

# Vision, Mission and Values Statements Christ Covenant Community Church Adopted March 13, 2010

## I. Vision

To see Jesus transforming people through grace and truth into Christ-like relationships.

### **Transformed (gk. – metamorphoo) - Romans 12:1b**

Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be *transformed* by the renewing of your mind.

### **Grace and Truth - John 1:14**

<sup>14</sup> The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of *grace and truth*.

### **Christ-like Relationships - Acts 2:42-47**

<sup>42</sup> They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. <sup>43</sup> Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. <sup>44</sup> All the believers were together and had everything in common. <sup>45</sup> Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. <sup>46</sup> Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, <sup>47</sup> praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.

Abbreviated Vision Statement:

Jesus transforming people

Expanded Vision Statement:

To see Jesus transforming people through grace and truth into Christ-like relationships that sow His love throughout our communities.

## II. Mission

We believe that the Father is at work in our communities to reach, redeem and renew all people as objects of His love through the transforming work of Jesus in the power of the Holy Spirit.

In order to give our lives to the Father's work in our time and place, we will:

- A. Proclaim, teach and live the Gospel of Grace, and Grace Alone
- B. Gather people into small group settings for authentic relationships and discipleship in grace
- C. Promote and empower Grace-based Service for All Believers
- E. Commit to the Justice and Renewal that come from Gospel Hope

## The Four Mission Pillars

These are not programs. They are core values that should permeate every programmatic expression of church life. Every program or ministry of the church should be carefully evaluated on a regular basis in light of their implementing and expressing these values and then altered if found falling short, and encouraged where found strong.

### 1) The Gospel of Grace

While every Christian denomination will say that grace is central to the message of the Gospel as they understand it, we are referring to a distinct understanding of that Gospel Perspective that understands that all of Christian life – salvation, sanctification and glorification – are given by grace through faith. We believe this to be the message of the Bible from Genesis to Revelation. Through the history of God’s people, this perspective has often “lost” and by God’s purposeful grace just as often “rediscovered.” Martin Luther and the Protestant Reformation are a graphic, historic example of that recovery.

### 2) Gospel Community through Small Group Ministry

We believe that lasting life change happens best in the setting of a “small group,” defined as an affinity-based gathering of 8-12 people that develops a meaningful level of trust in order to share life and pursue “heart change” through relationship, prayer, Scripture and service in the presence of the Holy Spirit. In current typologies, we would want to lead “a church **of** small groups” not “a church **with** small groups.” Committees, boards and ministry teams would function with a commitment to this small group dynamic. A wide variety of small groups would be encouraged, equipped and supported as a central ministry expression of the church.

### 3) Grace-based Service for All Believers

Grace-based service – as contrasted with guilt, pride or competition motivated service – is an essential expression of the life of grace (Ephesians 2:8-10). Helping people identify their God-given Ministry Passion, Spiritual Gifts and Personal Style, and then serve in appropriate ways consistent with those is an important ministry expression of any grace-centered church. ServantHeart is the programmatic expression of this mission pillar at Christ Covenant.

### 4) Gospel Hope Leading to Justice and Renewal

The Gospel of Grace changes hearts as nothing else can. It sets us free from “Do-It-Yourself Righteousness” in terms of religion as well as from the driving values of our culture. Gospel Hope gives us a vision of our Father’s end for humanity, most easily glimpsed in the Book of Revelation as a time of complete renewal of the created order – a Millennial Kingdom and a New Heaven and Earth. Set free from the idols of self and culture, with a vision of our Father’s end, God’s people can graciously become an outpost of that vision, a first glimpse of where the Father is taking His entire creation. We can envision a community where the grip of our culture’s values of materialism and individualism are being broken, one that is multi-cultural because of the Gospel, creative and expressive in response to our Father’s creative nature, and aware of our stewardship of our Father’s creation. This Gospel Hope would drive the missional extension of the congregation.

### **III. Ministry Values: Graciously Reformed**

#### **Graciously Reformed**

The historic Reformed perspective is a systematic, biblical and all-encompassing worldview that draws us to freedom in Christ and greater love for God and neighbor. It is the Spirit Himself who works *Reformata, Semper Reformanda* ("Reformed, and Always Being Reformed") and not some legalistic adherence to the faithfulness of earlier times or syncretistic compromise with a changing world.

