



“Welcome to the family of Christ!”

A brief overview of the vision, mission, values, history,
loving fellowship, service and ministry of the
Christ Community Church Montreat.

2014 Edition

“In Essentials, Unity.
In Non-Essentials, Liberty.
In All Things, Charity”

This class is offered for anyone interested in learning more about Christ Community Church. And while attendance in this class does not lock you into a commitment to join CCC as a member, it is our hope that you will want to enter into that relationship with us. Regardless of that though, all are welcome to come, listen, ask questions and learn.

OVERVIEW OF THE “INQUIRER’S” CLASS:

- I. Let’s Get to Know One Another
- II. A brief history of Christ Community Church
- III. Called to follow Jesus Christ
- IV. Called together as the church
- V. Called to make disciples
- VI. How Does One Become a Member of the CCC Family?

I. Let’s Get to Know One Another

- A. Let’s introduce ourselves
- B. What is required in order to become a member of CCC?
 1. A commitment to follow Jesus Christ
 2. Attend this class
 3. Answer the five covenant questions (listed in Appendix 1, page 15) at a worship service.

II. A Brief History of Christ Community Church Montreat

- A. Christ Community Church began in the Montreat Cove in 1897. Congregationalists from New England founded Montreat as a retreat center so in its early years only a handful of folks lived here year round. Montreat’s purpose was to provide a place for gospel refreshment and equipping of Christians with a view to refresh and then send them back into the world to advance Christ’s kingdom. Early meetings were held in tents. By 1899, this group began holding regular worship services in the President’s Lodge.
- B. In 1902, this group formed “the Montreat Church of Montreat, NC,” an interdenominational group consisting of 37 founding members.
- C. With the purchase of Montreat in 1906 by the Presbyterian Church in the United States. (PCUS), the Montreat Church changed its name and denominational status. It was received into the Presbytery of Asheville, (PCUS), as Montreat Presbyterian Church on December 13, 1906.

- D. MPC was associated with the PCUS and its successor, the PC(USA) for 101 years. However, in 2007, because of growing concerns about theological drift, the congregation made the decision to leave the PC(USA) and join the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (EPC), a relatively new Presbyterian denomination.
- E. The EPC began in the fall of 1980 and spring of 1981 when a group of pastors and elders met in St. Louis, Missouri, for planning and prayer. They came from the two mainline Presbyterian denominations, the United Presbyterian Church (UPCUSA) (northern churches) and the Presbyterian Church in the United States (PCUS) (southern churches). These leaders had become increasingly distressed by liberalism within their respective denominations. They wanted to form a church that took seriously the words of Scripture, the theology of the historic confessions of the faith, and the evangelical fervor of Presbyterian founders. They envisioned a denomination that was truly evangelical and truly Presbyterian; hence they chose the name “The Evangelical Presbyterian Church.”
- F. Our church was dismissed from the PC(USA) on April 27, 2007 and received into the Presbytery of the Mid Atlantic, EPC, on June 3, 2007. During the dismissal process a dispute arose over ownership of the assets of our church. Our former presbytery and denomination claimed ownership of our name, all our real estate, building contents and money. A lawsuit was filed by them against us in civil court seeking to enforce their position. That lawsuit was concluded in October 2012 with the parties reaching a settlement. Terms of the settlement included a declaration that we were the rightful owners of all our property but we agreed to change our name. After prayerful deliberation, our Session recommended the name “Christ Community Church Montreat, An Evangelical Presbyterian Congregation.” The congregation in November 2012 overwhelmingly adopted this name. By God’s grace we are now free from the lawsuit, own our building free and clear and are also free from all other financial debt.
- G. Since 1906, our church has been served by 17 pastors. Richard White has served our church since 1989. Ron Horgan joined us in 2009. Edward Brouwer served as Church Administrator for a number of years and was ordained to the pastoral ministry in 2012.

III. Called to follow Jesus Christ.

- A. Our first desire as individuals and as a church is to know Jesus Christ and to follow him each day. This desire is at the center of all that we are and hope to be. The Apostle Paul says, “. . . if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone; the new has come.” (II Corinthians 5.17)
- B. Following Christ means we believe the Gospel.
 - 1. The Gospel is first, bad news - we admit that we are sinners in need of a savior.
 - 2. The Gospel is also good news – we recognize that God sent His son Jesus to be the solution to our problem.
- C. Truly following Christ means we have received the free gift of eternal life – we’ve confessed our sins, asked for His forgiveness and transferred our trust from ourselves to Christ.
- D. It also means we are living the Gospel as an expression of our love for God, a love we have received through Jesus Christ. – we are recognizing Christ’s leadership in every area of our lives.
- E. Additionally, we are growing in our faith (our knowledge, our understanding and our actions) as we expose ourselves to the “means of grace,” (prayer, Bible reading/study, forgiving others, daily repentance, obedience, worship, sharing our faith with others,) trusting God to be in control of our lives.
- F. We are motivated to do good works out of a sense of gratitude and as the fruit of the righteousness we’ve received from Christ, not as the root of our salvation.

IV. Called together as the church.

- A. *“The Church is the community of all true believers for all time.”*
(Dr. Wayne Grudem, Westminster Seminary)
- B. The church is God’s idea. It was predicted to Abraham (Gen. 12:1-3), formalized by Moses (Deuteronomy 4:10) and reaffirmed by Paul, who refers to the church as “God’s building.” (I Corinthians 3:9). It began as “Israel” in the Old Testament and continues as “the church” today. (Gal 6:16)
- C. What are the marks of a Biblical church?
1. The Bible is preached and believed.
 2. The sacraments are offered. (See Appendix 4 for an explanation of our view of the sacraments.)
 3. Loving discipline is exercised.
 4. Gracious fellowship occurs.
- D. Our church is a Presbyterian church. In its simplest form, this means our church is governed by “elders” (presbyters).
- E. Our congregation elects representatives (teaching elders and ruling elders) to govern our local body and they, in turn, send representatives to the “higher courts” of the church on our behalf. “Courts” of The Evangelical Presbyterian Church are:
1. Session -- Local
 2. Presbytery -- Geographical
 3. General Assembly -- National
- F. We also elect deacons to serve many of the needs of our congregation.
- G. Historically, the Presbyterian Church has been “Reformed” in its theology. The foundational statement of what we believe is the Bible. We also believe that the best summary of what the Bible teaches is contained in The Westminster Confession of Faith and its Larger and Shorter Catechisms originally written in 1647. Our denomination has adopted the modern language version of the Confession and also a few chapters written subsequent to its original publication.

H. Unique to the EPC is a statement called “The Essentials of our Faith.” (See Appendix 2 for this important document.) “The Essentials” is not meant to be a complete statement of everything taught in the Bible but is a statement of eight “essentials” we believe are shared by all true believers without regard to denominational affiliation. They are meant simply to define what we believe to be the core beliefs of the Christian faith. The eight are:

1. The Bible is the Word of God and is our only infallible rule of faith and practice.
2. God is the Sovereign Trinity – Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
3. Jesus Christ is both fully God and fully man. He died a literal death on the cross for our sins and experienced the literal, physical resurrection of his body.
4. The Holy Spirit convicts, saves, indwells and empowers Jesus’ followers.
5. Salvation is found only by grace through faith in Christ’s death for us.
6. The true church is comprised of all who believe in Jesus Christ.
7. In the future Jesus Christ will literally return to earth as King.
8. Jesus commands all believers to share His Gospel to our culture.
(see Appendix 3 for more detailed teaching on “The Essentials of Our Faith”)

I. As we seek to live out the teaching of scripture, our church is characterized by and committed to six core values. The first two, grace and truth, are foundational to all that we do. The last four describe how we are to live our lives in light of God’s revelation of his grace and truth.

Resting in Grace

Grace, expressed through Jesus Christ, (John 1.14-17), is the free gift of God for our salvation. Grace is the power of the gospel. It is the result of what God has done in history, (Romans 1.16-18; 3.21-26; Titus 3.5-7), and our experience and expression of grace are to be just as concrete. (Ephesians 2.8-10; II Thessalonians 2.16-17) Gospel-rest is the mark of the church. (Matthew 11.28-29; Hebrews 4.3, 9-11) This being true, it is not okay (and a slam to the goodness of his grace) to try to approach God by trying harder.

