

# Justice & Mercy at Citizens Church – Values –

2021

## **A . How we are Postured: Ways of Being**

We are:

- *Learners & listeners* – We are committing to hear, see, and value the stories, presence, and experiences of our neighbors, especially those on the margins and those experiencing injustice. We are paying attention to the Spirit's leading, and yielding to the ways that God is already moving. We are learning with our whole selves, allowing God to undo our assumptions & egocentrism and reform us in the likeness of Jesus.
- *Humble truth-tellers* – We acknowledge that we have much to confess and much to learn. We are not seeking self-glory or pedestalizing, but are seeking to follow the example of Jesus in his humility. We are committed to telling the truth about ourselves and inviting others to tell the truth about us to us. We are striving to be prophetically yet gently disruptive: naming & lamenting injustice and joining God in bringing his Kingdom to earth as it is in heaven.
- *Gospel-centered community* – We understand our primary identity to be that of sons and daughters of God, beloved by the Father, redeemed by Jesus the Son, and empowered by the Spirit. We are seeking to understand who God is and what he has done, is doing, and will do in order to understand who we are and how we are invited to respond. We are seeking to be rightly oriented towards others because of the way that Christ reorients us towards himself.

## **B . How we are Practicing: Ways of Doing**

We are:

- *Focused on friendship* – We believe that poverty at its root is caused by broken relationships: with God, self, others, and creation. We are paying attention to the capacity and calling of our church and noticing our location within the complex network of care and services in our city, and have discerned our particular niche to be that of friendship. We are not focusing on distributing resources nor shifting systemic structures, but rather seeking to engage in a variety of mutually beneficial and transformative relationships with a diverse range of neighbors in our city.

- *Participating in Kingdom homemaking* – We acknowledge that God has initiated relationship with us and adopted us into his family and Kingdom purposes through the grace of Jesus. In his incarnation, Jesus came and dwelt among us, as fully God and fully human, and now God makes his home within us through his Spirit. As a worshipful response, we are seeking to facilitate hospitable spaces and relationships for others to encounter love and belonging.
- *Striving for “helping that doesn’t hurt”* – We confess that much of our well-intentioned “helping” is often actually hurtful and damaging to our neighbors on the margins and those experiencing injustice. We seek to affirm the shared dignity and worth of every human, and also acknowledge the shared brokenness of every human, ourselves included. Rather than operating out of patronization, hierarchies, neocolonialism, and “us vs. them” posturing, we seek to engage in relationships of mutuality and shared giving, receiving, and learning. Rather than doing things *to* others or *for* others, or hoping to somehow save or fix others, we seek to walk *with* and *alongside* others as they pursue flourishing.
- *Motivated by faithfulness rather than outcomes* – We recognize that the culture that we are embedded in is obsessed with producing, measuring, and analyzing results. While we do welcome helpful ways of paying attention to the seasons of our work, celebrating our legacy, and telling stories, we do not derive our value or worth from tangible or apparent outcomes. We believe that our work of doing justice, loving mercy, and walking humbly with God is “measured” by our faithfulness & obedience to the Spirit, rather than by human metrics of success or failure, efficiency or waste.