#### **Biblical**

The Spirit speaks through the Scripture to bring conviction of sin, transformation of heart and strength for living. This can never happen through various theological systems with proof texts, or principles extracted from the Bible and applied by human strength. While we are not free to alter the biblical texts, we will take seriously the challenge of communicating the meaning of those texts in ways, with forms and with vocabulary that the listening world understands.

#### **Historic and Orthodox in Faith**

As a Mission Church of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church, we affirm and commit to the Essentials of Our Faith as an expression of our faith. See Appended Statement.

#### **The Gospel is Grace First to Last: Good News for Sinners and Saints Alike**

Having been saved by grace, we then live and are sanctified over time by that same grace. Spiritual maturity is not mastering the steps to victorious Christian living, but a Gospel dependence that results from an ever-increasing vision of the cross that bridges a deepening sense of our own sin and brokenness on the one hand and a growing sense of the Father's holiness on the other.

#### **Small-group Oriented**

A Celebration service may be an initial point of entrance or discovery of grace, but real growth takes place over time in smaller (8-12 people) groups of people gathered in safe, honest community centered on the Word, prayer and service.

#### **Gift-based Service**

Spiritual gifts are how the Father equips us to the good works for which He saved us, so that in His strength we might glorify Him and serve others. Grace-based service is a promised result of redemption and so is to be pursued, expected and encouraged. Authentic service is neither motivated by guilt, nor meant for the advancement of self or organization.

#### **Attraction Not Recruitment**

Authentic Christ-followers are called to live with a welcoming openness that allows the world to experience the hope of the Gospel at work in the context of the Father's New Community. We offer not "what you want," but "what the Father is doing."

#### **Missional**

Jesus died for all people and His body will include every tribe, tongue and nation. In reaching that end, we believe He will call different churches to pursue and minister to different people

and cultures at different times and by different means. Being missional means hearing that call, identifying that focus on a particular group, deliberately pursuing effective ministry with them and recognizing that our calling and ministry is one portion of the universal work of the Father.

### **Grace and Truth**

Jesus Himself is grace and truth and He empowers us to live in the balance of these two. Truth without grace is legalism. Grace without truth is licentiousness.

### **Creativity and the Arts**

God by His very nature is a creative creator. As His creatures, made “in his image,” our hearts are built with the capacity to respond to His world with creativity. The Gospel can powerfully inform the church’s expression of art as well as our understanding of art and aesthetics that exists outside the church.

### **Safe**

People who are open, appropriate and honest about their brokenness and struggles create a community environment that will be safe for others to begin to face their own struggles and discover the hope of the Gospel.

### **Common Grace: The Father's Bridge To The Lost**

Reformed theology has long recognized common grace as the sovereign Father's activity in the unredeemed world. Common grace is the contact point for grace-based evangelism: honest, non-judgmental relationship with people at a point where the Father is at work in their lives, even when they might not recognize it.

### **Affirming of Womanhood**

Our culture is too often polarized between radical feminism and reactive fundamentalism. We believe that the Scripture's teaching of male and female as the image of the Father, reconciled by the Son and gifted by the Spirit for mutually submissive service is a fresh and life-giving wind of hope. We believe that the Gospel opens positions of leadership like Elder or Deacon to women because the Gospel has reconciled all God’s people and our Father may gift and call women to serve in the body by leading it.

### **Multi-Generational and Diverse**

The Father draws people into multi-generational relationships beyond their current circumstance and circle in life. The reconciling work that ends in Revelation 7:9 has begun at the cross of Christ, and should be seen, at least in process, in the New Community of Jesus who is breaking down walls of separation among ethnic groups, social classes and generations.

### **Communication Tools in a Cyber-Age**

The digital revolution and its offspring, the internet, have brought us to an epochal change in communication much like the highways of the Pax Romana that facilitated travel for Paul’s missionary journeys and Gutenberg’s printing press that disseminated Luther’s writings. Because the Gospel is a message, we should thoughtfully embrace all the tools at hand to communicate that message, particularly as the means by which our culture typically receives its messages and information changes.