Grounded in Truth

We want to know the written Word of God so that we can love and obey the Living Word of God. (John 14.21; II Timothy 2.15) We are not left to float in suppositions, but called to apply all of His truth to all of our lives. We are called to obey God's Word. (I Timothy 6.11-12; II Timothy 3.14-17) Where God has spoken clearly it is not okay to equivocate on what He has said.

Growing in Christ

We will invest in supporting families and preparing disciples for their particular roles in advancing the Kingdom. The trajectory of our members is the measure of our impact. (Deuteronomy 6.4-9; Matthew 28.18-20; II Peter 1.3-8) Because of the magnitude of both the task of becoming a disciple and advancing His kingdom into every corner of the world it is not okay to stop growing in Christ.

Called to Go

Every member is a missionary. Each of us is called to go, without reservation, taking Christ to our families, communities, the workplace and the world. The influence of our members is the measure of our impact. (Matthew 28.18-20; II Corinthians 5.14-20; I Peter 3.15) Because of the clear and direct call to each of us, it is not okay to leave our calling to others.

Created for Community

We are made to live life together. Healthy fellowship embraces broken people who are experiencing healing and gospel rest. We are called to give expression to Christ's family in community. The love of our members is the measure of our impact. (John 13.35; Romans 12.10, 13; Hebrews 13.1-5) Therefore, it is not okay to be present from a distance or to keep others at a distance.

Engaged in Worship

All of life is worship, corporately and individually. As we are made alive by the Spirit we respond in prayer, music and praise, in multiple styles for a single savior. It is all for God's glory. The engagement of our members is the measure of our impact. (Psalm 100; Romans 12.1,2; Hebrews 12.28-29) Because God calls each of us to worship it is not okay to politely witness worship.

V. Called to make disciples

A. We believe that if Christ is at the center of our lives we will be committed to seven important mandates from scripture:

1. *The Great Revelation.* Hebrews 1.1-2

1. Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, **2.** but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.

At just the right moment in history, God sent forth His only son, the Lord Jesus, to reveal God's eternal plan of redemption to us. This included living a perfect life in which He continuously pointed us to His Heavenly Father, dying an unjust death on the cross and rising from the dead as evidence that His death paid the penalty for our sins. And at its most basic level, the mandate of Jesus is simply, "Follow me." From this revelation and command the other mandates follow.

2. *The Great Promise.* Matthew 16:13-18

13. Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that the Son of Man is?" **14.** And they said, "Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." **15.** He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" **16.** Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." **17.** And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. **18.** And I tell you, you are Peter, and **on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.**

The "rock" is not Peter. The "rock" is Peter's confession that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah-Savior, the Son of the living God. Jesus promises to build a community of people who confess Him as Savior. Jesus is the builder and what He builds endures. Not even the powers of hell can bring down His church.

God's vision for our church is that we would make clear to our community that Jesus is the Savior. This truth is the only thing that will endure as He shapes a community of people who confess He is Lord.

3. *The Great Commandment.* Matthew 22:35-40.

35. And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. **36.** "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" **37.** And he said to him, "**You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.** **38.** This is the great and first commandment. **39.** And a second is like it: **You shall love your neighbor as yourself.** **40.** On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets."

God's vision is that we live in two directions – vertically and horizontally. Vertically we are to love God with all our being. There is nothing reserved. No part of our being is to be held back or kept from expressing love to the Lord. The same is to be said on the horizontal. We love others with all our being. Nothing is held in reserve. We love others as Christ loved us. Love for God must manifest in love for others.

4. *The Great Commission.* Matthew 28:18-20

18. And Jesus came and said to them, "**All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.** **19.** Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, **20.** teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

God's vision for us is that we go and make disciples based on the authority and presence of the risen Christ. We are told to go, not stay home and hope people come and find us. Christ commissions movement beyond ourselves toward others. Ministry cannot be done in our own strength or without Christ. We move in His authority, not our own. We speak because of who Christ is, not because of who we are. We are never alone. Christ is with his people wherever and whenever they engage in what He has given them to do.

5. *The Great Power.* Acts 1:8

8. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.

God's vision is that we live and serve solely by the power of God. We can do nothing apart from the power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit cannot be coopted for personal experiences. The Spirit's power is given expressly for the purpose of witness to Jesus Christ, to make Him known both in the Christ-like character of Jesus' followers, and in their proclamation that Jesus is Lord and Savior.

6. *The Great Mission.* Luke 19:10

10. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.

God's vision for us is stated clearly by Jesus. His was a search and rescue mission to seek the lost. This is why he came into our world. He sends us into the world with the same mission.

7. *The Great Multiplication.* Matthew 24:14

14. And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

Jesus intended for His gospel to multiply, to spread from across the street to around the world. Only after it does will He return. George Eldon Ladd says that this verse is "the single most important verse in the Word of God for the people of God today." He further comments regarding the definition of "nations" and the completion of the task given to Christ's church:

"God alone knows the definition of terms. I cannot precisely define who all the nations are, but I do not need to know. I know only one thing: Christ has not yet returned; therefore, the task is not yet done. When it is done, Christ will come. Our responsibility is not to insist on defining the terms; our responsibility is to complete the task. So long as Christ does not return, our work is undone. Let us get busy and complete our mission."

B. *Making Faithful Followers of Jesus Christ.*

A disciple is a follower of Jesus Christ who becomes like Jesus and does what Jesus does. Discipleship is rooted in relationship with Jesus. We never stop growing as disciples. We never fully arrive in this life. But growth is real and abundant, even though at times it can be messy and confusing. We come to know Jesus and become faithful followers of Jesus through gospel centered worship, prayer, growth, community, outreach and evangelism.

To get at the heart of what we mean by discipleship at Christ Community Church, specifically to answer the question, “Am I growing as a faithful follower of Jesus?” (and, “What does it mean to disciple someone?”), we want to ask ourselves some questions. Use these questions as probes to deeper reflection. These questions are not something we can checklist and be done with, but are on-going soul-training exercises for followers of Jesus.

1. **How am I growing in intimacy with God through Prayer?**

/Describe your regular practices

1 Thessalonians 5:17: Pray without ceasing.

Ephesians 6:18: ...praying at all times in the Spirit with all prayer and supplication.

Romans 8:15: ...but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, ‘Abba! Father!’

2. **How is my obedience to Christ growing with my knowledge of Christ?** */What have you learned and put into action most recently?*

John 14:15 If you love me, you will keep my commandments.

James 1:22 But be doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

3. **With whom am I regularly accountable?** */What does this involve?*

Galatians 6:2: Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

James 5:16 Confess your sins to one another and pray for one another, that you may be healed.

Ephesians 5:20 ...submitting to one another out of reverence for Christ.

Hebrews 10:25...not neglecting to meet together...but encouraging one another all the more as you see the Day drawing near.

4. **With whom am I actively sharing my faith in Christ?**

/Describe what this looks like

Matthew 28:19: Go therefore and make disciples of all nations.

Matthew 4:19: Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.

5. **Who am I joyfully serving? /In what capacity?**

Mark 10:45: For the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.

Galatians 5:13: ...but through love serve one another

Philippians 2:3 ...in humility count others more significant than yourselves... look not only to your own interests but also to the interest of others.

6. **Am I passionately engaged in worshipping God (privately and corporately)? / Describe what this involves for you**

Matthew 22:37: You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and all your soul and all your mind.

Psalms 100:2 Worship the Lord with gladness!

1 Corinthians 14:26 When you gather together.... Let all things be done for building up.

- Where are you now with regard to these aspects of following Jesus?
- Where do you want to be?
- What might you do to close the gap in order to get where Jesus wants you to be?
- Who is discipling you in these exercises of the soul?
- Who are you discipling in your area of influence?

C. All of the above means that we seek to be “mission driven” rather than “maintenance driven.” The term “mission driven” or “missional” has become common and therefore at times vague and highly nuanced. We define “mission driven” or “missional” in a simple and specific way so that we, as a church family, can commit to a unified, obedient pursuit of the expansion of the Kingdom of God. This, therefore, is what we believe:

1. We believe that God is a missionary God and that “it is not so much that God has a mission for His church in the world, but that God has a church for His mission in the world.”
2. We believe that the mission of God is rooted unalterably in the Bible, God’s infallible Word. Therefore, we believe that the essence of God’s mission is to extend the reign of God. This is summed up in the gospel of Jesus Christ and received by us as a command through the Great Commission.
3. We believe we are called to be a visible community of authentic disciples of Jesus Christ who gather for celebration, prayer and teaching and then disperse locally and globally as His missionaries to love and serve people. In so doing, we both pursue and welcome sinners as they are drawn into a saving relationship with Jesus Christ. The greater purpose in all of this is that the earth will be filled with the worship of God.
4. We believe that we are more than just a collection of individuals. Rather, we are a community called together by God, to love Him and serve Him as well as to love and serve one another.
5. We believe that we are to be concerned with more than maintaining programs for existing members; we are called to mobilize our people both individually and as a community to daily self-sacrifice for the hurting world around them. Therefore, we must be both inwardly strong and outwardly focused.
6. We believe that the essence of these things is the essence of our existence. Therefore, we will constantly seek to reevaluate our church as to whether or not its emphasis, organization, and activity effectively position our church to partner with God in His mission.

