

# North Fresno Church Worship Statement

## Through our worship, we participate in God's story.

Followers of Jesus are to live their whole lives in worship. This includes gathering with other believers in a local faith community. The following reflects the belief and expression of the corporate worship of North Fresno Mennonite Brethren Church. It helps define who we are and what we do in our worship gatherings.

### **The Essence of Our Worship**

- **Our worship is God-centered.** God is one and reveals himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We bring honor and glory to him through our worship.
- **Our worship is biblical.** God's story of salvation is given to us in the Bible and these Scriptures are foundational in anchoring and guiding our worship.
- **Our worship is relational.** God has initiated relationship with us and invites us into experiencing and participating in this life with him. As we journey with God and each other, a diverse and intergenerational community of believers enhances our worship.
- **Our worship is missional.** As we gather in worship, we tell God's salvation story. He is continually working to restore all creation and to redeem all people. We see this in a special way through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Through the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit, the church continues God's work of restoration and redemption.
- **Our worship celebrates** the past, present and future faithfulness of God. We remember God's mighty deeds throughout history. The history of God's people in the Bible and our Anabaptist and Evangelical faith tradition have helped bring God's salvation story to us and shape our worship. We also anticipate God's final victory over evil and the final establishment of God's eternal kingdom.

### **The Form Of Our Worship**

- **God calls.** God initiates worship by calling believers together in the context of the local church.
- **We come.** We exercise faith and obedience as we gather together for corporate worship. We all come in equal need of God's restorative work. The church is nourished and renewed as its people gather regularly to glorify God.

- **God speaks.** God communicates with us as we gather for corporate worship. God speaks in unlimited ways, including: Scripture, song, prayer, symbols, fellowship, preaching, testimony, baptism, and communion.
- **We listen and respond.** We hear and discern God's voice and seek to respond appropriately: in confession, meditation, commitment, repentance, giving, and service. We experience healing and restoration, as well as exhortation and call.
- **God restores.** God continues to make all things new and meets us as a body and as individuals in bringing transformation to our lives and our relationships.
- **We receive.** Despite our imperfections and unworthiness, God cleanses, restores, and makes us worthy to be in his presence. We celebrate God's faithfulness and grace, reaffirm our faithfulness to God, build each other up, forgive others as we ourselves are forgiven, and seek God's direction for our life and mission. We observe the Lord's Supper and practice baptism, proclaiming the good news of salvation that comes through faith in Jesus Christ.
- **God sends.** God is at work and on mission in the world. He calls and invites us to join him in that mission.
- **We go.** We respond to God's commission and invitation to join him on mission. We do this in a way that meets the whole needs of the people we encounter.
- In the words of Menno Simons, "True evangelical faith is of such a nature it cannot lie dormant, but spreads itself out in all kinds of righteousness and fruits of love; it dies to flesh and blood; it destroys all lusts and forbidden desires; it seeks, serves and fears God in its inmost soul; it clothes the naked; it feeds the hungry; it comforts the sorrowful; it shelters the destitute; it aids and consoles the sad; it does good to those who do it harm; it serves those that harm it; it prays for those who persecute it; it teaches, admonishes and judges us with the Word of the Lord; it seeks those who are lost; it binds up what is wounded; it heals the sick; it saves what is strong (sound) ; it becomes all things to all people. The persecution, suffering and anguish that come to it for the sake of the Lord's truth have become a glorious joy and comfort to it."

**The Style of Our Worship.** Our worship is God focused and we reflect this through the essence and form of our worship.

- **We worship in the language of our time and place.**
  - We worship God with a sense of awe in a setting designed to minimize external distractions.
  - Our worship is a reflection of our membership in a worldwide, intergenerational, community of believers.

- We worship God with the best we have to offer, understanding that our gifts are worthless unless they are a product of a heart purified by God.
  - We celebrate all the gifts of the Spirit and seek to include them in an appropriate and meaningful way.
  - Our congregational worship services are open to all.
- **We evaluate our worship style**, adding that which enriches and discarding that which no longer communicates.
    - We choose to use a variety of styles to give voice to our worship.
    - We embrace truths given to us by the champions of our faith throughout the history of the church.
    - We strive to make our worship services relevant to all.
    - Our participation in worship takes many forms like singing, listening, giving of our finances, reflecting, and prayer. We seek to avoid expressions of worship that primarily entertain, whether in Classic or Contemporary style. Spontaneous congregational responses of praise and thanks, like clapping, are directed toward God.
    - All aspects of our worship service, including style, are directed toward a greater awareness of God's presence.
- **We cultivate a lifestyle of worship**
    - We understand that all aspects of Christian life are expressions of worship and corporate worship is one expression of that lifestyle.
    - Expressions of worship include but are not limited to visual art, literature, music, drama, hospitality, athletics, acts of service, financial giving, technical ability, and mechanical skills.
    - Our faith is strengthened by worshiping both in our daily lives and as a congregation.
    - In our worship, both individual and corporate, we desire to share the good news of Jesus Christ.
    - We recognize that we daily fall short of God's perfection and so we daily claim forgiveness from God.
    - We are called to share the good news of Jesus Christ with everyone in our neighborhood and around the world.