



SEQUOIA



CHARTER

2020

Introduction

The purpose of this charter is to clearly communicate the **reason** for our existence and the **meaning** behind all of our activity. This articulation will help us understand and live our purpose, respond confidently to our critics, and keep us accountable for our behavior.

History

Sequoia Church has a rich 80-year history in Redwood City. We began with a newspaper advertisement in 1940 seeking like-minded Christians to establish a new church completely independent of any denomination or affiliation. First Christian Church was born, and was led by a variety of pastors and leaders for the next several decades. In the 1960's we purchased our current property on Topaz St. with an eye to Alameda de las Pulgas, a main thoroughfare through the city. In 1999 we changed our name to Sequoia Christian Church and began making changes to style and expression relevant to emerging generations. In 2004 we merged with a local startup church (Shorelife) bringing together two congregations and renewed leadership.

Throughout Sequoia's history, members and leaders have taken courageous steps of faith and served in humility to advance a strong, healthy, and effective presence for the Gospel of Jesus in our community. Now in 2020, we are listening once again to the move of God's Spirit guiding and leading us to a new and renewed expression of our church. We invite you to join us as we together **Follow Jesus**.



Our Mission

There is a simplicity to Sequoia. We have no denominational affiliation, nor are we beholden to heritage (though we honor it). We care deeply about being our authentic selves. We are learning to be “comfortable with being uncomfortable,” as Jesus leads us to the unknown, the uncertain, the unforeseen, and the unexpected. We truly embrace the wonderful mystery that comes with a faith that is often risky and frequently whimsical. Our hearts are open and willing to behave in new ways as the Spirit leads and guides. We are, in all of those senses, simply following Jesus, wherever he may lead us. And by having the courage to follow in faith, we are fulfilling the biblical definition of discipleship and the human experience of faith. All this is summed up in our mission,

Sequoia Church exists to **Follow Jesus.**

As he walked by the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea—for they were fishermen. And he said to them, “Follow me, and I will make you fish for people.” Immediately they left their nets and followed him. As he went from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John, in the boat with their father Zebedee, mending their nets, and he called them. Immediately they left the boat and

their father, and followed him.

Matthew 4:18-22

Trust in the Lord with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding.

Proverbs 3:5

Jesus said to him, “If it is my will that he remain until I come, what is that to you? You follow me!”

John 21:22



Our Heart

Everything that Sequoia is ultimately about as followers of Jesus is captured in the following two phrases. We are...

A safe place to heal.

“Who needs a doctor: the healthy or the sick? I’m here inviting outsiders, not insiders—an invitation to a changed life, changed inside and out.” - Jesus (Luke 5:21-32, MSG)

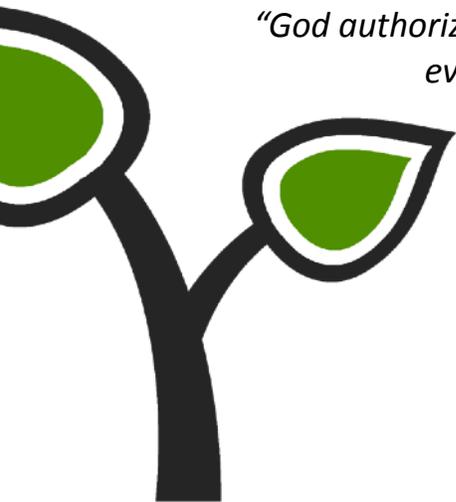
“Are you tired? Worn out? Burned out on religion? Come to me. Get away with me and you’ll recover your life. I’ll show you how to take a real rest. Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it. Learn the unforced rhythms of grace. I won’t lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you. Keep company with me and you’ll learn to live freely and lightly.” - Jesus (Matthew 11:28-30, MSG)



A challenging place to grow.

“‘Love the Lord your God with all your passion and prayer and intelligence.’ This is the most important, the first on any list. But there is a second to set alongside it: ‘Love others as well as you love yourself.’ These two commands are pegs; everything in God’s Law and the Prophets hangs from them.” - Jesus (Matthew 22:37-40, MSG)

“God authorized and commanded me to commission you: Go out and train everyone you meet, far and near, in this way of life, marking them by baptism in the threefold name: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Then instruct them in the practice of all I have commanded you. I’ll be with you as you do this, day after day after day, right up to the end of the age.” - Jesus (Matthew 28:18-20, MSG)



Our Journey of Becoming

All of our ministry activity is anchored in three elements: **Love Unconditionally, Question Boldly, and Serve Humbly.** Together, these three values invite us into a process that we call “**Spiritual Formation.**” It is the adventure we are inviting everyone to join, the “**Journey of Becoming Like Jesus.**”



LOVE UNCONDITIONALLY // We have been captivated by the overwhelming, unconditional, and reckless love of God. We believe it is our highest calling and most central value to extend that same love to others. That love manifests itself in cultivating relationships where we sincerely know and are truly known by others. In this loving community, only Jesus' standards and his conditions are measured.

[Deuteronomy 6:4-5; Psalm 133:1; Mark 12:28-34; John 13:34-35; Romans 8:38-39, 12:4-5; 1 Corinthians 12:24-27; Galatians 6:2; Ephesians 3:14-19; 1 Thessalonians 5:14; 1 John 4:7-12]

QUESTION BOLDLY // We believe every honest question and every sincere questioner deserves a nonjudgmental and respectful response. We believe there is a wonderful joy in discovering more of God through study, devotion, contemplation, meditation, and conversation. We also believe that faith is not blind but rather wide-eyed, and open to the entirety of the world. We frequently doubt, question, misunderstand, and want to dig deeper. Through this kind of curiosity, we grow, we mature, we discover, and we wrestle with God.

[Joshua 1:8; Psalm 119:33-40; Proverbs 4:1-13, 18:15; Matthew 7:7-11, 16:19; Acts 17:10-12; Hebrews 4:12; 2 Timothy 3:16-17]

SERVE HUMBLY // The heart of the Gospel—the good news of Jesus—is a life laid down in service to others. We care deeply about the suffering that exists and work hard to alleviate that suffering with compassion, mercy, sacrifice, and dignity. We give up our time and our abilities to care for those in our spheres of influence. By serving, we ourselves are also transformed.

[Matthew 20:26-28; 25:31-46; Philippians 2:1-11; James 2:14-17; Galatians 5:14]

SPIRITUAL FORMATION // Ultimately, this is all an invitation to a way of living that deepens our connection with God and strengthens our connections with our community. These behaviors make up a lifelong process that works in our hearts and transforms our lives.

[Psalm 51:10; Romans 12:1-2; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Philippians 1:6]



Our Commitments

We are striving to sustain and nurture a culture that is...

Multigenerational

We recognize and value the lives and contributions of every member of our church regardless of age, socio-economic status, or label. **Everyone belongs here.**

Whimsical

We do not take ourselves too seriously, and believe that the joy of God is often expressed playfully, unconventionally, and spontaneously. **We simply delight in how God surprises us.**

Participatory

We are not passive recipients that merely consume spiritual products. We are a body, a community that works to build, sustain, and nurture our church together. **Everyone contributes.**

Our Name

A sequoia redwood is an evergreen tree and amongst the tallest and oldest trees in the world. So, while our name identifies us with our geographical and civic location in the heart of Redwood City, it also symbolizes the longevity and reach of the Christian movement. The sequoia tree's broad and intertwined root system also speaks to the connectedness and interdependence of the community of Jesus followers.



SEQUOIA

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