

CHURCH at THE CROSS



## WE ARE GLAD YOU'RE HERE

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Thank you so much for going through our membership process. We hope you found the videos to be clarifying regarding our beliefs, our vision, our mission, our values, and our calling to advance his mission in the world. After taking in the content and attending our brief class, we hope you will see the importance of Church Membership and will know exactly what it means to be an actively engaged member of this local congregation. Thank you again for investing your time and attention to this process. We hope it will be an enriching and encouraging experience.

Pastor JR Vassar and Team  
[jr@churchatthecross.com](mailto:jr@churchatthecross.com)

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# SESSION ONE: WHAT IS THE CHURCH?

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The word “church” (ekklesia) means “an assembly,” or “a gathering,” and is the word used to speak of all the people God gathers out of the world to belong to Jesus Christ. Theologian Wayne Grudem defines the church as, “The community of all true believers for all time.” In this way, the church is primarily a people and not a place. When the Bible speaks about the church, it is not referring to a building or physical structure, but about people who have come to trust in Jesus Christ as the Son of God, the Savior of the world, and who have become his disciples. Not everyone who attends a physical gathering called “church” is part of the church, but only those who have responded with personal faith in Jesus Christ and have publicly aligned themselves with him and his people through baptism.

The Bible gives several images of the Church. The Church is called the **household of God** (Ephesians 2:19) with God as our father and each believer existing as spiritual siblings. The Church is called the **Bride of Christ** (Ephesians 5:32), the object of his love and covenant faithfulness. The Church is called a **new temple** (1 Peter 2:5), the very people among whom God chooses to dwell by his Spirit and make his presence known. The Church is called the **body of Christ** (1 Corinthians 12:12-27) of which each believer is a part of the body, gifted in different ways to do different things in the Church. In all of these metaphors, Christ is the Lord. He is over the family of God, the husband who loves and leads his bride, the foundation of the new temple, and the head of the body. The Church is God’s flock and Jesus is the Chief Shepherd. The Church and her leaders are to submit to Christ’s rule mediated by his Word that is applied by his Spirit.

## WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE CHURCH?

The priorities of the Church are basically to **worship God**, to **nurture believers**, and to **minister to the world through evangelism and mercy and justice**.

### Worship God

The Church as a people worships God together. Several passages of Scripture speak of the gathered people of God singing psalms and hymns of praise to God (Colossians 3:16; Ephesians 5:16-19). When we gather and sing songs of praise to God, we are telling God that we love and admire him for his greatness and that we are grateful and overwhelmed with joy that he would shower us with his grace. We worship him for his salvation, his daily provision, and his constant presence with us.

However, worship is not simply songs. Worship consists of prayers, confessions, and listening and responding to God’s word. Worship includes all of life.

*“I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. 2) Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.” Rom 12:1–2 ESV*

*“So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.” 1 Cor 10:31 ESV*

**Worship is our whole life response to God for his greatness and his grace.** It involves our thinking, dreaming, planning, living, eating, drinking, responding, speaking...It is an everyday, all day activity of living in response to God. This is what the Church does as a people when *gathered* and when *scattered*.

## Nurture Believers

The Church as a people is responsible for building up one another as followers of Jesus. God gives the Church leaders who are to seek the spiritual maturity and formation of the people.

*“And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, 12) to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, 13) until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, 14) so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. 15) Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, 16) from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.”*  
Eph 4.11–16 ESV

The ministers are to equip the members of the church so that the members of the church can minister to one another and build up the body. As the body grows in maturity, it becomes more singularly focused on Jesus and his purposes so that there is a greater unity among God’s people. Not only does serving others in the body help grow them and strengthen them, but it helps create greater maturity in the one who serves. It is also important to note that each member is to be speaking the Word, the truth, to other members. “Church as a place” sees the professional ministers as the talking heads who expound on the Bible, but “Church as a people” understands that we are all responsible for speaking truth to one another so that the church can be holy and healthy and accomplish God’s purpose for it. So, the Church should be led by leaders who are equipping the members to do works of ministry and to speak the truth, so that the body is served, built up and matured.

## Minister to the World

The Church has a mission from Jesus. When Jesus ascended into heaven he gave one last final charge to his followers.

*“And Jesus came and said to them, ‘All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19) Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20) teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.’”*  
Matt 28.18–20 ESV

Jesus commanded his followers to go and preach the gospel and invite others to repent and believe in Jesus, join his people who make up the church, and embrace a life of discipleship. This is not just a call to the professional minister, but to every Christian. Every Christian is to be a disciple who makes disciples who will make disciples. This means Christians will be engaging non-Christians to speak to them about Jesus and his Gospel. It means that they will help those who become Christians and are baptized into Jesus’ Church to grow in their faith. They will help them be faithful disciples who make other disciples.

The Church is to do this with the world in mind. Christ is sending his people to the ends of the earth to proclaim this great salvation. But to carry out this mission, we need the resources that Jesus has won for us and provides for us, namely, the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit.

*“Then he said to them, ‘These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.’ 45 Then he opened their minds to*

*understand the Scriptures, 46 and said to them, "Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, 47 and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. 48 You are witnesses of these things. 49 And behold, I am sending the promise of my Father upon you. But stay in the city until you are clothed with power from on high." Luke 24:44–49 ESV*

*"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." Acts 1:8–9 ESV*

The Holy Spirit empowers his Church to tell others about Jesus and his gospel. One of the reasons we don't sense the Holy Spirit's power in our lives is because we are not engaging in this mission. We are not requiring anything that requires the empowering presence of God's Spirit.

We are not commanded to only share the message of Jesus, but we are also called to display the mercy of Jesus. Jesus calls us to demonstrate his kindness to those in need and to fight against injustice, cruelty, and oppression in all forms. In Matthew 25, Jesus speaks of feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, helping the sick, and visiting those unjustly imprisoned. We are especially to do this for those who are believers in Jesus, but we are also to show this kind of concern for all people (Gal 6:10).

## WHAT DOES IT MEAN FOR YOU TO "BE THE CHURCH"?

If the Church is not primarily a place, but a people, then what does it mean to "be the Church"?

- It means that you have responded to Jesus Christ with repentance and faith. You have come to see yourself as he sees you and turned from a self-orientation to God-orientation. You have trusted in his provision in Jesus' death and resurrection for the forgiveness of your sins and your salvation. You have been united to Christ by faith in him.
- To "be the Church" means you have also identified yourself with other Christians through baptism. Becoming part of the Church through faith in Jesus and the identity revealing act of baptism introduces you into a new life. We do not now squeeze the experience of church into our life, but arrange our lives in light of this new reality of who we are and to whom we belong.
- To "be the Church" means you are regularly joining with other believers in worship. It means that you are active in the lives of other believers, encouraging them, speaking the truth to them, listening to their exhortation and hearing the truth from them. It means that you are using your spiritual gifts to build up the church.
- To "be the Church" means that you are engaged with other believers in living on mission in this world. You are seeking to make Christ known to your co-workers, friends, neighbors, and family. It means that you are actively sharing the message of Christ and showing the mercy of Christ to the people to whom God calls you. It means that you move from being an observer to a participant and from a consumer to a contributor, using your gifts, resources, time and energy to advance God's purposes in the world with other believers.

## WHY MEMBERSHIP?

As you read the New Testament, you read letters to local communities of believers who had been joined together by the gospel of Christ (Romans 16:3-5). The people who made up these communities consistently worshiped together (Hebrews 10:24-25), were accountable to one another (Galatians 6:1), encouraged one another (1 Thessalonians 5:11), served one another (1 Peter 4:10), and contended for the gospel together using their spiritual gifts and financial means to edify the church and move the mission forward (Philippians 1:5, 27; 1 Corinthians 12). These local congregations kept lists of widows in their congregation whom they sought to care for and serve (1 Timothy 5:9). The people that made up these congregations made decisions together as a congregation for the congregation (1 Corinthians 5:4-5). These local congregations each had an established plurality of leaders called Elders (Acts 14:23; 1 Timothy 3:1-7). The members were to submit to their leaders and pray for them (Hebrews 13:17). They also faced discipline from the community and its leaders when they strayed from the truth or engaged in a lifestyle that was not in step with the gospel (1 Corinthians 5:1-5; 2 Thessalonians 3:14-15). All of these things would be meaningless if there did not exist a commitment to mutual accountability among a specific body of believers. Therefore, Church at the Cross believes that church membership is a New Testament reality and should be embraced by every believer. Church at the Cross greatly values church membership. Those who are members of the church partner with the pastors, deacons, staff, and other members of Church at the Cross to carry out its missional calling to our neighbors and to the nations. As a member, you move from consumer to contributor, from observer to participant. When you become a member, you are embracing your calling to belong to a local body of fellow Christ-followers with whom you can worship and serve and be on mission. To become a member is to commit to full participation with the people of Church at the Cross. Membership also clearly identifies who the leadership of the Church is accountable for before God (Hebrews 13:17). The leadership and staff are committed first and foremost to the members of Church at the Cross, covering them with prayer and providing them with leadership, instruction, counsel, and care while helping them to carry out their missional calling.

### What does it mean to be a Church member?

We believe that as we lift the profile of a church member off the pages of the New Testament, we clearly see what church membership comprises. To be a member of a church means that you officially and willingly belong to a group of people with *Shared Beliefs* (the gospel), *Shared Sacraments* (the Sacraments of believer's baptism and communion), *Shared Practices* (living with an ethical vision under the Lordship of Jesus), *Shared Leadership* (congregationally selected elders) and a *Shared Purpose* (carrying out the mission of Jesus). The following are not guidelines we arbitrarily establish and unreasonably hold our people to. Rather, they are the marks of one who has committed his or her life to Christ and to a local expression of his body. Membership at Church at the Cross is offered to all who:

- Have responded to the gospel of Jesus Christ with faith and repentance.
- Have publicly identified with Jesus and His Church through believer baptism.
- Have affirmed the CATC Affirmation of Faith.
- Complete an informal membership interview with one of our elders or deacons.
- Will joyfully enter into a Membership Covenant of full participation with the leadership and other members of CATC in living out our life together under the Lordship of Jesus on mission.

## WHAT IS THE AFFIRMATION OF FAITH?

*For a fuller version of our affirmation of faith, see Appendix One.*

### Basic Beliefs:

- The Bible is totally true and trustworthy.
- There is one and only one living and true God, Creator of heaven and earth who eternally subsists in three divine yet distinct persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- Humanity is the special creation of God, made in his own image, yet fallen, alienated from God and under God's just condemnation for sin.
- Jesus Christ died as a substitute for sinners to pay the penalty for the sins of all who would trust in him. He rose bodily from the grave with indestructible life and lives forever. He will one day return again physically in power and glory to reign forever and forever.
- Salvation is by grace and received through faith in Jesus Christ alone apart from works.
- The Holy Spirit is permanently and irrevocably given to all who trust in Jesus. He works to convince us of God's love, conform us into the image of Jesus, empower us with gifts for ministry and mission, and assure us of our final salvation.
- There will be a future physical resurrection of the dead unto eternal life or condemnation. Only those who trusted Christ through personal faith and repentance will inherit eternal life.

## WHAT IS A MEMBERSHIP COVENANT?

A membership covenant with a local church is a promise that a Christian makes with God, that particular local church, its members, and its leadership. That promise is an agreed upon commitment to pursue Christian maturity together and to meaningfully participate in the life and mission of the church.



## SESSION TWO: WHAT IS THE GOSPEL?

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The gospel literally means “good news.” This good news has two key facets to it, an individual one and a corporate one. Depending on the angle at which we read the Bible, one of these facets dominates our understanding of the Scriptures. We have to learn to read the Bible in such a way that we see both facets of the gospel so as to properly perceive the beauty and power of the gospel. Then we can truly grasp the hope that it holds out for us, humanity, and creation.