D. Moreover, we are a part of a denomination that is trying to be “mission driven” not only as congregations but also as presbyteries and as an entire denomination. We believe that a missional denomination:

1. Believes ministry begins with the local church.
2. Is made up of local congregations committed to being missional.
3. Believes that the Presbyteries and General Assembly, being expressions of the larger church, have an important role to play in identifying, equipping and supporting leaders and churches. They are a key link in the principle of mutual accountability toward missional ministry and Biblical standards.
4. Constantly examines whether its polity, structures and programs are supporting or inhibiting that missional commitment.

(Adapted from J. Andrews, What is Mission? Theological Explorations, (Fortress Press, 1999)

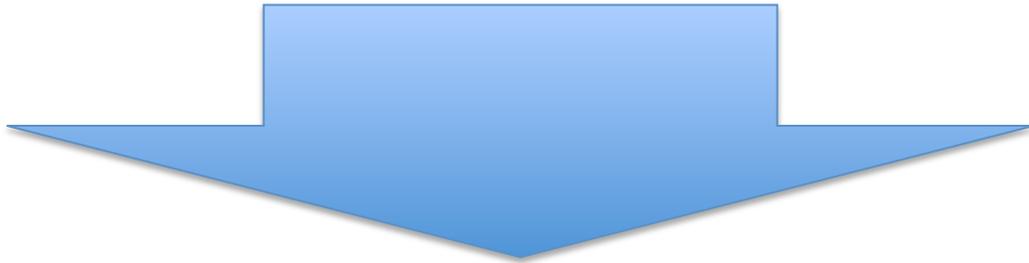
A. Our Strategic Plan – The Great Commission Matrix

1. **Go** – The church is called to outreach, to meet and welcome people in our community, to serve at the point of their needs in order to win the right to be heard concerning the gospel.
2. **Make** – Our outreach must, at some point, move beyond good deeds. It requires us to share our faith, to share the saving message of the gospel with those in our network of relationships.
3. **Disciples** – We must be equipped and trained, grounded in our faith, and then sent as brothers and sisters to one another and ambassadors of Christ to our world. We must avoid simply learning more information. We must put into practice the skills we learn about sharing our faith and discipling others to follow Jesus.
4. Therefore, we are in the process of aligning all of our ministries with this matrix.

The Ministry Matrix

Ministries of Christ Community Church

	Children's Ministry	Youth Ministry	Adult Ministries	Other Ministries
GO Outreach				
MAKE Evangelism				
DISCIPLES Discipleship				



Ministry to a Lost World

While certain programs (containers) may champion an aspect of this matrix, each should develop ministry with all aspects of the matrix in mind, that is, how each programmatic expression can lead people into other aspects of outreach, evangelism and discipleship.

- B. In order to do all of this, we must radically change our perspective on the purpose of our church. We must embrace the following changes in our thinking:
1. “My life for God’s plan, not God’s plan for my life.”
 2. “Once we begin to reach the community the congregation will get on board, not once the congregation is on board we’ll begin reaching the community.”
 3. “Once our ministry is fully committed to outreach and evangelism then discipleship will naturally result, not once our ministry is fully committed to discipleship then outreach and evangelism will naturally result.”
 4. “How do we minister THROUGH our congregation, not how do we minister TO our congregation.
- G. Our strategic plan is currently under construction. We’ve attached a complete copy of our work to date in Appendix 6 and we invite your input. We also invite you to join us on this exciting journey on which God has sent us.

VI. How do I become a member of the CCC Family?

- A. Join! Become a “certificate-carrying member.”
1. Attend the this class
 2. Join through one of three doors:
 - a. First-time profession of faith.
 - b. Reaffirmation of faith.
 - c. Transfer of membership.
 3. Meet with a few elders. They’ll be interested to hear about:
 - a. Your family background
 - b. Your faith journey- How did you come to be a follower of Jesus Christ?
 - c. What difference does being a follower of Jesus make in your everyday life?
 - d. What part will you play serving in the life of our church?
 - e. At a worship service, you will affirm your commitment to our church family by affirming the membership vows.

- B. Serve! Find a ministry or other avenue to serve with us as together we advance the kingdom in Jesus' name.
- C. Give! In our church, we give joyfully of our financial resources because the Bible teaches us that:
 - 1. God is the owner of all things. (James. 1:17)
 - 2. God will require an accounting of us (Roman 14:12)
 - 3. Giving is a response to God's grace (2 Corinthians 8:1-5)
 - 4. The OT standard was 10% (Malachi 3:7-8)
 - 5. The NT standard is: It all belongs to God. (2 Corinthians 8:5)
 - 6. Giving voluntary causes cheerfulness. (2 Corinthians 9:7)
 - 7. Giving please God. (Phil 4:18)

In short, our goal is to practice “triple stewardship” meaning stewardship of our time, our talent and our treasure.

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APPENDIX 1: THE CONSTITUTIONAL QUESTIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP

1. Do you acknowledge that you were a sinner in the sight of God and without hope for your salvation except in His Sovereign mercy?
2. Do you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God and the Savior of sinners, and do you receive and depend upon Him alone for your salvation as He is offered in the Gospel?
3. Do you now promise and resolve, in humble reliance upon the grace of the Holy Spirit, that you will endeavor to live as becomes the follower of Christ?
4. Do you promise to serve Christ in His Church by supporting and participating with this congregation in its service of God and its ministry to others, to the best of your ability?
5. Do you submit yourself to the government and discipline of The Evangelical Presbyterian Church and the spiritual oversight of this Church Session, and do you promise to promote the unity, purity and peace of the church?

APPENDIX 2: THE “ESSENTIAL OF OUR FAITH”

THE ESSENTIALS

All Scripture is self-attesting and being Truth, requires our unreserved submission in all areas of life. The infallible Word of God, the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, is a complete and unified witness to God’s redemptive acts culminating in the incarnation of the Living Word, the Lord Jesus Christ. The Bible, uniquely and fully inspired by the Holy Spirit, is the supreme and final authority on all matters on which it speaks. On this sure foundation we affirm these additional essentials of our faith.

1. We believe in one God, the sovereign Creator and Sustainer of all things, infinitely perfect and eternally existing in three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. To Him be all honor, glory and praise forever!
2. Jesus Christ, the living Word, became flesh through His miraculous conception by the Holy Spirit and His virgin birth. He who is true God became true man united in one Person forever. He died on the cross a sacrifice for our sins according to the Scriptures. On the third day He arose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven where, at the right hand of the Majesty on High, He now is our High Priest and Mediator.
3. The Holy Spirit has come to glorify Christ and to apply the saving work of Christ to our hearts. He convicts us of sin and draws us to the Savior, indwelling our hearts. He gives new life to us, empowers and imparts gifts to us for service. He instructs and guides us into all truth, and seals us for the day of redemption.
4. Being estranged from God and condemned by our sinfulness, our salvation is wholly dependent upon the work of God’s free grace. God credits His righteousness to those who put their faith in Christ alone for their salvation, and thereby justifies them in His sight. Only such as are born of the Holy Spirit and receive Jesus Christ become children of God and heirs of eternal life.
5. The true Church is composed of all persons who through saving faith in Jesus Christ and the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit are united together in the body of Christ. The Church finds her visible yet imperfect, expression in local congregations where the Word of God is preached in its purity and the sacraments are administered in their integrity, where scriptural discipline is practiced, and where loving fellowship is maintained. For her perfecting she awaits the return of her Lord.
6. Jesus Christ will come again to the earth personally, visibly, and bodily—to judge the living and the dead, and to consummate history and the eternal plan of God. “Even so, come, Lord Jesus.” (Rev. 22:20)

7. The Lord Jesus Christ commands all believers to proclaim the gospel throughout the world and to make disciples of all nations. Obedience to the Great Commission requires total commitment to “Him who loved us and gave Himself for us.” He calls us to a life of self-denying love and service. “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.” (Eph. 2:10) The Essentials are set forth in greater detail in the Westminster Confession of Faith.