### **“Tradition” – Learning the Pathways of Heart Change**

We believe the rich contribution that church history and traditions can make to ministry in our day and time is not worship style and personal behaviors. Instead, it is in navigating the depths of the human heart in light of the Gospel. We can honor, respect and benefit from understanding and teaching from these traditions, rather than simply trying to replicate their behaviors and patterns.

# The Essentials of Our Faith

All Scripture is self-attesting and being Truth, requires our unreserved submission in all areas of life. The infallible Word of God, the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, is a complete and unified witness to God's redemptive acts culminating in the incarnation of the Living Word, the Lord Jesus Christ. The Bible, uniquely and fully inspired by the Holy Spirit, is the supreme and final authority on all matters on which it speaks. On this sure foundation we affirm these additional Essentials of our faith:

We believe in one God, the sovereign Creator and Sustainer of all things, infinitely perfect and eternally existing in three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. To Him be all honor, glory and praise forever!

Jesus Christ, the living Word, became flesh through His miraculous conception by the Holy Spirit and His virgin birth. He who is true God became true man united in one Person forever. He died on the cross a sacrifice for our sins according to the Scriptures. On the third day He arose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven, where, at the right hand of the Majesty on High, He now is our High Priest and Mediator.

The Holy Spirit has come to glorify Christ and to apply the saving work of Christ to our hearts. He convicts us of sin and draws us to the Savior. Indwelling our hearts, He gives new life to us, empowers and imparts gifts to us for service. He instructs and guides us into all truth, and seals us for the day of redemption.

Being estranged from God and condemned by our sinfulness, our salvation is wholly dependent upon the work of God's free grace. God credits His righteousness to those who put their faith in Christ alone for their salvation, thereby justifies them in His sight. Only such as are born of the Holy Spirit and receive Jesus Christ become children of God and heirs of eternal life.

The true Church is composed of all persons who through saving faith in Jesus Christ and the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit are united together in the body of Christ. The Church finds her visible, yet imperfect, expression in local congregations where the Word of God is preached in its purity and the sacraments are administered in their integrity; where scriptural discipline is practiced, and where loving fellowship is maintained. For her perfecting, she awaits the return of her Lord.

Jesus Christ will come again to the earth-personally, visibly, and bodily-to judge the living and the dead, and to consummate history and the eternal plan of God. "Even so, come, Lord Jesus." (Rev. 22:20)

The Lord Jesus Christ commands all believers to proclaim the Gospel throughout the world and to make disciples of all nations. Obedience to the Great Commission requires total commitment to "Him who loved us and gave Himself for us." He calls us to a life of self-denying love and service. "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." (Eph. 2:10)

These Essentials are set forth in greater detail in the Westminster Confession of Faith.

## **Explanatory Statement to "Essentials of Our Faith"**

The Westminster Confession of Faith is a confessional statement of orthodox Presbyterianism. The Westminster Confession of Faith is our standard of doctrine as found in Scripture. It is a positive statement of the Reformed Faith. The Westminster Confession of Faith constitutes a system of biblical truth that an officer of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church is required to believe, acknowledging that each individual court has the freedom to allow exceptions which do not infringe upon the system of doctrine in the Westminster Confession of Faith.

"Essentials of Our Faith" is an irenic statement of historic evangelicalism. The purpose of "Essentials of Our Faith" is to define core beliefs of the Christian Faith. It expresses historic Christian beliefs common to all true believers and churches throughout the world. "Essentials of Our Faith" is not intended to be the exclusive test of orthodoxy for ordination. It is not intended to be used as an explicit standard for minimal core beliefs for candidates, ordination or ministerial examinations. It is not to be construed as a substitute for the Westminster Confession of Faith.

Both the Westminster Confession of Faith and "Essentials of Our Faith" are important documents in the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. The Westminster Confession of Faith and "Essentials of Our Faith" are not alternative statements of truth, nor are they competitive statements of truth. They each serve important and harmonious purposes within the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. The Westminster Confession of Faith preserves our commitment to the historic orthodoxy of the Reformed Faith. "Essentials of Our Faith" preserves our commitment to historic evangelicalism