### The Individual Facet: The Gospel Of Our Salvation

When we read the Bible from an individual angle, the storyline is “God rescues sinful people through Christ who is appropriated by faith apart from works.” We understand the gospel in terms of *God, Sin, Christ, Faith*. God is holy and we are sinful. Our sin deserves judgment. God, out of his great love, sends his Son Jesus Christ to rescue us from God’s judgment. He lives a sinless life and dies in the place of sinners, the just for the unjust, so that all who believe in him might have their sins counted against Christ and be free from condemnation. Christ’s righteousness is imputed to them and they are fully accepted by God. This is the doctrine of imputation and justification – our sin imputed to Christ, and Christ’s righteousness imputed to us by faith that we might be declared righteous before God (John 3:14-17; Romans 3:10-31; 5:1, 6-11; 2 Corinthians 5:17-21; Galatians 2:15-21; Ephesians 2:8-9; Philippians 3:8-9; Colossians 1:21-22; 1 Timothy 1:14-17; 2:5-6; Titus 2:11-14; 3:3-7; Hebrews 2:14-17; 10:11-25; 1 Peter 3:18; 1 John 2:2). The gospel of our salvation has huge ramifications for our lives.

- **Humility:** we see how utterly sinful we are and how we are unable to save ourselves through our efforts. Because of this, we are humbled toward God, but we are also humbled toward others. We understand that all humanity stands on equal ground – sinners in need of a savior. Our salvation is not owing to anything inherent in us or to anything we have accomplished. It is solely from God. No one can boast. So we cannot have a sense of superiority over anyone, but a sense of mission to everyone.
- **Boldness:** we are confident before God because we have the righteousness of Christ credited to us and are always acceptable to God regardless of our poor performance. Insecurity is the enemy of intimacy. Though our fellowship with him might be strained, his acceptance of us is never in jeopardy. Because we are accepted by the ultimate person in the Universe, we can risk our reputations on earth for the sake of his name and purposes.
- **Freedom:** we are free from our idols. Since we are in Christ and find our value and identity in him, we are free from all the things we were building our identity upon that enslaved us in fear and in bondage. We have counted all things as loss compared to the surpassing value of knowing Jesus Christ (Philippians 3:7-8).
- **Deep Affection for God:** we understand (truly, but not fully) the depth of his love for us and his sacrifice to save us. Therefore, we live out of gratitude for grace, not out of fear of punishment. We have become children of God and do not respond to God out of fear like slaves, but out of affection like sons and daughters.

## The Corporate Facet: The Gospel Of The Kingdom

If we were to consider the world we all want, there would be a great deal of agreement. We desire a world where there is no suffering, sickness, or death. A world where evil does not exist and we never have to lose those we love; a world of justice, peace, and plenty. The Bible tells us that is exactly what this world is destined for. We have seen a glimpse of it in Jesus. But it is not the world we know now. The world we live in is broken, full of evil, pain, sorrow, suffering, sickness, poverty, injustice, and death. The Bible gives us the best explanation for the world that is, and it gives us the greatest hope for the world we all want.

God is a Triune God and exists as Community – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. When God created the world, his creation reflected this Divine Community. God was in community with man. Our first parents were in perfect community with one another and reigning with God, exercising dominion in the earth in perfect community with creation. When sin entered the picture (Genesis 3), that community was shattered. The image of God in man was marred and community with God was undone (Genesis 3:8). The community that existed between our first parents was shattered, as man and wife moved from unity and vulnerability to division and shame. Man also became at odds with creation (Genesis 3:16-19). Satan usurped man's dominion in the earth and the world fell into the lap of the evil one who is now the "god of this age" and the "prince of the power of the air" (1 John 5:19; 2 Corinthians 4:4; Ephesians 2:1-3). The fabric of creation was now unraveled by sin. It was under the power of God's enemy, full of evil, brokenness, injustice, tears, and death, but God clearly revealed that this is not the way the world would remain. The prophets spoke into this fallen world declaring in so many words, "There is coming a day when all this will change. Everything will be made new, restored, the fabric rewoven to the way it is supposed to be." People before Christ's coming looked for the day when the Messiah would come – a divine King who would defeat God's enemies, and begin to reign in the earth, establishing God's Kingdom. Through his reign, he would restore God's design for creation. He would renew the marred image of God in man (love and holiness) and restore humanity to community with the triune God. He would create a new human community reconciled to one another that would reflect the divine community in their relationships. And he would restore creation to its original design, reweaving the fabric of creation to create an environment that images forth the beauty and glory of God and provides a realm for the flourishing of the human community. Through the work of this divine King, the Savior, this "present age" would be replaced by the "age to come."

When Jesus came on the scene, his message was, "Repent, for the Kingdom of God (Heaven) is at hand." His preaching was the "gospel of the Kingdom." In other words, the good news is that the King is here and if you align yourself with him you will enjoy the blessings of his Kingdom that is soon to be established." It is through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus that God has established the Kingdom of God in the earth. Already the Kingdom of God is here (Luke 11:17-23). Jesus has reconciled people to God, restoring community between man and God for all who will believe in Him. His Spirit is renewing his people, restoring the image of God in man. He has created a new human community that is without ethnic or socioeconomic distinction, but one in him (Ephesians 2:11-22). He will one day fully and finally restore community between man and creation by bringing about a new heaven and a new earth free of sickness, disease, and death where the human community can thrive and flourish unhindered by the damaging effects of sin (Revelation 21-22). For those who have received this King as Savior and Lord, there is a great promise of the world we all want. It is here, but not yet its fullness. To believe this good news means to receive Jesus as our Savior King. We turn to him to forgive us and restore us to God, to make us part of his new community, and reweave the fabric of our lives. We identify with him through baptism, follow his word, and wait for his return.

From this perspective, the gospel can be defined as "the good news of the in-breaking of God's rule and reign in the crucified and risen Christ, healing and reweaving all of creation back together, spiritually, psychologically, socially and even physically." When the gospel is seen from this perspective, we read it in these terms: **Creation, Fall, Re-**

**demption, and Restoration.** The gospel of the Kingdom has major ramifications for us:

- **Our Submission to God's rule in our own lives:** When God's gracious rule in the Person of Christ is not acknowledged and not submitted to, the fabric of life unravels (at every level of life and society). But, as we trust in Jesus and come under his reign, he begins to renew our lives and put us back together.
- **Our Community with fellow believers:** We are an alternate society. We are a people restored to community with God and one another that exists as an alternate society in the earth. In the Church, there are no racial or class superiorities. We are not to accrue money or power at the expense of others. We are not to crave popularity or recognition or status, but consider others more important than ourselves. We are not to use sex in a selfish way that hurts community among God's people. The gospel of the Kingdom changes how we view and treat all these things (See Ephesians 4-5; Philippians 2:1-11).
- **Our View of Creation:** Creation was created good. It is now fallen and needs to be renewed. The gospel is not solely about individual happiness and personal fulfillment. It is about God's wonderful plan for the world. The gospel is the coming of God's Kingdom to renew all things in creation, bringing their use and enjoyment under the rule of God. This has tremendous ramifications for how we view art, food, drink, sex, the environment, etc.
- **Our Mission:** When the Kingdom comes in its fullness, it will fully eradicate some things and finally established some things. As sons and daughters of the Kingdom, we seek to eradicate to a degree what the coming of the Kingdom will eradicate (sin – personal and corporate - injustice, poverty, sickness). As sons and daughters of the Kingdom, we seek to promote what the Kingdom will establish in full (righteousness, peace, justice, world-wide worship of Jesus Christ). We strive for the flourishing of the human community. This affects how we perceive our resources and our vocations.

We need to keep these two facets of the gospel in mind. If we only focus on the gospel of our salvation, the gospel becomes a personal matter without ramifications for our world and creation. It can lead to mere pietism that is void of community and mission. If we focus only on the gospel of the Kingdom, it can lead to a social gospel that ignores people's personal condition before God and humanity's need for a savior to free individuals from personal guilt and condemnation.

## CONCLUDING QUESTION:

*Have you personally trusted in Jesus Christ exclusively to forgive you of your sins and bring you into God's family and Kingdom?*

If it is your desire to place your trust in Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins and for a right relationship with God and to be baptized as a believer, simply let God know through prayer. You might pray a prayer similar to this as an expression of your faith in Jesus Christ:

*God, I have not treasured you above all things. I have sinned by putting things before you and pursuing things more than you. I have failed to worship you as you deserve and I deserve your just punishment for my sin. Thank you that you love me and gave your Son for me to pay the penalty for my sin. You provide forgiveness for me and want to have a relationship with me. I trust Jesus Christ for a right standing with you God, I surrender my life to you, and I seek to find freedom in gaining my identity from you. I trust you to save me and rule my life by your grace. I desire to express my faith in Jesus by being baptized as you commanded. Thank you for saving me.*

# SESSION THREE: VISION, MISSION, VALUES

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## VISION

Our vision describes the preferred future we dream about. It describes what will happen if we carry out what we believe God is calling us to.

As we identify the vision of our church, we must keep in mind the Story of God: Creation, Fall, Redemption, Restoration (or Re-Creation). God is restoring all things lost and broken at the Fall. He is restoring them in Jesus, making all things new in him. Ephesians 1:7-10 captures this purpose of God perfectly.

*Ephesians 1:7-10 (ESV) – 7 In him we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of his grace, 8 which he lavished upon us, in all wisdom and insight 9 making known to us the mystery of his will, according to his purpose, which he set forth in Christ 10 as a plan for the fullness of time, to unite all things in him, things in heaven and things on earth.*

The New Living Translation captures the meaning of this verse in a helpful way,

*Ephesians 1:7-10 (NLT) – 7 He is so rich in kindness and grace that he purchased our freedom with the blood of his Son and forgave our sins. 8 He has showered his kindness on us, along with all wisdom and understanding. 9 God has now revealed to us his mysterious plan regarding Christ, a plan to fulfill his own good pleasure. 10 And this is the plan: At the right time he will bring everything together under the authority of Christ—everything in heaven and on earth.*

Dr. Martyn Lloyd Jones said of verse 10:

*"I do not hesitate to assert that we have in this verse the key to the understanding of the chief practical purpose of this Epistle to the Ephesians...Indeed, we can go further and say that this verse states what is the central theme of all Scripture." D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, God's Ultimate Purpose.*

"He has made known to us the mystery of his will." A mystery is something that was not previously known but has now been made known. God's will or purposes were not known until he made them known. And Christ is at the center of this plan. Here is that plan: at the time that God has appointed, he will unite all things together in Christ, whether things in heaven or on earth. The words "unite all things" literally translated mean "to sum up all things;" to bring all parts together. It is used in Romans 13:9 to say that all the commands are summed up in one word, "Love your neighbor..." So in Romans 13:9, different commands find unity and alignment in one word. It means to bring everything together under one head. The New Living Translation is a good summary: "9 God has now revealed to us his mysterious plan regarding Christ, a plan to fulfill his own good pleasure. 10 And this is the plan: At the right time he will bring everything together under the authority of Christ—everything in heaven and on earth."

What does this mean? Everything is not together. Everything is not united under Christ. Everything is fractured, ruptured, dislocated in the heavenly realms and on earth. The Fall has shattered and dislocated everything and God is going to bring it all back together, to heal it, renew it through the work of Christ. This will be realized fully at his second coming when he "makes all things new," but this "newness" has broken into our present world as God

brings renewal to lives and locations through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Sins are being forgiven, relationships are being healed, darkness is being pushed back. Jesus has bound Satan, the strongman, and the Church is plundering his house. When people encounter Jesus, they are set free and their lives begin a process of transformation and renewal.

In light of God's overall plan in Christ, the Church is God's agent and vehicle to carry out his mission in the world. God, through the Church empowered by the Spirit, is introducing the future into present.

## VISION STATEMENT

*"Helping people and places encounter Jesus."*

Encountering Jesus means coming face to face with who he is and coming to terms with our need for his salvation. When we encounter Jesus, he begins to put our lives and relationships back together by his grace and reign over us. Sin has alienated us from God, corrupted our hearts, disordered our loves, disoriented our lives, and fractured our relationships. All this is being healed in Jesus who reconciles to God, who renews our hearts, who reorders our loves, who reorients our lives, and who heals our relationships by the power of his Holy Spirit. We desire to give as many men, women, and children the repeated opportunity to encounter Jesus, to hear and respond to the saving message of his gospel. As lives are renewed by that encounter, we know that places are transformed. We desire to see the gospel bring renewal to our communities, neighborhoods, nations, vocational domains, education, the arts, and every circle of influence God entrusts to us.

## MISSION

*The means by which we help others encounter Jesus. This is required for us to accomplish our vision.*

## MISSION STATEMENT

*We seek to help people and places encounter Jesus by **Reaching, Teaching, Training, and Sending**.*

### Reaching

**Conversion.** We work to give as many people the repeated opportunity to hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ and respond in repentance and faith. As individuals and as a community, we want to reach people with the Gospel.

