

Replant Update: Worship Service Changes in August

On August 2nd we will be changing our worship times:

- ❖ 9:30 AM Worship Petersen Hall (*limited to 10-15 CCC members plus visitors*)
- ❖ 11:00 AM Worship Barnwell St. (all other CCC members, regular attenders and visitors)

A small group of worshipers from Christ Covenant will be inviting friends and guests to join them for worship at Covenant Rd. The small group for August will be the following individuals and families from the “Peter” Shepherding Group:

- ❖ Paul & Debbie Covington
- ❖ Ben & Lori Wilkerson family
- ❖ Eric & Sarah Williamson
- ❖ Sue Finch
- ❖ Sharon Worthy Boyd
- ❖ Rob Hubbard
- ❖ Sammy & Alyssa Rhodes family

This group will worship together for one month and then we will choose another group to participate in September. The congregation is encouraged to pray for this group during August. The congregation is also encouraged to invite friends and neighbors to join them for worship together at Barnwell St. at 11:00 am each Sunday.

Christ Covenant Church is getting a new website!

You can check it out at www.christcovenantsc.org. In this article, we will explain the intent behind making a new website and how you can get involved with this part of our mission together.

There are several issues with the current website that the new website is looking to address:

- The current website does not rank well on Google (one of the best sources for getting church visitors).
- Church Plant Media, the host of the current website, charges far more than the host of the new website.
- The Church Plant Media website is restrictive in design capability compared to the new host.

We view our website as both a tool for our congregation and a platform for community outreach. The first thing that people do when they are looking for a new church is pull out their phone and Google “churches in Columbia SC,” and with our current website, Christ Covenant will never reach those people. Using a keyword tool, we estimate that around 1,500 people in Columbia search for a church using Google each month. We want to be able to show our church to these people and potentially have them visit with us on a Sunday morning.

Not only do we believe that the new website will be able to reach more people through Google and other search engines, it will do so at less expense to the church. By switching websites, we will save about \$30 a month. Over a year, this adds up to around \$360 saved, and over a decade, we could save as much as \$4,000. This money adds up over time. And it is not wrong to project the life of a website this far into the future—the old website has been live since 2003!

A website is a long-term investment—we likely won’t see results instantly. It is best to think of it as a time capsule. We won’t see new visitors that found our church through a Google search for months, or possibly even years, because the new website will not rank well at the start—and that is alright. We are investing in our church’s future. With consistent effort and regular updates, the new website will climb in the google ranks for keywords that will drive people to our church as visitors.

This website is a work in progress. Right now, we mostly have the barebones structure of the website in place, and it is a healthy structure that is ready for traffic and expansion. Here are some of the updates on the agenda that we want to complete before the end of 2020:

- Place professional-quality images on our pages to make them come to life. This will greatly improve the website’s appearance.
- Redesign static pages (like “Kids” and “College”) around the new images and other media to make them visually appealing.
- Create and promote blog posts from Pastor Wilkerson and other church members to serve as an outreach tool to our friends—especially on Facebook. This will also show Google that our website is updated regularly and will improve our rankings.

This new website has potential to be a powerful outreach tool. Not only will it allow us to reach complete strangers when it begins ranking on Google, it will aid our congregation in reaching out to our friends. Members of our congregation can share the blog posts from our Facebook page to easily reach out to their friends with the Gospel, and since it is attached to our church website, it is an indirect invitation to worship with us on Sundays. We view this new website as an outreach tool and want to help you use it to the fullest.

Take some time to check out the website (www.christcovenantsc.org) and let us know what you would like to see changed.

Orthodoxy: The Lord's Supper

Question 47: Does the Lord's Supper add anything to Christ's atoning work?

Answer: No, Christ died once for all. The Lord's Supper is a covenant meal celebrating Christ's atoning work; as it is also a means of strengthening our faith as we look to him, and a foretaste of the future feast. But those who take part with unrepentant hearts eat and drink judgment on themselves.

For Christ suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, that he might bring us near to God. - 1 Peter 3:18

The Lord's Supper is a celebration of grace and pardon already given. It proclaims grace and pardon in the present, and is enjoyed by humble faith in the already accomplished work of Christ. The Lord's Supper increases grace already given a person who walks by repentance and faith in Jesus Christ, but it does not impart grace where there is not grace. Therefore, those who participate in this sacrament without repentance and faith in Jesus suffer judgement. Yet, an unrepentant person who is not trusting in Jesus Christ for salvation can benefit from listening and watching God's humble children participate in the sacrament by faith. Let me mention four benefits that the Lord's Supper offers to the unbeliever.

First, they can be near the benefit of not only hearing the good news of God's salvation read, but they can see it dramatized in the elements of the table. They can see how God in his love sent his own Son into the world to be broken under his judgment in the place of sinners. And through this brokenness restore his children into his presence. They can see how God in his love sent his own Son into the world to become an atoning sacrifice through the shedding of his own blood for the forgiveness of sins. And through this substitutionary death by his blood accept his children as though they had no sin. The unrepentant can hear and see this truth, humble themselves, and be saved by faith in Christ.

Second, they can see more clearly their standing before the living God. They can know there is a fence around the table where the elements are served. And this fence has a gate in it by which people can come and enjoy the family meal as children of the loving Father. But that gate is closed to all who reject the Son, Jesus Christ, as the only way to the Father. Therefore, when an unbeliever participates in a worship service where the Lord's Supper is being observed they can see where they really stand in this world in relationship to the God who made them and sustains their life each day. The unrepentant can hear and see this truth, humble themselves and by faith in Christ be saved.

Third, they can know that no matter how spiritual or intellectual or influential or prosperous they may be, without eating and drinking the family meal of the King of the universe, they cannot be truly strengthened and refreshed in this life. It is like sitting outside the house and watching through the windows as the family has gathered for dinner, and you know unless you eat of that meal you will never be satisfied, refreshed, and strengthened for life in this world. The unrepentant can hear and see this truth, humble themselves and by faith in Christ be saved.

Finally, the benefit an unbeliever can expect for themselves as they watch believers partake in the Lord's Supper, is to know that they are cut off from the everlasting presence of God. When believers partake of the Lord's Supper by faith they are looking forward in faith to the grace filled promise of God's everlasting presence with his family that is secured by the death, resurrection, and ascension of Jesus Christ. Therefore, when an unbeliever watches from a far they can know where they actually stand in an insecure place. Why are these benefits? Because the good news of God's grace is only good when we really understand how bad our condition and situation is at present. And it benefits us when we then seek him for his grace and love as it is promised in Jesus Christ through his Word and shown to us and our senses in the sacrament.

I once knew of a person who participated in a Christian worship service where the sacrament was being observed. They heard the pastor "fence the table" and they felt cut off. But they said at that moment when they felt like a stranger amongst a family, they heard the invitation to come in and find rest in Jesus Christ. They said they heard the invitation when they saw the reality of their own life and the truth about God's salvation in Jesus Christ revealed in the elements of the Lord's Supper. It was during the family meal that they came to know grace and pardon, a grace and pardon that was already accomplished for them through the person and work of Jesus Christ.

Praying for Our Missionaries - Phil and Kay Luther in Greece