Explanatory Statement to "Essentials of Our Faith"*

The Westminster Confession of Faith is a confessional statement of orthodox Presbyterianism. The Westminster Confession of Faith is our standard of doctrine as found in Scripture. It is a positive statement of the Reformed Faith. The Westminster Confession of Faith constitutes a system of biblical truth that an officer of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church is required to believe, acknowledging that each individual court has the freedom to allow exceptions which do not infringe upon the system of doctrine in the Westminster Confession of Faith.

"Essentials of Our Faith" is an irenic statement of historic evangelicalism. The purpose of "Essentials of Our Faith" is to define core beliefs of the Christian Faith. It expresses historic Christian beliefs common to all true believers and churches throughout the world. "Essentials of Our Faith" is not intended to be the exclusive test of orthodoxy for ordination. It is not intended to be used as an explicit standard for minimal core beliefs for candidates, ordination or ministerial examinations. It is not to be construed as a substitute for the Westminster Confession of Faith. Both the Westminster Confession of Faith and "Essentials of Our Faith" are important documents in the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. The Westminster Confession of Faith and "Essentials of Our Faith" are not alternative statements of truth, nor are they competitive statements of truth. They each serve important and harmonious purposes within the Evangelical Presbyterian Church. The Westminster Confession of Faith preserves our commitment to the historic orthodoxy of the Reformed Faith. "Essentials of Our Faith" preserves our commitment to historic evangelicalism.

APPENDIX 3: A WALK THROUGH THE “ESSENTIALS”

I. What We Believe About the Bible

“All Scripture is self-attesting and being Truth, requires our unreserved submission in all areas of life. The infallible Word of God, the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, is a complete and unified witness to God’s redemptive acts culminating in the incarnation of the living Word, the Lord Jesus Christ. The Bible, uniquely and fully inspired by the Holy Spirit, is the supreme and final authority on all matters on which it speaks.” --The Essentials

- A. The Bible is God’s special revelation to us. The original manuscripts (the Old Testament in Hebrew and the New Testament in Greek) are without error. Even though we do not have these originals, we believe that God has worked throughout the ages to preserve the integrity and accuracy of those manuscripts up to the present. Therefore, they remain true because the ultimate author, God himself, is Truth. (II Timothy 3:16)
- B. The Holy Spirit acted on writers of the Bible in an “organized” way, in harmony with their own values, character, temperament, gifts, talents, education, and culture. He illumined their minds, aided their memory, prompted them to write, repressed the influence of sin and guided them to express their thoughts in their own words, and yet, the Spirit was the ultimate author of their writing. (I Corinthians 2:13; I Thessalonians 2:13; II Peter 1:20, 21)
- C. The sixty-six books of the Bible contain everything we need to know about salvation, faith, and life; yet our full persuasion and assurance of the Bible’s truth and authority is from the inward work of the Holy Spirit, bearing witness by and with the Word in our hearts.

II. What We Believe About God

“We believe in one God, the sovereign Creator and Sustainer of all things, infinitely perfect and eternally existing in three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. To Him be all honor, glory and praise forever!”

- A. There is only one living and true God, eternally existing in three persons, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the same in substance, equal in power and glory.
- B. God is absolutely sovereign. From before the beginning of time, because of His wise and holy purpose, He decreed and ordained everything that will occur. However, God is neither the author of sin, nor does He repress the will of His created beings.
- C. God created the universe out of nothing. He created male and female. Adam and Eve were created with righteousness and holiness in God’s image. They had the moral ability to sin or not, and had liberty of their own will.

III. What We Believe About Mankind

“Being estranged from God and condemned by our sinfulness, our salvation is wholly dependent upon the work of God’s free grace. God credits His righteousness to those who put their faith in Christ alone for their salvation and thereby justifies them in His sight. Only such as are born of the Holy Spirit and receive Jesus Christ become children of God and heirs of eternal life.”

- A. Our first parents sinned. By that sin they fell from their original righteousness. The penalty for sin is death; guilt of that sin has been imputed to all humans. That original corruption completely disinclines us to good. Thus, our spiritual condition is that we are dead.
- B. All people are sinners. The Bible describes sin as anything which is not pleasing to God, whether sins of commission or omission. Any sin on our record is condemned by God. He hates all sin. The just punishment of sin is the wrath of God. Nowhere does the Bible teach that good deeds somehow wipe out a measure of sin. We cannot clear our own sin record. Therefore, since the Fall, no one can be acceptable to God in their own right.

IV. What We Believe About Jesus Christ

“Jesus Christ, the living Word, became flesh through His miraculous conception by the Holy Spirit and His virgin birth. He who is true God became true man united in one Person forever. He died on the cross a sacrifice for our sins according to the Scriptures. On the third day He arose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven where, at the right hand of the Majesty on high, He now is our High Priest and Mediator.”

“Jesus Christ will come again to the earth--personally, visibly, and bodily--to judge the living and the dead, and to consummate history and the eternal plan of God. ‘Even so, come, Lord Jesus.’ (Rev. 22:20)”

- A. Because of His mercy, God freely offered to sinners life and salvation by Jesus Christ. God requires that we place our faith in Jesus and promises to give His Holy Spirit to all those who place their faith in Him. He does this by making us spiritually alive, thereby causing us willingly to believe.
- B. Jesus Christ, who is fully God, at the proper time took on Himself our nature, with all our essential qualities and weaknesses, and yet He lived His entire life without sin. He was conceived by the Holy Spirit in the womb of the Virgin Mary. The two whole, perfect, distinct natures--God and man--were inseparably joined together in one person, without being altered, blended, disunited, or confused. Jesus Christ is fully God and fully man, yet one Christ, the only Mediator between God and man.
- C. The Lord Jesus, by His perfect obedience and one-time sacrifice of Himself to God, endured the most grievous torment and painful suffering in His body. By doing this, He fully satisfied the justice of God the Father, and purchased not only reconciliation, but an everlasting inheritance in the kingdom of heaven for everyone whom the Father has given to Him.
- D. Christ physically arose from the dead, ascended into heaven, and will physically return at the end of time.

V. What We Believe About the Holy Spirit

“The Holy Spirit has come to glorify Christ and to apply the saving work of Christ to our hearts. He convicts us of sin and draws us to the Savior. Indwelling our hearts, He gives new life to us, empowers and imparts gifts to us for service. He instructs and guides us into all truth, and seals us for the day of redemption.”

- A. The Holy Spirit is the instrument of God’s “common grace” to all mankind. By “common grace” we mean that, without renewing the heart, the Holy Spirit exercises such moral influence on people’s souls that sin is restrained, order is maintained in social life, and civil righteousness is promoted. “Common grace” also includes the general blessing God imparts to all people without any distinction, as God sees fit. Although this grace enables people to do good deeds in the eyes of other people, none of these good deeds is sufficient to merit righteousness or justification before God.
- B. The external call of the Holy Spirit urges sinners to accept the salvation offered in Jesus Christ. All who hear the gospel are urged to repent and follow Christ.
- C. The internal call of the Holy Spirit is really the external call made powerfully effective in the person’s life by operation of the Holy Spirit. It ordinarily comes to the sinner through the Word of God savingly applied by the work of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit operates in such a powerful way through the preaching of the Word of God that the sinner is effectively persuaded. This powerful work of the Holy Spirit is called “regeneration” and leads the newly regenerated person to confess sin, repent, and follow Christ. None of this takes place as a result of human choice, but rather because of the work of the Holy Spirit.

VI. What We Believe About How We Are Saved

- A. God effectively calls all of His chosen people by His Word and Spirit, out of their natural state of sin and death into grace and salvation through

Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit is the only One who causes this redemption to occur.

- B. In a state of repentance, we are able to see our sins as God sees them, as filthy, and come to grieve for and hate our sins. “Repentance” is determining to turn away from our sins. The Holy Spirit convicts us of our sin and moves us to repentance. Just as there is no sin so small that it does not deserve damnation, there is none so great that it can bring eternal damnation upon those who truly repent.
- C. Those God calls, He also justifies, not by infusing righteousness into them, but by accepting them as righteous because of Christ’s work alone. Justification is a legal declaration by God that the price for our sins has been paid, and we will never be punished for them.
- D. We are justified by faith alone. Faith itself is a gift, enabling God’s people to trust in Christ alone for salvation. Faith ordinarily comes by the ministry of the word. The Holy Spirit persuades and enables us to embrace Jesus Christ by faith. The Spirit unites all believers to Christ and takes up residence in our spirit as our Comforter and Sanctifier.