### Teaching

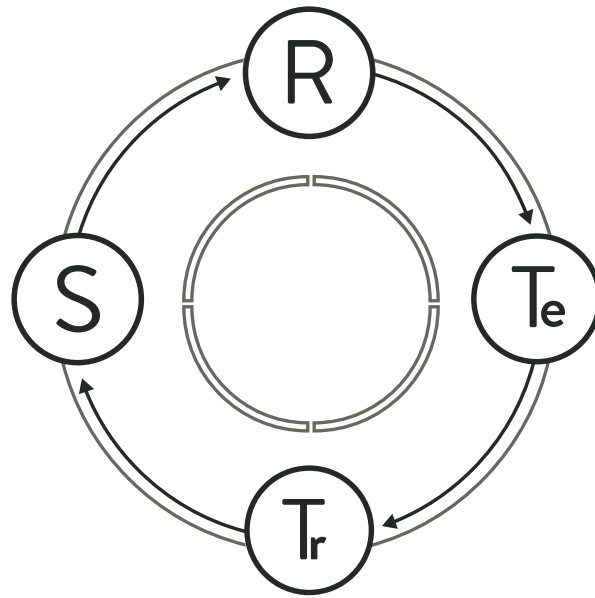
**Convictions, Character, and Community.** We work to help people develop a Christian mind and Christlike character in the context of biblical community, helping them to live together as disciples of Jesus.

### Training

**Competencies and Confidence.** We work to equip people for ministry inside the church and beyond its walls (leadership, evangelism, missions, mercy, justice, vocational domains)

### Sending

**Commission.** We work to raise up and send people into ministry in the church and beyond (commissioning elders, deacons, group leaders, age group ministry leaders, church planters, missionaries)



Reaching, Teaching, Training, and Sending is a pathway of renewal for us. Each of us is somewhere on this cycle. We want to be continually moving along on this pathway. Many have been reached with the Gospel, but have never been taught practically how to live the Christian life (developing a robust devotional life, a knowledge of the scripture, Christlike character, and meaningful community with other believers). Many have been taught, but have never been trained how to engage the church and world in ministry. Some sit in the church, instructed and trained but never sent into active ministry to reach and teach and train others. We desire to see every person we reach with the Gospel to move along this cycle and live as instructed, trained disciples sent on mission together.

## VALUES

*Our values explain our collective heart that moves us into our mission so that we might fulfill the vision of helping people and places encounter Jesus. The values we embody and express as we carry out our mission represent our philosophy of ministry. Each core value is succinctly captured in two memorable mantras or maxims.*

### **Centered on Jesus**

We will trust and treasure Jesus above all things finding our identity in him, pursuing intimacy with him, and enjoying all that the Father is for us because of him. Our gatherings and groups will focus on Jesus: his person, his work, and his teachings, and seek to bring our lives under his rule.

*Colossians 1:28 (ESV) – 28 Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ.*

#### **Mantras**

Our Truest Identity is who we are in Jesus.  
We become like Jesus as we behold Jesus.



## Driven by Grace

The Grace of God serves as our greatest motivation and the fuel for our transformation. We are fully accepted by his grace; therefore, we fearlessly obey and strive to please God according to the grace at work within us. The gospel is the way we enter the Christian life and the way we live the Christian life (Romans 1:15-16). It is sufficient for all of life. The gospel is the way we grow as Christians (Galatians 3:1-3; Colossians 1:6). This means that the gospel is our motivation and explanation for the qualitative distinctiveness of our lives.

Example: Generosity

*2 Corinthians 8:7-9 (ESV) – 7 But as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all earnestness, and in our love for you—see that you excel in this act of grace also. 8 I say this not as a command, but to prove by the earnestness of others that your love also is genuine. 9 For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich.*

Example: Marriage

*Ephesians 5:25-33 (ESV) – 25 Husbands, love your wives, as Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her, 26 that he might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word, 27 so that he might present the church to himself in splendor, without spot or wrinkle or any such thing, that she might be holy and without blemish. 28 In the same way husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. 29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, just as Christ does the church, 30 because we are members of his body. 31 “Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and the two shall become one flesh.” 32 This mystery is profound, and I am saying that it refers to Christ and the church. 33 However, let each one of you love his wife as himself, and let the wife see that she respects her husband.*

### Mantras

The gospel not only saves us, it changes us.  
The more we “get” grace, the more we give grace.

## Shaped by Scripture

The Bible is God’s Word to us. God has given us his Word so we can know him and live in line with his desires for us. In it, God communicates to us who he is, what his plan is for the world, and what he requires and expects from us in our relationship to him and others. The Bible reveals, instructs, rebukes, corrects, and trains us to live a life of righteousness (2 Tim 3:16). As we read it, the Holy Spirit illumines our minds to understand it and enables us to obey it.

### Mantras

The Bible is a necessity for intimacy with God (Revelation).  
We align our lives with the Bible, not the other way around (Authority).

## Renewed as Community

Spiritual formation is a community project. The Holy Spirit dwells among us as God’s people and is renewing us individually and collectively into the image of Jesus, showing the world the beauty of life lived as a people under the gracious reign of God.

*Colossians 3:9–13 (ESV) – 9 Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have put off the old self with its practices 10 and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge after the image of its creator. 11 Here there is not Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free; but Christ is all, and in all. 12 Put on then, as God’s chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, 13 bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other; as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive.*

**Mantras**

Spiritual formation is a community project.  
Our life together is an evangelistic event.

## **Sent on Mission**

We are the gathered community called out of the world to belong to Jesus, and we are the community sent into the world to proclaim Jesus. We are sent together to saturate neighborhoods and nations with the message and mercy of Christ—announcing his Kingdom in word and deed.

*Philippians 2:14–15 (ESV) – 14 Do all things without grumbling or disputing, 15 that you may be blameless and innocent, children of God without blemish in the midst of a crooked and twisted generation, among whom you shine as lights in the world...*

*Romans 10:13–15 (ESV) – 13 For “everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.” 14 How then will they call on him in whom they have not believed? And how are they to believe in him of whom they have never heard? And how are they to hear without someone preaching? 15 And how are they to preach unless they are sent? As it is written, “How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news!”*

In this way we are a missionary community. There is a difference between being a community of missionaries (which we are) and being a missionary community. A missionary community sees themselves as sent together on mission, a collective witness working together to demonstrate and declare the gospel. We are communities of light, scattered throughout our cities demonstrating and declaring the gospel of Jesus.

**Mantras**

Missions exists because worship doesn’t.  
The question is not if I’m called, but to whom and to where I’m called.

## **Empowered by the Spirit**

We seek to carry out the mission of Jesus with the same resource Jesus carried out his mission, the empowering presence of the Holy Spirit. We will prayerfully seek the Spirit’s presence and power as we live as missionary communities formed by the gospel.

*Acts 1:8 (ESV) – 8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will*



*be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."*

*John 20:19–22 (ESV) – 19 On the evening of that day, the first day of the week, the doors being locked where the disciples were for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you." 20 When he had said this, he showed them his hands and his side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. 21 Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, even so I am sending you." 22 And when he had said this, he breathed on them and said to them, "Receive the Holy Spirit."*

These values are not words on a plaque hung on a wall somewhere. These are realities cultivated in the life of God's people finding expression as they daily embrace the gospel. These values mark a community with a rich gospel content that is creating a rich gospel culture.

#### **Mantras**

God's power is for God's purpose.  
Prayer precedes power.

## SESSION FOUR: THE WORSHIP GATHERING

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The Christian life is meant to be lived in community, sharing life together in the unity of the Holy Spirit. At Church at the Cross we value biblical community, but we also highly value the public worship gathering. In our gatherings we desire to glorify God by exalting his Son by the power of the Holy Spirit. Through the proclamation of the Word of God, we desire to grow God's people in maturity and equip God's people for his mission. We seek to evangelize those in our gatherings who have not responded to the grace of God in Christ. We also believe that the public worship gathering is the place for the observance of the Sacraments.

### Proclamation of the Word

At Church at the Cross, we value the preaching of God's Word. We believe that apart from the proclamation of the gospel, people will not turn to Christ and Christians will not be conformed to Christ. We believe that all preaching should be Jesus-Centered and gospel-driven. As Christ is proclaimed and the gospel is applied to every area of life, believers are sanctified and built up. Simultaneously, non-believers hear the gospel and see how it works in every area of life. In this way, evangelism and discipleship both occur in the same sermon. The gospel is not tagged on at the end of sermons, but every sermon is the unpacking of the gospel as it relates to particular dimensions of life, relationships, society, and culture. The gospel has ramifications for our thinking, feeling, living, working, and behaving.

### The Sacraments

A Sacrament is a visible sign or symbol of a spiritual reality. We believe there are two Sacraments that Jesus has given his Church – baptism and communion. God knows we need physical images to help grasp spiritual realities, so in his mercy he has given us these signs and symbols to image forth his gospel to us. Not only do they image the gospel, these Sacraments are also instruments that bring the experience of grace to our lives resulting in our trans-

formation. Just like when you hear the Scriptures being taught and your heart is affected, so these Sacraments affect us at the heart level.

## Baptism

Baptism is not a saving act (1 Corinthians 1:17), but an act that pictures one's salvation. Baptism is a sign and seal of the New Covenant (the gospel) that is to be administered to all believers upon personal faith and repentance. It is a *sign* in that baptism images forth the realities that have happened in our lives as a result of being united by faith with Christ in his death and resurrection. Like a diamond, the sign has many facets: new birth as one emerges from the water now dead to sin and alive to God (Romans 6:3-4); cleansing from sin (Titus 3:4-7); the passing through the waters of judgment into life (1 Peter 3:20-22); and incorporation into Christ's church as members of his body (1 Corinthians 12:13). It is a *seal* or authentication, consummation of our faith in that by receiving this sign of faith we are assured of the Spirit's work in us giving us new life in Christ. It is a sign of what God does for all those who believe in Jesus and it is a seal, a way he visibly promises that he will indeed do all of those things for us.

In the days of the early church, baptism was administered immediately after one came to believe in Jesus Christ (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 2:38-39; 8:12,35-39; 9:17-18; 10:44-48; 16:14-15, 30-33). It was the way one *immediately identified* themselves as belonging to Jesus and as one receiving his salvation. Baptism was the way they were visibly incorporated into his Church. The event was so closely associated with the point of belief that baptism was often spoken of as the point of belief. The two were seen as inseparable acts. In fact, a non-baptized believer was a non-category in the early church. To believe was to be baptized. This is why we value baptism as an immediate expression of faith in Jesus Christ and do our best not to delay it after one comes to faith and can give a credible profession of their faith.

Every time we observe baptism, we are reminded of what God has done for us in Christ and by the saving activity of his Spirit. We see the gospel preached to us when someone is baptized, and we are reminded about the things that are true about us. Baptism is not just for those being baptized, but it is a visible sermon to all those who watch it.

## *Infant and Child Baptisms*

Because we believe that the biblical pattern is personal faith followed by baptism, it is reserved for those who can give a credible profession of faith in Jesus. However, there are many in evangelical traditions that baptize their infant children. These traditions see a continuity between circumcision (the Old Covenant sign) and baptism (the New Covenant sign). Just as the people of God in the Old Testament would give their children the sign of the covenant community (circumcision), the people of God in the New Testament, the Church, should give their children the sign of belonging to the new covenant community (baptism). At Church at the Cross, we appreciate this view, but we do not share it. We believe that though there is continuity between the Old Testament people of God and the Church, there is also discontinuity. In the New Covenant, we are not gathered to God's people by our nationality or ethnicity, but by faith (Galatians 3:7, 25-29). We do not belong to the people of God through the flesh (our birth or ethnicity), but by faith. The Church consists of those who have faith in Jesus. As John Piper has written,

*But the people of the new covenant, called the Church of Jesus Christ, is being built in a fundamentally different way. The church is not based on any ethnic, national distinctives but on the reality of faith alone, by grace alone in the power of the Holy Spirit. The Church is not a continuation of Israel as a whole; it is a continuation of the true Israel, the remnant—not the children of the flesh, but the children of promise. Therefore, it is not fitting that the children born merely according to the flesh*

*receive the sign of the covenant, baptism. John Piper, "How do Baptism and Circumcision Correspond?" August, 1999.*

We believe that infant baptism is a beautiful expression of a parent's faith and a way to visibly associate the infant with the Church. We believe it expresses a parent's desire to see their child grow up to understand and receive the salvation that is found in Jesus. However, we believe that baptism is a personal response to the gospel, a sign and seal received by those who have placed personal faith in Jesus (Colossians 2:12; 1 Peter 3:21).

