

Vision for Becoming an Intercultural Church

*When we affirm and welcome a variety of expressions of faith,
it deepens our understanding of God and of each other.*

An intercultural church is a welcoming church...

- It is joyful, accepting, and life-giving.
- It trusts that God's Spirit opens us to new experiences. It recognizes that those experiences can be challenging, painful, or uncomfortable.
- In referring to God, it uses a range of names and images. In writing policies and making statements, it uses many different images and ways of speaking.
- It is committed to listening and learning, not just to speaking and teaching. It invites full participation and dialogue. It allows itself to be changed.

a relational church...

- It treasures the different contexts that God gives to different communities. It values diverse expressions of faith.
- It offers a positive vision of the whole community, together in its diversity. It encourages a healthy critique of each other's points of view.
- It values the give and take of respectful relationships. It commits to building right relationship with all of creation.
- It takes steps to become a multilingual community.

an adaptive church...

- It is able, with God's grace, to accept mistakes. It learns from the past and grows.
- It is open to being vulnerable.
- It affirms diverse cultural identities, and avoids their assimilation into the dominant culture.
- It dares to engage in an ongoing transformation of heart, mind, structure, and policy. It adapts to change when change is called for.

a justice-seeking church...

- It keeps finding new ways to share resources, redress imbalances of power, and challenge unfair systems. It seeks the equitable participation of all—both inside and outside of the church.
- It faithfully addresses racism and White privilege.
- It recognizes the churches' participation in historic injustices. It strives to do things differently.
- It thinks globally and commits itself to seeking justice.

an intentional church...

- It aims to be enriched by different experiences and points of view. It knows that we hold much in common, but also have many differences.
- It provides a safe context for difficult conversations.
- It supports and encourages diverse leadership. This is especially important in communities that have been marginalized in the past.
- It examines itself, reflects, and keeps learning. It prays, educates, and consults. It monitors how well it is living out its intercultural vision.

a missional church

- It looks for and applies the biblical and theological foundations for becoming an intercultural church.
- It affirms that the God of mission has a church in the world. We—in all of our differences—are active participants in God's mission.

What does "intercultural" mean?

It means living together with a respectful awareness of each other's differences.

We do this by

- examining ourselves,
- building relationships, and
- distributing power fairly.