

Staff / Leadership Culture

Updated 1.24.19

Introduction: Every organization has a culture - whether it is explicitly recognized or not. At Eucharist Church, we proactively seek to develop and cultivate a particular culture. As many have recognized, culture is more often “caught than taught”. But it is important to communicate in writing what we intend our culture to be as a guide and reference point. The values outlined below (in no particular order of priority) are an extension of the 4 Values for Discipleship & Leadership (*humility, maturity, solidarity, transparency*) that shape the life and ministry of Eucharist Church. Precise policies and procedures for paid staff related to the values outlined below will be developed separately in a staff handbook.

Christocentric - As staff and leaders, we seek (as our mission / motto says) to do *all of life in reference to Christ*. Foundational to our staff / leadership culture is this overarching principle: In all that we do, we do it as *unto Christ, in the manner* that Christ would have us do it, and *as those who bear His Name*. In other words, Jesus is our reference point in all things. He is the culture we seek to embody.

Joy - We take the gospel seriously, but we try to not take ourselves too seriously. Ministry should be joyful. Even in hard seasons, it can be joyful. Ministry remains joyful when it is carried out from a perspective of partnership with Christ and collaboration with others. It often ceases to be joyful when there is disunity, poor communication, inattention to excellence, and individualistic agendas or approaches to ministry at work (see the values below). Because we want to cultivate joy, we seek to know those we work with deeply and personally; we seek to enter into solidarity with each other; we laugh and have fun, while keeping the main thing the main thing. We hope our relationships with each other will spill over into other areas of our lives and not merely remain “work relationships”.

Communication - We prioritize communication as the primary means of accomplishing our work. The church is a social reality and the mission of Christ is relational. This means we put a premium on clear communication. We seek to communicate our ministry needs, expectations, hopes, frustrations, setbacks and challenges as soon as possible and/or appropriate in the best medium possible. We prefer communication of sensitive matters in this order: 1) in-person, 2) by video-chat, 3) by phone call, 4) in written form. This facilitates maximum communication effectiveness (bodies, faces, intonation / voice, as well as words). Meetings are an important part of our communications culture that honors the Lord and one another and so should be as productive, enjoyable, and efficient as possible.

Conflict Resolution - Disagreements, hurt feelings, and misunderstandings are all part of working together as people who are still on the way to being made more like Christ. It’s not a matter of if, but when. Thus, we are committed to walking out the pattern of reconciliation that Jesus taught in Matthew 18:

- **Discern:** First, decide if the offense is worth speaking to the other person about. Not every slight or misunderstanding we feel needs to be confronted. Proverbs 19:11 says, “A person’s wisdom yields patience; it is to one’s glory to overlook an offense.”
- **Go Direct:** If you feel it is necessary to deal with the offense or conflict, then go directly to the person with whom you have the conflict for one-on-one discussion. Seek reconciliation by speaking the truth in love and then listen carefully and prayerfully to the other person’s response. It is important to emphasize that this step is necessary before you go to your supervisor.
 - Note: there is no room in this process for going to other people who are not involved. To do so has the potential to stir up division.
- **Mediate:** If that doesn’t resolve the issue, take another (appropriately chosen) person.

- **Involve Trusted Elders:** If 1-on-1 and mediation don't resolve the issue, involve an appropriate clergy person in the conversation. This can be expanded to including the entire pastoral team. If the problem is with the Rector, involve the Dean of the Diocese.

There is the necessary order in which conflict should be resolved. To step out of that order is to risk damaging long-term trust and creating division.

In all conflict situations, the goals are to: listen, speak the truth in love, offer grace and forgiveness, re-build trust and, ultimately, full reconciliation. This can only happen in the context of gospel-humility, patience, perseverance, and a complete reliance on the Holy Spirit.

We recognize that (sadly) not all conflicts will be resolved this side of heaven, but we must seek to honor Christ always - even if dealing with a non-repentant person or a humanly-speaking unresolvable situation. If a person decides to leave our team, our staff, or our fellowship, we want him/her to leave with blessing (if possible) and without having left unexplored any possibility for reconciliation.

Excellence - We offer our best in our work as an expression of glorifying God and inspiring others. We work as "unto the Lord" as Paul says in Colossians 3, and not just to "get by". Our work can reflect excellence without becoming overly obsessive, perfectionistic, or done at the expense of other priorities. We recognize that there are times in which we may find ourselves overwhelmed and unable to meet high marks; however, most of the time, we expect our work to be top-notch.

