
Christ Church Mansfield New Members Class



We are a worshipping community on mission
to reach this and the next generation
with the transforming power of the gospel,
in Mansfield, South DFW and beyond!

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Christ Church Mansfield New Members Class	1
TABLE OF CONTENTS	3
INTRODUCTION	5
VISION, VALUES & DISTINCTIVES	7
HOME ASSIGNMENT: PERSONAL FAITH STORY	17
ON BEING A MEMBER	23
STRUCTURE OF MINISTRY	27
CONTRIBUTING TO THE CHURCH	33
CONNECTING & COMMUNICATION	39
HOME ASSIGNMENT: PERSONAL INFO & EXPLORATION OF GIFTS	45
ON EXPOSING HEART IDOLATRY	46

INTRODUCTION

Thank you for taking the next step in exploring who we are and what we are about at Christ Church Mansfield. This material will help guide our time in discussing our Vision, Values, Distinctions and Expectations as Members. At any point, feel free ask questions if something is new, unusual, or just unclear and we can address it right away, or find some other time to discuss it more fully.

Participation in the New Members Class does not obligate anyone to officially join the church. You may engage fully without feeling any pressure to commit as a formal member.

The outline for the New Members Class is as follows:

Part 1 - Vision, Values, Distinctives of Christ Church Mansfield:

- Being a Christian
- How we live out our Mission, Vision, and Values
- Open/Closed handed issues
- Presbyterianism (Church Government, Structure)
- Some doctrinal hot topic issues

Part 2 - What it Means to be a Member of Christ Church Mansfield:

- Importance of Worship, Community, Mission, Discipleship
- Contributors vs. Consumers
- How we function as a church
- Giving Time, Talent, Treasure/\$
- Communication
- Getting Plugged In
- Schedule Next Steps

There will also be a couple of Take Home Assignments that will be required for Formal Membership at the end of each section of the New Members Class. The last sequence of steps for officially joining and becoming a Member of Christ Church Mansfield will be an interview with the Lead Pastor, as well as a public reception of New Members at a scheduled and coordinated Worship Service.

Thanks for coming and taking the time to explore more about the church and your involvement. We are glad you're here!

Chris Gensheer
Lead Pastor
Christ Church Mansfield

VISION, VALUES & DISTINCTIVES

Vision

To see all nouns - people, places and things - redeemed, restored, and renewed back to life and alignment with God.

"And the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of God, as the waters cover the sea." - Habakkuk 2:14

Gospel Centrality

On Being Gospel Centered

At Christ Church Mansfield we talk about being "gospel centered". So what is the gospel? And what does it mean to be a "Gospel Centered Church"?

The word "gospel" simply means "good news" and referred to the announcement of some world changing, life altering event that carried social, cultural and personal consequences, such as when a king had been born, or died, or a kingdom had been conquered. We find it helpful then to think of what it means to be gospel centered through the lens of "story".

The Larger Story - A Cosmic "Gospel"

We believe that we are participants in a larger story than just our own. A helpful outline of the Bible as a whole, and what many throughout the years have used can be seen along a "horizontal" axis, of man's place in overarching story of the Bible.

1. Creation (Genesis 1-2)
2. Fall (Genesis 3:1-14)
3. Redemption (Genesis 3:15 - Revelation 20)
4. New Creation (Revelation 21-22)

The Personal Story - A Home Address Gospel

This “cosmic” scope of redemption though, touches down in each of our lives, and calls us to respond. Another way of thinking about the gospel is along a “vertical” axis of man’s relationship with God and others.

1. God and Holiness (Romans 1)
2. Man and Sin (Romans 2-3)
3. Christ and Salvation (Romans 4-5)
4. Response of the People
 - Receive it (through faith) and grow as God’s people (Romans 6-8; 12-15)
 - Reject it and grow apart from God (Romans 9-11)

Our response to the gospel is that we are called to be God’s people (vertical dimension) in God’s world (horizontal dimension), worshipping Him, together with the church, and joining Him in His mission of redeeming, restoring and renewing all nouns (all peoples, all places, all things) to Himself (Ephesians 1; Colossians 1-2; Romans 8; Revelation 21:5).

On Being a Gospel Centered Christian (Christ follower; Disciple)

This is the essence of the Christian faith and what it means to be and live as a Christian. It is that we worship God alone, in community with His people, giving of ourselves in service to others, and reaching others with the transforming power of the gospel.

Our lives are characterized not by perfection, but by repentance and faith; humility, trust, and godly ambition; a growing desire to bring God glory and honor in our lives, and our communities, seeing His glory and His kingdom spread throughout the world.

To believe, or “have faith” is to transfer our functional trust from our own efforts of finding life, mercy and forgiveness, to the person and work of Jesus Christ alone. The default mode of the human heart is to “go our own way” and “take matters into our own hands.” Faith in Christ means we go His way, on His terms, and in His power - not ours.

We also then need to remember this and repent daily as a way of life. To repent is to simply admit that we often desire and in fact live as masters of our own fate, choosing to worship someone or something (creature/creation) other than God

[Notes/Questions](#)

(Creator). We seek and savor “forbidden fruit” in the forms of our own autonomy, power, control, comfort or approval, establishing our own “law” and “rule of life” instead of trusting in the “Word of God” that satisfies more than any bread. We repent of all these things we do or leave undone, and all the ways we make ourselves the center of the universe instead of God.

But as we turn away from sin and all the ways we give in to it, we also turn towards Christ in faith, receiving His mercy, forgiveness and life by the Holy Spirit to live in “newness” - constantly dying to sin and living unto righteousness. In light of what He has done, has given us, and continues to be for us, sin quickly loses its power and control in our lives.

The great Puritan, circuit riding Presbyterian minister, Robert Murray McCheyene perhaps said it best: “For every one look you take of your sin, take ten looks upon Christ!”

This is the Christian life in a nutshell.

