

# COMMITMENTS

*Faith Statement*

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THE KITTAMAQUNDI COMMUNITY  
CHURCH

Rev July, 2018

## FAITH STATEMENT OF THE KITTAMAQUNDI COMMUNITY

The Kittamaqundi Community believes that God, the Creator, has a vision of wholeness and reconciliation for the world. That vision is manifested in peace, compassion and mercy, economic and social justice, relationship to and co-creativity with God, and a deep respect for the earth.

We believe God's vision is fulfilled in Jesus' life and teachings. Through the mystery of Jesus' death and resurrection, God opens up to the world a new reality.

At Kittamaqundi Community, we are being transformed by the Holy Spirit into the fullness of that new reality. Individually and communally, we commit to grow into fuller relationship with Christ, both spiritually and in the practical affairs of life.

Our inward transformation is marked by a disciplined life that includes daily prayer, weekly worship, regular scripture study, and the sacrificial giving of our time and financial resources.

Our outward transformation is marked by mission through small groups acting in fellowship with the poor, the afflicted, and others who suffer injustice in our society.

We commit to freely give and receive support and accountability, to evoke each other's gifts, to comfort, instruct, and inspire each other, and to witness to our faith. For us, these disciplines are not an end in themselves. Rather, they are tools that bring us closer to God and God's vision as revealed in Jesus.

We are an independent Christian community that welcomes dialogue and diversity of all kinds. We invite everyone to join us as we strive to meet the challenges of living our faith in the world.

# Welcome to the Kittamaquondi Community Church (KC)

## WHO WE ARE

We are an independent, ecumenical community grounded in core affirmations of the Christian faith.

However, we do not define our church based on a specific creed or unanimity of beliefs, and we welcome diversity of perspectives.

What is important to our community since our beginning has been our walk—not just our talk. We want our spiritual journey to bear fruit in the world as well as in our lives.

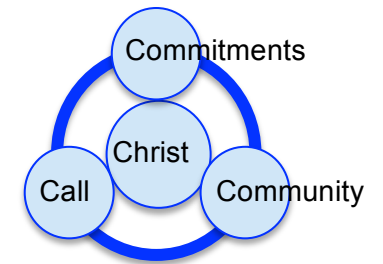
We believe a rich, growth-producing spiritual life does not happen by accident. Rather, at its core, a spiritual life is a journey that requires commitment.

At KC, we have identified five spiritual commitments, or practices that we believe are the core of a Christian community, and specifically the KC community:

- Daily prayer
- Scripture study
- Participation in worship
- Service to others
- Sacrificial giving of our resources

We believe these commitments give form and substance to our spiritual lives, as individuals and as a church. While they are required for formal Membership, everyone in the KC community, whether Members or not, is encouraged to practice them.

## FOUNDATIONS



### CHRIST

In his letter to the Colossians, Paul writes that Christ "is before all things, and in him all things hold together. He is the head of the body, the church"

When we recognize Christ as the heart of our community, the originator of our call, and the one to whom we make our commitment, we will practice our faith in a way that is compassionate, creative and forgiving.

### CALL

We are a call-based community, listening for and responding to God's calls, the seeds that God plants in our individual lives and our life together. The work of our Enabling Minister and all of the structures of the community is to clarify and support the calls of the community, individually and corporately.

### COMMITMENT

Our commitment to spiritual practices means that the seed of call will fall on rich soil—our lives are ones where Jesus Christ's call to discipleship can take root and grow. The KC commitments are discussed in detail on the next few pages.

### COMMUNITY

We come together as a loving Christian community focused on supporting each other in our spiritual development and outward work.

Community is the rain that nourishes us, strengthens our practices, and supports our calls.

# THE KC COMMITMENTS

## 🔊 PRAYER

There are as many ways to pray as there are people in the world, and as far as KC is concerned, there is no single way we all “should” pray. But we are convinced that a relationship with God, like all intimate relationships, requires a daily intention to communicate.

In prayer, we seek to bring our own lives—the good and the bad—to God. And we strive to listen to God. Here are a few examples of ways you might pray:

- Sit in silent meditation for 15 minutes every morning.
- Follow a format suggested in a book or by a spiritual mentor.
- Write out a dialogue with Jesus.
- Make a date each evening with a “prayer partner.” Pray for each other and for your shared concerns.

What other prayer practices have you found helpful?

## 🔊 SCRIPTURE STUDY

The Bible is foundational to our community and to our lives as Christians. In the Bible, we encounter stories that not only guide our spiritual path but shape our lives as a whole. Consider how you might incorporate the study of scripture into your daily life, for example:

- Read a psalm every morning as you make your coffee. Find a word or a phrase that you might carry with you throughout the day.
- While in your car, listen to a version of the Bible that speaks to you.
- Read a lectionary blog each week and discuss your responses to the questions with your CARE group, a friend, or a family member.

- Designate one Saturday morning each month as a scripture retreat and read a book in preparation.

What other ways to study scripture have you found helpful?

## 🔊 SERVICE TO OTHERS

When our eyes are open, we encounter people in need everywhere. Jesus calls us to respond, with a special emphasis on reaching out to those who have been cast out or marginalized by our culture. This year you might do the following:

- Join an existing KC mission project.
- Call a new FOCUS group (see How to Become a Member of the Kittamaquindi Community) to initiate a new project.
- Commit to going just once to a meal program, a tutoring project, a worship service at a prison—anything that would push you a bit past your comfort zone.
- Make a promise to reach out to a lonely neighbor, an elderly relative or someone else you have noticed who needs help.

How else have you felt called to love your neighbor and to offer support to “the least of these”?

