

OUR VISION

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*To all who are weary and seek rest
to all who mourn and long for comfort
to all who struggle and desire victory
to all who sin and need a Savior
to all who are strangers and want fellowship
to all who hunger and thirst after righteousness
and to whoever will come –*

*this church opens wide her doors
and offers her welcome in the name
of the Lord Jesus Christ.*

I. CONTEXT

The church will be situated in the metropolitan Philadelphia area where people from all walks of life gather. Many are lost in their worldly pursuits without meaning and purpose, while others are simply overwhelmed, having just arrived at a foreign land with a totally different language and an alien culture.

Our main targeted audiences are Christians and non-Christians of Chinese descent, though people from all races are welcome. We consider our cultural and linguistic affinities to be strategic points-of-contact by the providence of God. They are therefore a missiological leverage to be wisely utilized.

We envision a multilingual, multicultural ministry with people from a great variety of linguistic, social and economic backgrounds, yet being made one in Christ, exhibiting an oneness that is both in spirit and in deeds.

II. PRINCIPLES

Our vision for the church is based on the principles found in Acts 2:42, "*They devoted themselves to the apostles; teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to [the] prayer.*"

2.1 *The Word of God*

First of all, it is a church that is firmly built upon the Word of God – a church that is known for its unwavering and uncompromising stand on the orthodox, historical Christian doctrines. It is also a church that proclaims the riches of the Reformed tradition as summarized in the *Westminster Confession of Faith*.

2.2 *Christian Fellowship*

Secondly, it is a church that lives out the truths of the Scriptures. It is a church that strives to reflect her heavenly Head, Jesus Christ who embraces the lowly, comforts the sorrowful, strengthens the weak, and brings joy to the broken-hearted. She is to be a living embodiment of the grace of Jesus Christ expressed through an authentic Christian fellowship.

2.3 *The Sacraments*

Thirdly, it is a repentant community that is constantly made aware of her sinfulness and thus acknowledges her desperate need for the gospel. It is a fellowship that lifts up the cross of Jesus through the Lord's Supper – constantly remembering Christ's sacrifice for sinners while looking forward to his return. It is a church that is compelled by Christ's love to live no longer for herself, but for him who died for her and was raised.

2.4 *Prayers*

Finally, it is a church that believes in the sovereign hand of God, a church that always lays before her the dual-vision of a majestic, awesome and omnipotent God and a compassionate heavenly High Priest interceding unceasingly for her. Here we find a church that turns away from her self-reliance to a deeper trust in the work of the Holy Spirit through individual and corporate prayers.

III. EMPHASES

The “Emphases” are direct outflows of the “Principles”. They are not “options” – for they are based on teachings from the Scriptures – but emphatic applications that are particularly relevant and important in our time and place.

3.1 *An Incarnational Community*

- q John 1:14, “The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.”
- q Luke 10:27, “He answered: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind”; and, “Love your neighbor as yourself.””

We believe that the Lord has called us to bear a *corporate* witness of the gospel in our immediate surrounding. The Christian faith is not an isolated, individual matter, but a faith that shines the brightest through the lives of a community of believers.

Resolved, by the grace of God, to become a community (vs. commuter) church that is deeply involved in and ministers to the community in which we live.

3.2 *A Church Embracing the Lowly*

- q Luke 6:20, “Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.”
- q Luke 14:21-24, “The servant told his master what happened, and the master became so angry that he said, ‘Go as fast as you can to every street and alley in town! Bring in everyone who is poor or crippled or blind or lame.’ When the servant returned, he said, ‘Master, I’ve done what you told me, and there is still plenty room for more people.’ His master then told him, ‘Go out along the back roads and fence rows and make people come in, so that my house will be full. Not one of the guests I first invited will get even a bite of my food!’”

- q James 2:5, “Listen, my dear brothers: Has not God chosen those who are poor in the eyes of the world to be rich in faith and to inherit the kingdom he promised those who love him?”
- q 1Corinthians 1:26-29, “Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things – and the things that are not – to nullify the things that are, so that no man may boast before him.”

We believe that the biblical church is a church that gives priority to and embraces the poor and the lowly. Therefore, while we welcome people from all walks of life, we seek to give particular attention to the poor, the uneducated, the fatherless/motherless, the needy, the weak, the mentally/physically impaired, and all who are considered lesser by the society.

Resolved, by the grace of God, to become a church that seeks to embrace, protect, and nurture the lowly and the despised of our society.

3.3 *Pursuing Justice; Loving Mercy*

- q Micah 6:8, “He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to talk humbly with your God.”
- q Amos 5:24, “But let justice roll on like a river, righteousness like a never-failing stream!”
- q Luke 4:18-19, “The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to release the oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord’s favor.”
- q Matthew 5:6, “Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.”

We believe that the kingdom of God is a kingdom of justice, love and mercy. Thus we strive to reflect these characters of

Christ by pursuing justice for the powerless, doing mercy among the poor, and loving our neighbors as ourselves.

Resolved, by the grace of God, to become a church that devotes her prayers and energy to the pursuit of social justice and mercy among the poor and powerless.

3.4 *Genuine Reconciliation*

q Ephesians 2:14-18, "For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit."

We believe that all believers – regardless of their social and economic status – have been made one in Christ Jesus. Therefore, we are common sinners and common recipients of grace despite our varied social and economic standings. Hence, we endeavor to encourage a common bond of fellowship between the have's and have-not's, the educated and the uneducated.

Resolved, by the grace of God, to become a church that breaks down all social and economic barriers so that the people of God may indeed be one in Christ.

3.5 *Simple Living; Lavish Giving*

q 1Timothy 6:6-10, "But godliness with contentment is great gain. For we brought nothing into the world, and we can take nothing out of it. But if we have food and clothing, we will be content with that. People who want to get rich fall into temptation and a trap and into many foolish and harmful desires that plunge men into ruin and destruction. For the love of money is the root of all kinds of evil. Some

people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs."

q Luke 12:32-34, "Do not be afraid, little flock, for your Father has been pleased to give you the kingdom. Sell your possessions and give to the poor. Provide purses for yourselves that will not wear out, a treasure in heaven that will not be exhausted, where no thief comes near and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also."

q 2Corinthians 8:9, "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich."

We believe that just as the Lord has lavished his love on us, we too should give generously and cheerfully to the poor and ministry of the church. We strive to take seriously the numerous biblical teachings on money and wealth, seeking to live a life of simplicity (especially for those who have been blessed materially) that we may give lavishly to the church and those who are in need.

Resolved, by the grace of God, to become a church that is known for her simple living and lavish giving, and hence a powerful witness in a materialistic society.

IV. DISTINCTIVES

By God's grace, we seek to attain the following distinctives:

- q Strong expository preaching by gifted men of God
- q Solid Christian education / discipleship programs resulting in an authentic Christian worldview for community impact and cultural renewal
- q Nurturing pastoral care, biblical leadership and church discipline
- q A ministry of mercy that reaches out to the immediate community and beyond
- q Genuine reconciliation, spiritual and material sharing between the have's and the have-not's, the educated and the not educated
- q Simple Christian living, a spirit of self-abandonment, and lavish giving
- q A heart for mission and evangelism through constant prayers and active participation