At Church at the Cross, we do want to acknowledge a parent's desire to see their children brought up in the community of faith and raised up into the knowledge of Jesus. Therefore, as a tangible way to express that desire, we conduct Parent/Child Dedications. These moments are sacred times with our community when parents pledge to God and to their children a promise to model and teach the gospel to their children with the help of the church while entrusting their children to God and his grace. When those children reach an age where they are able to give a personal credible profession of faith, they will be considered for baptism.

### *Mode of Baptism*

There are various ways that the Church has practiced the act of baptism throughout its long history. As a result, there has been much debate as to the 'correct' or most appropriate modes of baptism. Some evangelical traditions have long practiced the sprinkling or pouring of water over the baptized. Others, such as the Southern Baptist Convention, hold to a practice of immersing the baptized under the water. This is the belief and practice of Church at the Cross. However, we do not hold it as a required practice to recognize the validity of a person's baptism from other evangelical traditions. We do not require those that are seeking membership to undergo baptism by immersion if they have undergone Believer's Baptism by a different mode.

### *Communion*

The gift of Communion is one of *remembrance* and *participation*. When we eat the bread and drink the cup, we are *remembering* Jesus' cross event and communing with him by faith. The elements of the bread and the crushed fruit of the vine represent his body and blood. His body (bread) was given for us. His blood (wine/juice) was poured out for us (Luke 22:19-20). We remember what he has done for us and embrace it, once again savoring our salvation. This nourishes us spiritually as we ponder God's goodness toward us expressed fully in the giving of his Son for our sin and salvation. When we take communion, we are *participating* by faith in the broken body and shed blood of Jesus and he is spiritually present with us, communicating his love for us in a tangible way (1 Corinthians 10:16). As we receive communion together, we remember that we are a community brought together around the Lord's table by the Holy Spirit who has united us together in Christ (1 Corinthians 10:17). This is a communal meal, a coming together around Jesus to remember him and have our faith renewed in his saving work. As we take of this symbolic meal, we look forward to his coming where we will indeed dine with Christ and his people in his Kingdom (Luke 22:16, 18). This is a very sacred moment. So much so that only those who have come to know Christ and have been baptized in his name are invited to receive communion. When we take communion, we are giving testimony of our continued faith in and loyalty to Jesus as our Savior and to our faithfulness to his Church as our spiritual family. Paul warned the church in Corinth that anyone who took Communion in an unholy way, either as a non-believer or as a believer, who was living in sin or out of fellowship with God's people would bring judgment on themselves. In fact, some in Corinth had become sick and even died as a result of taking communion in an unholy way (1 Corinthians 11:23-31).

The normative experience of Holy Communion is the intentional, frequent, and consistent observance (i.e., remembering, participating) by Christians gathered together in churches. At Church at the Cross, we practice “open Communion,” namely that all baptized, true followers of Christ are welcome to his Table with us. Those who are not baptized, true followers of Christ should not receive Holy Communion in order to avoid eating and drinking unto their own judgment by God (1 Corinthians 11:23-21).

## PREPARING FOR WORSHIP GATHERINGS

Our covenant members are expected to regularly attend worship at Church at the Cross. As you come, we encourage you to come prepared.

### *Rise early for personal prayer and preparation*

Give yourself enough time in the morning to quiet your heart before the Lord in prayer. Ask his blessing and favor upon our gathering. Pray that we would experience his presence among us and that he would empower the preaching of his word.

### *Arrive early*

It is very hard to enter the gathering with a quiet heart ready to meet with the Lord and his people when you are rushed and frantically trying to make it on time. It is also impossible to engage new people and help them feel welcomed when you are rushing in late to a gathering.

### *Bring a friend*

The gospel will be preached at our gatherings and they provide a great environment for others to hear about the grace of God.

### *Come to serve*

There are great needs on Sunday that you can contribute to: Children’s Ministry, Student Ministry, Greeters, Connection Center, etc. Get in a regular rotation of service.

### *Reflect throughout the week*

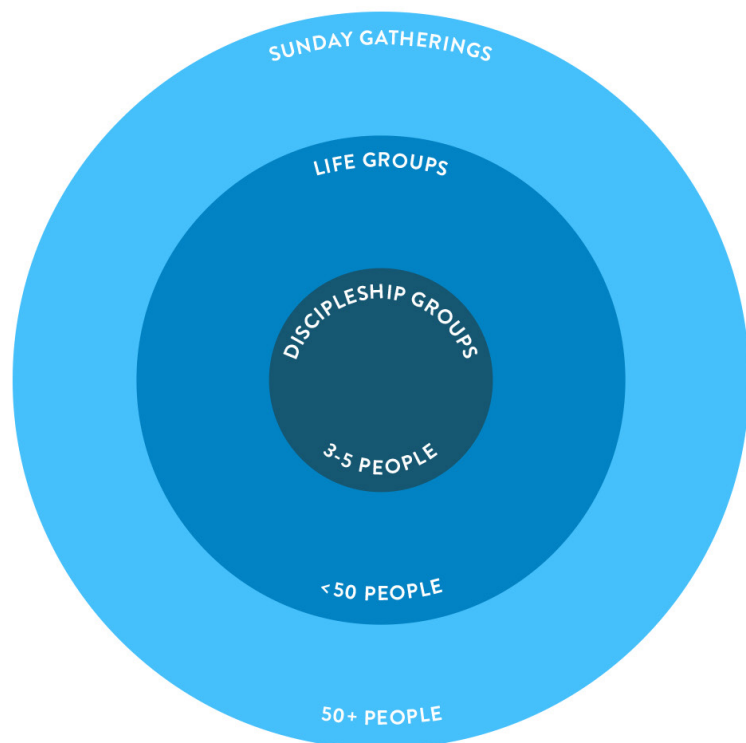
Don’t come and forget, but come and reflect. Ask God to solidify his Word from Sunday in your heart. Reflect on the songs, the sermon, and on your interaction with others. Our Life Groups meet during the week as well as on Sunday to reflect on the text and seek to apply it together as a community.

# SESSION FIVE: LIFE GROUPS

## Review

In Session One, we examined the nature and purpose of the Church, looking at the universal Church and the importance of the local church. In Session Two, we focused on the gospel, both from an individual perspective – how is God saving and renewing us who have been separated from God by sin; and from a corporate perspective – how is God renewing all of creation shattered by sin. The gospel is more than just, “I am reconciled to God through the finished work of the crucified and risen Jesus Christ.” It also is, “This world is destined for re-creation because of the finished work of the crucified and risen Christ.” In Session Three, we looked at our vision, mission, and values that spring from the gospel. We are about *helping people and places encounter Jesus*. We do this by *reaching, teaching, training, and sending*. But only a people formed by the gospel will live lives together like that. We seek to be a people *centered on Jesus, driven by grace*, who are being *renewed as community*, are *sent on mission*, and who love, serve, and speak on mission as those *empowered by the Holy Spirit*. In Session Four we focused on our church as a gathered community and looked at our Worship Gatherings and the centrality of the gospel in our worship. We also examined the Sacraments, the gospel in pictures that serve as a means of grace to the Church. In this section, we will look at the Church as a people who live in a regular pattern of interaction and shared life.

## DISCIPLESHIP CIRCLES GRAPH



### PUBLIC SPACE

- Evangelism
- Instruction
- Exhortation
- Sacraments

### SOCIAL SPACE

- Care/Prayer
- Fellowship
- Encouragement
- Evangelism

### PERSONAL SPACE

- Accountability
- Bible Study
- Confession
- Friendship



# ORDERING OUR EVERYDAY LIVES TOGETHER

In the book of Acts we see the Church as a people brought together in Jesus, united by the Spirit advancing God's mission.

*Acts 2:42–47 (ESV) – 42 And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. 43 And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. 44 And all who believed were together and had all things in common. 45 And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. 46 And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.*

The Church did not see themselves as a place but as a people. They did not simply attend a place, but belonged to a people. They entered into a regular rhythm of life with other believers, sharing time together, meals together, and resources together. They sought to help each other understand the Scripture and bring their lives into conformity to it. They gave themselves gladly to the mission of God together, seeing more and more people added to their number as they came to know the saving grace of Jesus declared and demonstrated by these growing communities of believers.

**Helping people and places encounter Jesus requires certain shifts to take place.**

- **From Church as a Place to Church as a People** – Daily living as disciples together, primarily in Life Groups.
- **From Attending to Belonging** – Not consumers and observers, but contributors and participants; not unknown, but known, loved and exhorted to follow Jesus.
- **From Knowledge to Obedience** – Personal obedience to teachings of Jesus. Communal: not being informed together about the Word, but forming one another with the Word.
- **From Centralized Ministry to Decentralized Ministry** – Gathered to receive and scattered to give; living out the "one anothers" of Scripture in daily interactions with one another. We are not about programs, but about people living out their passion, calling, and gifting, seeking to bless others and introduce them to Jesus and his church.
- **From Mission Events to Missionary Communities** – **ATTRACTIVE CHURCH**: Not about the style of its presentation but about the substance of its people. Church as Place puts on evangelistic events and markets those events to the community. The job of the people is to get people to come to the event where someone will tell people how to go to heaven and give them an opportunity to respond. If they don't, there is always next year, or the next event. *Missionary Communities - your life together is the evangelistic event.*

These shifts will require an intentionality as to how we live. We won't accidentally live out our mission with one another. It must be intentional. **These shifts require us to renounce compartmentalization** – where we silo our faith off from everything else and make a Sunday silo that never touches the rest of our days. These shifts mean that we intentionally live out our collective identity together as the people of God, Monday through Sunday.

We seek to purposefully order our lives. **What does it mean to order your life?** *Ordering your life means you intentionally prioritize your time, energy, emotions, and resources around something you have exalted with the inten-*



*tion of experiencing, enjoying, and advancing it. This intentional ordering creates rhythms in your life, canonized habits, non-negotiable commitments of time, money, and energy.*

**We are going to order our lives around something** – Something will be exalted in our lives that seizes our time, money and emotions, claiming any margin we might have on our calendar or in our bank account. EXAMPLES: our families, careers, kid's activities, hobbies, a relationship...

**The members of Church at the Cross are seeking to order our everyday lives together around Jesus and his mission.** This means that we are ordering our individual and everyday lives together, prioritizing our time, energy, emotions and resources around knowing and enjoying Jesus together and advancing his mission through our collective works and witness to help people and places experience renewal in Jesus.

**This starts with Identity**– Do you see yourself primarily as an individual, or as one made in the image of God who is built to be a person in community? God did not save us in isolation – he saved us in to his people. God saves us into his family and expects us to experience shared life together as his people, not simply as a saved, isolated individual.

**Foundational Shift: Moving from Occasional Event to Regular Rhythms** – If those other shifts are going to happen, this shift will be NECESSARY. Church moves from an event I attend to people with whom I'm in a regular pattern of interaction and shared life, primarily experienced in Life Groups. I move from events to rhythms.

## RHYTHMS

### Personal Rhythms

Personally growing in my relationship with Jesus, embracing my identity in him.

- Daily spiritual disciplines of Bible reading, prayer, and worship
  - Daily prayer (see [churchatthecross.com/prayer](http://churchatthecross.com/prayer))
  - Church at the Cross Daily Readings ([churchatthecross.com/dailyreadings](http://churchatthecross.com/dailyreadings))
- Regular gatherings with God's people for worship, the Word, and the Sacraments

### Communal Rhythms

- Regular participation and shared life with a Life Group and its members. Community is not the goal; not something that we do out of a law or obligation. Community is the outworking of our new identity as the people of God, made family in Jesus.
  - Weekly Life Group meeting where we share life (meal, fellowship, scripture, prayer, using our spiritual gifts to build into one another's life)
  - Scheduled *Discipleship Groups*, time to meet with smaller group of believers for scripture, prayer, confession, and accountability
- Spontaneous interaction in the everyday habits of life; experiencing shared life together where we naturally talk about Jesus and his work in our life.

### Missional Rhythms of Community

- Frequent hospitality that together opens our homes and lives to those who have yet to connect with Jesus.
- Regular recreation that seeks to include outsiders.
- Regular patronizing of stores, restaurants, coffee shops, etc. in hopes of having presence and building friendships with those outside the church.
- Adopting a people or place in hopes that they would encounter Jesus.