VII. What We Believe About the Church

“The true Church is composed of all persons who through saving faith in Jesus Christ and the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit are united together in the body of Christ. The Church finds her visible, yet imperfect, expression in local congregations where the Word of God is preached in its purity and the sacraments are administered in their integrity; where scriptural discipline is practiced, and where loving fellowship is maintained. For her perfecting, she awaits the return of her Lord.”

A. The invisible church

First, we recognize the catholic (with a lower case “c”), or universal church, which is invisible, and consists of all across time who have been or will be gathered under Christ, the Head of His church.

B. The visible church

It consists of all in the world today who profess true Christianity and their children. It is the Kingdom of Christ, the house and family of God, through which people are ordinarily saved.

- C. Christ has given grace, ministry, and the Scripture to the church. The church is the redemptive community through which God intends to work out His plan to bring His people to himself.
- D. Particular churches are members of the visible church.
- E. Churches are never perfect.
- F. As an act of faith and practice, we are to involve ourselves in the fellowship and communion of a church, to be united to one another in love, and to worship God, witness and serve, as the gifts, graces, and frailties of each one are assimilated in the body of Christ.

VIII. What We Believe About How We Are to Live

“The Lord Jesus Christ commands all believers to proclaim the Gospel throughout the world and to make disciples of all nations. Obedience to the Great Commission requires total commitment to “Him who loved us and gave Himself for us.” He calls us to a life of self-denying love and service. “For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.” (Ephesians 2:10)

- A. We are justified (saved) by faith alone, but the faith that justifies is never alone. Out of gratitude to God for giving us our faith, we do good deeds. Thus our faith is not a dead faith, but one which is alive and causes us to do good works out of love for God.
- B. Even though we are now declared righteous in God’s sight, we do still sin. But we are no longer slaves to sin. A process called sanctification (cleansing) begins (although it does not end in this life). In this process the desires of the old self are more and more weakened and subdued.

The Holy Spirit indwells our hearts, produces new life in us, empowers us and gives gifts to us for service. He also instructs and guides us. We receive from the Spirit the ability to do good works, which are themselves the evidence of a true and living faith. The motivation for good works is our gratitude for what Christ has already done for us. Good works do not merit God’s blessing. But they are necessary in the

life of a believer. Jesus Christ cannot be our Savior without being our Lord.

- C. When we are justified we are adopted into God's family as His children. Therefore, we become joint heirs with Christ of all of God's blessings.
- D. True Christians cannot fall away from God's saving grace. This is due to the unchangeable nature of God's election, the merit of Christ's intercession, the presence of the Holy Spirit within them, and the nature of the covenant of grace. Nevertheless, believers can fall into grievous sins for a time, displease God, and be deprived of some measure of grace and comfort.
- E. The liberty which Christ purchased for believers frees us from guilt and condemnation arising from sin; however, it grants no license to indulge any sinful practice on the pretext of Christian freedom.
- F. Those who are justified are also glorified. After death, our souls are made perfect in holiness and are received into heaven where we behold the face of God and wait for the full redemption of our bodies.

These Essentials are set forth in greater detail in the Westminster Confession of Faith.

APPENDIX 4: WHAT WE BELIEVE ABOUT THE SACRAMENTS

- I. What is a sacrament?
 - A. "A holy ordinance instituted by Christ wherein by visible signs, Christ and the benefits of the New Covenant are represented, sealed and applied to believers."
-Westminster Shorter Catechism Question #92
 - B. It is a picture of the Gospel.
 - 1. Baptism pictures the washing away of our sin and being cleansed by Christ. (Titus 3:5)
 - 2. The Lord's Supper pictures the death of Christ and the application/identification of His work for us. (I Corinthians 11:26)
 - C. There are only two sacraments instituted by Christ.
 - 1. Baptism - Matthew 28:19

2. The Lord's Supper - Luke 22:19; I Corinthians 11:23-26

- D. It is God, the Holy Spirit that causes grace to flow to us, not our doing of the act and not because of anything inherent in the physical elements. This is a great mystery.
- E. We are to be obedient to receive the sacraments, but they are not necessary for salvation. Examples: the thief on the cross never received either sacrament; Abraham was justified before he received circumcision.

II. Baptism

- A. Baptism is a sacrament wherein the washing with water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit signifies and seals our ingrafting into Christ and receiving the benefits of the covenant of grace, and our commitment to be the Lord's. - Westminster Shorter Catechism, Question #94
- B. "To baptize" literally means "to wash." In the Bible it is used of washing by immersion, dipping, pouring or sprinkling.
- C. In the Old Testament, the priests underwent ceremonial washing after they became unclean. The people were also ceremonially sprinkled as a means of spiritual cleansing. At times this was done with blood and at times with water.
- D. Baptism is one visible means of identifying believers (from all nations) as separate from the world.
- E. Because it is God who baptizes, we accept any baptism done in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (Trinitarian baptism).
- F. The "mode" of baptism (sprinkling, pouring, immersion) is unclear. One cannot defend one mode to the exclusion of all others.
- G. The Old Testament sign of inclusion in the covenant was circumcision. In Colossians 2:11-12, Paul the Apostle tells us that the sign of circumcision has been replaced by the New Covenant sign of baptism. It is still a covenantal sign of the Holy Spirit's act of cleansing from the defilement of sin.
- H. Why we baptize not only believers but also their children

1. God's Covenant of Redemption was made with Abraham not only for himself but for his offspring (descendants) and, therefore, the sign of the covenant (circumcision) was placed on his children including the infant Isaac. (Genesis 17:9-14)
2. Children have always been included in covenants instituted by God. Baptism, as a sign and seal of the covenant of grace is, therefore, to be applied to children of believers, even though the child has not yet come to faith in Christ.

“The ground of infant baptism is not then presumptive election or presumptive regeneration but rather the covenant relation in which the child stands and the ordinance or command of God.” - Dr. Robert L. Reymond

3. There is an abundance of Scripture in the Old Testament concerning inclusion of children in the covenant and its sign (circumcision) and there is no repudiation of this inclusion in the New Testament. In fact, there are several accounts of baptisms of entire “households” in the New Testament.
4. Summary
 - a. Infant males received the sign and seal of the covenant of grace under its Old Testament administration;
 - b. The covenant of grace has continuity and organic unity; the people of God are essentially one in all ages; and
One can find no repeal in the New Testament of the Old Testament command to place the sign of the covenant of grace upon covenant children. And, in fact, history demonstrates that the church, since the first century has been baptizing infants.

III. The Lord's Supper

- A. “The Lord's Supper is a sacrament in which bread and wine are given and received as Christ directed to proclaim his death. Those who receive the Lord's Supper in the right way share in His body and blood with all His benefits, not physically but by faith, and become spiritually stronger and grow in grace.”

-Westminster Shorter Catechism, Question #96

B. The signs

1. Bread - “This is my body...”

2. Wine - “This is my blood...”
- C. Seal: I Corinthians 11:26 - “For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup you proclaim the Lord’s death until he comes.”
- D. It is a physical meal that pictures a spiritual meal.
- APPENDIX 5: OUR PASTORS, STAFF, ELDERS AND DEACONS**

PASTORS AND STAFF

RICHARD WHITE: TEACHING PASTOR
RON HORGAN: EXECUTIVE PASTOR
EDWARD BROUWER: PASTOR OF ADULT DISCIPLESHIP
KRIS BARTMAN: DIRECTOR OF MUSIC
DUSTIN JERNIGAN: DIRECTOR OF YOUTH AND FAMILY
SARA LYNN MILLER: DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN’S MINISTRY
TERESA COX: EXECUTIVE ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT
MARCELLA CALLOWAY: YOUTH ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT
CATHY FOSTER: RECEPTIONIST
DEBORAH MCINNIS: BOOKKEEPER
SONDRA KRAAK: ACCOMPANIST
COLLEEN GILLESPIE: ORGANIST
LINDA ROBINSON: HOSTESS
JENNIFER LASSITER: ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF MMS
CORRIE GREENE: NURSERY COORDINATOR
SPENCER KILGORE: SEXTON