## 🔊 PARTICIPATION IN WORSHIP

Worship is one of the most central parts of our life together, and we invite everyone in our community to make participation in worship a high priority each week. Organizing other plans around our Sunday commitment reinforces this priority in our own lives and helps us to communicate it to others.

If you are out of town and can’t attend worship at KC, can you find another way to worship wherever you are, in a church or informally?

When you do come to worship at KC, what does it mean to you to fully participate? You might commit to one of the following:

- Offer a response to a sharing this year.
- Offer a prayer concern each month.
- Participate in table talk once, even if it's uncomfortable for you.
- Get to know the name of someone you don't know, or the name of a child.
- Join a Worship Task Group so that you can help plan and lead our community worship.

Is there some new way you feel called to participate in worship this year?

## SACRIFICIAL GIVING

Jesus clearly called the people of his day to consider how sharing their wealth might be a part of their response to his invitation to be his disciples. Jesus instructed one rich man to give all of his possessions away, and Zaccheus gave away half of his wealth when he decided to follow Jesus. Clearly, our response to Jesus will also necessarily involve our finances—probably in an uncomfortable way.

We encourage every single person who participates in KC's life to make a financial pledge to our community. This helps us to plan our budget and our outreach giving—*we give 20% of everything we bring in back to organizations that help those in need in our community and world.*

Many of us have found it helpful to consider what percentage of our total income we are currently giving and then try to make a one percent (or half a percent) increase the coming year. Both the Jews of Jesus' day and the early Christian communities encouraged people to tithe their income—to give away ten percent.

What would it mean for you to take a step in that direction?

## WHY THESE COMMITMENTS?

Since the earliest days of KC, we have identified five spiritual practices that define and focus our community's spiritual life. These practices, we believe, shape our lives in such a way that we can be responsive to God's call.

People may grow in their spiritual journeys at their own pace and in diverse ways. Keep this in mind as you consider how you might make these commitments your own!

We also believe that the KC membership process focuses on individuals choosing explicit, personalized, spiritual commitments, rather than detailed requirements, associated privileges, or having "arrived" in some way.

The difference between involvement and commitment is like ham and eggs. The chicken is involved; the pig is committed.

-Martina Navratilova

## KC COMMITMENTS: FAQ'S

**Q:** Why do we emphasize these five commitments?

**A:** We believe that these practices give shape to our lives, making us more available to hear and respond to God's call.

**Q:** Do I have to commit to doing these things if I want to be a part of the Kittamaqundi Community?

**A:** No, just those wanting to be formal Members must commit to all.

**Q:** So, are the commitments just for Members?

**A:** No! We invite everyone in our community to consider how these commitments might be a part of your life for the coming year—one of them or several of them.

**Q:** Are there particular ways I'm supposed to do these things?

**A:** Each person defines for him or herself how s/he is going to keep the commitment. There's no one right way.

**Q:** Am I going to get in trouble if I don't do these things?

**A:** No! Commitment is a journey, and we often take steps backwards as well as forward. Forgiveness—of ourselves and others—is key.

The relationship between commitment and doubt is by no means an antagonistic one. Commitment is healthiest when it's not without doubt but in spite of doubt.

-Rollo May

**Q:** How do I make the commitments? Are they private?

**A:** Towards the end of each year, the KC community gathers together in a Community Retreat to consider and renew its commitments, as a church and as individuals. During that time, we encourage you to write down your commitments and at least share them with one other person, but it is not mandatory.

You can hand them in to the Community Life team, which accounts for membership. You can also share them with your CARE group and invite them to support you and hold you accountable.

**Q:** Can I make other spiritual commitments besides these five?

**A:** Yes! You might even make an additional commitment together with members of your CARE group, or another group. You are welcome to share these other commitments with the whole church—at the retreat or in another way that feels fitting to you.

**Q:** So, if I make these commitments, am I a Member of KC?

**A:** Actually, there are two more parts of membership:

We ask each formal Member to consider our Faith Statement, which describes both our foundational beliefs and the basis for our relationship with each other. We invite each person who commits to membership at KC to commit to living into our Faith Statement. You can find the Faith Statement on the inside front cover.

Because we all need support to keep our commitments, we ask that each KC Member join a CARE group—a small group led by a KC Member and comprised of members and friends that meets regularly in the homes of members (or the church). Information on these groups—and how to call a new one—is available in the *CARE Group* booklet.

**Q: What is the Community Retreat and how is it related to membership and the commitments?**

**A:** Our annual retreat is the time when we declare our intentions to make spiritual commitments and ask for the support we need to maintain them. You may commit to all five of the disciplines, to some of them, or to additional practices which are core to your own spiritual journey.

All are encouraged to attend whether or not they intend to become formal Members.

At the retreat, each person in our community, whether they have been a part of KC for 30 years or 30 days, is invited to consider whether they feel called to be a Member of our community for the coming year. Membership is not automatically renewed each year. (See *Becoming a Member* booklet for more information.)

**Q: Can I only make spiritual commitments or become a member at the retreat?**

**A:** No. You may do either or both at any point during the year.

But what happens when we live God's way? God brings gifts into our lives, much the same way that fruit appears in an orchard – things like affection for others, exuberance about life, serenity. We develop a willingness to stick with things, a sense of compassion in the heart, and a conviction that a basic holiness permeates things and people. We find ourselves involved in loyal commitments, not needing to force our way in life, able to marshal and direct our energies wisely.

- Galatians 5:22, from Eugene Peterson's *The Message*



## THE KITTAMAQUONDI COMMUNITY CHURCH

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