If we have the responsibility of hiring or placing people in jobs or roles, then we want to do so in accordance with their proven gifts, experience, and talents. To place a person into a role that they are ill-suited for because of expediency is not helpful to the congregation nor kind to the person placed.

Preparation - As an extension of the value of excellence, we value preparation and discipline for all aspects of ministry. Much may be accomplished initially via spontaneity and raw charisma; but ministry that lasts emerges out of thoughtful and intentional preparation. To adequately prepare and to persevere even in difficulty is to operate as a servant leader who embodies sacrifice for the sake of others.

Integrity - We value honoring our word and being transparent in our failures. Our collective and individual trust rests on the truthfulness of our communication and the dependability of our words. One important expression of our integrity is a commitment to punctuality - *to be where we say we will be when we say we will be*. To be late once in a while, with proper communication, is understandable (e.g. due to unexpected traffic, etc.). To be consistently late or to miss appointments altogether is inconsiderate toward others and detrimental to the accomplishment of our mission. Overall, it is important for our words to remain trustworthy vehicles of communication in order to maintain a communal sense of trust.

Alignment & Solidarity - Echoing Jesus' prayer for unity amongst His disciples (John 17), we believe the mission of Christ is carried out most effectively in the context of solidarity and appropriate support of established leaders. Ultimately speaking, we do not ask for loyalty to a merely human leader, but to Christ and to His Kingdom/mission. All human leaders are fallible and make mistakes from time-to-time. But in order to foster unity and solidarity, we seek a unified posture from which to publicly present our vision and execute our strategies for implementation. We are careful to avoid undermining (publicly or privately) another leader. When we have disagreements about how something is done, we carry that out in the manner suggested above (see Conflict Resolution) and behind closed doors. We want to avoid ever giving the devil a foothold from which to sow disunity and division.

Proactive / Anticipatory Posture - Our culture as leaders and staff is to seek the full effectiveness of the mission of Christ, not merely the checking off of our own personal check-list of responsibilities. We want to instill a value of operating as “owners” rather than “renters” - with an eye toward the big picture health and strength of the mission. We seek to find next steps, new projects, and things that need to be done rather than wait to be told (while still observing the value of rest and boundaries described below). We operate proactively while honoring our official roles/responsibilities, the roles/responsibilities of others, and always with lots of communication about what we’re thinking of doing and with permission (before we do something, if it is a major new project).

Healthy Flexibility & Going the Extra Mile. - In a church (especially a church plant), things do not always go as planned. There are surprises - both good and bad. We seek the good of the mission and the well-being of those we work with as much as possible. This means that we cannot be overly rigid or stubborn in our approach. There will be times when the mission requires us to be flexible, adaptable (within reason) and willing to go the extra mile. One of the tangible signs that a team is working well is when everyone pitches-in in order to fulfill a greater mission.

Rest & Boundaries - We seek to handle our roles and responsibilities from a perspective of knowing that we are “yoked to Christ” (Matt. 11:28-30). It is His ministry that we are partners in. It is Jesus who builds the church (Matt. 16:18); we are merely collaborators. Our goal is always, first and foremost, to seek to be attentive to Him. We can accomplish *nothing* lasting apart from being firmly attached to Christ the vine. It is from this perspective that we can appropriately discern our necessary rhythms of rest and our boundaries of availability. We do this discerning not merely individually but in conversation with the rest of our team so that we are all sharing in the responsibilities rightly and realistically. We expect our staff and leaders to honor a sabbath-principle of resting at least one full day a week. Rest can look different for all of us but at a minimum means taking a break from the normal work and some of the routines of the other six days of the week. The important principle is that we are renewed in soul, body and spirit.

Above Reproach - We seek to minimize distraction to our mission by conducting ourselves in ways that are “above reproach” (1 Tim 3:2) according to biblical standards. This includes (though is not limited to):

- Dressing with modesty and appropriate to the occasion
- Proper personal hygiene
- Avoiding inappropriate situations or those that could be easily misunderstood
- Edifying speech, not frivolous, coarse or disparaging comments
- Not causing other Christians to stumble because of the freedom one has in Christ
- Not seeking to make ourselves the center of attention (whether via humor, eccentricities - a need to be heard/seen, etc.)

Love - In all that we do, we seek to emulate and embody the love we have received from God in Christ. As St. Paul says in I Corinthians 13, all of our ministry is ultimately meaningless if we lack love. Love as we understand it is defined by Christ; He is the perfect embodiment of love and its source in our own lives. Love in action looks like unselfishness and seeking the good of others.