

# What Makes Us Different?

We are a fun and exciting community that respects who you are and helps you grow spiritually, personally and in service to our community and world.

We have a passion for justice. We help feed the unhoused in our local community. We have a big impact for our size. We currently partner with the San Joaquin Pride Center, Second Harvest, and the Western Farm Workers Association.

We are a safe haven for LGBTQ+ people, explicitly welcoming people who are transgender and gender non-binary.

We are a small church. We care for one another like family. You're accepted as you are, unconditionally.

We have 25 years of experience in our community. Our building is paid for, which allows us to focus on feeding the unhoused, providing back-to-school backpacks to the children of migrant farm-workers, and doing good work in the world.

We have dedicated volunteers from a variety of spiritual backgrounds and faith traditions. We think that everyone has their own unique spiritual gifts. We encourage people to develop and exercise their gifts.

Members of our congregation publish a spiritual reflection five days a week.

Our congregation includes people from throughout the Central Valley and others who join us via the internet.

We are casual. No need to dress up when you drop by. We are dog-friendly. Well-behaved dogs are welcome at our Sunday services.

We love music and singing.

We're part of the Metropolitan Community Churches, whose member churches serve as spiritual homes and advocates for LGBTQ+ people around the world.

# Whom Do We Want to Attract?

We are looking for you if you are looking for a community that is open and accepting. If you are seeking spiritual growth and an opportunity to serve others, we're waiting for you.

We are looking for:

- LGBTQ+ people, their families and friends
- People of all colors, nationalities, and ethnicities
- Young adults and high school students
- Young families
- People who have been told that God does not love them
- Trans and non-binary youth who don't know that there's a spiritual home for them
- People who are spiritual but not necessarily religious
- People who are politically active working for LGBTQ rights and other social issues
- People who like to coordinate social events
- Social media experts and social influencers
- Artists, musicians, singers, drag performers, and theater people
- Community leaders
- Carpenters, electricians, plumbers and others who can help us build and maintain facilities to help people who are unhoused
- People who join us via the Internet for our services and activities
- People who would like to volunteer for the Food Pantry
- People who would like to support the work that we do at the church and our wider community

Our church does many things, and you are free to participate in whatever ways are meaningful to you.

# What Difference Do We Want to Make in the World?

We at Valley Ministries want to be a shining example of a dynamic living Christian community whose light is a beacon to all people on their spiritual journeys.

We want to:

- Be a safe place for LGBTQ+ and allies to congregate and fellowship. Include adults, youth, and children of all ages.
- Be a voice for LGBTQ+ liberation and spirituality. Work for LGBTQ+ rights in our local communities and the wider world. Be active in dispelling anti-LGBTQ+ misinformation.
- Have fun while working on our spiritual development, social causes, and civil rights.
- Feed the hungry through our Food Pantry.
- Give comfort through our Care Team.
- Inspire people through our worship services, Holy Conversations, and Daily Devotions.
- Let people know that God loves them. Model love, kindness, respect, and acceptance.
- Share that God loves all and that all means all. Help people return to God.
- Encourage people who feel hopeless and who have lost their faith.
- Help people let go of their fears, exercise their spiritual gifts, and become part of a loving community. Be the hands and feet of God by showing and giving love.
- Be a place of peace.
- Be known and visible as an accepting church.
- Work towards being carbon neutral and eco-friendly.
- Speak up for the oppressed. Work to end racism. Work to end sexism.
- Serve the underserved and those who find themselves at the fringes of society.

Many of us have had experiences with spiritual communities that treated us as outsiders or discriminated against us. We want to be a supportive spiritual home for today's young people so that no one has to go through what we went through.

# What's Our Message?

We are all part of God's family. God's love is accessible to everybody. God loves you just as you are.

Love begins with kindness and charity. Valley Ministries is a place to share and receive love. We strive to be the positive good that we want to see in the world.

We believe that true Christianity rejects racism, sexism, homophobia, biphobia, and transphobia. Within the Christian tradition, we believe that there is much that is beautiful and inspiring for today's world.

We believe that we can learn from people who come from other religious traditions and that we have much in common. We wish to work in partnership with other faith communities.

We are an inclusive spiritual community that reaches out to all, including those who are feeling left out or on the fringes of society.