Values

Gospel Centered

We say at Christ Church Mansfield that we are a single-issue church; we are about the Gospel. But this one single-issue and core, central conviction is described by Paul in Romans 1 as “power”, meaning it causes certain implications and effects. We say then that everything we do as a church is to come from this one central place. *Gospel centrality* forms the activities (worship, community, mission and discipleship) and effects (hospitality, cross-cultural witness, holistic renewal, and Kingdom advancement and church multiplication) we aim for at Christ Church Mansfield..

Worship (Inspiring)

Loving God with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, with joyfulness, both personally (Scattered) & corporately (Gathered). [**Up-reach: Love God**]

Community (Inviting)

Connecting, encouraging, and challenging one another, both within the church family & our ministry context. [**In-reach: Connect People**]

Mission (Invested)

Loving & serving one another in the church as well as others in the places God has called us - everywhere we live, work & play - encouraging and challenging everyone towards faith in Christ by our witness of WORD and DEED. God saves; we serve. [**Out-reach: Serve the City**]

Discipleship (Intentional)

Purposefully thinking, planning, and engaging the next generation, along with those "not yet in the room" with the gospel. [**Down-reach: Reach the World**]

Generous & Ordinary Hospitality

"Party" people into the kingdom of God & open our lives (homes, schedules, resources) toward others. We give to others because we have been given so much, lavishly and immeasurably by God (cf. Luke 15; 2 Corinthians 8:9; Ephesians 1-2). We open ourselves up to others, sharing our time, talent and treasures, because God the Father, opened Himself up to us by sending His Son to pursue us to the point of death on the cross (cf. John 17; Philippians 2).

Multi-Generational and Multi-cultural Witness:

Seek to be a community that defies age, ethnic, and socio-economic categories by our love & respect for others. The kingdom of God is not a commodity of any one nation, tongue, tribe or people; but is a community of people from every nation, tongue, tribe and people, (cf. Galatians). The heavenly picture at the end of the age is one of the nations streaming into the renewed city of God, bringing their unique gifts to give glory to God for eternity, (cf. Revelation 5). We are currently citizens of a heavenly city (cf. Philippians), members of a new covenant community (cf. Hebrews), and a new household of faith (cf. Galatians).

Creatively Holistic Renewal

All-of-life transformed by God's grace & Christ's Lordship for the good of others (Marriage, Parenting, Vocation, Arts). Grace changes and restores nature, because Jesus is redeeming "all things to himself," (Colossians 1:15-20; Romans 8). God has always called His people to partner with Him in His work of

Notes/Questions

redeeming, restoring and renewing all nouns - all peoples, all places and all things, (cf. Genesis 12; Jeremiah 26; Jonah 4; Matthew, Mark, Luke and John; Revelation 21-22).

Church planting church/Always & Onward Mentality

God's glory spreads through His disciples being & making disciples of others. Our goal is to saturate the world with men, women and children who love, trust and follow the Lord the Jesus Christ, until He returns ("Always"), and constantly moving out from where we are in any given place ("Onward") (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8).

Our strategy for doing this can be called a strategy of "Sentness", or "Being Everyday Missionaries", where:

- In order to send, we need to nurture and equip them in the church;
- In order to equip/nurture, we need to connect them to the church;
- In order to connect, we need to reach them as the church;
- In order to reach them we need to bless them through deeds of mercy and winsome words of Gospel hope, mercy, encouragement and at times challenge.

Bless → Reach → Connect → Disciple → Send

We are committed to help you find your special place in fulfilling this vision of being God's people in God's world; everyday missionaries called by God, connected in community, disciplined/equipped in the church, and sent back out to the communities God has placed you - everywhere we live, work, and play.

(More in next week's material on "Membership")

Distinctives

Catholicity of the Church

Each week we recite what we believe as foundational truths to be confessed in our Confessing the Faith portion of the Worship Service. Usually this is taken

from one of the two oldest and most fundamental Creeds of the historic church - the Apostles or the Nicene Creed.

In each Creed, we say that "we believe in one holy, catholic, and apostolic church."

By confessing this truth, we are saying that we believe that there is one true church throughout the world and throughout time. The one true church, or "invisible church" as it is sometimes referred to, is the church as perfectly and completely seen by God. It is the church "universal" (which is the plain meaning of *catholic* and what we actually confess each week), not merely particular.

Each church is localized in a particular time and setting, and these "visible" expressions of the church are at best representative of the church as a whole, but never to be confused with being the whole church.

Because of our location in history and geography, no one, single, local (or visible, particular) church can express or convey the fullness of God's kingdom; so we confess that we are part of the church, not the totality of it.

And because of our sin - both personally and corporately - no one, single, local (visible, particular) church and/or denomination can perfectly and completely reflect the nature of God's truth (theology) or its expression (practice).

So we confess that we are part of the church "catholic"/universal, and that what binds us in unity with other churches of various time, location and denominational settings, is agreement over that which is clear and plain from Scripture - namely the Gospel ("apostolic"), as set forth in the Ecumenical Creeds, primarily The Apostles and Nicene Creeds.

This is also why we allow all Christians (Christ followers, disciples) who are either members of other churches or our own, and in "good standing" (not under church discipline) to come and partake of the Lord's Supper. It is the Lord's Supper and His table; not the commodity of any one singular expression of the church (local church/congregation or denomination).

To be a Member of Christ Church Mansfield, one simply needs to be a Christian, affirm the theological convictions of the Apostles/Nicene Creed, and commit to seeking the peace and prosperity of the local church through intentional engagement.

[Notes/Questions](#)

Reformed Theological Tradition

We stand in the general theological tradition referred to as "Reformed". This refers to the historical movement within the Christian church that saw a significant break with the Roman Catholic church in the 16th century. This was the historical situation that led to the birth of multiple denominations and movements, such as the Lutheran, Baptist, Anglican and Presbyterian churches of today.

