcomed
 - what about those who don’t want to participate or offer/use a gift?
- #2 helps address some of the risks – gifts are meant to build up community.

Green group

- We are community with whoever is here. Relational based, commitment to whoever is gathered
- Not shopping around for a good fit. Commitment to this church family
- This could be a description of any Christian church
- Does this describe our unique leadership structure?
- Examples after each point would help us explain each point
- We value authority resting with congregation rather than Leadership Team or individuals
- We all participate and share responsibility for shaping our community

Black group

- How to present the core values so that Christ-centered living is primary?
- Possibly reverse #1 and #2 under covenantal community
- Add to #3 “regardless of identity or status”
- Longing for fellowship and community-building outside of worship
- We should get the children’s input – especially on #6
 - question of vibrant youth group

Blue/red group

- Agreement with #1
- Agreement with #2
- #3 – We might be clique-ish?
- Agreement with #4 – many positive examples. Small groups could help with this
- #4 – not so good with this, we aspire but don't often practice. It happens when trust exists (eg. Small groups)
- #5 – probably (but nobody in our group has young children)

Core Value 2: Christ-centered living

1. *We are disciples of Jesus, and we seek to become more like him.*
2. *In daily life and in corporate worship, we seek to know, love and serve God.*
3. *Prayer, biblical study, corporate worship, and other spiritual disciplines encourage us on the path of discipleship.*
4. *The scriptures are interpreted in community, with Jesus as the primary reference point for understanding what the scriptures mean and how we live them out.*

Green group

- “Disciple of Jesus” – discipleship as we do it is more *doing* than being. We become like Jesus by doing the things that Jesus did. Practices are important
- We are pretty comfortable with this core value
- Discipleship includes our willingness to trust the wisdom of the whole community under the “leadership” of Christ

Blue group

- Corporate worship is highly valued
- Spiritual disciplines are practiced by individuals, but for the larger group this notion of disciplines seems to be aspirational. It doesn't seem to be part of the culture of the group
- How do the scriptures get interpreted at RAMF? This seems to happen in adult hour
- Agree with #2. Seems very true that people carry their faith into their life and decisions
- Some of these things don't necessarily happen between Sundays
- Strong affirmation that we are a Jesus-centered church. We look at the Bible with Jesus as the reference
- Do we have Jesus-centered worship, or is it music-centered? Music sometimes dominates corporate worship, and for those who don't read music, this can be challenging. One style of music means that other types of worship are not explored. Music is not an end in itself – it is to worship God/build up the community

Red group 1

- How does RAMF express this uniquely?
- Mutual support and love for each other is a way we follow Jesus
- Reaching out to the poor and marginalized
- We take loving our neighbor and loving our enemies seriously
- No one person dictates how we follow Jesus. Jesus is our authority and we have shared and equal responsibility to understand Christ-centered living
- Communication between leaders and congregation. Fluidity and greater participation in the process. (add to discussion about leadership)???

Black group

- This describes us well and is the core of our core values
- Possibly add “With our whole being” to #2
- Recognize diverse paths and practices (“paths (not path) of discipleship”)

Red group 2

- Scripture interpretation is not private or from above. Valuing the interpretation of others that influence me (openness)
- Our corporate worship is a joining together, not just a mere scheduled gathering
- We help each other to be “nonconformed” to the world in daily life – we support each other in discipleship.

Core Value 3: Peacemaking and Reconciliation

1. *We believe God’s work is reconciliation with the intent of reconciling humans to God and to each other.*
2. *We believe that conflict is a natural part of life and relationships. When conflicts arise, we commit to resolve them. While we do not always agree, we seek to always remain in loving relationship, agreeing to disagree in love.*
3. *We believe that Jesus meant what he said and that he is talking to us in his call to us to be peacemakers, to love our enemies, to seek justice, and to be agents of reconciliation.*
 - Both internal (RAMF) and external (Larger society, etc.)
 - Captures our aspirations
 - B+ on really living out #2
 - Affirm as a core value
 - Things to consider:
 - Is it evident to outsiders?
 - What about stewardship/care for creation?
 - Do we encourage peacemaking on both personal and systemic (social justice) levels?
 - Can we testify more (e.g. in worship/SS) about what we are doing?
 - God’s kingdom includes all of humanity (all of creation)
 - Include “Counter-cultural” somewhere in our three values
 - We recognize in point #2 that is both descriptive and aspirational
 - Agents of reconciliation in the world (not just in our close community)
 - How do we resolve conflict? What is our process? Could this be a part of the role of one of the ministries?
 - What does reconciliation mean?
 - Caring for/tending/protecting the connections we have with each other and God
 - Restoring to right relationship
 - We have a lot of skills and resources internally. How to utilize them?
 - Provide training in mediation, conflict resolution
 - Developing a process and articulating it for everyone