

Do Church Buildings Matter?

A question before us as we plan to replant Christ Covenant Church at 3100 Covenant Road is, “Why should we care about buildings and property?” Or “Why should we generously invest in the revitalizing of the buildings and property at Covenant Road?”

In an American era of mega churches occupying the prominent landscapes of our cities, is there a place for sacred spaces in our neighborhoods? It is good for our neighborhoods to have places where God’s people are gathering together to do worship, life, and ministry together.

Church buildings are for the common good. The buildings and property God has provided his particular church facilitate the mission of the church. In the space God provides we can participate together in the worship of God, and gather for the nurture and growth of the saints. But the church property can also facilitate the witness of the church to a watching world. The church is called “the light” of the world (Mt.5:14-16). Therefore, the church buildings are not simply “the home” of her worshipers where their preferences are served, but are places for the common good. Our church buildings are visible markers of Jesus’s neighborly proximity and public outposts of God’s kingdom in the communities commons. God fills his church buildings with his merciful new creatures in Christ, so that they become “sanctuaries” for those seeking refuge from the storms of life.

The community of faith in Jesus Christ that occupies buildings and properties are a value to neighborhoods and towns. However, the acquiring or renovations of these properties for communities of faith is often difficult. Many churches face civic and economic challenges when pursuing have a place for the common good in neighborhoods. But it is not only the church that faces these difficulties. The neighborhood will be hindered as the church is hindered from being able to move forward due to civic or financial challenges. Emma Green, who writes for the Atlantic, wrote the following,

“Without an adequate place to gather, [religious groups] miss opportunities to assemble in study, service, and prayer. The stakes are high for towns, too. Churches, synagogues, and mosques influence life well outside their walls: People who belong to religious institutions are more civically engaged than their secular neighbors. They are more likely to serve on school boards, volunteer at charities, and join clubs. In the absence of these institutions, communities can become fractured and isolated. Neighborly infrastructure decays.”

When the church has no visible presence in the neighborhood it’s not just the church that loses. The neighborhood is affected negatively also.

Therefore, the church has a responsibility and a privilege in preserving and resurrecting her buildings and properties for the common good, of not only the household of faith, but for everyone (Gal.6:10).

Two New Series for the 3rd Quarter

Life Group - A Biblical Theology of Race

The adult life group will be studying the biblical theology of race in the 3rd Quarter (July - September). The term “biblical theology” has been around for a long time. It simply means, the theology (Theos - God & ology - study) the study of God as revealed to us in the Bible. Biblical Theology is distinct from Systematic Theology. Systematic Theology looks at the teaching of the Bible as a whole, in its final, complete entirety. It asks the question, “What does the Bible teach about God, man, Christ, redemption, the church, and last things. Biblical Theology, by contrast, approaches the Bible as a story and as unfolding revelation, and it does its work in tracking that developing story and revelation through different themes. The work of the Biblical theologian is driven by topic and time - how the story or a particular them develops and unfolds throughout God’s revelation. We will be studying the theme of race as it is revealed to us in the Scriptures.

“After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language . . .” (Revelation 7:9).

The visions in the book of Revelation give a glimpse of the people of God at the consummation of history—a multiethnic congregation gathered together in worship around God's throne. Its racial diversity is expressed in a fourfold formula that first appears in Genesis 10. The theme of race runs throughout Scripture, constantly pointing to the global and multiethnic dimensions inherent in the overarching plan of God. The history of the church reveals we have by in large neglected this theme revealed to us by God. We will be studying this theme focusing on texts which have a general bearing on race. This careful, nuanced analysis and study will provide us with a clear theological foundation for life of our church as we pursue racial unity in Christ in the midst of the challenges we face in this contemporary multiracial culture.

Evening Worship - The Sadness and Stupidity of Idolatry, A Study in 1 Kings

During our evening worship at Covenant Road we will be traversing through the 22 chapters and 816 verses of 1 Kings in the 3rd quarter of 2019. This book is the history of Israel's kings from the death of David and rise of Solomon to the two kings of the divided kingdom, Jehoshaphat and Ahaziah. It can be divided neatly in two halves. The first 11 chapters tell the story of King Solomon, his rise and fall. The second half, chapters 12-22, tell the story of the spiritual decline of the divided kingdom of Israel in the north and Judah in the south. This book tells the story of the sadness and stupidity of idolatry among God's kings and his people. When we find ourselves exchanging the worship of God for the worship of the creature and the created, we find our own lives reflecting the lives of the kings and their subjects. Yet in the midst of the reigning power of sin, God is greater than all our idolatry and sin, our sadness and stupidity. His covenant promise to David of a King who will reign over his people forever to rescue them from sin and idolatry (2Sam.7:14), is a promise we see foreshadowed in the midst of earthly kings of old and fulfilled in Jesus Christ. In this study of 1 Kings, in the midst of the sadness and stupidity of idolatry, we will look together for him, the Power and the Glory, and for our way of repentance and faith through him.



Catalyst Planning

As we follow our timeline for 2019 we are preparing to engage in Catalyst Planning. We will begin in July as we spend 3 Wednesday evenings brainstorming goals, refining goals, and prioritizing goals that will enable us to develop a plan for fulfilling our Mission and Vision.

- ❖ Brainstorming Our Goals - Wednesday July 10th 5:00 - 7:00 PM
- ❖ Refining Our Goals - Wednesday July 17th 5:00 - 7:00 PM
- ❖ Prioritizing Our Goals - Wednesday July 24th 5:00 - 7:00 PM

The gatherings will begin at 5:00 PM with dinner provided. At 5:45 we will provide a nursery for children 0-4 and a children's program for boys and girls ages 5 - 11. Students 12 and up are encouraged to participate in the Catalyst Planning sessions with adults.

We will begin with a brief large group orientation at 5:50. At 6:00 pm we will divide into smaller groups led by facilitators. The facilitators will lead the small groups to accomplish the groups purpose for each night. The small groups will re-gather together in a large group to share what they have accomplished. Each week during July the information that the groups share will be provided to the congregation so that we can share together in the Catalyst Planning process. Please make plans to participate by signing up for our gatherings in July. You can sign up on the sign up sheets in the Narthex at Barnwell Street or in the back of the Sanctuary at Covenant Road. Or, you can sign up online by **following this link** or by going to the church website and clicking the banner (ccotc.org).