THE RULING ELDERS (SESSION)

JOEL BARKER
LLOYD DAVIS
ANDREW FORBAT
JAY GUFFEY
JOE HAGAN
GARY HAMRICK, CLERK OF SESSION
RON HORGAN, MODERATOR
BILL KRAAK
CHRIS MASLIN
DAVID PHILLIPS
ROB SCHERMERHORN
STAN TOPPLE
MARK WELLS
RICHARD WHITE

THE DEACONS

LUANNE BRYAN
JASON BURK
STEVE HAGAMAN
DON FARROW
SCOTT JENKINSON
JACK MCMAHAN
SCOTT REED, MODERATOR
MARTHA SERVER
JEFF SHUMAN
LEE SIMMONS
DAN SINGLETARY

JAKE WETZEL

APPENDIX 6: OUR VISION SUMMARY STATEMENT AND STORY OF CHRIST COMMUNITY CHURCH MONTREAT

Vision Summary Statement

For more than 100 years Christ Community has witnessed the gracious hand of Jesus Christ on our life together. Congregationalists from New England founded Montreat as a retreat center in 1897. Montreat's purpose was to provide a place for the refreshment and equipping of Christians in the gospel with a view to sending followers of Christ back into the world. The iconic gate is symbolic of Montreat's early purpose: coming in to go back out, encountering Christ here so as to represent Christ there.

As we enter our next chapter with our new name "Christ Community Church," we pursue a renewed vision of making disciples of all peoples for the glory of Jesus Christ our Lord.

Our Biblical Foundation and Values

Our vision is founded in God's Word, and our values capture the heart of Christ Community Church for ministry.

- *Resting in Grace:* Grace, expressed through Jesus Christ, is the free gift of God for our salvation. Gospel-rest is the mark of the Church. (John 1:14-17, Matthew 11:28-29, Hebrews 4:3, 9-11)
- *Grounded in Truth:* We want to know the written Word of God so that we can love and obey the Living Word of God. (John 14:21, 2 Timothy 2:15)
- *Growing in Christ:* We will invest in supporting families and preparing disciples for their particular roles in advancing the Kingdom. (Deuteronomy 6:4-9, Matthew 28:18-20, 2 Peter 1:3-8)
- *Called to Go:* Every member is a missionary. Each of us is called to go, without reservation, taking Christ to our families, communities, workplace, and world. (Matthew 28:18-20; 2 Corinthians 5:14-20, 1 Peter 3:15)
- *Created for Community:* We are made to live life together. Healthy fellowship embraces broken people who are experiencing healing and gospel rest. (John 13:35, Romans 12:10, 13, Hebrews 13:1-5)
- *Engaged in Worship:* All of life is worship, corporately and individually. As we are made alive by the Spirit, we respond in prayer, song and praise in multiple styles for a single Savior. It is all for God's glory. (Psalm 100, Romans 12:1,2, Hebrews 12:28-29)

Our Ministry

The Lord has called Christ Community Church to equip our members so that they may take ministry to those within and beyond our gate. Outwardly focused, we believe we must be fully committed to outreach and evangelism first, and then discipleship will naturally result. We minister *through* our congregation, not only *to* our congregation. We will equip our membership through weakness and strength, need and ability, to make disciples in all the places where they are. All are called to share the gospel, and at Christ Community Church, that means advancing the gospel into our community and world for God's glory.

Vision Story of Christ Community Church - Montreat September 2013

For more than 100 years our church has witnessed the gracious hand of Jesus Christ on our life together. At times we have paid a significant price for walking with Jesus. At other times, we have felt the tailwind of the Holy Spirit bringing joy and renewal. As we begin a new chapter in the life of our church, we again sense that God is doing a new work in us and through us. Our hope in this document is to articulate our sense of how God wants to express Himself through our church in this community at this time.

Our History Setting

Christ Community Church began in 1897 as a community church. Congregationalists from New England founded Montreat as a retreat center. At the heart of that community was a worshipping fellowship. Montreat's purpose was to provide a place for the refreshment and equipping of Christians in the gospel with a view to sending followers of Christ back into the world in order to bring Christ to their world. The iconic gate is symbolic of Montreat's early purpose: encountering Christ here so as to represent Christ there. The church identified with this purpose and was part of the community that welcomed and equipped disciples.

From 1906 to 2007 the church was associated with the mainline Presbyterian Church (PCUS/PCUSA) and known as Montreat Presbyterian Church. In the early 1960s, under the leadership of the Reverend Calvin Thielman, the church was mainly focused on discipleship through gospel centered preaching and teaching. But Under Calvin's leadership ministry began to expand to Montreat College and beyond the gates of Montreat, especially in the support of missionaries to foreign fields.

In 2007, the church voted overwhelmingly to join the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (EPC). Our leadership stated emphatically that we had spent enough time, money, and human resources striving with our former denomination over issues of the authority of God's Word, the single saving sufficiency of Jesus Christ, and the call to a lifestyle of biblical holiness. In the EPC we found a denomination of like-minded gospel-centric churches committed to advancing Christ and His mission in the world.

So a new chapter began for our congregation in 2007. Unfortunately, part of that new chapter involved defending ourselves in a lawsuit filed by our former denomination seeking our name and property. By God's grace that matter was resolved in 2012. Under the terms of that

settlement we changed our name to “Christ Community Church Montreat, an Evangelical Presbyterian Congregation.” Today, Christ Community Church is free from the burden of that lawsuit and free from all financial debts. We have a new name that signifies our center, home, and hope. There is a stirring of the Holy Spirit in the congregation to move forward in mission with Jesus in all the places He is calling us.

Observation From Our history

Throughout our history the Lord has positioned us inside a gate, but with a purpose of moving with Christ beyond our gate (Hebrews 13:12,13). Our church has been blessed with gospel centered teaching for the refreshment of the soul and for equipping of God’s servants to enter our world with Christ beyond our front door.

II. God's Great Mandates

God has not left us without direction. His will is revealed in His Word. He has a grand vision for His church throughout the world. His particular vision for our congregation is founded upon and grows out of our alignment with God’s great vision.

1. *The Great Revelation.* Hebrews 1:1-2

1 Long ago, at many times and in many ways, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, **2** but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed the heir of all things, through whom also he created the world.

At just the right moment in history, God sent His only Son into the world. The Lord Jesus Christ revealed God’s eternal plan of redemption. This included His living a perfect life in which He continuously pointed us to His Heavenly Father, dying an unjust death on the cross, and rising from the dead as evidence that His death paid the penalty for our sins. At its most basic level, the mandate of Jesus is simply “Follow me.” From this revelation and command the other mandates follow.

2. *The Great Promise.* Matthew 16:13-18

13 Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say that the Son of Man is?” **14** And they said, “Some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets.” **15** He said to them, “But who do you say that I am?” **16** Simon Peter replied, “You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.” **17** And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven. **18** And I tell you, you are Peter, and **on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.**

The “rock” is not Peter. The “rock” is Peter’s confession that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah-Savior, the Son of the living God. Jesus promises to build a community of people who confess Him as Savior. Jesus is the builder and what He builds endures. Not even the powers of hell can bring down His church. God’s vision for our church is that we would make clear to our community that Jesus is the Savior. This truth is the only thing that will endure as He shapes a community of people who confess He is Lord.

3. *The Great Commandment.* Matthew 22:34-40

34 But when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. **35** And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. **36** “Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?” **37** And he said to him, “**You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.** **38** This is the great and first

commandment. ³⁹And a second is like it: **You shall love your neighbor as yourself.** ⁴⁰On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.”

God’s vision is that we live in two directions – vertically and horizontally. Vertically we are to love God with all our being. There is nothing reserved. No part of our being is to be held back or kept from expressing love to the Lord. The same is to be said on the horizontal. We love others with all our being. Nothing is held in reserve. We love others as Christ loved us. Love for God must manifest in love for others.

4. ***The Great Commission.*** Matthew 28:18-20

¹⁸And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. ¹⁹Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

God’s vision for us is that we go and make disciples based on the authority and presence of the risen Christ. We are told to go, not to stay home and hope people come and find us. Christ commissions movement beyond ourselves toward others. Ministry cannot be done in our own strength or without Christ. We move in His authority, not our own. We speak because of who Christ is, not because of who we are. We are never alone. Christ is with his people wherever and whenever they engage in what He has given them to do.

5. ***The Great Power.*** Acts 1:8

⁸But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.

