

...a commitment to reach out to the unchurched in meaningful ways.

- Because all people matter to God (Luke 15:1-32; 19:10), we will continually seek new ways to connect with the unchurched so that they can consider the claims of Jesus Christ in an atmosphere of openness and encouragement. God desires for us, individually and corporately, to reach as many people as possible with the life-changing message of Jesus Christ. We believe it is our task to go out to help a dying world and are committed to that mission locally, nationally, and internationally (Matthew 28:19-20).

...a commitment to generously share the resources God has given us.

- We recognize that everything we have is a gift from God and that God expects us to manage these gifts wisely. However, we also understand that ultimately, good stewardship is not a matter of wise money management or even responsible living. It is a matter of extravagant love. The prophet Jeremiah proclaimed, "...The unfailing love of the Lord never ends...Great is his faithfulness; his mercies begin afresh each day." (Lamentations 3:22-23) God's love toward us overflows. When hearts are transformed by that extravagant grace, believers generously share their resources with others and God blesses them in return. (Acts 2:32-34; Malachi 3:10)

...a commitment to creativity, innovation, and excellence in all that we do.

- In today's rapidly changing world, forms and methods must be continually evaluated, and if necessary, altered to fit new conditions. We are more concerned with effectiveness in ministry than with adherence to tradition (Luke 5:33-39). We also believe that our great God, himself a God of excellence, deserves the best we have to offer. The apostle Paul encourages us to "whatever your task, put yourselves into it, as done for the Lord and not your masters..." (Colossians 3:23). Doing what we do with excellence honors God and inspires people.

*Core Values of
First Lutheran Church,
Cedar Rapids, IA*



*Adopted by the congregation
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AS MEMBERS OF FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH, WE VALUE...

...a commitment to be deeply rooted in the good news of God's love in Jesus Christ as recorded in the Bible.

- We treasure the Biblical message of God's grace, his amazing love for undeserving people through the gift of his Son, Jesus Christ, and his death on the cross for us. (John 3:16) In fact, the Bible is central to, and the basis for, every aspect of our congregation's ministry for the sole purpose that Jesus Christ might be exalted as Savior and Lord. For us, the Bible is the primary source of truth. (II Timothy 3:16-17)

...a commitment to become fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ.

- As disciples (learners/followers) of Jesus Christ, we are called to grow from spiritual infancy to maturity (Philippians 3:3-14; Ephesians 4:12-14) and stay connected to Christ through an abiding personal relationship (John 15:1-17). Evidence of a genuine saving relationship with Jesus Christ is a life of holiness and obedience, attained by believers through the power of the Holy Spirit.

...a commitment to stay connected to God through daily worship and prayer.

- Worship is a personal and corporate encounter with the living God (Psalm 84:1-4, 10-12; Ephesians 1:3-14). True worship, recognizing the "worth-ship" of God and offering him praise and thanksgiving, involves both joyous exultation and quiet reverence. We believe that worship is not driven by a particular style, but rather by the experience of God's awesome presence. We also believe that God desires his people to pray and that he hears and answers prayer (Matthew 7:7-11; James 5:13-18). Understanding that, not only our personal lives, but also the ministries and activities of this church, are characterized by a reliance on prayer.

...a commitment to live out our faith in relevant Biblical community.

- Research demonstrates that people respond best to the gospel when it is presented within the context of loving relationships. Therefore, we believe that building relationships is vital to the spiritual growth of our congregation. We further believe that those relationships are best realized in small groups, places where we get to know one another, develop caring concern for each other, hold each other accountable, and offer newcomers a safe place to belong (Acts 2:42-47).

...a commitment to cultivating a Christ-like and loving atmosphere within the body of Christ.

- Loving relationships are the heart of a healthy community of believers. Jesus said that people will know we are his disciples by our love. We are a church of individuals, different in many ways, yet called together by God to be one in ministry and mission (John 17:20-23). Among us, love for one another is the norm (John 13:34; Romans 13:8), conflicts are resolved according to the teaching of Jesus (Matthew 18:15-17), and we seek to build each other up (I Thessalonians 5:11).

...a commitment to multiply ministers for God's work in the world.

- We hold to the creedal statement, "Every member a minister." We believe that the primary responsibility of the pastors and program staff in the local church is to "equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ..." (Ephesians 4:12) Church leaders, therefore, have the responsibility to help believers discover, develop, and exercise their spiritual gifts in appropriate ministries.