



IDENTITY STATEMENT

1. OUR PURPOSE (Why we are here):

**We are committed to seeing lives changed by the Gospel of God's Grace,
For the Glory of God.**

We believe that these theme verses give us the priorities we need to follow in order to pursue the Lord's purpose for His church:

Matthew 28:18-20, *"Jesus came and told His disciples, "I have been given complete authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.""*

Mark 12:29-31, *"Jesus replied, "The most important commandment is this: 'Hear, O Israel! The Lord our God is the one and only Lord. And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength.' The second is equally important: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' No other commandment is greater than these.""*

Proverbs 19:21, *"You can make many plans, but the Lord's purpose will prevail."*

Ephesians 4:12-13, *"Their [pastors and teachers] responsibility is to equip God's people to do His work and build up the church, the body of Christ, until we come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature and full grown in the Lord, measuring up to the full stature of Christ."*

Romans 15:5-6, *"May God, who gives this patience and encouragement, help you live in complete harmony with each other—each with the attitude of Christ Jesus toward the other. Then all of you can join together with one voice, giving praise and glory to God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ."*

2 Peter 3:18, *"But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To Him be all glory and honor, both now and forevermore. Amen."*

2. OUR PRIORITIES (How we will minister):

We believe that we are called to follow a relational model of ministry, which is different from that of many other churches, which follow a program or event model of ministry. Our emphasis will be change in the lives of people within the church, with the fruit of those changed lives overflowing to effect change in the lives of people outside of the church, as a continual, repeating process. Therefore, the priorities of Potomac Hills are as follows:

2.1. FOR THE SESSION (PASTORS AND ELDERS) OF THE CHURCH:

The Pastors and Elders are called to be shepherds of people's souls, caring for and being concerned about their day-to-day spiritual growth, through ministering the Word of God, Prayer, and the Sacraments. We are looking to build relationships that encourage growth in the grace and knowledge of our Lord for each person. We do not understand ourselves as called to be corporate program managers. The purpose and ministries of the church and the Elders are clearly set forth in Scripture, and we are to lead in submission to the Holy Spirit who applies God's Word to each of our lives. Elders are to teach the Biblical process of growth in grace and shepherd the people to trust and follow God's purposes as they are revealed in His Word.

2.2. FOR THE PEOPLE OF THE CHURCH:

We are all called to build relationships, first with God, then with each other and those outside of the church. We place a high value on the process of growing in the grace and knowledge of our Lord, which in God's providence may lead to numerical growth. However, the measurement of success is seen in changed lives as evidenced by increased godliness and maturing toward unity in Christ, not just numbers of people in attendance.

2.3. FOR THE MINISTRIES OF THE CHURCH:

We believe the ministries of the church will reflect those whom God has drawn into our church and how He has gifted them. We then intend to encourage, equip, and enable people to work out of their God-given gifts; supporting them in the ministries God has called them to, as God provides the people and resources for those ministries. We believe that ministry flows out of relationships, and rises up from the people of the church as they grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord, instead of being imposed from above by the elders (e.g. Small groups form because someone feels called to lead a group, not because the elders are running a small group program).

OUR PROCESS (What we are doing):

THE FIVE-STEP PROCESS OF GROWTH IN GRACE

Relationship	With God	Relationships	With	Others
				Outreach
			Service	
		Fellowship		
	Learning			
Worship				

2.4. RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD:

1st Step: Grace in Worship

We believe that real worship is the primary means to meet with God as one body, joyfully beginning and growing in our relationship with Him, as we repent of our sins, offer Him our thanks and praise, hear His Word, and receive His Grace.

*“Come, let us **worship** and bow down. ... Oh, that you would **listen** to His voice today! - Psalm 95:6-7 “Let them **praise** the Lord for His great love and for all His wonderful deeds to them. Let them **exalt** Him publicly before the congregation ...” - Psalm 107:31-32*

- Implementing Ministries: Beginning and growing in our relationship with God through the Sunday morning worship service and children’s church.