The reasons for the break were a perfect storm of moral/ethical abuses disagreement over traditions, and a renewed study of Scripture. Both Protestants and Roman Catholics in the Counter Reformation agreed largely on the first two issues - moral/ethical abuses and disagreement over extra-biblical traditions); but what kept the separation between Protestants and Roman Catholics were differences of theological convictions.

Cursory Summary of the Reformed Theological Tradition (The Five Solas)

- **Sola Scriptura** - "by Scripture alone". Ultimate Authority is limited to the Bible (Canon of 66 books) only, not Bible and Church Tradition (Pope).
- **Sola Fide** - "by faith alone". Man is made right with God (justification) by faith alone, and not faith plus works (penance; indulgences).
- **Sola Gratia** - "by grace alone". All of salvation is received as a gift of God's goodness, mercy and grace, not earned based on any merit on man's part (venial vs. mortal sins).
- **Solus Christus** - "by Christ alone". All of God's blessings are "unmediated", meaning they are received in and through our spiritual union with Jesus Christ alone, and not through any particular person or class of persons (priests), deceased saints, or any particular operation someone performs (Mass).
- **Soli Deo Gloria** - "glory to God alone". God is the One who is worthy of glory, honor and any veneration. To revere or honor anyone in an ultimate or co-ultimate way is to commit idolatry - the worship and reverence of someone or something other than God (Romans 1; contra veneration of Mary)

Particular Theological Distinctives of the Presbyterian/Reformed Churches

Our particular tradition of Presbyterianism (Presbyterian Church in America) holds to the theological statements contained in full in the Westminster Confession of Faith. Though not exhaustive or comprehensive, it is one of the fullest theological documents to emerge in the history of the Christian church.

Here are some quick highlights and potentially controversial topics (to discuss)

- Covenantal View of God and His Word
- Creational Views
- Predestination
- Sacraments (Real Spiritual Presence)
- Millennium/End Times/Eschatology
- Complementarian View of Men/Women
- Human Sexuality

Presbyterianism (Form of Government)

Presbyterian simply refers to our structure of church government, which is by representative assemblies of elders. The document that outlines how we are to function and operate is called the Book of Church Order (can find an online version here: [www.](http://www.pca.org))

In a Nutshell, we say that we are a connectional church, under authority of local (Session), regional (Presbytery) and national (General Assembly) leadership (Acts 15), adhering to the Reformed tradition expressed in the Westminster Confession.

Each local congregation is governed by "sessions" made up of representatives of and chosen by the congregation (Ruling Elders: Laymen) and members of the Presbytery called to the particular/local church (Teaching Elders: Senior/Lead and Associate Pastors). Currently, Christ Church Mansfield is a "Mission" church (or Church Plant), and as such we are under the authority of the Session of Fort Worth Presbyterian, with Chris Gensheer acting as a Commission of the Session and interacting with them on a regular basis until the time that we are "particularized" and self-governing.

Each local congregation then is self-governed, but accountable to other congregations within their Presbytery - a regional/geographic area comprising all Presbyterian Churches within it. We are currently members of the North Texas

The Westminster Confession of Faith along with the Longer and Shorter Catechism are 17th century, Reformed confession. To read: http://www.reformed.org/documents/wcf_with_proofs/

Notes/Questions

Presbytery, comprising the Dallas/Fort Worth Metro, Waco, TX, Shreveport, LA, and Oklahoma. When there are matters of discipline of an Elder, lack of peace or stability within the church, concerns of acting out of accord with our system of doctrine/theology or organization/practice (Book of Church Order) the Presbytery may assign a Committee or Commission to step in and "hear"/"try" the case. It is a court of accountability, not a hierarchical authority to the local church.

Each Presbytery then is self-governing, but accountable to other Presbyteries within the denomination, called a "General Assembly". This is a regular gathering of all Teaching Elders and Representatives (Ruling Elders) from every church within the denomination to gather and "work" through various theological, process or discipline cases that have not been resolved at either the Session (Local), or Presbytery (Regional) levels.

Partnerships in Gospel/Kingdom Advancing Ministry

Formal Affiliations

Presbyterian Church in America /North Texas Presbytery/Fort Worth Presbyterian

Southwest Church Planting Network (current works we are supporting; changes annually):

- Trinity Presbyterian Church (Downtown Fort Worth, TX)
- City Church Houston (Downtown Houston, TX)
- Grace and Peace (Austin, TX)
- New Valley Church (Phoenix, AZ)

Informal

There are plenty of great churches and networks that we not only appreciate, but celebrate, and when we are able will gladly participate in join efforts of gospel-centered, kingdom advancing ministry. We call this being part of the #sameteam, where the Kingdom of God is greater than our little four-walled corner of it. While we may have disagreements with other churches over their theological convictions or ministry styles and expressions, we would rather focus on what unites and brings us together - love for God and neighbor displayed in the gospel ministry of word and deed - than what separates us.

#sameteam (Not exhaustive or comprehensive)

Acts 29 Church Planting Network

The Community at Lake Ridge (Mansfield)

St. Johns Lutheran Church (Mansfield)

Mansfield Bible Church (Mansfield)

Community of Hope (Mansfield)

Stonegate Church (Midlothian)

Paradox Church (Fort Worth)

[Notes/Questions](#)

HOME ASSIGNMENT: PERSONAL FAITH STORY

30 Minutes to a Shareable Personal Faith Story (Testimony)

Below are some pointers for thinking through and writing your testimony. After you've read through them, set aside 30 minutes to answer the reflective questions and do the actual writing.

15 Minutes: Know Your Before, During, and After

Paul seemed to regularly share his testimony. In the book of Acts alone, he shares it three times. He tells it a little differently each time, but also makes sure to include the same three elements:

- Before: Paul gives an outline of the situation before he encountered Jesus.
- During: Paul shares a narrative of the encounter itself.
- After: Paul describes how life has been different since meeting Jesus.

It's a pretty simple structure you can easily imitate. Below are some reflection questions to help you think through and compile the raw material of your spiritual journey to date. The questions are designed to trigger your thought process, not to restrict you; feel free to add anything else you think is important.

