

Revitalization Plan 2020 & Beyond

The most oft asked questions I have received since Rev. Scott Dinkins announcement of his departure to be the Senior Pastor of Chapin Presbyterian Church are:

“Are you going to be okay?”

“What are we going to do?”

I love questions because they are looking for answers. These questions are natural and good. They, like any questions, need to be answered.

I will answer these questions in this way, We’re going to be who we are meant to be as the church, and do what we are meant to do as the church. We are the church, the gathered people of God. We are the church, the congregation of God. We are the church, the bride of Christ. We are the church, the household of God. We are the church, the family of God. We are the church, the pillar and buttress of the truth. We are the church, the body of Christ. We are the church, the followers of Jesus Christ. Therefore, we do what the church does in this identity. We gather by faith in the Triune God to worship together. We love one another in life together. We share our loving humble generous lives with our neighbors by words and deeds in ministry together. We are the church of the living God who does his pleasure in the earth -
Worship, Life, and Ministry Together.

How are we going to do this? We are going to carry out our Mission of Worship, Life, and Ministry Together, according to the Revitalization Plan for 2020 & Beyond. When we participated in the marriage of Christ Church and Covenant Presbyterian Church in 2019, we began a year of congregational Catalyst Planning for the newly formed Christ Covenant Church. It was our desire to involve as much of the congregation in this process as were willing to participate.

We began the year by participating in a sermon series on our Vision and Mission. This was followed by a series of Catalyst Conversations in small groups to facilitate an understanding and interaction with the Vision and Mission of Christ Covenant Church. We then entered into a season of Catalyst Prayer. During this period we gathered together in small groups and in corporate worship praying for what God wills for his church as outlined in our Vision and Mission. This period of prayer was followed by a process of planning. We gathered for brainstorming ideas, the coalescing of the ideas, and for establishing goals. This planning process led to the Revitalization Plan of 16 goals and strategies for how the church can fulfill her Vision and Mission in 2020 and beyond.

Therefore, to answer your questions: We’re doing good because God is good and does good. We’re God’s church and God is faithful. Therefore, we’re going to do what God has called us to do as his church, to participate in what God wills for his church:

Mission: *Worship, Life, and Ministry Together*

Vision: *We exist to participate in a movement of the gospel that will bring personal conversion and renewal, community formation, and generous lives serving others through humble cultural engagement in Columbia and beyond.*

We encourage you to read through the Revitalization Plan for 2020 & Beyond, pray for Christ Covenant Church, and participate in pursuing the plan together.

Approval

Idols of the heart are those things we feel must have to be happy. These are things in our lives that are more important than God. They are things that enslave our hearts through over desires.

We can identify the idols of our hearts by asking questions. Those questions begin this way:

Life only has meaning or I only have worth if...

If you are struggling with the idol of approval you would finish this question with:

I am loved and respected by _____.

When we must have approval to be happy, we are seeking affirmation, love, respect, and relationships. We fear being rejected by those we need approval from. We trouble relationships with others by causing them to feel smothered. We struggle with the emotions of cowardice and fear.

The idol of approval that enslaves our hearts must be met by the gospel of Jesus Christ. Living by faith in the cleansing blood and powerful resurrection of Jesus Christ we can hear our Heavenly Father's words spoken to his Son, spoken to us, "This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." (Mt.3:17) God's pleasure is in his children whom he loves. This powerful approving love of God in Christ can penetrate our hearts pressing out our affections for lesser gods (approval). This powerful approving love of God in Christ can work through our hearts so that as we repent and live by faith, we begin to learn to love, listen, and encourage others in relationship for their joy, not needing them to make us happy.

Orthodoxy - The Redeemer

New City Catechism Question 20: Who is the Redeemer?

Answer: The only Redeemer is the Lord Jesus Christ, the eternal Son of God, in whom God became man and bore the penalty for sin himself.

For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus. - 1 Timothy 2:5

No one can see God and live (Ex.33:20). No one can draw near and touch God and live. Israel feared death by coming near the mountain where he appeared to Moses (Heb.12:20). Merely hearing his voice and sensing his presence made Moses tremble with fear (Heb.12:21). He is a tempest, a storm, a consuming fire. God is Spirit and has no body as we do. Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty.

But the eternal God has put on our body, and called us to come near. He calls to place our fingers in his nail pierced hands and spear pierced side, from which poured the water and the blood that made us clean. He calls to us to listen and see his glory full of grace and truth. He calls us to sit at his feet and learn from him. He calls us to come weary and be refreshed in his humble hearted presence.

The Ancient of Days limited himself to seconds, minutes, hours, days, months, and years. The eternal Son of God willingly accepted the cruelty of rejection, sorrows, griefs, and despising. The Self Existent One subjected himself to birth, the hands and wishes of man, and the agony of thirst. Why? To redeem men, women, and children living, suffering misery, and dying under the tyranny of sin. To redeem men, women, and children suffering the just wrath of God. He bore the penalty for sin himself. "He became sin for us that we might become the righteousness of God." (2Cor.5:21)

Our lives are not our own, but we live like they are distorting the value of our lives as the image bearers of God. We deny our sinfulness and we're enslaved to sin being left empty. But God sets his love on us, and rescues us by his own Son. All we can do is turn from our lover gods to the true God who loves us sending his own Son into the world to redeem us. He values us when we do not value him or ourselves. We're in denial, while what we value over our Creator, not only devalues our lives and the lives of others, it proves fatal. The Redeemer, Jesus Christ, came and gave himself in our place - a fatality or death - being devalued by the very ones he came to seek and save. Why? Because he loves us and in that love willingly rescues us. When we know him as our Redeemer, we can live all our days now enjoying him in the heights, depths, lengths, and widths of this love, being valued, and valuing the lives he came to redeem. Jesus as our Redeemer means something and does something.