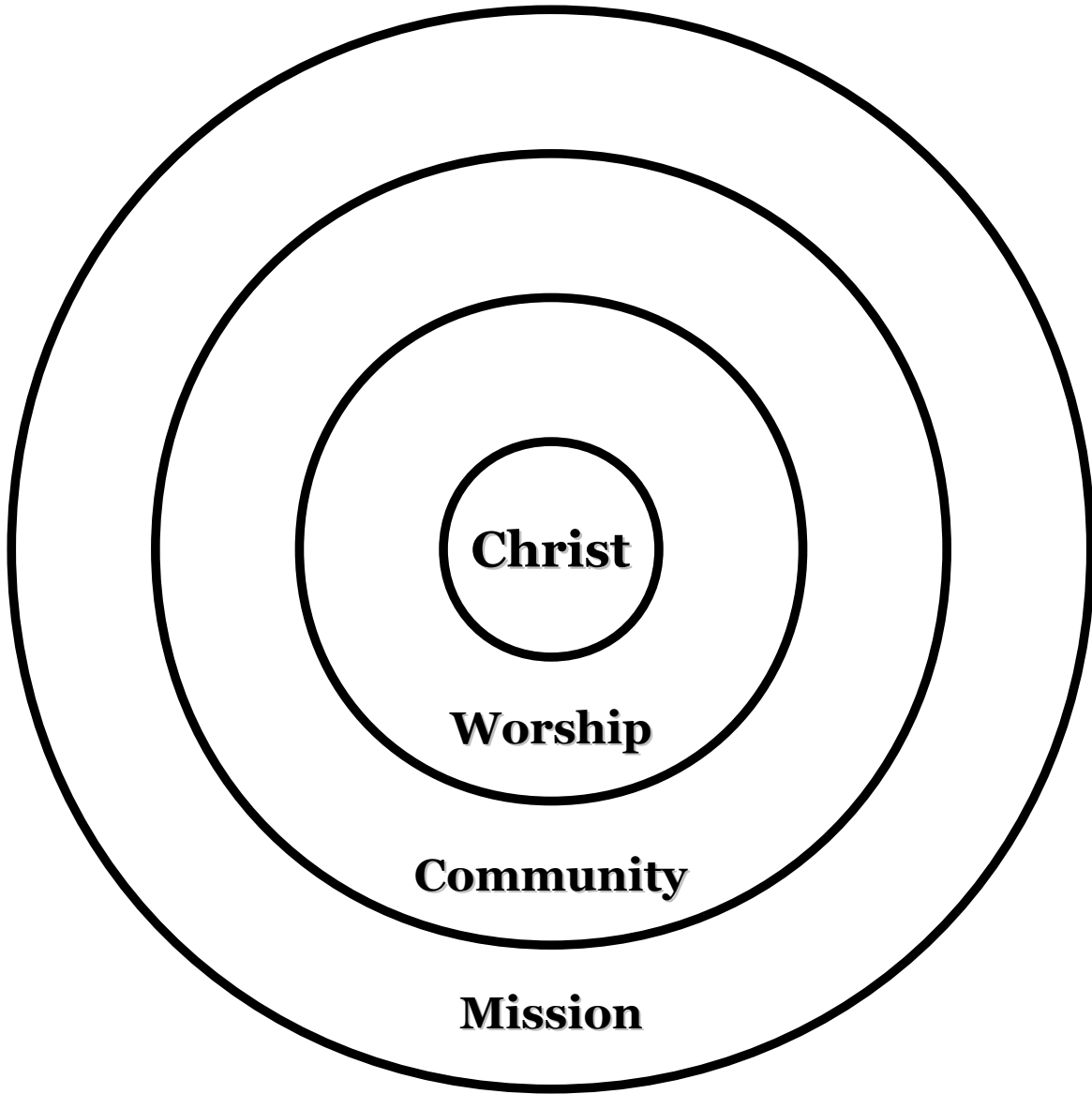


Christ Covenant Presbyterian Church

Worshiping Christ in Community on Mission

Vision Document



Introduction

This vision document is intended to provide the leadership, members, and visitors of Christ Covenant Presbyterian Church with a theological summary of our ministry to Culpeper, VA. It provides four anchor points—illustrated in concentric circles—to help our church retain the major emphases of the Bible—*Christ, worship, community, and mission*. This document helps explain why we do what we do. It also explains why we don't do many things that may be good but don't fit into our vision for a church in Culpeper. As you read it, prayerfully consider what implications it may have on your life, your family, and your participation in Christ Covenant Presbyterian Church.

To God be the glory, now and forevermore!

Christ

“Christ Exalting”

Christ Centered – Cross Centered – Gospel Centered – Redemptive Historical
The Foundation of Everything We Do

God created everything by his word. This word-created world plunged into sin through the rebellion of its steward—Adam. Adam, his wife Eve, and all their natural born children experience the consequences of Adam's rebellion: lost communion with God, liability to his just judgment, exposure to the miseries of this broken world, and eventually death and eternal separation from God. But God did not stop speaking to his world. After the entrance of sin, God began to speak redemptive words—in the form of promises—to reverse the effects of sin, satisfy his justice, restore creation, and create for himself a people to live in happiness with him forever. These gracious words—collectively called his covenant of grace—were eventually written down and remain as the holy, inerrant, and infallible Bible. This Bible is the only authority for how we know God, govern his church, and live our lives.

The promises found in the Old Testament point to a final redemption that would be brought about by one of the sons of King David (2 Chr 7:18; Isa 9:7). This son, also known as the messiah, is Jesus Christ (Luke 1:32; Rom 1:3). He is the sovereign, redemptive, and gracious word of God made flesh (John 1:1-14). He is God and man in two distinct natures yet one person. He is the mediator of the covenant of grace.