## The Threat of Compartmentalization

- *Compartmentalization vs Integration.* What if you could integrate the activities of your life so that you live out of your gospel identity alongside your gospel community with gospel intentionality.
  - From *Everyday Church*: How to recognize opportunities for missional rhythms in community
    - Think of all the activities that make up your daily routine (commuting, eating, exercising, playing with your kids); your weekly routines (shopping, watching tv programs, attending sporting events); monthly routines (projects).
    - For each one ask if you can add a *community component* by involving someone in your believing community; a *missional component* by including a non-Christian with whom you have been building a friendship; a *gospel component* by looking for opportunities to talk about Jesus.
    - NOT Compartmentalization but Integration. Not adding anything to your schedule, but living with greater gospel intentionality. Including others and being included by others.

## How Life Groups Form and How You Can Get Involved?

- Existing Relationships – if you are coming to CATC with already existing relationships with people already in a Life Group, consider starting there.
- Geographical Proximity – join a group that is near you. Proximity is vital for ordering our lives together.
- Missional Interest – join a group that is seeking to engage the same missional context as you.

To find a Life Group, drop by our Connection Center, go online to [churchatthecross.com/lifegroups](http://churchatthecross.com/lifegroups), or contact Minister to Life Groups and Outreach, Geoffrey Bertram at [geoffrey@churchatthecross.com](mailto:geoffrey@churchatthecross.com).



# SESSION SIX: LEADERSHIP AND MEMBERSHIP

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## **Elders, Deacons, Members**

The Church is precious to Jesus Christ. She is His Bride for whom He gave His life (Ephesians 5:25-32). He is her Husband. The Church is His Body; He is the Head. The Church is His Flock; He is the Chief Shepherd. Jesus is the Sr. Pastor of the Church shepherding it from heaven, but He entrusts the care of His Church on earth to equipped, qualified leadership.

### **Elders/Pastors**

All New Testament churches had a plurality of leaders called Elders, also called Pastors and Overseers (Acts 14:23; 15:2; 20:17; Philippians 1:1; Titus 1:5; James 1:1; 5:14; 1 Peter 1:1; 5:1). These men were to look after the Church's health, govern the Church's direction, teach the Church sound doctrine, defend the Church against false teachers, encourage faithfulness among God's people, and confront and gently deal with the presence of sin in the faith community. The qualifications for these men as laid out in Scripture are very clear and very demanding (1 Timothy 2:11-3:7; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-3). They are to be devout, prayerful men of integrity who have known Christ for some time, are above reproach, sexually pure, self-controlled, able to teach and defend sound doctrine, free from the love of money, good managers of their own homes and families, hospitable, and having a good reputation with people outside the church. As leaders they will one day give an account to God for how well they led, protected, and nourished God's people (Hebrews 13:17). Church at the Cross is led by a plurality of pastors, both staff and non-staff, who oversee the direction, health, ministries, and finances of the church.

### **Deacons**

Deacons are secondary leaders under the Elders/Pastors who assist in ministry to the people. Though the word is not used in Acts 6, it is a clear illustration of the ministry of a deacon. The word deacon literally means servant. It is their role to serve the local church in a variety of ways (caring for the sick, serving the needy in the congregation, filling service roles, etc.). The later New Testament Epistles give clear qualifications for deacons. They are to be people who are worthy of respect, above reproach, having proven character, self-controlled, free from greed or addictions, sound theologically, sexually pure, and not prone to sins of the tongue. In addition, married men who serve as deacons are to be godly husbands and fathers who lead their families well.

### **Members**

Church members serve and lead under the direction of the Elders and Deacons. As Christians, they are devoted to their local congregations desiring to ensure its health and growth by giving sacrificially of their time, talents, and treasures. Members of the church are committed to its vision, are actively using their spiritual gifts to edify the church and evangelize those far from Christ, and are systematically and sacrificially giving of their resources to fund the ministries of the church for the accomplishment of its vision. As members grow in their spiritual formation and develop as followers of Christ, it is our desire to see them pursue further service and leadership in the church.

## MINISTRY AND MISSION

*"And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love." (Ephesians 4:11–16, ESV)*

We believe in decentralized ministry. Whatever God is going to do, he is going to do through all of his people and not just professional clergy. Jesus has given to his Church gifted people who empower and equip the people to do the work of ministry. This does not require programmed ministries created to steward the burden of members or to provide venues to display giftings. Rather, in the everyday patterns of life, we use our spiritual gifts and personal resources to build up other believers and advance the mission of Jesus in the world.

### Reaching

**Conversion:** Worship Gatherings; Life Groups; Personal Evangelism; Gospel and Baptism Class; and Prologue

### Teaching

**Convictions:** Worship Gatherings; Life Groups; Grow Class; Equipping; Resources (Daily Readings; Website)

**Character:** Life Groups; Discipleship Groups; Counseling; Prayer; Resources (Daily Readings and Website)

**Community:** Life Groups; Discipleship Groups; Night of Prayer; Membership Class; and Members' Meetings

### Training

**Competencies, Confidence:** Life Group Leader Cohorts; Evangelism Training; Leader Development; Elder and Deacon Development; Art and Culture; Foster Care/ Adoption; Care and Community Engagement

### Sending

**Commissioning:** Age Group Ministry Leaders; Mission Teams; Community Ministry; Life Group Leaders; Elder and Deacon Appointments; Missionary Deployment; Commissioning Artists; Adoptive/Foster Care Families; and Church Planting

## SERVING AT CHURCH AT THE CROSS

The Holy Spirit has given gifts to each believer to be used to serve the body of Christ, bringing it to maturity and moving the mission forward. Each member is expected to use their gifts and abilities to serve the other members and ministries of the church.

### Kids at the Cross Children's Ministry

We are deeply committed to teaching children a Jesus-Centered, Grace-driven understanding of the Bible. We believe the Church is to provide a safe, fun, engaging environment for children in our 30,000 square foot space known as Kidstown. We desire children to learn the gospel and its implications for all of life. We strive to staff the ministry with screened and trained volunteers who serve with a passion for the spiritual formation of the children of Church at the Cross. Even as we do this, we strongly believe that the home is the foremost arena for spiritual formation and seek to partner with parents in the process of leading their children to a fuller understanding of the person and work of Jesus. In addition to Sundays, we also provide opportunities for camp, Vacation Bible School, summer Bible studies, and other events.

For more info, contact Minister to Children and Families, Lori Atkeisson, at [lori@churchatthecross.com](mailto:lori@churchatthecross.com)

### Students at the Cross Student Ministry

The student ministry of Church at the Cross exists to help students and their families encounter Jesus. Students at the Cross includes all teenagers, grades 6th-12th. It's hope is to reach students with the gospel of Jesus Christ, teach them what it looks like to follow him, equip them to help others follow him, and send them out into their spheres of influence to make him known. Looking to get your teenager connected? Some connection points include:

- Student Life Groups | Sunday Mornings at 10:45am in the Student Center
- EMERGE | Student Worship Gathering | Wednesdays from 6:30-8pm in the Student Center
- ONE Weekend, Student Life Camps, & Retreats
- Mission Trips
- Discipling Relationships

Are you are interested in joining the Students at the Cross team? There are a number of different roles and different capacities that you can help in. We really do believe that whatever God is going to accomplish in this ministry, he is going to do it through a team of people, not through any one individual. Join us! We would love to have you. Contact James Sercey to take your next steps.

For more info contact Minister to Students James Sercey at [james@churchatthecross.com](mailto:james@churchatthecross.com).

### Sunday Hospitality Teams

We have three teams that serve our corporate gathering on Sunday mornings. We would welcome your help on any of these three teams to help us continue to host hundreds of folks on our campus every Sunday morning.

Our three teams are:

- **The Auditorium Team**

This team serves in three ways: 1) help guests and members find their seats 2) take up the tithes and offerings 3) prepare and serve communion ever Sunday. Covenant Membership is required to serve.

- **The Welcoming Team**

This team serves as the first impression of Church at the Cross to all guests and members. Team members serve as greeters on Sunday mornings as well as at special events throughout the week.

- **The Eyes and Ears Team**

This team helps ensure the security of our campus by maintaining heightened awareness throughout our Sunday mornings and other special events.

For more info or to sign up to serve, visit [churchatthecross.com/serve-hospitality](http://churchatthecross.com/serve-hospitality).

## Life Task Force

At Church at the Cross, we believe that all life is important and valued by God, from womb to tomb. The Life Task Force seeks to mobilize and equip the church to care for the vulnerable and marginalized in our culture. The focus will be on three key areas: Foster Care and Adoption, New Life Advocacy, and Senior Care and Dementia. Each of these teams will advocate, educate, and train the church to respond to the needs around us.

For more info or to sign up to serve, visit [churchatthecross.com/life-task-force](http://churchatthecross.com/life-task-force).

## MISSION PARTNERSHIPS

*"And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.'" (Matthew 28:18–20, ESV)*

The members of the Church carry out the mission of the church through active participation in going, praying, and giving. It is the call of every Christian to actively seek to make Christ known to our neighbors and all the nations. Collectively the church should seek to advance the mission of Jesus through everyday evangelism and church planting with a focus on our neighbors and Gospel Priority Peoples, and through mercy and justice endeavors.

### Our Partners

- **Southern Baptist Convention** - We partner with other "Great Commission" churches to provide disaster relief, train pastors, support church planting efforts, and send the largest supported missionary force in the world.
- **North American Mission Board** - NAMB works to mobilize churches and equip leaders for church planting efforts throughout North America.
- **International Mission Board** - The International Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention is evangelizing, discipling, and planting reproducing churches among all peoples in fulfillment of the Great Commission.
- **Grapevine Women's Care Clinic and Human Coalition** - We partner with these organizations defending the sanctity of life and serving women in crisis pregnancies.
- **All Peoples Community Church, Fairfax, VA.** - We are helping Kenji and Christine Adachi plant a church in Fairfax, VA just outside of Washington D.C. Fairfax County is the largest county in the DC Metro area. It is an area in need of gospel rich churches that can reach a diverse community. We are thrilled to partner with Kenji as he launches and leads this new church seeking to promote a movement of gospel-driven, multi-ethnic churches.

- **Flourishing Grace Church** - Flourishing Grace Church's desire vision to see a movement of people in Utah transformed through flourishing relationships with Jesus. Pastor Josh Knight and his team are striving to make that happen in Bountiful, Utah - just outside of Salt Lake City.
- **Mercy of Christ Fellowship Church** - Pastor Jeremy McClain planted Mercy of Christ Fellowship Church in Washington D.C. They are a diverse group of sinful people that have found eternal mercy in Jesus Christ. They are committed to walking with God by praying, preaching, and living by the Word of God.
- **Empower One** - Empower One's goal is to empower local leaders in East Africa to know how to make a disciple of Jesus, who can start a church that can then transform its community.

## CHURCH DISCIPLINE

When someone commits to join a local body, that person is willingly submitting himself/herself to the Elders of that local body (Hebrews 13:17) and the community as a whole. From time to time, individual members of a local congregation will find themselves in spiritual tailspins and begin to embrace lifestyles or false teachings that are harmful to their own spiritual and emotional states and poorly represent Christ and adversely affect His people. The Scriptures instruct us that when this happens, other members of the body who are spiritual should seek to gently restore that individual (Galatians 6:1). This informal process should happen one to one (Matthew 18:15), and if the person does not listen, then one or two others should be involved in the restoration process (Matthew 18:6). However, when the individual refuses to respond to this informal approach, and continues in sin (public and persistent), a more formal approach to church discipline must be taken. At this point the Elders of the church are given the responsibility to tenderly and lovingly confront that individual and call him or her to repentance. The church member is to be addressed by the Elders to clarify the issue and give appropriate opportunity for repentance. When there still exists consistent unrepentant sin, the Elders are to bring it before the body of believers who are then informed of the individual's sin (Matthew 18:17). If the person does not repent even after this appeal by the body, that person is to be removed from the fellowship and treated as an unbeliever (Matthew 18:18; 1 Corinthians 5:1-5, 11; 2 Thessalonians 3:6, 14-15) meaning we should seek to lead that person into an understanding and embracing of the gospel for his/her personal salvation. This individual would not be allowed to take communion since partaking of communion is a sign of partaking in the unity of the Church. Church members would not engage this person in ordinary fellowship, but would use every encounter to invite the person back to Jesus and to his Church through repentance. The goal of church discipline is restoration of the person to fellowship with God and His people. When a person does respond to this process of discipline and repents, he or she is to be embraced again by the body and received into fellowship (2 Corinthians 2:7-8).