15 Minutes: Know Your Before, During, and After

What Was Your Life Like Before You Encountered Jesus?

1. Think about each phase of your life. What was your faith like during childhood, during your adolescent years, and now as an adult? Jot down some key points for each of these three phases.

2. Can you identify a specific moment or period when you welcomed Jesus in? Where did that happen? Describe what you felt and experienced. If it happened over a longer period of time, maybe pick one or two key turning points and focus on them. If your conversion occurred early in your childhood, describe a time when you think your faith became your own, made sense, or came alive.

3. If you were responding to a sermon or a Bible study, what was it about? What were the circumstances of your life that helped that message make sense?

4. How did your encounter with Jesus address the longings, desires, and/or restlessness you experienced prior to conversion? How would you describe the central issue or question of your journey? How did God answer this?

5. What was the role of Christian community in your surrendering to Jesus? How did the people you mentioned above, or perhaps a church, Bible study, or Christian friends play a part? How did they influence you? How did they help you understand your need for God?

Example:

Chris Gensheer: Personal Testimony & Call to Ministry

As a child, I did not grow up in a Christian household or environment. In fact, I have had the privilege of seeing my parents come to know the Lord through my personal witness and the collective involvement of the local church later in life. In high school, I was being sent to a private Christian school on account of my bad behavior throughout my middle school years. This decision did not sit well with me, but I was powerless, so I first encountered God through the influence of this school as a freshman. As a freshman at a basketball camp, I did make a profession of faith, and throughout high school I even served as a student leader in the youth group.

It wasn't until college where I was lovingly confronted with the reality that I had been "playing the part" of a cultural Christian while in that environment, but never really gave up finding life, significant and approval in my own ways. I remember clearly hearing this from a friend one night, realized I was maintaining faith in my own strength, and had merely accepted Jesus Christ as my "get out of hell" card, but not Lord and King. After my friends loving challenge and time invested with me, I witnessed a significant change in my life with regards to my thoughts, attitudes, actions and desires. It was there as a freshman at Augusta State University through the influence of a ministry called Campus Outreach, where I started to grow in my relationship with God and in serving and building up the body of Christ. Within that ministry, I grew to serve as a student leader, which provided several significant training opportunities in the forms of small group bible study leadership, personal evangelism, and discipleship. I also had the privilege of participating on three Cross-Cultural Projects (Bangkok, Thailand; Johannesburg, South Africa; Inner-city Augusta Project) where I learned to work in partnership with other believers and groups, and contextualize the gospel for the common cause of making Christ known.

Upon graduation, I continued to grow and serve through a young adults/ professionals ministry at my church, again as a lay leader, while working full time and starting a family in Augusta, GA. During this time of life transition, I was privileged to be mentored by several godly men who demonstrated and taught me what it means to live a life centered on the gospel in whatever life-stage or setting you find yourself in. These men were also discipling me in areas of church context ministry as a lay leader, and who have encouraged me to pursue vocational ministry, specifically in the form of starting new movements of kingdom advancing ministries (church planting).

Chris Gensheer received a Call to the work of re-planting the church in Mansfield (Christ Presbyterian Church, now Christ Church Mansfield) from Fort Worth Presbyterian (FWP) in the Spring of 2014, and has been engaged in that work with the support and oversight of FWP, North Texas Presbytery and the Southwest Church Planting Network since May 2014.

ON BEING A MEMBER

Membership Vows and Commitment

These are the Membership Vows according to *Book of Church Order* [BCO] 57-5, that we will ask you to answer in the affirmative (“I do”) when we bring you up in front of the congregation on a Sunday we select based on availability.

1. Do you acknowledge yourself to be a sinner in the sight of God, justly deserving His wrath, and without hope except for God’s sovereign love and mercy?
2. Do you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and Savior of sinners, and do you receive and rest upon him alone for salvation as He is offered in the Gospel?
3. Do you now resolve and promise, in humble reliance upon the grace of the Holy Spirit, that you will serve him with all that is in you, to forsake the world, to put to death your sinful nature, and to endeavor to live a godly life as a follower of Christ?
4. Do you promise to support the church in its worship and work to the best of your ability?
5. Do you submit yourself to the government and discipline of the church, and promise to pursue and preserve its purity and peace?

Notice that these questions say nothing about some of our theological or doctrinal distinctives (ex: Infant baptism, predestination, “end times” views, etc), nor even ministry philosophy or styles (ex: music, order of worship service, small groups, evangelism, etc).

To be a Member of the church, all that is necessary or required is to be a Christian (a follower of Jesus Christ, trusting in Him alone for your salvation: faith), committed to living as a follower of Jesus Christ (a life characterized by repentance from sin, and growing into the image of Christ in our thoughts, words, deeds - the totality of our being).

But these questions do address how we are to live together as God’s people (the church) - mutual submission to and active pursuit and preservation of the church’s purity (moral standing, quality) and peace (relationships with one another). While agreement with other theological/doctrinal distinctives or even ministry styles and philosophy (or Theological Vision as Tim Keller calls it) are necessary for Membership, by taking these vows, you are agreeing to at least,

not undermine them.

Or as we like to say, "If you are wanting to be a Member, but can't quite come to a belief or conviction about some of these other things, you have to at least "play nice" with them as a Member of this church."

On Church Unity and Discipline

Church unity is important. It was a prominent theme of several of Paul's letters in the New Testament (1 & 2 Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians). Jesus Himself prayed that His church "would be one", patterned after the unity He has within the Trinity - diversity of persons, but unity of substance and purpose (One God, in three distinct persons). It is in our unity as the church that God is glorified (Romans 15:5-6) and that the world is influenced (John 17:23).

Church unity is also fragile. Even before the end of the Apostolic age (generation of Jesus Disciples, called Apostles after His ascension), the greatest threat to the church and her witness to transforming power of the gospel was disunity. It was a prominent theme of Paul because it is often under attack! The very first church council was convened in order to settle matters of disunity among congregations of different cultural styles (Jewish vs. Gentile Christians in Acts 15; cf Galatians).

