

GOOD SOIL



a series to help us think, talk, and act

VALUES



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ISSUE 1.1 VALUES



I remember from childhood singing, "They need you, they need me, they need Christ." It was engrained in me that God loves and values everyone. So I try every day to show people their God-given **dignity** in the way I treat them.

– Mathéo

I grew up watching my dad make supper every night. The meals were always delicious, and he thoughtfully remembered not to put gravy on my potatoes. In **serving** others, he has taught me that the small details matter.

– Jason

After a severe car accident, I nearly lost my husband. He survived, but he will never regain the use of his legs. It almost broke us. But because we have a loving community, we learned to **hope** in a God who may not always heal but always cares.

– Loraine

I'm passionate about working toward environmental sustainability. As a Christian, I know God wants me to care for the planet, and I want to be a good **steward** of what God entrusts to us. I have learned to compost and am teaching my parents.

– Adeola

We all have values that guide our actions and decisions. Some are values we are born and raised with. They are deeply rooted in who we are. Other values are learned through life experiences. Wherever our values come from, they should reflect what is most important to us.

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.'"

Matthew 22:37-39 (NIV)



- What values were you raised with?
- Think of the most meaningful experiences in your life? What made them valuable to you?
- What values are important to you as a Christian?
- What impact do you want to have on the world?



Write down 2 or 3 values you want to integrate into your life.



How will you put your values into action?

Don't forget to reflect on how you have put your values into action!



Contact the Ethics Centre
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A few years ago, my husband and I attended a wedding in another city. Our son Samuel, who lives with a complex disability, was not able to travel. When we arrived at the wedding feast, we discovered a name-card for Sam alongside ours. Even though the bride and groom knew that Sam could not attend, they had remembered him by having his name-card on the table. People living with disabilities are not always able to attend events. Whatever the reasons might be for their absence, small actions can signal that they are not forgotten.

Story by Coralie Bridle, PhD

While human dignity is not dependent on personal feelings or the judgments of others, palliative care expert Harvey Chochinov claims, in a sense, dignity resides in the eye of the beholder. It is difficult for a person to feel dignified when they are not respected and valued by others.



Credit: Christine Johnston

Human dignity has no conditions. We are all created by God who loves each one of us and has made us image bearers of the divine. We are responsible to live in community seeing others as whole individuals worthy of respect.

For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus
to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.
Ephesians 2:10

LET'S TALK IT OUT

- Who are the people who may not feel welcome? Why?
- What makes respecting and valuing a person challenging?
- What barriers are in the way of honouring human dignity?

What can we do differently to ensure people feel seen and valued?



We respect and value each other, recognizing everyone's worth.



FUN 
FACT

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ISSUE 1.3 HOPE



How long?

Till You wipe away the tears from every eye
Till we see our home descending from the sky
Do we wait in vain?
Jesus, give us hope again

Isaac Wardell, Porter's Gate



Because He lives, I can face tomorrow
Because He lives, all fear is gone
Because I know He holds the future
And life is worth the living just because He lives

Bill & Gloria Gaither



In Christ alone, my hope is found
He is my light, my strength, my song
This Cornerstone, this solid ground
Firm through the fiercest drought and storm
What heights of love, what depths of peace
When fears are stilled, when strivings cease
My Comforter, my All in All
Here in the love of Christ I stand

Keith Getty & Stuart Townend

It can be difficult to hope when what we hope for seems unlikely. We can almost taste the meal but cannot find the ingredients to make it. Yet we nurture hope because we know our final hope is not in our own power but in God. Hope pushes us to have faith in something we cannot see, prove, or control.

(Adapted from *Suffering Well and Suffering With*, Aimee Patterson)

"For in hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope,
for who hopes for what one already sees?
But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience."

Romans 8:24-25 (NRSVUE)



- How does my faith in Jesus shape my understanding of hope?
- How does hope help us in suffering?
- What promises in scripture ground hope? How do they comfort us?
- How can we encourage hope in others?

Take a walk.
Look for signs of life and hope.
What do you see?

Where in the neighbourhood
does hopelessness exist?
How can we respond?

hope

We give hope
through the power of
the gospel of Jesus
Christ.



Check out the
GOOD SOIL
playlist for
songs of hope!



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ISSUE 1.4 STEWARDSHIP



In Praise of Decay

A photograph of a bare, leafless tree with many thin, dark branches reaching upwards and outwards. The tree is positioned on the left side of the page, partially overlapping the text.

So much is deadly in the shiny new,
Persistent plastic choking out our life,
The landfill of each ego's empty stuff,
Where poison and possession still accrue.
So praise Him in the old and mouldering,
In pale gold leaf-fall losing shape and edge,
In mottled compost rustling and rich,
From which the stuff of life is still unfolding.
Change and decay is what our plastic needs
To break the bleak persistence of our waste.
Pray that we learn the lost arts of our past,
The arts of letting go and sowing seeds,
That secrets of the lowly and the least
Might save us from the dreadful things that last.

Malcolm Guite, <https://tinyurl.com/2496w3re>

“The earth is the LORD’s, and everything in it.”

(Psalm 24:1, NIV)

God took the Man and set him down in the Garden of Eden
to work the ground and keep it in order.

(Genesis 2:15, *The Message*)

God created all good things to work together. There is an order. The order of creation is marked by growth and decay. Humans are responsible to care for the rest of creation in ways that adhere to God’s order. Creation groans not because it decays. It groans because we have created dreadful things that last.

Listen to Steve Bell's
"In Praise of Decay"



- Why is it a good thing that nature decays?
- How do we get in the way of God's order of creation?
- What is our role when it comes to keeping creation in order?



THE SALVATION ARMY
INTERNATIONAL POSITIONAL STATEMENT

CARING FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

<https://www.salvationarmy.org/resources/international-positional-statement-caring-environment>

We responsibly
manage
the resources
entrusted
to us.



STEWARDSHIP

Write down
what you commit to do
to care for the environment.



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ISSUE 1.5 SERVICE



For even the Son of Man did not come to be served,
but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.

Mark 10:45 (NIV)

Service is about giving and receiving.

It is more than transactional exchange. It is transformative!
It builds deeper relationships between the giver and the receiver.

Check out the stories below
for examples of transformative service.

Genesis 18:1-15

How does Abraham serve three strangers?

How do three strangers serve Abraham?



1 Kings 17:7-24

What transformations happen when a
woman and her son encounter Elijah?

Ruth 1:10-18

How is the relationship between Naomi and
Ruth transformative even as they both grieve?



Acts 9:36-42

How was Tabitha a transforming
influence on the women around her?



- In the Abraham story, the guests become the hosts. What does it mean to be a guest and a host?
- What gifts do we receive when vulnerable people welcome us into their space?
- What makes service transformational?
- Service demands a lot of energy. How do we replenish our minds, bodies, and spirits when we feel drained?

What are the gifts you and your ministry community can use to serve others?

Commit to a way you can be a good guest to those in your neighbourhood.

We reach out to support others without discrimination.



PATHWAY
OF
HOPE

Have you heard about Pathway of Hope? Pathway of Hope supports individuals and families at many stages of life, each bringing unique experiences, strengths, and goals. By meeting participants where they are, Pathway of Hope helps people build stability, confidence, and a sense of belonging within their communities.

pathwayofhope.ca



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