When an individual joins Church at the Cross, he or she is agreeing to be held accountable by the body and its leadership. That person does so understanding that persistent and public sin will be graciously confronted. If that sin is not publicly repented of, the individual will be publicly removed from the fellowship of the Church in hopes of bringing eventual repentance and restoration.

# SESSION SEVEN:

## COVENANT MEMBERSHIP AT CHURCH AT THE CROSS

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### Why Membership?

We must begin to view membership less as a loose affiliation useful only on occasion and more as a regular responsibility involving us in one another's lives for the purposes of the gospel.

Membership is not a sentimental issue, but a theological one. We want to move away from "member in name" and move toward "member in fact."

### What is a Membership Covenant?

A Membership Covenant is a public promise we make to God and to one another to live out our discipleship together on mission. It is how we know who is a member of our specific congregation, clarifying what it means practically to be a member of our congregation in terms of beliefs and practices. It clearly articulates church life - how we are expected to live as a community of Christ-followers together in ways that contribute to the maturity and the mission of the church. Just as the people of God in the Scriptures would publicly make and renew a covenant together with God, even in writing accompanied by their signatures (Nehemiah 9:38ff), members of local churches have historically made commitments to one another as a congregation, entering into covenant with one another before God. In this way, a covenant is a way of voicing our commitment and inviting other members and the elders into the responsibility of holding us to that commitment.

Church covenants make membership meaningful because they clarify the spiritual and relational commitments that membership signifies. Clarifying the commitments of membership promotes the health of the local church because it keeps nominalism at bay and keeps us accountable to growing in real Christian piety. And the more we grow in true Christian holiness and love, the more evidence we have that we are indeed his disciples (John 13:34-35; 15:8).

"A public promise, or covenant, is the basis for all society according to the Bible: marriage, employment, citizenship and church membership are all relationships of accountability." - Tim Keller

# THE MEMBER COVENANT OF CHURCH AT THE CROSS

As those who have been brought to faith in Jesus by the powerful working of God's Holy Spirit, and have been baptized as believers, we pledge that with God's help we will give ourselves to the following commitments:

We will hold fast to the gospel of Jesus for our life and salvation, putting no confidence in our flesh for our standing, status, or security before God and his people (Matthew 11:28-30; Romans 3:20-25; Galatians 2:20-21; 6:14; Philippians 3:3; Colossians 1:21-23).

We will center our lives on Jesus and his mission, trusting and obeying him as we seek to make disciples among our neighbors and among the nations by the power of the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:18-20; Mark 8:34-38; Acts 1:8).

We will conduct our lives in holiness according to God's Word, submitting ourselves to the Scriptures and continuing in this local church's Statement of Faith as a trustworthy summary of biblical teaching (Matthew 5:13-16, 48; Romans 12:1-2; 2 Corinthians 7:1; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; 1 Peter 2:11-12).

We will be faithful in the Word and prayer, devoting ourselves to the study of Scripture and to private and corporate prayer and intercession (Acts 2:42-47; 4:31; Colossians 4:2; 1 Thessalonians 5:17).

We will actively, consistently, and joyfully participate in the corporate life of the church, serving in its ministries, engaging in groups, and attending weekly services to worship, receive God's Word, and observe the Sacraments (Acts 2:42-47; Hebrews 10:24-25).

We will seek to exemplify true Christ-centered community, striving to maintain the unity of the Spirit by loving, serving, caring for and admonishing one another (John 13:34-35; Acts 4:32-37; Romans 12:9-10; 2 Corinthians 13:11; Ephesians 4:1-6; 4:25-5:2).

We will seek to discover, strengthen, and use our spiritual gifts for the glory of God and the growth of his Church (Romans 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12:12-31; 1 Peter 4:10-11).

We will cheerfully, sacrificially, and regularly give to support the ministries and expenses of the church, to relieve the poor and needy, and to advance the spread of the gospel through all nations (Acts 2:44-45; 4:32-37; 2 Corinthians 8:9; 9:6-12).

We will accept biblical guidance from fellow members of the church and its elders who are called to give care, counsel, and spiritual direction to its members (Colossians 3:16; 1 Thessalonians 5:11-12; Hebrews 3:13; 10:24; 13:7, 17).

We will honor marriage as a permanent and exclusive covenant between one man and one woman for the sake of demonstrating the gospel to the world, while striving to honor and provide intimate friendship and spiritual family to those who for the sake of Christ live as single and celibate (Matthew 19:3-12; Ephesians 5:22-33; Hebrews 13:4).

We will hold one another accountable to this covenant, exhorting and equipping one another to keep these promises and seeking to gently restore those who persistently live contrary to them (Matthew 18:15-20; 1 Corinthians 5:6-7; Galatians 6:1; Ephesians 4:25).

We will embrace as covenant members those who commit to keep the spirit of this covenant, but who due to physical health conditions are unable to keep all the practices of this covenant. We will seek to serve them as our home-bound members in need of support, encouragement, prayer, and fellowship (Isaiah 1:17; Matthew 25:36; James 1:27).

We will, upon leaving this congregation in good standing, notify the appropriate leaders and, as soon as possible, unite with another church that seeks to embody the spirit and doctrine of this covenant for the glory of God (Ephesians 4:4-6).

## THE ELDER COVENANT

As Elders, we are called to love, serve, guide, teach, equip, and watch over the church for God's glory and the good of his people. As Elders appointed by God's Spirit through his people, we will give ourselves to the following commitments:

We will abide by the Church Covenant as fellow members of Church at the Cross and seek to set an example for those whom God has entrusted to our care (Heb.13:7; 1 Peter 5:3).

We will prayerfully and humbly seek God's direction for our local church, listening to God through the faithful study of his Word and through prayer (Acts 6:4; Acts 20:31-32; 1 Peter 5:1-4).

We will provide care and counsel for the church seeking the growth and spiritual health of its members (Mat.28:16-19; Acts 20:28; 1 Cor. 3:10-16; Eph.4:11-16; 1 Peter 5:1-4).

We will faithfully teach the Bible, preaching the whole of Scripture and guarding the church against false teachers who would hurt the church and hinder its mission (Acts 20:27-31; Col. 1:28; 1 Tim. 4:16; 2 Tim. 4:1-5; Titus 2:1; Heb. 13:17).

We will lovingly exercise discipline when there is public, persistent, and unrepentant sin, following Jesus' instructions for the good of the church and for the good of the one being disciplined (Mat. 18:15-20; 1 Cor. 5; Gal. 6:1; James 5:19-20).



# APPENDIX ONE: CHURCH AT THE CROSS AFFIRMATION OF FAITH<sup>1</sup>

## The Scriptures

The Holy Bible was written by men divinely inspired and is God's revelation of Himself to man. It is a perfect treasure of divine instruction. It has God for its author, salvation for its end, and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter. Therefore, all Scripture is totally true and trustworthy. It reveals the principles by which God judges us, and therefore is, and will remain to the end of the world the true center of Christian union, and the supreme standard by which all human conduct, creeds, and religious opinions should be tried. All Scripture is a testimony to Christ, who is Himself the focus of divine revelation.

*Exodus 24:4; Deuteronomy 4:1-2; 17:19; Joshua 8:34; Psalms 19:7-10; 119:11,89,105,140; Isaiah 34:16; 40:8; Jeremiah 15:16; 36:1-32; Matthew 5:17-18; 22:29; Luke 21:33; 24:44-46; John 5:39; 16:13-15; 17:17; Acts 2:16ff.; 17:11; Romans 15:4; 16:25-26; 2 Timothy 3:15-17; Hebrews 1:1-2; 4:12; 1 Peter 1:25; 2 Peter 1:19-21.*

## God

There is one and only one living and true God. He is an intelligent, spiritual, and personal Being, the Creator, Redeemer, Preserver, and Ruler of the universe. God is infinite in holiness and all other perfections. God is all powerful and all knowing; and His perfect knowledge extends to all things, past, present, and future, including the future decisions of His free creatures. To Him we owe the highest love, reverence, and obedience. The eternal triune God reveals Himself to us as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, with distinct personal attributes, but without division of nature, essence, or being.

### God the Father

God as Father reigns with providential care over His universe, His creatures, and the flow of the stream of human history according to the purposes of His grace. He is all powerful, all knowing, all loving, and all wise. God is Father in truth to those who become children of God through faith in Jesus Christ. He is fatherly in His attitude toward all men.

*Genesis 1:1; 2:7; Exodus 3:14; 6:2-3; 15:11ff.; 20:1ff.; Leviticus 22:2; Deuteronomy 6:4; 32:6; 1 Chronicles 29:10; Psalm 19:1-3; Isaiah 43:3,15; 64:8; Jeremiah 10:10; 17:13; Matthew 6:9ff.; 7:11; 23:9; 28:19; Mark 1:9-11; John 4:24; 5:26; 14:6-13; 17:1-8; Acts 1:7; Romans 8:14-15; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 4:6; Colossians 1:15; 1 Timothy 1:17; Hebrews 11:6; 12:9; 1 Peter 1:17; 1 John 5:7.*

### God the Son

Christ is the eternal Son of God. In His incarnation as Jesus Christ He was conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. Jesus perfectly revealed and did the will of God, taking upon Himself human nature with its demands and necessities and identifying Himself completely with mankind yet without sin. He honored the divine law by His personal obedience, and in His substitutionary death on the cross He made provision for the redemption of men from sin. He was raised from the dead with a glorified body and appeared to His disciples as the person who was with them before His crucifixion. He ascended into heaven and is now exalted at the right hand of God where He is the One Mediator, fully God, fully man, in whose Person is effected the reconciliation between God and man. He will return in power and glory to judge the world and to consummate His redemptive mission. He now dwells in all believers as the living and ever present Lord.

*Genesis 18:1ff.; Psalms 2:7ff.; 110:1ff.; Isaiah 7:14; 53; Matthew 1:18-23; 3:17; 8:29; 11:27; 14:33; 16:16,27; 17:5; 27; 28:1-6,19; Mark 1:1; 3:11; Luke 1:35; 4:41; 22:70; 24:46; John 1:1-18,29; 10:30,38; 11:25-27; 12:44-50; 14:7-11; 16:15-16,28; 17:1-5, 21-22; 20:1-20,28; Acts 1:9; 2:22-24; 7:55-56; 9:4-5,20; Romans 1:3-4; 3:23-26; 5:6-21; 8:1-3,34; 10:4; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 2:2; 8:6; 15:1-8,24-28; 2 Corinthians 5:19-21; 8:9; Galatians 4:4-5; Ephesians 1:20; 3:11; 4:7-10; Philippians 2:5-11; Colossians 1:13-22; 2:9; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 1 Timothy 2:5-6; 3:16;*

<sup>1</sup> Our statement of faith comes from the most essential sections of the 2000 Baptist Faith and Message

*Titus 2:13-14; Hebrews 1:1-3; 4:14-15; 7:14-28; 9:12-15,24-28; 12:2; 13:8; 1 Peter 2:21-25; 3:22; 1 John 1:7-9; 3:2; 4:14-15; 5:9; 2 John 7-9; Revelation 1:13-16; 5:9-14; 12:10-11; 13:8; 19:16.*

## **God the Holy Spirit**

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God, fully divine. He inspired holy men of old to write the Scriptures. Through illumination He enables men to understand truth. He exalts Christ. He convicts men of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. He calls men to the Saviour, and effects regeneration. At the moment of regeneration He baptizes every believer into the Body of Christ. He cultivates Christian character, comforts believers, and bestows the spiritual gifts by which they serve God through His church. He seals the believer unto the day of final redemption. His presence in the Christian is the guarantee that God will bring the believer into the fullness of the stature of Christ. He enlightens and empowers the believer and the church in worship, evangelism, and service.