Church unity requires discipline. We are prone to thinking of discipline in mostly negative ways, but the word itself comes from the Latin *disciplina*, meaning "instruction" and "knowledge". Church discipline then simply refers to the "practice", "training", and "building up" of one's life in light of the knowledge of God (the gospel), or at times "realignment" and "course correction" in light of our own sinfulness (total depravity).

Matthew 18 is foundational for our understanding of church discipline in its proactive and reactive forms:

"If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, **between you and him alone**. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. **But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you**, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. **If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church**. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector." - Matthew 18:15-17 (ESV)

In Matthew 18 we see that it's not a matter of "if" but "when" a problem arises

[Notes/Questions](#)

within the church among it's personal members. How are we to react?

First, we are to go to them directly ("between you and him/her alone"). This is critical for two reasons: a) it mitigates the spread of even more sin through gossip (don't talk to other people about other people, but go to the person directly), and b) it sets up the helpful paradigm for each of us to "seek first to understand, then to be understood." The reality is that what you see in someone else life may not actually be "sin". No one should go to another Christian in the church with "guns out" as it were looking to confront and challenge. This first step is to go directly and have a conversation about the matter. There may be sin there, but then again, there may not be; you won't know, until you go.

Second, if there's still an issue, bring others into the conversation ("take one or two others along..."). If the issue is not resolved, and there is a persistent problem or sin issue, then it may be necessary to involve other people. But again, this is not because someone has "gossiped" and "raised a posse" out to get someone. This is so that the "charge" may be "established by the evidence of two or three witnesses." The number is larger than one, but still limited to only one or two more concerned parties. Their presence is there to help mediate between the two original people as well as to establish what is the issue is: Is there sin to be addressed, but so far hasn't? What needs to happen to bring about restoration and reconciliation? If this goes any further, which it might, how do we establish what is right and what is wrong? (Interestingly, this presupposes several of the Proactive elements of Church Discipline and Community involvement, discussed below).

Lastly, the matter goes before "the church". This is primarily the Elders (local leadership, Session), and if necessary, the church as a whole. If there is persistent, willful, and unrepentant sin in the life of a member of the church, that has been addressed one-on-one, and among a select, concerned few, then the matter should be brought to the Church leadership (Elders). It is at this point that the matter is to be "judged" or "tried" (spiritual court) with the hope and goal of restoration, reconciliation, and renewal ("...you have gained a brother". That's the hope and goal, always!). There may be a need for some kind of consequence (Ex: suspension from the Lord's Supper, removal from Office or Leadership positions, etc).

But if the outcome goes in the other direction, and the offending/sinning party does not repent, then the church is to "ex-communicate" - that is to remove their Membership status - that person/persons from the church. This is a serious matter and never to be take lightly or quickly. And when it happens, we are to treat them "like a Gentile or a tax collector", meaning, an "person for evangelism" and to whom we are to love, serve, bless, encourage and when

necessary challenge them with the transforming power of the gospel through our winsome witness in words and deeds.

So we as a church engage in both proactive and reactive church discipline¹.

Proactively:

- Corporate worship
- Preaching/teaching of God's word
- Receiving the sacraments
- Personal devotion (Bible Study, Prayer)
- Community group involvement (nurture, care, and support)
- Encouraging spiritual friendship and accountability

Reactively:

- Personal conversation/confrontation
- Small group conversation/confrontation
- Church leadership (Elders) conversation/confrontation
- Consequences of Suspension (from sacraments, office/position)
- Excommunication (from the church)

¹ For more on Church Discipline, see Ken Sande, *The Peacemaker*.

STRUCTURE OF MINISTRY

This is how we seek to structure how we do the work of ministry as a church in being faithful to the Vision, Values and Distinctives of being a Gospel Centered Church.

Worship

Each week we gather together to engage in the “royal waste of time” that is worship; meaning we come to worship not for what we get out of it (thought we probably will experience some personal benefits), but for who we encounter when we worship, the Living God, Creator and Redeemer of the world.

What we do in our gathered times of worship is simply retell, remember, and receive the Gospel (who God is and what He has done for us), which then reorients and recalibrate our lives around the Gospel.

We all need help in doing this as we continue to struggle with sin, our own selfishness, pursuit of our own comfort, power and approval, all the days of our lives. One leader, talking about vision but can equally be applied here said, “Vision leaks.” This is why we do it weekly. And everyone’s presence and participation helps everyone else hear, celebrate and receive the Gospel and reorient our lives around God instead of “self”.

Gathered worship also feels and is fueled by our own “scattered” or “personal” worship. So we seek to help resource and equip each of our members to have a regular and vibrant personal devotional life and plan. Everything from reading the Bible, to engaging in personal or group studies, engaging in prayer, are all tools and resources and ways we can encourage each of us to worship personally in all the scattered parts of our lives (where we live, work, and “play”). And this helps us enter into the corporate, gathered worship of God as a group.

Bottom Line: As a Member, we want to highly encourage one another to attend and actively engage in corporate worship on a weekly basis, to the best of everyone’s ability, and begin cultivating the regular habit of engaging in personal worship and devotional practices. There are no “attendance” records and this is not a matter of “checking off a box” but it is a matter of one’s heart and commitment to the body of Christ and the worship and glory of God. So as each

is able, we expect participation in gathered worship to be a “big rock” in your schedule/calendar/weekly planner.

Community

Small groups are where we can know others and be known by others in order to live out the gospel and love God (worship) with all our heart, soul, mind and strength, and love our neighbor as ourself (community, mission & discipleship).

We realize that everyone is on a journey, or in process, in their walk with God (Rom 12:2; 2 Cor 3:18; Phil 3:21). We want our small groups to be a welcoming, inviting, and safe place for all to plug in and connect with others. Everyone - whether long time Christian, new to the faith, or questioning their faith - are all works in progress. So we expect people to come as they are, where they are.