Through his perfect life and atoning death, Jesus earned salvation and paid for the sins of all those who have been chosen by God before the foundation of the world. The cross of Christ is the central theme of Christian living. At the cross we learn about God's surpassing love for us, his excruciating justice, a pattern for Christian suffering, the key for understanding the entire Bible (Luke 24:27), and the substance of all preaching (1 Cor 2:2). The cross is the lens through which Christians understand the world around them. Through Christ's atoning work these cross-focused-Christians are made holy and blameless, are justified before God by Christ's work, and are preserved for all eternity as the people of God. They receive the Holy Spirit, are equipped with spiritual power for service in the world, and are placed in the community of faith—the church.

This is the main story of the Bible. As a church we recognize this truth and center all that we do on the person and work of Jesus. Our main goal is to exalt him. Through him we

now know the Father's love for us and his plan for our redemption.

We are a people humbled by his sovereign grace extended towards us without any merit of our own. We are a people who no longer try to earn God's favor through religious or ethical obedience. We are a people who have been shown the emptiness of all this world has to offer. We are a people marked by faith in God and repentance for our sins. We are a people privileged to share this good news with others.

Our spoken, explicit, consuming focus on Jesus Christ is our attempt to model our church and our lives according to the Bible. The preeminence of Jesus is the bar by which we judge all that we do.

For further Reading:

- Luke 24:13-35
- John 1:1-18
- Colossians 1:13-23
- Hebrews 1:1-14

Worship

“God-ward Praise”

God Glorifying – Scripture Driven – Reverent & Joyful – Edifying to Believers – Accessible to Unbelievers
Corporate Worship – Family Worship – Private Worship - Calling

The response of a redeemed sinner to God's revelation of himself is worship. Worship is the proclamation of God's worthiness to be praised as God Almighty—Creator and Redeemer. We worship the triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Every human being was made to be in relationship with God. Sin broke this relationship. Redemption is the gracious process by which our Trinitarian God restores that relationship. Redemption produces worship.

