

Statement of Values

The following statements clarify what, we, the congregation of Staunton Grace Covenant Church, hold near and dear as our values. Our mission as a church is to be a home to the faithful, a resource to the community and a witness to the world. Therefore our values are outlined in these three areas.

Home to the Faithful

The Bible and Worship

We value the Bible as God's divinely inspired and inerrant Word given to us to better know God, as revealed in the Trinity -- Father, Son(Jesus) and Holy Spirit and to have His guidance through His scriptures to live on this earth to please and glorify Him. All of our values and life principles are based on the teachings of the Bible (II Peter 1:19-21; II Tim 3:16-17; Heb. 4:12-13).

Worship is a time of intimacy between God and His people. We believe that our first priority as a congregation of believers is to worship God. Our worship time is our expression of joyful adoration and praise to God. We value various forms of worship expressed through vocal songs and hymns, instruments, drama, arts and writings. We encourage all participants in our worship services to actively participate in worship to our Lord both in private and corporately (John 4:23-24; Col. 3:16-17; Rom. 12:4-8; Acts 2:42,46).

Fellowship and Home Groups

As we deepen our relationship with Jesus Christ we gain confidence in building relationships with fellow believers. Fellowship is strengthened on Sunday morning before and after our worship time, once a month by having lunch together in our Fellowship Hall and by being an active member of a Home Group (Acts 2:42-47; Mal. 3:16-17).

Our home group ministry meets in various homes around the area where a small group of 12-15 adults gather to development a better understanding of the Bible and how to apply its principles to our daily lives. This is also a great

time to get to know a smaller group of people with more depth and to enjoy some social activities together. A home group is also where an individual receives the most personal care and ministry by our Lord and the Holy Spirit via the leadership and membership of the group. We encourage all of those who are members of Staunton Grace Covenant Church to join a home group. If you visit or attend our church we encourage you to join a home group.

Strong Families and Homes

We value the families and homes associated with our church and focus many of our activities to support healthy families. Families include those whom are married. We believe the husband-wife-child relationship to be Biblically established and to be held in high regard and honor. Marriage is the expression of a covenant love between a man and a woman. We conduct a Marriage Course on a regular basis to help our married members and their married friends strengthen their marriage vows. We also support single parents who have the tremendous challenge of raising children by themselves. We desire to “come alongside them” and be a supportive help to them. In this regard, we conduct a regular Parenting Course to assist parents and grandparents with ideas for becoming improved parents.

We provide and encourage all couples desiring to be married to undergo pre-marital counseling. At the onset of marriage each person in the marriage makes a commitment to be faithful, supportive, and dedicated to each other. Therefore, divorce is not an option. We oppose divorce and see it as a breakdown of a solemn covenant between the husband and wife. However, when divorce does occur, when an unbelieving partner departs, then the remaining believing partner is a free person. We are committed to ministering God’s grace and redemption to the victims of divorce and desire to provide a safe haven for them (Gen. 2:21-25; Matt. 19:3-15; I Cor. 7:6-16; Heb 13:4).

Singles

Singleness is encouraged by Paul in his letter to the Corinthians and he himself was single. The single tends to feel like they are out of place in church life. We desire to be a warm, loving family for those who are single and to encourage them to be active in a home group (I Cor. 7:7, 32-35; Matt. 19:11-12).

Christian Lifestyle

We believe that when a person commits their life to Jesus Christ there is a new life that is born and the old life is no longer dominant. Our relationship with Jesus takes priority in our daily lives: our personal life, our family, our finances, our work, our activities and our associations (Matt. 16:24-26; Matt. 19:27-30).

