

*Bethany Church*  
**Foundations for Becoming a Multicultural Church**

- 1. We believe that God has called Bethany Church to become a multi-cultural community of reconciliation.**
  - a. This call is implicit in the biblical account of Creation (*Genesis* 1 – 2): God designed a world of beautiful diversity, in which our first parents lived in communion with him, in companionship with each other and in cooperation with the rest of creation. Though this *SHALOM* was shattered by sin, it remains God’s deepest desire for us and his world.
  - b. This call is explicit in the new creation, under the reign of Jesus Christ: his death and resurrection not only reconciles us to God, but also destroys ancient barriers and divisions and creates “one new humanity” (*Ephesians* 2:14-18); the very purpose of the church is to demonstrate God’s eternal plan to unite all people and things under Jesus Christ (*Ephesians* 1:9-10).
  - c. Fulfillment of this call is our eternal destiny: God is moving history inexorably toward the goal of gathering a people “...from every nation, tribe people and language, standing before the throne...” (*Revelation* 5:9-10; 7:9).
  
- 2. We embrace the discomfort of diversity. We may face resistance, experience tension and even conflict as we move toward this vision.**
  - a. There is an Adversary, who tries to divide and destroy the people and work of God; *but* “...the one who is in us is greater than the one who is in the world.” (*I John* 4:4).
  - b. Obedience to our call will require relinquishing control and moving out of our comfort zones; but we believe, guided by the Holy Spirit, the tension can be creative rather than destructive, and that God will use the conflict to deepen our relationships rather than distance us from each other (cf. *Acts* 6; 10; 15)
  
- 3. We must examine all aspects of our life together, seeking to discern and dislodge every vestige of personal, institutional and systemic racism.**
  - a. The sin of racism resides not only in our hearts, but in our history and in the structures of the dominant culture.
  - b. God will honor a spirit of repentance and humility, and will not only forgive our sins but will cleanse (purge) us of all unrighteousness and injustice.
  - c. As we are forgiven by God, we will be convicted to repent to one another and empowered to extend forgiveness to each other.
  
- 4. We must pursue this vision with intentionality, striving to reflect in the composition of our leadership what God desires for the whole body.**
  - a. We are committed to hiring staff and recruiting volunteers toward this vision.
  - b. We are especially conscious that the composition of our Council, committees and worship leadership must better represent what we believe God is calling this body to become.
  
- 5. We believe in the transforming power of relationships.**
  - a. We are changed through a growing relationship with God, through Jesus Christ.
  - b. As we have opportunity to be in significant relationship with people who are different from us – through planned activities and programs as well as in informal interaction – our attitudes will change and our lives and life together will be transformed.