



Charter and Founding Principles

*Stand at the crossroads, and look, and ask for the ancient paths,
where the good way lies; and walk in it, and find rest for your souls.*

Jeremiah 6:16

Pathways is a different kind of church. Conventionally-speaking it's a *non-church*. It is a faith community comprised of those for whom organized religion and the burdens of institutional infrastructure have become an encumbrance. There are different paths for different people.

Pathways is a church without buildings, big budgets or ecclesiastical hierarchy. It costs nothing but an open heart and mind to belong to Pathways. The best travel tip for the Pathways participant: Travel light, seek, and expect to be found in fresh, authentic and spiritually meaningful encounters, not necessarily of your own making.

Pathways is inclusive, where anyone and everyone is welcome. This includes self-professed atheists, agnostics, pagans and believers of any sort.

More so, Pathways is not exclusive. One can be a part of Pathways, and still belong to any other faith community where one might find deep and meaningful ways to understand and live out one's faith in the world.

At Pathways, critical Biblical scholarship, unhindered interpretation, and exploration of the relevance of scriptures and other writings deemed to be sacred is the norm.

Pathways is a dynamic model for an ever-evolving faith, that nonetheless remains rooted in the Christian faith tradition. It affirms the humanity, teachings and way of life expressed in the historical Jesus, a Galilean spirit-sage.

Pathways replicates the earliest Christian faith communities, who simply called themselves followers of the Way. Gatherings are structured in an informal framework that is always evolving. Experimenting in prayer practice and meditation is less about asking, and more about listening, remembering, offering and responding. Music is simple, tasteful, accessible and participatory.

At Pathways, there is no creed or confession of faith to which one must ascribe. From a theological glossary within the Christian faith tradition, those revelatory gifts most often sought, affirmed and embraced in a Pathways journey are: faith, hope and charity, grace and gratitude, compassion, forgiveness, transformation, restoration and renewal.

Pathways fosters personal spiritual growth, in order to equip and encourage participants to serve the larger community with charitable acts. Pathways' limited infrastructure links people with projects, instead of duplicating the efforts of other dedicated organizations.

Pathways is part of the broader progressive movement within the Christian faith tradition. As such, it is a Supporting Church of the organization, Progressive Christianity.org. Pathways affirms the "8 Points of Progressive Christianity," which can be found at <http://progressivechristianity.org>.

Pathways is also an organizational member of the Mt. Diablo Peace & Justice Center in Walnut Creek, California (mtdpc.org). Pathways participants are automatically eligible to participate in the Peace Center's ongoing events as members of that organization, as well.

Pathways is a volunteer-based and volunteer-led organization, which operates with minimal financial expenditure. Aside from modest operating costs, contributions are used to either fund program or foster increased visibility and awareness of Pathways in the local community; as well as Pathways web presence for a 'congregation' of cyberspace followers.

As such, financial support is encouraged, but based solely on each individual's capacity and desire to give of themselves, from whatever good fortune they have experienced. Pathways is a 501.c.3 non-profit religious organization in the state of California. As such, all financial donations to Pathways are fully tax deductible to the full extent allowed by law.