As a Christian we need to be in constant communication with God. We accomplish this through prayer. Romans 12: 12 states, “Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.” We are to praise God in prayer and be consistent, persistent, specific, faithful and prayerful. “To be a Christian without prayer is no more possible than to be alive without breathing”(Martin Luther). (Luke 11:1-13; Luke 18:1-8)

As a Christian, we have a vital responsibility to be people of integrity. We value honesty, moral courage, good citizenship, and financial responsibility. We believe that a person’s word is their bond and that a person can be counted on to speak the truth. We also value loyalty, including loyalty to our commitment to live lives modeled after Jesus Christ and our loyalty to each other to help each other to grow in a relationship with Christ. This loyalty is not conditional on another’s perfection or agreeability. However, it is based on God’s loyalty towards us as revealed in His mercy and faithfulness. Since we are a people who benefit from God’s grace and mercy, we need to be people who willingly extend grace and mercy to others. We do this with our graciousness in expressions, tone of voice, actions, words, and attitudes toward each other. We are to show respect to all people, no matter what their financial status, position in life, race, or nationality (Eph. 4:17-31; James 2:1-6a; James 5:12).

Church Leadership and Structure

The leadership of our church consists of the Senior Pastor, Elders and Assistant Pastor. The qualification for leadership is based on I Timothy 3 and Titus 1. The heads of various major committees and ministries are members of the Leadership Council that meets on a quarterly basis or more frequently, if needed. The leaders of the church are to provide overall coordination of the ministries related to the church, to have a sense of the Spirit’s direction for the church, and to lovingly shepherd God’s people (Acts 20:28; I Peter 5:1-5; I Tim. 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9).

Membership

Membership is greatly valued. It is a two-way street. When a person acknowledges their desire to join Staunton Grace Covenant Church, he or she is stating they have accepted Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, accept our beliefs and values, are willing to submit to the leadership of the church, and want to be a contributing member of our church to enhance the ministry of Jesus Christ to fellow believers, the community, and to be a witness to the world. Likewise, the current members and leadership of the church commit to you to help you develop your relationship with Jesus Christ and provide to opportunities to use your God-given gifts, talents and abilities to build the body of Christ to oneness in Christ and the unity of faith (Rom 12:3-8; Eph. 4:7-16; Heb. 13:17).

Tithes and giving

Jesus said, "Give to Caesar what is Caesar's and to God what is the God's." No organization can be functional without financial support. We believe the tithe is 10% of our gross personal income and it should be given to support His ministry. Those who have the financial capability to give above the 10% of gross income to help the poor, promote the gospel in special events or to support specific outreaches or needs should give willingly and cheerfully, as God will bless the cheerful giver. We also recognize there are periods of our lives when we are financially constrained and those are times to allow our fellow church members to help us (Gen. 14:18-20; Gen. 28:20-22; Mal. 3:8-12; I Cor. 16:1-3; Acts 11:27-30; II Cor. 9:6-11).

Training/Education and Discipleship

II Timothy 3:16-16 tells us that all scripture is God-breathed and useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness in order for us to be thoroughly equipped for every good work. In Romans 12:1-2 we are to be transformed by the renewing of our minds in order to be able to test and approve what God's pleasing and perfect will is for our lives. We are committed to educating our young people and adults in the fundamentals of Christianity with the purpose of developing individuals who can live their lives as models of Jesus Christ and be a light on the hillside for His gospel. This commitment is fulfilled by conducting Sunday School classes for our youth up through high school, regularly offering special courses dealing with specific aspects of the Christian faith, and encouraging all to participate in a home group (Deut. 6:6-9; Acts 21:9-10; Acts 20: 26-27, 31; Titus 1:9).

Miracles and the Supernatural Nature of God

God is alive and well today. We expect a mighty moving of God today in our midst. As a congregation of growing and developing Christians we are ready to be used by God for His glory. We believe the gifts of the Spirit, all of His gifts, are available to a person who has received Jesus as their Lord and Savior and may be manifested as God has need of these gifts. We encourage our members to step out in faith and to use their gifts to build the body of believers to the oneness in Christ and the unity of faith. The power of God may be used in private or public as long as it is used to glorify God and not the individual. The power of God is given to all believers and is to be used for His glory (Mark 16: 15-18; I Cor. 12: 27-18; Acts 4:31; Acts 5:12-16; Acts 19:11-12).

Holiness and Discipline

We are called to be Holy. Jesus said: “Be Holy, as I am Holy.” We need to constantly be encouraging one another to be holy in attitudes, thoughts, and actions, realizing that purity of heart is precious to God. Our actions and thoughts affect the entire church whether others actively know it or not because we are one in Jesus Christ (I Cor. 6:9-11; Eph 4:17-18, 25-31; Col. 3:1-10).