*Genesis 1:2; Judges 14:6; Job 26:13; Psalms 51:11; 139:7ff.; Isaiah 61:1-3; Joel 2:28-32; Matthew 1:18; 3:16; 4:1; 12:28-32; 28:19; Mark 1:10,12; Luke 1:35; 4:1,18-19; 11:13; 12:12; 24:49; John 4:24; 14:16-17,26; 15:26; 16:7-14; Acts 1:8; 2:1-4,38; 4:31; 5:3; 6:3; 7:55; 8:17,39; 10:44; 13:2; 15:28; 16:6; 19:1-6; Romans 8:9-11,14-16,26-27; 1 Corinthians 2:10-14; 3:16; 12:3-11,13; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 1:13-14; 4:30; 5:18; 1 Thessalonians 5:19; 1 Timothy 3:16; 4:1; 2 Timothy 1:14; 3:16; Hebrews 9:8,14; 2 Peter 1:21; 1 John 4:13; 5:6-7; Revelation 1:10; 22:17.*

## **Man**

Man is the special creation of God, made in His own image. He created them male and female as the crowning work of His creation. The gift of gender is thus part of the goodness of God's creation. In the beginning man was innocent of sin and was endowed by his Creator with freedom of choice. By his free choice man sinned against God and brought sin into the human race. Through the temptation of Satan man transgressed the command of God, and fell from his original innocence whereby his posterity inherit a nature and an environment inclined toward sin. Therefore, as soon as they are capable of moral action, they become transgressors and are under condemnation. Only the grace of God can bring man into His holy fellowship and enable man to fulfill the creative purpose of God. The sacredness of human personality is evident in that God created man in His own image, and in that Christ died for man; therefore, every person of every race possesses full dignity and is worthy of respect and Christian love.

*Genesis 1:26-30; 2:5,7,18-22; 3; 9:6; Psalms 1; 8:3-6; 32:1-5; 51:5; Isaiah 6:5; Jeremiah 17:5; Matthew 16:26; Acts 17:26-31; Romans 1:19-32; 3:10-18,23; 5:6,12,19; 6:6; 7:14-25; 8:14-18,29; 1 Corinthians 1:21-31; 15:19,21-22; Ephesians 2:1-22; Colossians 1:21-22; 3:9-11.*

## **Salvation**

Salvation involves the redemption of the whole man, and is offered freely to all who accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Saviour, who by His own blood obtained eternal redemption for the believer. In its broadest sense salvation includes regeneration, justification, sanctification, and glorification.

*A. Regeneration*, or the new birth, is a work of God's grace whereby believers become new creatures in Christ Jesus. It is a change of heart wrought by the Holy Spirit through conviction of sin, to which the sinner responds in repentance toward God and faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Repentance and faith are inseparable experiences of grace. Repentance is a genuine turning from sin toward God. Faith is the acceptance of Jesus Christ and commitment of the entire personality to Him as Lord and Saviour.

*B. Justification* is God's gracious and full acquittal upon principles of His righteousness of all sinners who repent and believe in Christ. Justification brings the believer unto a relationship of peace and favor with God.

*C. Sanctification* is the experience, beginning in regeneration, by which the believer is set apart to God's purposes, and is enabled to progress toward moral and spiritual maturity through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit

dwelling in him. Growth in grace should continue throughout the regenerate person's life.

*D. Glorification is the culmination of salvation and is the final blessed and abiding state of the redeemed.*

*Genesis 3:15; Exodus 3:14-17; 6:2-8; Matthew 1:21; 4:17; 16:21-26; 27:22-28:6; Luke 1:68-69; 2:28-32; John 1:11-14,29; 3:3-21,36; 5:24; 10:9,28-29; 15:1-16; 17:17; Acts 2:21; 4:12; 15:11; 16:30-31; 17:30-31; 20:32; Romans 1:16-18; 2:4; 3:23-25; 4:3ff.; 5:8-10; 6:1-23; 8:1-18,29-39; 10:9-10,13; 13:11-14; 1 Corinthians 1:18,30; 6:19-20;15:10; 2 Corinthians 5:17-20; Galatians 2:20; 3:13; 5:22-25; 6:15; Ephesians 1:7; 2:8-22; 4:11-16; Philippians 2:12-13; Colossians 1:9-22; 3:1ff.; 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24; 2 Timothy 1:12; Titus 2:11-14; Hebrews 2:1-3; 5:8-9; 9:24-28; 11:1-12:8,14; James 2:14-26; 1 Peter 1:2-23; 1 John 1:6-2:11; Revelation 3:20; 21:1-22:5.*

## **God's Purpose of Grace**

Election is the gracious purpose of God, according to which He regenerates, justifies, sanctifies, and glorifies sinners. It is consistent with the free agency of man, and comprehends all the means in connection with the end. It is the glorious display of God's sovereign goodness, and is infinitely wise, holy, and unchangeable. It excludes boasting and promotes humility. All true believers endure to the end. Those whom God has accepted in Christ, and sanctified by His Spirit, will never fall away from the state of grace, but shall persevere to the end. Believers may fall into sin through neglect and temptation, whereby they grieve the Spirit, impair their graces and comforts, and bring reproach on the cause of Christ and temporal judgments on themselves; yet they shall be kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation.

*Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:5-8; 1 Samuel 8:4-7,19-22; Isaiah 5:1-7; Jeremiah 31:31ff.; Matthew 16:18-19; 21:28-45; 24:22,31; 25:34; Luke 1:68-79; 2:29-32; 19:41-44; 24:44-48; John 1:12-14; 3:16; 5:24; 6:44-45,65; 10:27-29; 15:16; 17:6,12,17-18; Acts 20:32; Romans 5:9-10; 8:28-39; 10:12-15; 11:5-7,26-36; 1 Corinthians 1:1-2; 15:24-28; Ephesians 1:4-23; 2:1-10; 3:1-11; Colossians 1:12-14; 2 Thessalonians 2:13-14; 2 Timothy 1:12; 2:10,19; Hebrews 11:39-12:2; James 1:12; 1 Peter 1:2-5,13; 2:4-10; 1 John 1:7-9; 2:19; 3:2.*

## **The Church**

A New Testament church of the Lord Jesus Christ is an autonomous local congregation of baptized believers, associated by covenant in the faith and fellowship of the gospel, observing the two ordinances of Christ, governed by His laws, exercising the gifts, rights, and privileges invested in them by His Word, and seeking to extend the gospel to the ends of the earth. Each congregation operates under the Lordship of Christ through democratic processes. In such a congregation each member is responsible and accountable to Christ as Lord. Its scriptural officers are pastors and deacons. While both men and women are gifted for service in the church, the office of pastor is limited to men as qualified by Scripture.

The New Testament speaks also of the church as the Body of Christ which includes all of the redeemed of all the ages, believers from every tribe, and tongue, and people, and nation.

*Matthew 16:15-19; 18:15-20; Acts 2:41-42,47; 5:11-14; 6:3-6; 13:1-3; 14:23,27; 15:1-30; 16:5; 20:28; Romans 1:7; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 3:16; 5:4-5; 7:17; 9:13-14; 12; Ephesians 1:22-23; 2:19-22; 3:8-11,21; 5:22-32; Philippians 1:1; Colossians 1:18; 1 Timothy 2:9-14; 3:1-15; 4:14; Hebrews 11:39-40; 1 Peter 5:1-4; Revelation 2-3; 21:2-3.*

## **Baptism & the Lord's Supper**

Christian baptism is the immersion of a believer in water whereby a believer is publicly identified with Christ and his Church. It is an act of obedience symbolizing the believer's faith in a crucified, buried, and risen Saviour, the believer's death to sin, the burial of the old life, and the resurrection to walk in newness of life in Christ Jesus.

The Lord's Supper is a symbolic act of obedience whereby members memorialize the death of the Redeemer and anticipate His second coming.

*Matthew 3:13-17; 26:26-30; 28:19-20; Mark 1:9-11; 14:22-26; Luke 3:21-22; 22:19-20; John 3:23; Acts 2:41-42; 8:35-39; 16:30-33; 20:7; Romans 6:3-5; 1 Corinthians 10:16,21; 11:23-29; Colossians 2:12.*

## **Evangelism & Missions**

It is the duty and privilege of every follower of Christ and every church of the Lord Jesus Christ to endeavor to make disciples of all nations, to seek constantly to win the lost to Christ by verbal witness undergirded by a Christian lifestyle, and by other methods in harmony with the gospel of Christ.

*Genesis 12:1-3; Exodus 19:5-6; Isaiah 6:1-8; Matthew 9:37-38; 10:5-15; 13:18-30, 37-43; 16:19; 22:9-10; 24:14; 28:18-20; Luke 10:1-18; 24:46-53; John 14:11-12; 15:7-8,16; 17:15; 20:21; Acts 1:8; 2; 8:26-40; 10:42-48; 13:2-3; Romans 10:13-15; Ephesians 3:1-11; 1 Thessalonians 1:8; 2 Timothy 4:5; Hebrews 2:1-3; 11:39-12:2; 1 Peter 2:4-10; Revelation 22:17.*

## **Last Things**

God, in His own time and in His own way, will bring the world to its appropriate end. According to his promise, Jesus Christ will return personally and visibly in glory to the earth; the dead will be raised; and Christ will judge all men in righteousness. The unrighteous will be consigned to Hell, a place of eternal judgment. The righteous in the resurrected and glorified bodies will receive their reward and will dwell forever in Heaven with the Lord.

*Isaiah 2:4; 11:9; Matthew 16:27; 18:8-9; 19:28; 24:27,30,36,44; 25:31-46; 26:64; Mark 8:38; 9:43-48; Luke 12:40,48; 16:19-26; 17:22-37; 21:27-28; John 14:1-3; Acts 1:11; 17:31; Romans 14:10; 1 Corinthians 4:5; 15:24-28, 35-58; 2 Corinthians 5:10; Philippians 3:20-21; Colossians 1:5; 3:4; 1 Thessalonians 4:14-18; 5:1ff.; 2 Thessalonians 1:7ff.; 2; 1 Timothy 6:14; 2 Timothy 4:1,8; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 9:27-28; James 5:8; 2 Peter 3:7ff.; 1 John 2:28; 3:2; Jude 14; Revelation 1:18; 3:11; 20:1-22:13.*

## **Family**

God has ordained the family as the foundational institution of human society. It is composed of persons related to one another by marriage, blood or adoption.

Marriage is the uniting of one man and one woman in covenant commitment for a lifetime. It is God's unique gift to reveal the union between Christ and His church and to provide for the man and the woman in marriage the framework for intimate companionship, the channel of sexual expression according to biblical standards, and the means for procreation of the human race.

The husband and wife are of equal worth before God, since both are created in God's image. The marriage relationship models the way God relates to His people. A husband is to love his wife as Christ loved the church. He has the God-given responsibility to provide for, to protect, and to lead his family. A wife is to submit herself graciously to the servant leadership of her husband even as the church willingly submits to the headship of Christ. She, being in the image of God as is her husband and thus equal to him, has the God-given responsibility to respect her husband and to serve as his helper in managing the household and nurturing the next generation. Children, from the moment of conception, are a blessing and heritage from the Lord. Parents are to demonstrate to their children God's pattern for marriage. Parents are to teach their children spiritual and moral values and to lead them, through consistent lifestyle example and loving discipline, to make choices based on biblical truth. Children are to honor and obey their parents.

