

## Guidelines for becoming “Beloved Community

These are the “Guidelines for Cross Cultural Dialogue” from VISIONS, Inc. through the lens of reading 1 Corinthians 13.

**Love “Tries on”** - Jesus, the embodiment of love, “moved into the neighborhood,” putting on human flesh (John 1). “Love doesn’t insist on its own way.” Love moves into someone else’s world to understand their perspective and experience.

**Love says, “It’s OK to disagree. It’s not OK to blame, shame, or attack yourself or others.”** Love disagrees with evil, injustice and oppression in whatever forms they present themselves. Love sets limits, and says “no.” Jesus deeply loved the religious leaders of his day, AND Jesus said, “No!” in response to their abuse of power (Matthew 21:12-17; 23). Jesus does not dehumanize himself or others in disagreement. Nadia Boltz Webber has said that Jesus’ crucifixion was his disagreement with the way of violence and retribution. Jesus died refusing to participate in the world’s cycle of violence and retribution - instead placing his trust in the power of God to raise the dead and make all things new.

**Love Practices “self-focus.”** Not the same as self-centeredness. Practicing self focus is an act of work and courage. (M. Scott Peck has said, “Love is an act of work and courage.”) This is an invitation to come out of hiding and speak up about what you think and feel rather than hiding behind saying “we” or “you.” This takes work and courage! Self-Focus is also an act of self-care (loving yourself well!) because you are paying attention to what is going on in your body and soul emotionally. People who ignore feelings of sad, mad and scare wind up becoming harmful to themselves and others. Of course, not ignoring sad, mad and scare in yourself means that you get your needs met and can serve others too.

**Love Practices “both/and” thinking.** Love doesn’t insist on its own way. Love recognizes God’s ability to work through and move in and speak to people through both traditional AND modern worship music. The UMC has affirmed that both men AND women are called of God to be ordained clergy. God’s healing love makes it possible for us to acknowledge both our deep regret about the past AND move forward toward a new future of healing. As United Methodist’s we understand God’s salvation as both personal AND social.

**Love Notices both process and content.** Love “takes space for ourselves and makes space for other.” Love pays attention to who is in the room and who is not. Who is making decisions, setting budgets, leading in worship and who is not. Jesus is noted for paying attention to those on the margins, including the excluded, seeing the unseen.

**Love is aware of intent and impact.** I don’t insist on my own way, I notice the intent of someone else. AND I don’t hold onto resentment. Instead I share the impact of someone else’s behavior on me. When I hear someone share the impact of my

behavior on them, I listen. I can account for the impact of my behavior - even if it was not my intent.

**Love keeps Confidentiality.** Love treats other people's stories with dignity and honor - not as property they can just take and use however they want. Love asks permission to share someone else's story.