

WHAT WE ARE ALL ABOUT...
WE FOCUS ON THESE THINGS...

THE GOSPEL IS AT THE CENTRE OF EVERYTHING

We believe the gospel is the Good News about what God has done for us, and nothing about what we can do for Him. Through His perfect life, sacrificial death and physical resurrection Jesus Christ has dealt with our sin and enabled us to stand in God's holy presence, by dying in our place, and taking the punishment we deserved. We believe the gospel has cosmic significance as one day it will bring all things under God's rule and reign. The gospel is all about Jesus and His church, and it is our only hope for life beyond death. But it's not just how people are saved, it's also the way in which people are able to become holy. The truth about Jesus is what enables us to please God and become more like Jesus. We access this saving truth by God's free gift of grace, through faith in Jesus. There is nothing we can do to contribute towards it in any way. (*Mark 1:1; Luke 24:46-47; John 3:16-18; Romans 1:16-17; Romans 1:18-25; 1 Corinthians 1:18-25; 2:2; 15:1-4; 2 Corinthians 4:1-6; 9:13; Galatians 1:6-9; Ephesians 1: 7-10; Colossians 1: 19-20; 2 Timothy 1:8-14; 2 Peter 3: 11-13; Jude 3-4; Revelation 21-22*)

WHAT WE DO FLOWS OUT OF WHO WE ARE

The Church is God's people, rescued by the God's power to be used by God in the world. We ask four key questions to make sense of the Bible:

1. Who is God? (Being)
2. What has He done? (most centrally in Jesus) (Doing)
3. Who are we? (The Church; Disciples) (Being)
4. How should we live? (Doing)

The first three questions are fact. The final question addresses everything that Jesus commanded us to obey. God does because He is. In the same way, we do because we are; not the other way round. So, we don't go to church – we are the church. There are three central relational dynamics going on here.

We are...

- Family – God is our Father, so we love one another as adopted brothers and sisters in His household.
- Servants – Jesus is our Servant King, so we serve the least of these just as Jesus first served us.
- Missionaries – The Holy Spirit is our power to witness to Jesus in both word and deed.

We are many other things beside (Saints, the Bride, the Body, Living Stones etc.) but most centrally we are these three as we are baptised into the name of

the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, so we are to be like them in their nature and character. For these reasons we commit to holding fast to:

- The Bible, to ensure God and the Gospel are central to our church, life and mission.
- Being before doing so we aren't tempted to adopt legalistic or activist beliefs. We work from a place of deep soul rest.
- Remembering that we have both an individual and a corporate identity in Christ.
- Our identity so we can faithfully worship God and make disciples for Jesus.

(Matthew 20:25-28; 25:31-46; 28:16-20; John 1:12-14; 13:1-17; 20:21-22; Acts 1:8; Romans 8:14-17; 2 Corinthians 5:16-21; Ephesians 1:3-10; 2:10; Philippians 2:5-11; 1 Peter 2:9-12; 1 John 3:1; 4:7-12)

WE ARE LED BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit is completely God, in every way co-equal with the Father and with the Son, and His desire is to glorify Jesus. The Spirit also convicts people of their need for salvation through Jesus and brings new spiritual life by enabling people to be born again of the Spirit. As adopted sons and daughters, we have the Holy Spirit living in us, who enables us to call God "Father". The Holy Spirit makes us holy, directs us, brings us comfort, convict us of sin, and empowers us to obey everything that Jesus commanded. The Holy Spirit is the missionary Spirit of God and is the primary disciple maker. Jesus Himself showed us how to be dependent on the Spirit, through His miracles, preaching and authority. This same Spirit is at work in us, as His disciples. The Spirit gives spiritual gifts to enable us to do His work, and build up His Church. We believe all the gifts of the Holy Spirit are active today, but you do not need any one of them to show you have been filled with the Spirit. We should desire, develop and use these gifts as outlined in the Bible. Central to Holy Spirit-led work is praying together, which is key to worship, mission and wisdom, as without Jesus we can't do anything of lasting value. (Matthew 3:11; 12:28; Luke 4:1, 14; 5:17; 10:21; John 1:12-13; 3:1-15, 34; 14:12; 15:26-27; 16:7-15; Acts 1:8; 2:14-21; 4:29-30; 10:38; Romans 8:9, 15, 26-27; 12:3-8; 1 Corinthians 12:7-13; 12:28-31; 14:1-33; 2 Corinthians 1:21-22; Galatians 3:1-5; 4:6; Ephesians 1:13-14; 5:18)

WE MAKE DISCIPLES IN EVERYDAY LIFE THROUGH MISSIONAL COMMUNITIES

We make disciples through Missional Communities, an intentional environment where everyone can serve, should serve and ultimately has to

serve. Disciples of Jesus seek to submit to Him more and more in everyday life, as they obey Him, are changed by Him, and teach others to do likewise. Discipleship is about bringing all of life under Jesus' Lordship and empowering presence. Missional Communities create a context where life-on-life, life-in-community, and life-on-mission can occur.

- Life-on-life. Being together in everyday life creates opportunities for contact and access. As we see each other's lives on display in the everyday stuff people can see what it looks like to follow Jesus in all of life. Through close contact, trust and accountability, we can observe and speak into each other's lives and build one another up in the gospel.
- Life-in-community. Unlike one-to-one disciple-making, making disciples in a biblical, community context lead to disciples that look more like Jesus because we need His whole body at work to be built up into His full likeness. Here we can also be good family and live out the 'one-another's' throughout the New Testament (e.g. bear with one another).
- Life-on-Mission. Living on mission rapidly exposes areas of our lives that need repentance and faith and, because of the scale of the task, forces us to make disciples who can also make disciples. To help people see all of life as worship we need gospel intentionality in our everyday lives, as we do normal things differently in light of what Jesus has done for us.