But our goal is to help move people from where they are to where God wants them to be. The Apostle Paul says,

“And **we all**, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the Lord, **are being transformed** into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the Lord who is the Spirit.”

- 2 Corinthians 3:18 (ESV)

For this purpose of being transformed more and more into the same image of the glory of God (Christ), circles are better than rows. Rows are where we can come, observe and take it all in from a distance; circles are where we can come and try it on and work it all out in close proximity with others.

It is also in the context of community that we can learn to love, serve, bless and encourage one another in our “true face”, not the pretend masks we wear or project. Life is hard enough as it is. We, in the church, shouldn’t create a culture of expectation for anyone to have it all together; unfortunately, we do do this and instead of getting to the real heart of the matter with people, listening to each others struggles, wrestling in prayer and a simple ministry of presence, accepting one another as persons even while not approving of sin, we all hide behind the comfortable distance of a “hallway High-Five” and the simple word of “Fine”. We need to instead create safe places for anyone and everyone to be loved and accepted, even while hurting or struggling.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer offers this insight into true Christian community.

Notes/Questions

"It may be that Christians, notwithstanding corporate worship, common prayer, and all their fellowship in service, may still be left to their loneliness. The final break-through to fellowship does not occur, because, though they have fellowship with one another as believers and as devout people, they do not have fellowship as the undevout, as sinners. The pious fellowship permits no one to be a sinner. So everybody must conceal his sin from himself and from the fellowship. We dare not be sinners. Many Christians are unthinkably horrified when a real sinner is suddenly discovered among the righteous. So we remain alone with our sin, living in lies and hypocrisy. The fact is that we *are* sinners!" — Dietrich Bonhoeffer, *Life Together: The Classic Exploration of Faith in Community*

Bottom Line: As a Member, we want to highly encourage you to plug in and connect with others in the church in some form of a "smaller group". This could be our bi-weekly neighborhood gatherings in homes (Community Groups), or it could be one of our Bible Study/Affinity Group offerings (Men's Group, Women's Group, Weekly Bible Study at the Western Kountry Klub).

We don't expect or want anyone to plug into everything, but we do ask everyone to plug into something.

One more quick note on Community Groups/Affinity Bible Studies

Small Groups are where we live out the "one another" passages of Scripture, the pattern of the early church (Acts 2:42-47) and connect spiritually, relationally, emotionally, practically and missionally - with God and others.

Spiritually - we connect with God and His purposes for our lives through reading, studying and discussing Scripture (His Word) and prayer (our response).

- "devoted themselves to the Apostles teaching....prayers"
- "breaking of bread"

Relationally - we connect with one another for friendship and fellowship.

- "attending...together"
- "each other's homes"

Emotionally - we connect with one another for care, encouragement, support and challenge.

- "all things in common" - fellowship!

Practically - we connect with one another for meeting everyday and special needs as we are able.

- "gave to any who had need"

- “selling possessions”

Missionally - we connect with others who are on the outside looking into Christianity (unchurched) or simply tired of organized religion as they've experienced it (dechurched).

- “enjoyed favor”
- “awe came upon everyone”
- “the Lord added to **their** number daily, **those** who were being saved”

Mission

For us, our mission is not to “save” anybody, but to “serve” everybody. Let us explain.

One of our values is to be a “Church Planting Church” with an “Always and Onward” mentality. Last week, we said that,

God's glory spreads through His disciples being & making disciples of others. Our goal is to saturate the world with men, women and children who love, trust and follow the Lord the Jesus Christ, until He returns (“Always”), and constantly moving out from where we are in any given place (“Onward”) (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8).

Our strategy for doing this can be called a strategy of “Sent-ness”, or “Being Everyday Missionaries”, where:

- In order to send, we need to nurture and equip people in the church;
- In order to equip/nurture, we need to connect people to the church;
- In order to connect, we need to reach people as the church;
- In order to reach, we need to bless people through deeds of mercy and winsome words of Gospel hope, mercy, encouragement and at times challenge.

If our end goal is to send quipped disciples connected in community to reach the world, it starts with the attitude and activity of “blessing” others. This is what we mean by our mission is to serve, or bless, everyone and to trust God to save anyone.

Bless → Reach → Connect → Disciple → Send

For us to reach the goal of our mission to “be a blessing to all nations” (cf. Genesis 12:1-2), we each need to engage in ministries of loving service and

[Notes/Questions](#)

intentional blessing to those around us.

We are committed to help you find your special place in fulfilling this vision of being God's people in God's world; everyday missionaries called by God, connected in community, disciplined/equipped in the church, and sent back out to the communities God has placed you - everywhere we live, work, and play.

Bottom Line: As a Member, we cultivate a "inner attitude and mindset" of serving others, giving deference to others in humility, and seeking to alleviate other people's burdens to the best of our ability.

Practically, we have several key ministry needs that we are asking everyone to take a turn and serve in some capacity. These include:

- Nursery Helper
- Set Up/Tear Down
- Hospitality Sunday AM Team

Other potential areas of service (non-critical, but always needed and helpful)

- Worship Team (Audition process required)
- Creative Arts (Writing, Graphic Design, Website, Social Media)
- Communications
- Administrative

Discipleship

This is the one mission and task Jesus charged His disciples (and therefore His church) with doing - be and make disciples of Jesus Christ. Last week we stated that for us at Christ Church Mansfield, Discipleship is the:

Purposefully/Intentionally thinking, planning, and engaging the next generation, along with those "not yet in the room" with the gospel.

[Down-reach: Reach the World]

There are several ways we can do this and at some point will do this - such as a specific, designated process for equipping and reproducing disciples (ex: Life on Life Missional Discipleship).

