

Defining a set of values for our church at this time will be a valuable tool moving forward and can help inform many decisions from website design, restructuring a church, sermon series, leadership principles and discipleship pathways. Developing a set of owned and workable congregational values is necessarily one of long slow 'marinating' that has taken some years. Whether conscious of this or not we have been through a long process of prayer, listening and observing including responses from the congregational meeting early 2022. After prayer and fasting Church Council discussed and affirmed the following four values (Sep 2022). Each value fits well with both "raising children of God" and through the lens of Up/In/Out. We believe they summarise both who we are and who we hope to become. **With confidence we would like us to consider the following four values:**

### **"Prayerfully Listening"**

Prayerfully dependent on God and listening to the Holy Spirit we have an expectation that God will speak to us. Jesus often finished his sermons with "those who have ears listen". To listen is to actively hear and respond. We bring this value to our prayer life, worship, reading scripture, relating to our communities and each other. *Psalm 85:8 (NLT) "I listen carefully to what God the Lord is saying, for he speaks peace to his faithful people."*

### **"Learning Love"**

Grounded in God's word we are to love God, each other and ourselves as Jesus taught (Matt 22:37-39). *"God's love has been poured out into our hearts through the Holy Spirit,"* Romans 5:5. Jesus commanded us to "love one another as I have loved you" John 15:12. To learn love is to learn God. Lifelong learners have a posture of humility. Every child of God no matter what stage can keep learning and growing in love and therefore Christ-likeness.

### **"Encouraging friendship"**

As a community in Christ we are called to encourage genuine friendship, have and be friends that are encouraging and to encourage people to become friends with Jesus. This is relevant to all ages and all stages of faith. *"But you, dear friends, must build each other up in your most holy faith" Jude 20a.* Encouragement is a spiritual gift for church growth and health *"with the encouragement of the Holy Spirit, it also grew in numbers" (Acts 9:31b).*

### **"Spreading Joy"**

Joy is a defining characteristic of a Christian found throughout scripture (eg Isaiah 61:10). It is hopeful in all circumstances, a fruit of the Holy Spirit (Galatians 5:22) and expressed while worshipping with all we are. To spread joy is to share the light and hope of Jesus to others.

Please take these offerings and pray about them. Read scripture as directed by the Holy Spirit. Consider taking some time to fast and pray. Discuss and test them with others. Come prepared at the AGM to give your input, impressions and what you think God is saying to us.

Thanks for this important work.

Yours in Christ

Church Council