2nd Step: Grace in Learning

We believe God builds up His people through the ministry of God’s Word, Prayer, and the Sacraments so we will have a clear understanding of who we are in Christ, what God has given us in Christ, and what God expects of us through Christ.

*“They joined with the other believers and devoted themselves to the apostles’ **teaching** and **fellowship**, sharing in **the Lord’s Supper** and in **prayer**.” - Acts 2:42 “So everywhere we go, **we tell everyone about Christ**. We ... **teach** them with all the wisdom God has given us, for we want to present them to God, **mature** in their relationship to Christ. - Colossians 1:28*

- Implementing Ministries: Beginning and growing in our relationship with God through Sunday school, small groups, worship services, and communion.

2.5. RELATIONSHIPS WITH PEOPLE:

3rd Step: Grace in Fellowship

We believe in helping people build relationships in the church through a variety of church activities, personal hospitality, regular encouragement, and caring fellowship.

*“So accept each other just as Christ has accepted you...” - Romans 15:7 “Think of ways to encourage one another...” - Hebrews 10:24a “... we have **fellowship** with each other, and the blood of Jesus, His Son, cleanses us from every sin.” -1 John 1:7*

- Implementing Ministries: Building relationships within the church through worship, small groups, Sunday night services, and spending time to encourage and care for others in one-to-one and family-to-family relationships.

4th Step: Grace in Service

We believe in encouraging and equipping people to serve Christ. We believe that people who are serving Christ will be committed to the ministry of the church, take an active role in church activities, and use their spiritual gifts to serve others.

*“To prepare God’s people for works of **service**, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature...” - Ephesians 4:12-13 (NIV) “Each one should use whatever gift he has received to **serve** others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms.” - 1 Peter 4:10 (NIV)*

- Implementing Ministries: Building relationships within the church through set up, hospitality, nursery, children’s church, cookie ministry, diaconal ministry, and using our spiritual gifts to serve others in one-to-one and family-to-family relationships.

5th Step: Grace in Outreach

We believe in sharing our lives with those outside the church in ways that demonstrate the kindness of God by offering humble service with no strings attached, as a picture of the grace of God, and thus being used by God to draw them to faith in Christ.

*“The most important thing is that I complete my **mission** ... the work that the Lord Jesus gave me - **to tell people the Good News about God’s grace.**” - Acts 20:24 (NCV) “For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to Himself, no longer counting people’s sins against them. This is the wonderful **message** He has given us to **tell others.**” - 2 Corinthians 5:19*

- Implementing Ministries: Building relationships outside the church through personal hospitality, small groups, and seasonal events.

3. ANSWERS TO FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

3.1. WHY ISN'T THIS A CLASSIC VISION STATEMENT WITH GOALS AND OBJECTIVES?

What God has called the church to be and do has already been set forth in Scripture. We think it's unwise to come up with a vision statement of what the church should be and do that depends on human wisdom and achievement. The church should function according to Biblical mandates, not according to current corporate management philosophies. Therefore we've not listed goals to be achieved or objectives to be reached, because the purposes of the church entail a lifelong process.

3.2. WHERE DO YOU SEE US IN 10 YEARS?

Wherever God wants us to be. We don't mean that as a flip answer, but to state a measurable ten-year goal is being somewhat presumptuous about what God would have us do. We want to be flexible enough to respond to God's initiatives in our midst without being locked in to a ten-year plan. We would like to see, God permitting, Potomac Hills grow into a medium size church that can sustain ongoing ministries and plant new PCA churches in Loudoun County.

3.3. WHAT ABOUT A BUILDING?

We are very open to the possibility of having our own facility someday, but as our priority is on building relationships, it would have to help facilitate this process. And God would have to provide the resources to make such a move possible (and the resources required would be substantial). As our current needs are adequately met at Harper Park (and far more affordably), we are not actively searching for a permanent facility at this time.