God has given the church certain means by which we worship him—the Bible, prayer, and sacraments. These means show us how to commune with him and so find soul satisfaction. Through these means we hear and see the gospel causing growth in our understanding of God's grace toward us. He has also ordained these three things to be the primary way of communicating the gospel to unbelievers.

We are a church that puts primary emphasis on worship. It may take on different forms and take place in different locations but we exist first and foremost as redeemed sinners who worship the Triune God.

This worship is expressed in four categorical ways.

First, we worship together corporately on Sunday—the Christian Sabbath. Jesus has graciously given us the Sabbath for our spiritual rest and refreshment. The main way we receive this rest and refreshment is by gathering together as brothers and sisters in Christ to celebrate what our God has done through Jesus Christ. This celebration is marked by the singing, reading, praying, and preaching of the Bible along with the observance of the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper. This worship is joyful and reverent, edifying to believers, and accessible to unbelievers.

Second, we worship together as families. Each family is a mini-church. Husbands serve as pastors of their families. The Christian family is marked by the same emphasis on God's grace expressed in the gospel of Jesus Christ revealed in the Bible. As families we worship together in our homes as we sing, pray, read, and understand the Bible together.

Third, we worship as individuals. Each person is ultimately responsible to God as an individual. Each Christian should develop a habit of private confession, prayer, praise, and Bible study. This is the sure habit of spiritual health—private, consistent, personal worship. Personal spiritual health, expressed in private worship is the basic building block of family and corporate worship. In other words, we come to our Sunday worship service as people who have been worshipping God all week in prayer, song, and Bible reading.

Fourth, we worship God in our calling. God has made each person to do something well. He has also given us roles and responsibilities in our families, church, and world. We believe that we honor God most when we do what God has made us to do well. This is called “worship in all of life.” As a church we recognize each member's personal calling and specific spiritual gifts. We want to see each member understand those gifts and serve in the role God has given him.

For Further Reading:

- Deuteronomy 5:6-15
- Deuteronomy 6
- The Psalms
- John 4:20-24
- Romans 12:1-2
- 1 Corinthians 10:31
- Hebrews 12:28-29

Community

“Inward-Love”

Gospel Motivated – Forgiving – Self-Sacrificial – Solidarity – Spiritually Gifted

Small Groups – Fellowship – Christian Education – Accountability – Conflict Resolution

The same gospel that moves us to worship also binds us together in profound community. All men and women come to Christ on the same terms: with no merit of their own, solely dependent on the mercy of God. In salvation God adopts us as his children. That adoption not only makes God our heavenly Father but also makes other Christians our spiritual brothers and sisters. Just as sin broke our relationship with God, others, and all of creation so the gospel brings reconciliation between God, one another (Eph 4:32), and creation.

The gospel is the cohesion of Christian community. A gospel-centered church transcends ethnicity, being a place where people from every tribe, tongue, and nation are welcome. A gospel-centered church transcends socioeconomic status, being a place where rich, poor, and middle class live in generous community with one another. A gospel-centered church transcends education, being a place where those of high and low academic attainment humbly encourage one another towards holiness and service in Christ's Kingdom.

The foundation of Christian community is the Christian family. We place a large emphasis on equipping husbands and wives to build Christian marriages centered on the truth of the Cross. Husbands are to daily die to themselves as they serve and lead their wives just as Christ sacrificially loves and serves the church. Wives are to daily submit to their husbands in loving service just as the church submits and serves Jesus. Husbands and wives together parent their children by bringing them up in the fear and admonition of the Lord, daily living out the gospel before them.

But families do not exist in isolation. Following the example of Titus 2:1-6, we are also committed to gender specific accountability. Our church will not only meet together for worship on Sunday but also during the week as smaller groups for worship, fellowship, accountability, instruction, service, and prayer.