For now, we are cultivating this through our current ministry opportunities in our worship gatherings, community groups, Bible study groups, and beginning in the

Fall of 2015, intentional leadership development. As we avail ourselves of these opportunities to not only learn and grow, but also serve and intentionally engage others into being and making disciples, as each is able, we will live out our value of "reaching the world" - those in the next generation as well those not yet in the room - with the transforming power of the gospel.

Bottom Line: As a Member, we create space in our lives and in our church for being disciples, reflecting more and more the image of Christ, and intentionally make room for others to become and make disciples.

We invest in spiritual growth with, and loving service to, others and invite them into this dynamic relationship with God based on the transforming power of the gospel through our friendship, community groups, and gathered times of worship.

"The household of God must offer a clear and lovely alternative to the madness of this world. In our churches, God calls us to reach for something better than what many of us have ever experienced...The family of God is where people behave in a new way. I think of it with a simple equation: gospel + safety + time. The family of God is where people should find lots of gospel, lots of safety, and lots of time. In other words, the people in our churches need, (a) multiple exposures to the happy news of the gospel from one end of the Bible to the other; (b) the safety of non-accusing sympathy so that they can admit their problems honestly; and (c) enough time to rethink their lives at the deepest level, because people are complex and changing is not easy...In a gentle church like this, no one is put under pressure or singled out for embarrassment. Everyone is free to open up, and we all grow together as we look to Jesus." - Ray Ortlund, *The Gospel* (71-72)

CONTRIBUTING TO THE CHURCH

In recent years it has been popular to distinguish between a “missional” or “consumer” church. While you can press these distinctions to far to either extreme, we find the categories helpful to provide a “gut check” or “litmus test” of our heart attitude and mindset, more than any external expression or behavioral practices in thinking about the church and our involvement.

What these categories do is help distinguish between the difference of “Going to church” or “Being the church”. One is solely focused on “my needs, wants, desires”; the other about the “needs, wants, desires” of others. At Christ Church Mansfield, we say:

We exist as a church not for ourselves, but for others’ glory, joy and good (God and neighbor; cf. Mark 12:31-32).

Instead of being a vendor and distribution center of religious goods and services, where people come to have their needs met (Consumer church), we seek to be the church - a worshipping community on mission to reach this and the next generation with the transforming power of the gospel (Missional/Gospel Centered church).

This means we are a community (not merely have community options) who gather for worship, edification, and encouragement to live as God’s people in God’s world.

Getting Practical

Giving

As a church characterized and motivated by the gospel, we give of our time, talents, and treasures.

- **Time:** Pick an area where you can serve the needs of others practically.

- **Talents:** What has God given you uniquely to contribute to the needs and flourishing of others.
- **Treasures:** regular, generous, sacrificial giving of our material resources to support the work of kingdom extending ministry.

Areas to Serve (priority needs)

- **Christ Church Kids Volunteers** - work in the nursery and help the teacher by engaging the kids for their safety, fun and ability to learn.
- **Set Up** - show up at 8 instead of one Sunday every 3-4 weeks / Tear Down (everyone)
- **Hospitality** - One out of every 3-4 weeks, be the "first face" of CCM and greet people at the door with a smile, engage them authentically, help them find the nursery (if kids) and/or the worship space. Make it a point to follow up after the service or connect them with others during the service (if appropriate).

On Financial Giving²

Supporting the worship and work of the church to the best of your ability is one of the membership vows. While this certainly includes much more than money, it does not include less. Churches need money. That's not all they need, but they do need money. Having a healthy generous church will allow us to do so many more things, and we have a lot of things God has laid on our hearts in Mansfield and South DFW.

We want you to think and pray about: Meeting needs around you generously as you see needs; Giving to specific ministry projects as they arise; Estate planning and long-term giving; But our number one need is for you to give a tithe of your money. Tithing is not all that is expected but it is expected. We're not going to have tithing police or anything, but we would like for you to commit to giving regularly and generously in this way. Statistics show us that Christians only give 3% or so. We'd like to blow that out of the water and never have to worry about our budget being met. We'd like for our members to regularly give over 10% and that that would not be unusual at all.

² This section is taken and adapted from City Presbyterian Church, Oklahoma City and Redeemer Presbyterian Church, New York. Used with permission.

[Notes/Questions](#)

Malachi 3:10 "Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in my house, and test me now in this," says the Lord of hosts, "if I will not open for you the windows of heaven, and pour out for you a blessing until there is no more need."

2 Corinthians 9:7 "Each one must give as he has made up his mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."

When we give in this way, we are following God. We are also reminding ourselves that it's not true that only 10% is his. In fact, ALL of it is his. We forget this so easily, and money becomes such an idol in our lives and hearts.

The Bible gives principles and guidelines for considering this issue.

- *The guideline of the **tithe**.* In the Old Testament believers were required to give a tenth of their income to the support of the ministry and the needs of the poor. While the New Testament does not give believers this requirement today, surely we who are blessed more are not encouraged to give less. Thus the tithe (10%) is a kind of minimum guideline for giving.
- *The guideline of giving **sacrificially**.* The Apostle Paul says of the Macedonians, "they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own free will" (2 Corinthians 8:3). That means they gave until it meant a sacrifice in their lifestyle.
- *The guideline of **appropriateness**.* Christians are to give "according to [their] ability" (Acts 11:29). There are seasons to economic life, and we all have economic responsibilities to our families and to our debts. In many cases, good planning is necessary in order to gradually move our giving into Biblical proportions while still meeting personal and legal financial obligations.
- *Giving is a **response** to God's grace.* Paul asked for money by saying, "[I] say this not as a command, but to prove by the earnestness of others that your love also is genuine. For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich" (2 Corinthians 8:8-9). What a test! Paul says that the difference between moralists (those who think that God accepts them because of their goodness) and Christians (those who know they are sinners saved purely by grace) is that a Christian wants to give as generously as he or she has received. Put starkly, *we always give effortlessly to those things that*

give our lives meaning, to our "gods."

