A New Statement of Values for the Cathedral

A new, brightly coloured notice around the Cathedral and Deanery, entitled “Statement of Values,” is the work of our Parish Council, and it came about in response to recent instances, often on a Sunday morning, of behaviours that many found disruptive, and some found frightening. Stewards, staff, sidespeople and wardens are occasionally challenged to decide how to respond to such behaviour – sometimes, because there is a lack of clarity about what is or isn’t “permissible,” and sometimes because to intervene could serve only to escalate an already dicey situation. Other than to provide continuous training and support, we can’t do much about the latter, which requires experience and good judgment (rather than rules). But we can provide basic values that govern our behaviour, as well as suggesting behaviours which are unacceptable. And by posting this information, we hope to equip and strengthen all parish leaders in the upholding of these values.

Our Statement of Values begins with an overarching description of our desire to be inclusive of all, providing “a sacred, welcoming and safe place for everyone.” This leads to a list of “positives” that we expect of one another: Respect and polite language towards all • Respect for others’ physical boundaries • Respect for cathedral property • Respect for quiet individual prayer and worship • Respect for those conducting and participating in services.

Only in the context of these positive values do we name unacceptable behaviours in our midst. They are:

Panhandling or solicitation • Profane or abusive language • Drugs, tobacco, or abuse of alcohol • Threatening, aggressive or inappropriate behaviours • Damage, theft, or removal of Cathedral property • Weapons or dangerous objects.

Because all of us are held to the same posted values, we hope that this document will give us a positive basis from which to address negative behaviours. And as always, please know that staff and designated leaders such as clergy, sidespeople, stewards and wardens are trained to be our front line; if anything seems amiss, please don’t hesitate to contact one of them.

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