3.4. WHAT ABOUT MORE STAFF?

As Potomac Hills continues to grow, we think it's very possible that we will add staff members who help facilitate the process of spiritual growth throughout the church.

3.5. WHAT ABOUT MARKETING AND OUTREACH PROGRAMS?

We believe that Jesus has said to His followers (Matthew 5:13-16; Colossians 4:5-6), in effect, "You are my marketing strategy. You are the outreach program. You are the means by which My message will be spread in your family, your neighborhood, your workplace, and your school. You'll do it by being salt and light." Therefore all of us, the people that God has called to Potomac Hills, are the marketing plan and outreach program of the church, because we are still called to be salt and light today ... in our family, our neighborhood, our workplace, and our school. As this kind of marketing and outreach are the result of spiritual growth, our emphasis is helping people become salt and light wherever God has placed them.

3.6. WHAT ABOUT A SCHOOL?

A number of people would like to see Potomac Hills start a classical Christian school. We think experience shows that having our own facilities is a necessary first step; therefore we feel its consideration needs to wait until God meets that need first.

3.7. WHAT ABOUT CONTACTING ELDERS?

You may call any Elder about any personal, professional, or spiritual issue that you wish to discuss or receive counsel about. Please feel free to call whichever Elder you feel the most comfortable with.

3.8. WHAT IS THE PASTOR'S ROLE?

The Pastor's role is to be the Spiritual Leader of the Session and the church in a way that builds commitment to Christ, commitment to the Body of Christ, and commitment to the work of Christ in the world. His priorities, as determined by the Session, and in accordance with God's Word, are Prayer, Teaching and Preaching of the Word, the Spiritual Growth of Members, and Worship Leadership. The specifics are spelled out below:

The Pastor accepts an active teaching role, interpreting and teaching the Scriptures, theology, history of the Church, missions, and understanding current events; provides instruction for Church officers, educational leaders, covenant children [in preparation for profession of faith], and new members. The Pastor preaches the Word of God with urgency and conviction, bringing it to bear on the lives of individuals, the Church, the community, and the world; Preaching should edify, encourage, and challenge believers to grow in Christ and convince unbelievers of their need for Christ; High priority of Pastor's time placed on sermon preparation.

The Pastor leads the people of the Church to study, understand, and apply the Word of God to their lives on a continuing basis; prays often for and with the people of the Church; shares members' struggles, with opportunity provided for people to reflect on beliefs, concerns, and doubts regarding Christian faith and life. The Pastor, along with the Session, seeks and develops creative ideas and directions for ministries both inside and outside the Church; assists people in discovering and using their spiritual gifts; stimulates people with appropriate skills and gifts to be involved in service.

The Pastor, along with the Session, plans and presides over all worship services; ensures the worship services are glorifying to God and meaningful to the Congregation; works with the Worship Leader to develop a rich worship life, educating the Congregation for meaningful participation; administers the Sacraments (Baptism and the Lord's Supper); performs weddings and funerals.

The fulfillment of all of the above responsibilities is to be conducted in accordance with the Holy Scriptures, the Westminster Confession of Faith, the PCA Book of Church Order, and specific guidance from the Session. Decisions such as scheduling priorities, use of time, and selecting topics for preaching and teaching are made without prior approval. It is necessary for the Pastor to possess a seminary degree and to be ordained in the Presbyterian Church in America; a thorough knowledge of Reformed Theology and Presbyterian Polity; and a demonstrated ability to preach and teach the Bible, lead worship, and enjoy working with a variety of people. It is expected that he will set a godly example to the church in both word and deed and demonstrate spiritual leadership in the home and devotion to his wife and family. It is desirable for the Pastor to possess experience in managerial and administrative skills; counseling and listening skills; the ability to equip and encourage leaders; the ability to train others to teach the Bible and lead Bible studies; the ability to perform and train others in personal evangelism; a keen interest in missions; and a willingness to minister as part of a team.