God’s vision is that we live and serve solely by the power of God. We can do nothing apart from the power of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit cannot be coopted for personal experiences. The Spirit’s power is given expressly for the purpose of witness to Jesus Christ, to make Him known both in the Christ-like character of Jesus’ followers, and in their proclamation that Jesus is Lord and Savior.

6. ***The Great Mission.*** Luke 19:10

¹⁰For the Son of Man came to seek and to save the lost.

God’s vision for us is stated clearly by Jesus. His was a search and rescue mission to seek the lost. This is why He came into our world. He sends us into the world with the same mission.

7. ***The Great Multiplication.*** Matthew 24:14

And this gospel of the kingdom will be proclaimed throughout the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come.

Jesus intended for His gospel to multiply, to spread from across the street to around the world. Only after it does will He return. George Eldon Ladd says that Matthew 24:14 is “the single most important verse in the Word of God for the people of God today.” He further comments regarding the definition of “nations” and the completion of the task given to Christ’s church:

“God alone knows the definition of terms. I cannot precisely define who all the nations are, but I do not need to know. I know only one thing: Christ has not yet returned; therefore, the task is not yet done. When it is done, Christ will come. Our responsibility is not to insist on defining the terms; our responsibility is to complete the task. So long as Christ does not return, our work is undone. Let us get busy and complete

Summary

God’s mandates form His vision. In light of God’s vision for Christ Community Church we must align ourselves with God’s mission. This will introduce some major changes in our thinking.

1. We must change our thinking on God’s vision: **“My life for God’s plan,” not “God’s plan for my life”.**

Every member should state: “I’m available to God.” Ministry cannot focus inwardly on satisfying us. Ministry focus is outward, beyond ourselves, to God and what He is doing in our community. Corporately this means: **Not “God’s vision for our church,” but “Our church for God’s vision.”**

2. We must change our thinking on outreach: **“Once we begin to reach the community the congregation will get on board,” not “Once the congregation is on board we’ll begin to reach the community.”**

There is a danger in waiting until everyone is in agreement and then moving together. The danger is that we will never move forward. We will not be seduced into thinking that all will be on board with God’s vision or that ministry can’t happen without it. We move in obedience to God’s revealed will, trusting He will generate passion for His work in others when people see it in action.

3. We must change our thinking about outreach, evangelism, and discipleship: **“Once our ministry is fully committed to outreach and evangelism then discipleship will naturally result,” not “Once our ministry is fully committed to discipleship then outreach and evangelism will naturally result.”**

We sometimes justify our lack of evangelism with our sense of inadequacy. We believe we must first get our act together, first let the gospel heal us, first grow deep in our relationship with Jesus. Then, we believe, we will be ready to witness.

At worst this is a delusion. Who ever arrives or ever feels truly ready? In this life we will never be totally prepared, fully healed, all knowing, completely surrendered and walking gloriously with Jesus.

Jesus sent out his disciples to preach, heal, and cast out demons before his death and resurrection; before they really knew who He was. Even Judas participated in evangelism and outreach.

We reject the mindset that any Christian is too young or inexperienced to be a witness for Jesus in the place God has put him or her. Learning, healing, and a deeper walk with Jesus are often the results produced in us as we step forward as witnesses for Jesus. What needs to be overcome is not ignorance but fear. True discipleship must include outreach and evangelism. Anything less is a truncated and inward self-focused version. On the program level of church ministry, movement will not be to solve church issues by looking inward toward the found congregation, but to solve issues by looking outward toward engaging the lost community.

4. We must change our thinking about ministry: **“How do we minister THROUGH our congregation?” not, “How do we minister TO our congregation?”**

The Great Commission calls us to be a church focused outwardly toward others. This calls us to minister to the needs and growth of our fellowship. Through the service of Word and mercy we seek to help people find rest and healing in the gospel. But without becoming consumers or using need as an excuse, we also focus beyond ourselves to a needy world as witnesses for Jesus in the place God calls us. Weakness, brokenness, and need afford opportunity for grace to strength us and can be platforms for making Christ’s glory known to those outside our fellowship. In all ministry, inside and outside our church, we seek to work THROUGH our congregation, valuing their gifting and calling. We reject any sacred/secular split that sees those who are ordained as involved in sacred work while others dabble in secular. All work is sacred if done as unto the Lord. **We will equip our membership through weakness and strength, need and ability, to make disciples in the places where they are, in and out of the church. All are called. The work is vast.**

III. Vision Triangle: Content-Context-Containers

As we align our vision with God’s mandates and so fulfill God’s vision for our particular church at this time, we consider three aspects of life and ministry: Content, Context, and Containers.



Content is fixed. It involves the non-negotiables of God’s Word. Content never changes. It rules over us and rules over culture. The content of the gospel is centered in Jesus Christ, the authority of God’s Word, and all that God has done for us to accomplish our salvation.

Context involves people and place. It’s where God has planted us to live. It includes the people who make up our church and the people who live around us. Context may change as people move in and out and as neighborhoods and communities transform.

Containers are methodologies, strategies, and the church’s programs (VBS, retreats, Youth Camp, Wednesday night Connections) for moving the content of the gospel into our context. While containers must be shaped by the principles of God’s Word, there is freedom and creativity in shaping them. Containers, unlike content, are utterly negotiable. The problem in most churches is that people give their favorite container content status. This is idolatry.

Deeper Dive into the Vision Triangle

A. Content

The content of our faith is fixed by God’s unchanging Word, the Bible. A summary of Scripture’s teaching that we consider essential content can be found in the Westminster Confession of Faith and a document unique to the EPC called “The Essentials of Our Faith.” This document identifies eight essentials to the Christian faith. These are not meant as a

complete statement of the specifics, nor do they include everything taught in the Bible. They simply help define what we believe to be the core beliefs of the Christian faith that all true believers will share in common. The eight are:

1. The Bible is the Word of God and is our only infallible rule of faith and practice.
2. God is the Sovereign Trinity – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
3. Jesus Christ is both fully God and fully man. He died a literal death on the cross for our sins and experienced the literal, physical resurrection of His body.
4. The Holy Spirit convicts, saves, indwells, and empowers Jesus' followers.
5. Salvation is found only by grace through faith in Christ's death for us.
6. The true church is comprised of all who believe in Jesus Christ.
7. In the future Jesus Christ will literally return to earth as King.
8. Jesus commands all believers to share His Gospel with our culture.

While the essentials of the gospel never change, there may be times when, because of cultural issues or attacks on the gospel, certain essentials are emphasized. Christ Community Church emphasizes the following six values as shapers of who we are and how we intend to do mission.

B. Core Values

As we seek to live out the teaching of Scripture, our church is characterized by and committed to six core values. Grace and truth are foundational to all we do. The last four describe how we live our lives in light of God's revelation of grace and truth.

A. *Resting in Grace*

Grace, expressed through Jesus Christ (John 1:14-17), is the free gift of God for our salvation. Grace is the power of the gospel. It is the result of what God has done in history (Romans 1:16-18; 3:21-26; Titus 3:5-7), and our experience and expression of grace are to be just as concrete (Ephesians 2:8-10; 2 Thessalonians 2:16-17). Gospel-rest is the mark of the church (Matthew 11:28-29; Hebrews 4:3, 9-11). This being true, we must not approach God by trying harder.

B. *Grounded in Truth*

We want to know the written Word of God so that we can love and obey the Living Word of God, Jesus Christ (John 14:21; 2 Timothy 2:15). We are not left to float in suppositions, but are called to apply all of His truth to all of our lives (1 Timothy 6:11-12; 2 Timothy 3:14-17). Where God has spoken clearly we must never equivocate on what He has said.

C. *Growing in Christ*

We will invest in supporting families and preparing disciples for their particular roles in advancing the Kingdom. The trajectory of our members becoming more like Jesus Christ is the measure of our impact (Deuteronomy 6:4-9; Matthew 28:18-20; 2 Peter 1:3-8). Because of the magnitude of both the task of becoming a disciple and advancing His kingdom into every corner of the world, we can never stop growing in Christ.

D. *Called to Go*

Every member is a missionary. Each of us is called to go, without reservation, taking Christ to our families, communities, workplace, and world. The influence of our members in witness to Jesus is the measure of our impact (Matthew 28:18-20; 2 Corinthians 5:14-20; 1 Peter 3:15). Because of the clear and direct call to each of us, we must not leave our calling to others.

