



WHAT DO WE STAND FOR?

OPENING PRAYER:

O God of our Hearts
**You yearn to be so close to us
that we can know you in every
breath,
in every hope, in every
relationship.**

Meet us here today
**and teach us to recognize
the covenant of justice, peace
and love
you have written on our
hearts.**

**So may our desires become
your desires,
our work become your work,
and our community
the place where you are
sought and found.
In Jesus' name we pray,
Amen.**

"O God of Our Hearts: Prayers for the Fifth
Sunday in Lent," - www.ucc.org
by Rev. K. M. Huey & Rev. S. A. Blain

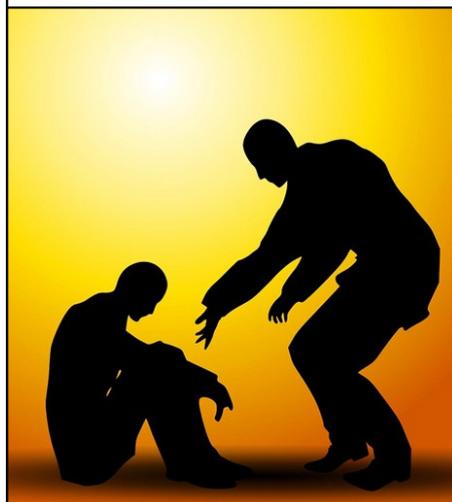
INTRODUCTION:

Our church has a long history of social action, and today it continues that tradition with the Lunch Club, the Film Club, the Café; its support for the Avenue Centre, the Rent Deposit Scheme, and the Multi-Cultural Centre; and the many other groups that meet within our building.

Do we do these things just because we have a sense of social justice and fairness that requires us to help those who are less fortunate than ourselves or who have been failed or forgotten by the statutory bodies that provide social care? Or is there some other reason?

Deuteronomy 15:7-11

⁷If there is among you anyone in need, a member of your community in any of your towns within the land that the Lord your God is giving you, do not be hard-hearted or tight-fisted towards your needy neighbour. ⁸You should rather open your hand, willingly lending enough to meet the need, whatever it may be. ⁹Be careful that you do not entertain a mean thought, thinking, 'The seventh year, the year of remission, is near', and therefore view your needy neighbour with hostility and give nothing; your neighbour might cry to the Lord against you, and you would incur guilt. ¹⁰Give liberally and be ungrudging when you do so, for on this account the Lord your God will bless you in all your work and in all that you undertake. ¹¹Since there will never cease to be some in need on the earth, I therefore command you, 'Open your hand to the poor and needy neighbour in your land.'



Zechariah 7:9-10

⁹Thus says the Lord of hosts: Render true judgements, show kindness and mercy to one another; ¹⁰do not oppress the widow, the orphan, the alien, or the poor; and do not devise evil in your hearts against one another.

Jeremiah 22:3

³Thus says the Lord: Act with justice and righteousness, and deliver from the hand of the oppressor anyone who has been robbed. And do no wrong or violence to the alien, the orphan, and the widow, nor shed innocent blood in this place.



THINGS TO THINK ABOUT:

- What separates us from Humanists?
- How does the service that we provide differ to that of, say, the Social Services?
- Apart from social action, what else do we stand for?
- How do we let other people know that we stand for these other things?



OUR MISSION STATEMENT

Believing worship to be central to our lives, we see our mission as continuing to grow, both as individuals and as a fellowship, to further our Christian service and witness within the community and the world.

COMMENT:

The above is the mission statement that we adopted as a church at the beginning of Project 2000. It helped us focus on what our church stands for, and the direction in which we hope to go in the future.



This mission statement is now nearly 20 years old. A lot has happened in the intervening years, perhaps it is time to review whether it is still appropriate to the situation we find ourselves in today.

A good mission statement should answer these questions:

- What do we do?
- How do we do it?
- Whom are we doing it for?
- What value are we bringing?

Matthew 28:16-20

The Commissioning of the Disciples

¹⁶Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them.

¹⁷When they saw him, they worshipped him; but some doubted. ¹⁸And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.'



THINGS TO THINK ABOUT:

- In what ways do we live up to this mission statement?
- What things do you think are missing from this mission statement?
- What do you think we should concentrate on if we defined a new mission statement today?

CLOSING HYMN R&S 475:

Brother, Sister, let me serve you,
let me be as Christ to you;
pray that I may have the grace to
let you be my servant too.

We are pilgrims on a journey,
and companions on the road;
we are here to help each other
walk the mile and bear the
load.

I will hold the Christ-light for you
in the night-time of your fear;
I will hold my hand out to you,
speak the peace you long to
hear.

I will weep when you are
weeping;
when you laugh I'll laugh with
you;

I will share your joy and sorrow
till we've seen this journey
through.

When we sing to God in heaven
we shall find such harmony,
born of all we've known together
of Christ's love and agony.

Brother, Sister, let me serve you,
let me be as Christ to you;
pray that I may have the grace to
let you be my servant too.

CLOSING PRAYER:

The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with your all. Amen