We believe the gospel advances when we live in such a way that pays attention to biblical truth, family, spiritual disciplines, accountability and living on mission. As we simultaneously share the Good News and live out its implications, new believers put their faith in Jesus, and disciples become more like Jesus. (Matthew 28:16-20)

WE BELIEVE MEN AND WOMEN ARE EQUAL BUT NOT THE SAME

Both men and women are created together in God's image and are of equal value, dignity and status before God as persons, and are equal in His sight through their faith in Jesus. Both men and women together receive the spiritual gifts for all of life and ministry, because God's plan is for both men and women serve using the gifts He has given.

Both husbands and wives, serving together in the family home, are responsible to God for their children's spiritual life, but God has chosen to give to the man the role of head of the household, serving along with his wife, which is based on the servant leadership and selfless love of Jesus.

The elders of each local church have been granted similar authority under Jesus to oversee, set an example of godliness, and serve the church through

prayer and ministry of the Word. This office is limited to men who are also an example of a godly man leading his household.

(Genesis 1:26-27; 2:18; Acts 18:24-26; 1 Corinthians 11:2-16; Galatians 3:28; Ephesians 5:22-33; Colossians 3:18-19; 1 Timothy 2:11-15; 3:1-7; Titus 2:3-5; 1 Peter 3:1-7)

INCLUSIVITY & DIVERSITY

God has reconciled all people groups into one global, multi-ethnic family in Christ (Ephesians 2:11-22). God has also given His people a ministry of reconciliation. Just as Jesus made Himself nothing and took the very nature of a servant (Philippians 2:7), so we serve others, welcoming the people God is sending us to into our lives and into our community. Every missional community will have a unique cultural context, unique capacity, unique calling and unique gifting. This diversity is God-honouring and desirable, but we should not conform to our culture any more than we should avoid it. Rather, we must be 'in the world but not of the world' (John 17:15-19, 18:36; Philippians 3:20) as we are led by the Spirit into the truth of the Gospel as we seek to bring all things under the lordship of Christ.

PLANTING CLUSTERS OF MISSIONAL COMMUNITIES

The local church is commissioned to look outward beyond its immediate vicinity to the wider area and wider world. In this way, mission is not a church ministry but a question of fundamental identity. We are a missionary people sent out by God into everyday life to fulfil God's calling and establish His Kingdom rule and reign. Our task is to make Jesus known through the Gospel, led by the power of the Holy Spirit, to bring everything under His authority. The main way we do this is through making disciples who make disciples, in the context of missional communities that cluster together to form Gospel-driven churches. The purpose of these churches is to see the likeness of Jesus Christ become more fully formed in our people.

(Isaiah 52:7; Matthew 10:5-25; 28:18-20; Luke 4:18-19; 24:46-47; Acts 28:31; Romans 10:14-15; 2 Corinthians 10:4-5; Galatians 2:10; Ephesians 3:10; 4:11-16; 2 Timothy 4:1-5; Hebrews 10:23-25; 1 Peter 2:4-5, 9-10)

WORKING TOGETHER FOR KINGDOM GROWTH

We are part of the global effort see everyone have the opportunity to meet Jesus, become His disciples, and follow Him in word and deed, and this through the local church. Jesus made clear God's heart for unity in the church (John 17), which we ignore at our peril. The apostle Paul made clear his "concern for all the churches" throughout his letters and God used church

unity powerfully to build and grow the early Church. The task of global mission is too big for any one church, or family of churches, so we must collaborate with other orthodox churches and orthodox Christians to see the Kingdom advance. Church unity is not an option, so we must share intentionally build relationships and become trusted friends with other Christians, sharing resources and facilities, serving together wherever possible, and most centrally, praying together in unity.
(John 17; 2 Cor 11:28; Eph. 1:22-23; Phil 2:1-2; Col. 1:3, 27-28; Gal 2:10)

WE ARE BEING REFORMED

We hold to the authority of Scripture, the sovereignty of God, salvation by grace through faith in Christ, and the need for evangelism. We believe in the Holy Spirit's work through the Word of God to bring God's people to deeper faith and greater fruitfulness, as we receive further revelation from God. Our elders take time to consider how we are doing at following Jesus, learn from others who can help us and make changes as necessary, even repenting publicly if we have not trusted in God, or loved Him or others well.

WE ARE A PEOPLE OF THE STORY

God's story, as told in the Bible, reveals His great mission to the world and shows us who He is and what He has done. This great sweeping story is where we find and make sense of our own story and the story of those we are seeking to reach for Jesus. In God's story we understand our identity as God's people and our mission in the world. We see discipleship as entering into God's story and becoming part of it. We mature as Jesus disciples as our lives become more and more conformed to this true story. Stories are how we all make sense of the world, so God's story gives us one true story to live out together as we bear witness to the advance of God's Kingdom on earth. Here we find our true understanding of the Gospel, theology, and even life itself and avoid being corrupted by both the world and by empty religious traditions. God's story stops missional communities from becoming an idol that we worship, as we exercise our God-given freedom to express a deeper truth of who we are, our identity and mission, within our own specific cultural context. We are part of God's story as His family on His mission, witnessing to Jesus' life, death and resurrection through the power of the Spirit.