*Genesis 1:26-28; 2:15-25; 3:1-20; Exodus 20:12; Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Joshua 24:15; 1 Samuel 1:26-28; Psalms 51:5; 78:1-8; 127; 128; 139:13-16; Proverbs 1:8; 5:15-20; 6:20-22; 12:4; 13:24; 14:1; 17:6; 18:22; 22:6,15; 23:13-14; 24:3; 29:15,17; 31:10-31; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12; 9:9; Malachi 2:14-16; Matthew 5:31-32; 18:2-5; 19:3-9; Mark 10:6-12; Romans 1:18-32; 1 Corinthians 7:1-16; Ephesians 5:21-33; 6:1-4; Colossians 3:18-21; 1 Timothy 5:8,14; 2 Timothy 1:3-5; Titus 2:3-5; Hebrews 13:4; 1 Peter 3:1-7.*

## APPENDIX TWO: ELDERS AND STAFF

### ELDERS

JR Vassar (Staff Elder)  
Boyne McHargue (Staff Elder)  
Joseph Tenney (Staff Elder)  
Pete Brooks (Staff Elder)

Tim Rost  
Russ Waldrop  
Taylor Brooks

### STAFF

**JR Vassar** *Lead Pastor*  
jr@churchatthecross.com

**Boyne McHargue** *Executive Pastor*  
boyne@churchatthecross.com

**Joseph Tenney** *Arts Pastor*  
joseph@churchatthecross.com

**Jon Kang** *Arts Associate*  
jon@churchatthecross.com

**Pete Brooks** *Care Pastor*  
pete@churchatthecross.com

**Geoffrey Bertram** *Minister of Mobilization*  
geoffrey@churchatthecross.com

**Matt Lear** *Minister to Life Groups*  
mattl@churchatthecross.com

**James Sercey** *Minister to Students*  
james@churchatthecross.com

**Casey Schutza** *Alpha Director and Student Ministry Associate*  
caseys@churchatthecross.com

**Riley Moyer** *Student Ministry Intern*  
rileyw@churchatthecross.com

**Lori Atkeisson** *Minister to Children and Families*  
lori@churchatthecross.com

**Kayla Derry** *Children's Ministry Associate*  
kaylad@churchatthecross.com

**Nan Hoenich** *Preschool Ministry Intern*  
nanh@churchatthecross.com

**Zac Simmons** *Director of Communications*  
zac@churchatthecross.com

**Lee Ann Woolbright** *Comm Admin*  
leeannw@churchatthecross.com

**Joe Ferriera** *Director of Production and IT*  
joe@churchatthecross.com

**Leah Cooper** *Childcare Coordinator*  
leahc@churchatthecross.com

**Jose Santiago** *Pastoral Intern*  
joses@churchatthecross.com

### SUPPORT STAFF

**Peggy Feil** *Facilities Director*  
peggy@churchatthecross.com

**Nancy Nies** *Financial Assistant*  
nancy@churchatthecross.com

**Trish Van Loh** *Director of KATC Weekday Preschool*  
trish@churchatthecross.com

**Mary Ellen Blackstone** *KATC Weekday Assistant*  
maryellen@churchatthecross.com

## APPENDIX THREE: OUR DENOMINATIONAL PARTNERSHIP

We are affiliated with the Southern Baptist denomination, also called Great Commission Baptist. We relate to our sister churches on the state and national level.

**1. State Level: Southern Baptists of Texas Convention (SBTC)** - We send a portion of our budget receipts to the SBTC because it, too, feels strongly about establishing new churches in Texas, sharing the gospel, training pastors and church leaders, and ministering to people in need. The SBTC receives monies from Texas Baptist churches and spends \$.45 of each dollar it receives right here in Texas. **The SBTC then sends the remaining \$.55 of each dollar to the national Southern Baptist Convention (SBC) where even more ministry and missions support take place.** The SBTC is theologically conservative and is in full agreement with the latest version of *The Baptist Faith and Message 2000* (the doctrinal statement of the Southern Baptist Convention); it is also in agreement with our church's understanding of biblical doctrine.

**2. National Level: The Southern Baptist Convention (SBC)** – Just what is the SBC? It may surprise you to know that the SBC is: **The largest association of churches in North America** (one church in 10 is affiliated with the SBC...that includes 40,000+ churches and more than 15 million members!).

The **most diverse association of churches** anywhere! SBC churches include every race, nationality, and ethnic group. Each Sunday services are held in over 80 languages in the U.S. 1/3 of African-Americans identify themselves as Southern Baptists. One of the **fastest growing groups** in America. The SBC baptizes over 1,000 new Christians each day in the U.S. and begins nearly 5 new churches each day.

The SBC receives financial gifts from state conventions (like the SBTC – Southern Baptists of Texas Convention) through **The Cooperative Program**. The Cooperative Program is a time-honored and God-blessed way that Southern Baptist Churches have partnered together to accomplish more than any single church ever could. The monies received through the Cooperative Program are used to:

- **Provide disaster relief** to parts of the nation when there is a crisis (the **SBC is the second largest disaster relief agency in America, second only to The Red Cross**).
- Train pastors and church staff leaders through the SBC's **six seminaries**.
- Train and send missionaries to foreign countries through the **International Mission Board (IMB)**.
- Train and send missionaries to start new churches in cities in North America through the **North American Mission Board (NAMB)**.

### Why not be just an independent church?

We are an independent church. Every SBC church is completely independent. There is no denominational control or hierarchy, as there are in most other denominations. Each church is governed by its members and determines its own affairs.

For example:

- *Every SBC church chooses its own pastors.*
- *Every SBC church owns its own buildings and assets.*
- *Every SBC church determines its own programs.*

### What are the advantages of affiliating with the SBC?

1. It allows us to **identify with other Christians** around the world who are known for their commitment to the Bible.
2. It allows our church to **participate in the largest missionary organization in the world**. Through the SBC **"Cooperative Program"** we help support over 7,500 missionaries in 104 countries around the world.



## APPENDIX FOUR: FINANCIAL PRACTICES

### The Importance Of The Church Budget

The ministry budget of Church at the Cross provides the financial resources that enable the church to fulfill its mission of sharing the good news of Christ in our community and around the world. The generous financial gifts of our members and attenders allow us to take full advantage of opportunities to share the gospel, provide ministries that give members and guests spiritual growth opportunities, and meet the needs of our members.

### The Budget Process

The church's fiscal budget begins **October 1** and ends **September 30** each year. The budget preparation process begins in early spring and ends in mid-summer (dozens of church members including committee members, ministry leaders and church staff share in the responsibility for drafting the budget).

Each member of the church family receives a detailed summary of the final proposed budget for their consideration at least 30 days in advance of the Annual Church Conference that is held in late September. Prior to voting on the proposed budget at that annual meeting, there is a "listening session" held so that church members may ask questions of the pastoral staff and Finance Committee members regarding the proposed budget.

### Financial Integrity

The church staff and leaders are committed to the highest financial integrity possible. An independent accounting firm has been hired to regularly conduct audit reviews of the church's financial procedures and documents. Each audit or financial review has confirmed that the church staff has maintained the highest integrity with regard to church finances.

All purchases are documented with receipts every 30 days and detailed explanations are recorded as to the nature of the expenses. The Finance Committee reviews the church's budget and expenses every 30 days, too.

### A Tool for Giving

The church uses a simple tool for financial giving – the offering envelope. The envelope gives several giving options for supporting ministries of the church:

- **Option 1: The General Fund**

This is the "keep the lights on" giving line. Gifts to the General Fund provide the finances to maintain the church's day-to-day operational expenses, including the building debt, utilities, maintenance and staff salaries. A portion of the general fund also funds the various ministries of the church, including ministries to adults, singles, youth and children. Around 8 percent of the general fund is designated to mission causes outside the church.

- **Option 2: Missions**

As mentioned above, missions is funded through the General Fund, but sometimes church members wish to go above and beyond their tithe and give to this account that helps to support specific mission endeavors: local mission work, mission trips or mission work in North America, or international mission work.

- **Option 3: Debt Reduction**

Church members may give over and above their tithe for the purpose of retiring our current debt.

## Electronic Giving

Online giving is another way you can practice tithing to the Lord. Information is available on our web site, [churchatthecross.com/give](http://churchatthecross.com/give) or by contacting our financial office.

## The Mercy Fund

The Mercy Fund provides help in three ways:

- **Benevolence** - provides tangible help to those in physical crises. Giving to our mercy fund will help us to continue to meet the physical needs among us.
- **Counseling** - provides resources for counseling to those in need of emotional and spiritual care.
- **Orphan Care** - provides funding for adopting parents and resources for foster care families. We will receive this offering through the month of December and encourage you to prayerfully consider generously giving to this fund.

## Easter Renewal Offering

Our Easter Renewal Offering is a missions offering that goes beyond the walls of our own church to help and people and places encounter Jesus. This offering helps start and strengthen existing churches in under-reached places as well as advance mercy and justice causes in our own community. We receive this offering through the Easter Tide season.



## APPENDIX FIVE: WORSHIP, COMMUNITY, AND MISSION

In Hugh Halter's book *The Tangible Kingdom Primer*, he identifies three circles of Kingdom life – Worship (Communion), Community, and Mission. When the Church is functioning in a healthy biblical way, believers will live in the intersection of these circles.

**Worship** – Being reconciled to God through faith in Jesus and relating to him in intimate fellowship, praise, and faithful obedience to his Word.

**Community** – Being reconciled to one another and experiencing shared life in the Holy Spirit with other believers. Living out the “one anothers” of the Scripture.

**Mission** – Engaging those outside the church together helping people and places experience renewal in Jesus.

Churches typically gravitate toward one of those circles. Each of these circles have good strengths and must be present in the Church, but living exclusively in one of these circles is not living in the fullness that Jesus designed the Church to live in.

### Worship Centered Church

Focusing on developing a personal relationship with God marked by personal holiness and biblical depth (Pietism)

Symptoms of a Pietistic Church:

- Church calendar is full of Bible studies regularly offered to increase one's knowledge of Scripture.
- Sermons are primarily focused on personal spiritual growth, personal morality, and personal and family health to the neglect of mission.
- Maturity is measured by Bible knowledge and morality.
- Neglect of justice and mercy, faith and work, and cultural renewal.

### Community Centered Church

Focusing on forging exclusive Christian relationships (Separatism)

Symptoms of a Separatist Church:

- Insider language is predominant and the faith of others is assumed.
- Small groups rarely have non-Christians interacting among them and speak as if no non-believers could be present.
- A “We vs. They” mentality is evident in “us/them” language that pokes fun at different beliefs or political/religious perspectives. The church is tribal.
- Small groups rarely multiply.
- Demonstrates very little understanding of the dominant culture and how the gospel speaks into it.



### Mission Centered Church

Focusing on impacting the world with mission activity (Activism). There are two streams of the Mission Centered Church. One stream is a high emphasis on getting converts through evangelism and global missions. This stream actively engages in evangelistic events and strategies that seek to lead people to a point of “saying the Sinner’s Prayer,” and going on mission trips. The second stream of the Mission Centered Church is the church that is cause driven, focusing on mercy and social justice for the poor and marginalized, freedom for the oppressed, and cultural

renewal initiatives.

### Symptoms of an Activist Church:

- In the first stream, there is a weak emphasis on making disciples who grow spiritually and experience mutual accountability in the community.
- In the second stream, the church can be inclined toward not emphasizing personal conversion or personal holiness, or accountability to the community.
- In the second stream, the church can become legalistic, putting people under the law of activism and social engagement and measuring maturity by the simplicity of one's life and depth of sacrifice.
- In the second stream, salvation sometimes is understood as "imitating the sacrificial way of Jesus," instead of "trusting in the saving work of Jesus."

Discussion: of these three kinds of churches, what kinds of churches have you experienced?

There is beauty and power in each of these three circles. The Church should be a people of personal holiness, growing the knowledge of God. The Church needs to be an intimate family who love each other and contend together for the faith. The Church needs to be a mission force that seeks to lead others to a saving knowledge of Jesus and see the gospel penetrate every nation and tongue. The Church should seek to care for the poor and marginalized and through the power of God's Spirit bring about cultural renewal, helping repair the fabric of the world through cultural production projects.

The Church that Jesus desires lives in the intersection of those three circles. The Church that Jesus wants is not full of people living in one circle or jumping from circle to circle, but **full of people who live out their collective identity as a missional community of Christ followers who together worship and depend upon God as they seek to bring renewal to his world.**

## MARKS OF A JESUS-CENTERED, GRACE DRIVEN, MISSIONAL CHURCH

- The people experience robust personal and corporate worship, celebrating Jesus and his grace, submitting to his Lordship in every area of life.
- The people share a rhythm of life together as spiritual family vs. merely attending a meeting.
- The people grow together in holiness with love being the mark of Christian maturity.
- The people live as a counter-cultural community, an alternate society for the common good; the broader community benefiting from their presence.
- The people together address the brokenness and multiplicity of needs in their communities and world with the message and mercy of Jesus and seek the good of their neighbors and community.
- The people welcome among them friends who have yet to believe in Jesus and embrace them as part of their community, AND collectively serve as a witness to them of the power of the gospel of Jesus.
- The people live out their vocations with faithfulness and gospel intentionality.
- The people care about the fame of Jesus among all nations and together leverage time and resources to contribute to gospel work among gospel priority areas and peoples.

**A Jesus-centered, Grace-driven, Missional Church is a product of the gospel**





CHURCH at THE CROSS

**CHURCHATTHECROSS.COM**

**3000 WILLIAM D. TATE AVE | GRAPEVINE, TX 76051 | 817.488.8533**