E. ***Created for Community***

We are made to live life together. Healthy fellowship embraces broken people who are experiencing healing and gospel rest. We are called to give expression to Christ's family in community. The love of our members for one another is the measure of our impact (John 13:35; Romans 12:10, 13; Hebrews 13:1-5). Therefore, as the family of Christ we must not be present from a distance or keep others at a distance.

F. ***Engaged in Worship***

All of life is worship, corporately and individually. As we are made alive by the Spirit we respond in prayer, song, and praise to our Savior. It is all for God's glory. Our member's engagement with God in worship is the measure of our impact (Psalm 100; Romans 12:1,2; Hebrews 12:28-29). Because God calls each of us to active engagement in worship we are not allowed to politely witness worship.

C. Context

The Context of our ministry is the Swannanoa Valley, primarily Montreat, Black Mountain, Ridgecrest, and Swannanoa. While we worship in Montreat, three-quarters of our members live outside Montreat. An even greater majority of our congregation work outside the Montreat Gate. Additionally, God has blessed us with an abundance of growing families with children of all ages as well as a significant number of "empty nesters," including retired missionaries. We continue to attract people in these two groups.

Our congregation parallels the make-up of our community. Significant community concern includes the desire to find adequate food resources, good spiritual teaching, help with parenting issues, and concerns about marriage and divorce. When looking for a good church, members of our community identify as desirable: good Bible studies, divorce recovery programs, family counseling, and family activities. They also express a desire for spiritual retreat, active retirement programs, and care for the critically ill.

Another part of our context that is directly relevant to our location is the fact that we exist on a college campus. Around 400 students, primarily from the Southeast, spend up to four years in Montreat. Several individuals in our congregation teach or work at the college, and others seek to support various sports teams. We continue to discern what form of ministry (containers) God is calling us to use in order to make disciples of students.

Within the broader valley we partner with Swannanoa Valley Christian Ministry and the schools to serve the poor and homeless of our community.

Our desire within our context is for every member to know himself or herself as a missionary. Jesus told his disciples in Matthew 9:37, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field." Seeing the

need we say, “Here we are, send us.” We will speak of ourselves as missionaries. We will see our circles of influence (neighborhoods, businesses, associations) as fields for harvest. We will open our eyes as Jesus told his disciples to do, believing that the fields are ripe for harvest (John 4:35).

As Jesus came to seek and to save the lost, so will we. If we are not willing then Jesus will use others to accomplish His mission and we will lose the joy and blessing of joining Him in bringing His elect to faith. We will not leave God’s calling to others.

D. Containers

Containers channel the fixed content of our faith to the context in which we are planted. While idolatry of containers, worshipping how we do something, is always a danger. But we celebrate how our church has been flexible and open to making changes in worship styles, denominational affiliation, and even our church name. There is freedom to build and even change containers in order to better serve the need of advancing the gospel into the context of our community.

Some other container changes of the last few years include moving certain ministries outside the gate (egg hunt, VBS). We have also seen a response to the creation of new containers with ministries outside the gate. These new containers include the homeless shelter, tutoring, prison ministries, Valley Fellowship, and small groups.

Our leadership must continue to underscore the transitional nature of containers in order to effectively communicate the gospel to our ever-changing community. Creating and maintaining containers is not our vision. Making disciples of the lost in our community is.

Containers for discipleship must focus on teaching and training. Christ Community has a solid history of teaching and proclaiming the gospel. Historically our discipleship programming has been aimed at imparting information with the assumption that knowledge leads to application. We will assume this no more. The containers we build for discipleship must involve training components, not just teaching. Training provides skills for how to share the faith in our contexts. Training provides accountability. Training will help members take ground for Christ in the places we already occupy by helping them give clear expression to Christ in those places. The task for leadership is to come alongside our members to teach, train, encourage, and hold accountable to the mission of God in the places He has scattered them.

IV. The Matrix of Ministry – Strategic Plan to Go-Make-Disciples

Jesus commissions his church to go make disciples of all nations. Beginning in our local context and extending to the ends of the earth, this is our calling that cannot stop until the Lord returns or calls us home. If we are called home, the next generation will be equipped to carry on Christ’s mission.

To strategically make disciples of the people God has called to Christ Community Church, we will develop all ministries of the church through the grid of: **“Go–Make–Disciples.”**

“Go” is the call to outreach, to meet and welcome people in their needs in the community. We seek to do what Jesus did when He went around doing good, healing the sick, casting out demons, feeding the hungry. While some ministries’ purposes is clearly outreach, such as tutoring at the Primary School, still other ministries must look for ways to connect with people beyond the church, either by going into their community or by welcoming them in our community.

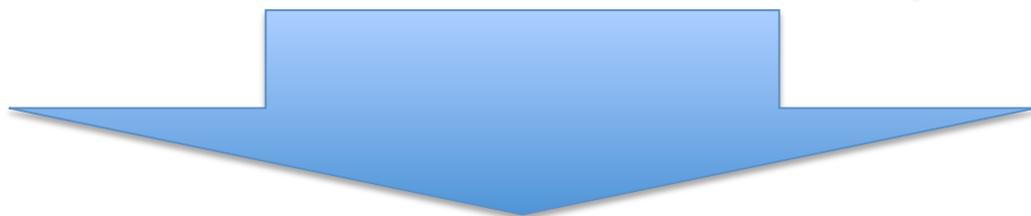
“Make” is a way of describing evangelism: the clear presentation of the gospel to others. Just as Jesus called people to put their faith in Him, stating that there was no other way of salvation (John 14:6), so do we declare this truth. Again, while certain ministries are specifically evangelistic in nature, each ministry of the church will consider strategies for clear gospel presentation.

“Disciples” (Discipleship) is the training and equipping of followers of Jesus to be like Him in His character and activity. Jesus equipped His followers to do the work He did, and to speak the message He proclaimed. He then sent them out to do all this. Each ministry of our church carries an equipping responsibility so that workers can make disciples who in turn, go and make disciples of others.

The Ministry Matrix

Ministries of Christ Community Church

	Children’s Ministry	Youth Ministry	Adult Ministries	Other Ministries
GO Outreach				
MAKE Evangelism				
DISCIPLES Discipleship				



Ministry to a Lost World

While certain programs (containers) may champion an aspect of this matrix, each should develop ministry with all aspects of the matrix in mind, that is, how

each programmatic expression can lead people into other aspects of outreach, evangelism and discipleship.

V. The Fuel and Goal of Missions

All ministry is centered in Christ and His Word and is based upon the worship of the One True Living God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. We know God and have life only because of the grace of Jesus Christ. Our life is in Christ. Thus, everything we do, whether eating or drinking, or going and making disciples, is opportunity for worship as it is done out of desire to celebrate God's glory and make His glory known to others. God's glory and the worship of our God then, is the fuel and goal of all mission. To put it another way, worship is the end and the reason of going and making disciples. John Piper summarizes this best in his book, the *Supremacy of God in Missions*:

“Missions is not the ultimate goal of the Church. Worship is. Missions exist because worship does not. Worship is ultimate, not missions, because God is ultimate, not man. When this age is over, and the countless millions of the redeemed fall on their faces before the throne of God, missions will be no more. It is a temporary necessity. But worship abides forever.

*Worship, therefore, is the fuel and **goal of missions**. It's the goal of missions because in missions we simply aim to bring the nations into the white hot enjoyment of God's glory. The goal of missions is the gladness of the peoples in the greatness of God. “The Lord reigns; let the earth rejoice; let the many coastlands be glad!” (Ps 97:1). “Let the peoples praise thee, O God; let all the peoples praise thee! Let the nations be glad and sing for joy!” (Ps 67:3-4).*

*But worship is also the **fuel of missions**. Passion for God in worship precedes the offer of God in preaching. You can't commend what you don't cherish. Missionaries will never call out, “Let the nations be glad!” who cannot say from the heart, “I rejoice in the Lord...I will be glad and exult in thee, I will sing praise to thy name, O Most High” (Ps 104:34, 9:2). Missions begins and ends in worship.”* John Piper, *Let the Nations Be Glad! The Supremacy of God in Missions* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1993/2003), 17. (Bold face emphasis added).

VI. The Structural Plan

We have recently begun developing a structural plan at staff and session levels that will implement the “Go-Make-Disciples” matrix. Staff have been tasked with realigning programs (containers) along this line. Our hope is that soon we will begin to make changes in our overall delivery of ministry that will more effectively bring Christ to our community.