Within this gospel community men are given a special responsibility to lead in their homes and in the church. One of the greatest needs of the church today is strong, humble, theologically astute, Christ-adoring, holy, servant-minded, masculine leadership. To this end our church will place a primary emphasis on the training of men. As the Lord grows our men in Christian maturity so will our women and children receive the dividends of husbands and fathers growing deeper in relationship with Jesus. It is from this group of mature, godly men that the Lord will raise up elders and deacons (1 Tim 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9) to serve, shepherd, teach, lead, and protect our church (1 Pet 5:1-4).

We also realize that even a gospel-centered, Jesus-loving community is still a community of sinners. We *will* have conflict with one another. We *will* disappoint one another. We are dedicated to dealing with conflict biblically according to the principles of Scripture generally and Matthew 18 specifically. We believe that conflicts are God appointed opportunities to tangibly apply the gospel to our relationships with one another. In this way we hope to show that a repenting community is also a community of peace.

For Further Reading:

- Acts 2:42-47
- Titus 2:1-6
- Matthew 18:15-20
- John 13:31-35

Mission

“Humble Service”

*Missional – Servant-disciples – Evangelistic – Cultural Engagement – Imago Dei – World View
Service Ministry – Mercy Ministry – Evangelism – Church Planting – World Missions*

Gospel humility is the foundation of all cultural engagement. By his own example, Jesus turned the concept of “greatness” upside down. He taught his disciples that the greatest among them will be servants, because he himself—the very Son of God—did not come to be served but to serve. *The servant-humility of Jesus is the pattern for cultural engagement.*

This example guards us from two dangers.

First, the humility of Jesus guards us from approaching culture *from the stance of arrogance or pride*. We do not have “it all” together and we do not have “it all” figured out.

We were broken sinners at our conversion, though redeemed and growing in grace we are still broken sinners, and we will remain broken sinners until Jesus returns for us. The recognition of our own need and of God's unmerited mercy towards us in Jesus deprives us of any pride, exclusivity, or self-entitlement. If we do anything good it is God's work in us. If we boast, it is in Jesus alone.

At the same time, the humility of Jesus guards us from *theological liberalism*. In Jesus's humility we also see a perfect example of truth telling. Jesus did not condone sin. Jesus did not mince words when it came to salvation. Jesus was uncomfortably clear about the sinfulness of man and about a salvation that could only be found in himself. Jesus was aggressively loving toward sinners and radically clear about the sinfulness of sin.

We see then that the gospel provides us with a powerful witness to our community—a group of humble servants privileged to share the gospel with all who will listen. This is our goal as we love our community.

We also want to provide tangible service to those around us. We believe every man, woman, and child is created in the image of God and so possesses inherent dignity. Everyone is worthy of being served. Everyone is worthy of hearing the gospel.

How we serve our community in gospel humility will depend on the needs of the community. In this way we are missionaries. Our goal is to love and learn Culpeper. We want to be aware of Culpeper's strengths and weaknesses. Then as witnesses to the gospel of Jesus we want to engage Culpeper asking God to extend his kingdom.

But we want more than just Kingdom extension in Culpeper. We want to do more than simply plant a church. We want to be a *church planting church*. As the Lord provides the means we want to participate in church planting throughout Culpeper County, the Blue Ridge Presbytery, Virginia, the United States, and the world. It is in this kind of humble, kingdom-extending service that we want our Lord to find us at his return.

For Further Reading:

- Matthew 28:16-20
- Jeremiah 29:7
- Mark 10:35-45
- Acts 17:1-4, 22-34

Conclusion

In conclusion, we return to the diagram we looked at in the beginning of this document. We are first and foremost centered on Jesus *Christ*. Our relationship to him leads us to *worship* the Triune God. Our worship encourages us to invest in gospel *community* with one another. Our gospel community is the staging area for our *mission* to our culture.

We worship Christ, in community, on mission.

As we go we encounter the spiritually lost with whom we will have the privilege of sharing the gospel. Whether an unbeliever hears the gospel in our worship service, a small group, or through our members on mission our goal is to introduce them to Jesus Christ. As Jesus saves the spiritually lost they too join us in worship, community, and mission.