Church discipline is to be an act of love for the correction and restoration of a believer who has been immoral, disruptive, or has turned away from their commitment to Jesus Christ through their actions or words (Matt. 18:15-18; Gal. 6:1; James 5:19-20).

Spiritual Warfare

The Bible clearly indicates there are two kingdoms active on this earth. The Kingdom of Light(God) and the Kingdom of Darkness(Satan). Satan seeks to disrupt, discourage and destroy any efforts made by Christians to follow God’s Word. We are aware of Satan but not focused on Him because he has already been defeated. We believe each Christian has God’s armor to protect him as described in Ephesians 6 (Col 1:13-14; Eph. 6:10-18; I Thess. 2:17-18; II Cor. 10:3-6; II Cor. 11:3-4).

Resource to the Community

Education

We value education and seek to help our community better understand Christianity, themselves, living with each other, parenting, and marriage. Throughout the year we desire to conduct relevant seminars for our members and the community to enjoy (II Tim 4:2-4; Matt. 28:19-21).

Evangelism

Sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ is a command Christians have received from Jesus Christ (Matthew 28: 18-20). We desire to accomplish this by our worship service, participation in outreach activities, financially supporting and participating with various local groups who actively share the Gospel with a wide variety of groups and ages.

Social Concerns

Abortion: We strongly oppose abortion on demand and see it as taking of innocent life. We oppose the prevailing attitude in contemporary law and society toward abortion and its endorsement of abortion on demand as an expression of a fundamental constitutional right to privacy. This approach to abortion undermines the family, cheapens human life, and is clearly against the Bible. It stands in direction opposition to our belief in a fundamental right to life for all people from conception to death. While we oppose abortion on demand, we do not support the use of physical violence to oppose abortion. We seek to promote life, promote responsible sexual activity within the covenant of marriage, help those who are pregnant, whether in or out of wedlock, and pray and lobby our government to change the current laws supporting abortion (Ps. 139:13-16).

Homosexuality: We believe that every individual is made in the image of God and is worthy of respect. We do not endorse same sex marriage or partnerships or the ordination of practicing homosexuals. Homosexual behavior is contrary to a Christian lifestyle as taught in the Bible (I Cor. 6:9-11; Rom. 1:26-27; I Thess. 4:3-8).

Peace and National Defense: We value the gift of peace, and we support a strong military force for our country. We do not object to the requirement of our young men to register for the draft. We oppose drafting women to serve or

requiring them to register for the draft. We would support anyone who has a conscientious objection to serving in the armed services, but would, instead, willingly do volunteer service for their country. We endorse the Augustinian view of the Just War as a guideline for the use of force by civil authority (Rom. 13:1-7 ; Luke 3:14; Luke 7:1-10; Acts 10:1-8; John 19:10-11; Acts 4: 19-20).

Community and Government Involvement: We support and encourage members of our congregation to be involved in community and national affairs. We believe God calls certain ones to serve Him in governmental positions and we support those people. We also believe we are to pray for our local, state, and federal leaders and to pray for God's wisdom for them as they govern. We encourage our members to be an active part of the governmental process through voting, communication through letters and e-mails, and by visiting their various representatives (I Tim. 2:1-4; Matt 5:13-16; Prov. 31:8-9; Prov. 22:22-23; Prov. 23:10-11; Prov. 24:11-12, 23-25).

Witness to the World

Missions

We greatly value and support cross-cultured missions and missionaries to a variety of areas in the world. We actively participate and support ongoing work in the Middle East and Post-Communist Europe, as well as other select cross-cultural missions, especially those touching the 10/40 window. We support and prepare our members for their participation in short and life-long mission work (I Cor. 16:1-4; Acts 13:1-4; Acts 1:8; Rom. 15:18-20).

Church Planting

Staunton Grace Covenant Church will actively support planting churches both in the United States and foreign countries, as the Lord provides the opportunities (Ro. 15:18-20; I Cor. 3:5-11; Titus 1: 5).