- *Giving should be **regular**.* Paul directed the Corinthians to set aside a portion of their wealth each week until he would come and receive it, in this case for the relief of famine victims in Palestine (see 2 Corinthians 8 again). Giving "spontaneously" might meet point 2 above, but it's rarely up to point 1. You need a plan, and the church can help with reminders and directions (for example, you might consider reading and discussing a Dave Ramsay course).

FAQ's on Giving, Tithing and Stewardship

What is generosity?

Generosity is the natural, consistent, and occasionally spontaneous giving of our material possessions to God's service and to our communities because of and modeled after what Jesus Christ has done for us on the cross. As God "did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all" (Romans 8:32), so our posture toward God and others in response to his love should be one of cheerful sacrifice and generosity.

What is stewardship?

A steward is a person who has been entrusted with, and who manages, another's resources according to the owner's vision and values. Each of us was created for stewardship by God (Genesis 1:28). A steward is both a ruler with authority to govern resources and a slave accountable to the owner of those resources. The New Testament calls Christians caretakers of God's truths and gifts – even God's grace (1 Corinthians 4:1; 1 Peter 4:10).

What is the basis for the tithe?

In the Old Testament, believers were required to give a tenth of their income to the support of the ministry and the needs of the poor. The New Testament teaches that we should give as we are "able and even beyond [our] ability" (2 Corinthians 8:3). Therefore, the tithe (10%) is seen as a kind of minimum guideline for giving.

Do I give 10% of my gross or net income?

Scripture teaches that we are to give back to God our "first fruits" (Exodus 23:16, 19). Proverbs 3:9 encourages us to "honor the Lord with [our] wealth, with the

[Notes/Questions](#)

first fruits of [our] crops," meaning the primary and choicest of our possessions. God has modeled "first fruits" by giving us his son, Jesus Christ. Our response to God should reflect our love of and devotion to him.

What if I am unable to give 10% right now?

There are seasons in our economic life. There are financial responsibilities to our families, friends, communities, and in some cases, creditors. In any stage of life, good planning is necessary to increase our giving over time without neglecting our legal and personal financial obligations. For some people, 10% is too low a starting point. For others, giving even 5% is a sacrifice. The goal is to increase one's commitment up to and above 10%, so that it models Christ's love to our communities.

Should I give all of my tithe and offering to Christ Church Mansfield?

The answer to this is a qualified no. Your gift is an act of personal worship to God in response to his grace in your life and the gift of his Son. The allocation of your money and time to God's service should be a byproduct of prayer and of consultation with other Christians to whom you are accountable. However, if you consider Christ Church your "home church," you should consider allocating a significant portion of your tithe and offering to the community where you invest most of your time and where others are investing in you.

Isn't there more to generosity and stewardship than money?

We certainly must be good stewards of all that God has given us: money, time, skills, influence and position. Therefore, generosity and stewardship are about much more, but not less, than our financial resources. Jesus said, "For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matthew 6:21). Our heart's inclination is to worship anything other than God. In a city like New York, money can become an idol. Therefore, giving it away generously to God's service can liberate us from our idolatry and fix our eyes on Jesus (Hebrews 12:2).

How does Christ Church meet our vision?

From the beginning, Christ Church's vision has been to build not just a good church but also, through the ministries of the church, to fulfill the command of Jeremiah 29:7 and build a great city and see the promise of Habakkuk 2:14, where "the knowledge of the glory of God fills the Earth as the waters cover the sea." In short: God's glory and man's joy is once again expressed more fully in this world, city, and community, and where *shalom*, peace, mutual flourishing and glory are enjoyed.

In a church such as Christ Church, a replant work in progress, it is easy to see how your individual contributions do make a difference to the work that is being done. Your giving counts and is greatly appreciated!

We have continued to keep a high priority on giving as a church, where 10% of what we receive as a church, goes out to other evangelistic and diaconal works; church plants, campus ministries, and specific city/community service opportunities. (We also have a separate designated "Mercy" fund for needs within our church body).

In time we hope to be able to do more to see this vision become a reality, such as take a more active role in planting churches (Worshipping communities on mission to reach this and the next generation with the transforming power of the gospel), launching initiatives around some of our key ministry fronts (Marriages, Parenting, Finances, Vocation/"Faith and Work", and the Arts), and other opportunities as God leads us.

CONNECTING & COMMUNICATION

Plugging In and Staying Connected

Regardless of whether you choose to be a formally recognized member at this time or not, we want everyone to find a place to belong, connect, grow and serve in the church. Here are the ways we want to encourage everyone to do that - whether you are a member, a regular attender, or guest of Christ Church Mansfield.

Worship Service: come, engage and invite others into the gathered worship service of God's people. Currently Sundays at 9:45am at the Aristide Event Center, 570 N. Walnut Creek Dr., Mansfield, TX 76063.

Community Groups: plug in and get connected with others for regular, spiritual, relational connection. Groups meet either bi-weekly (some weekly) based on geographic location or particular affinity/life-stage. For more info on these, contact Rachael Abedraboh at rachael@cpcmansfield.org

Ministry Teams: help out and serve in one of our Ministry Teams: Setup/Tear Down, Hospitality, or Christ Church Kids (nursery and children's Helpers or Teacher)

We maintain a Membership and Contact Database and we will from time to time send out email and regular mail updates on critical or very important matters (financial updates, urgent prayer requests or announcements, etc). But we promise not to bombard you with emails and spam (we hate that, really we do).

Instead we will focus our communication efforts on a platform called The City (internal) as well as on social media and the website (external)

Website

www.christchurchmansfield.com (still in progress)

www.cpcmansfield.org (transitioning away)

Online Engagement

The City

The City is a internal communication platform that resembles many features of Facebook. You create your profile, engage in certain "Groups" (like Member, Nursery workers, Small group, etc), ask questions or post thoughts, cares and concerns in the Plaza, and generally keep up with what is happening at Christ Presbyterian Church.

We use the City to keep us all informed and apprised of things that are constantly happening at CPC. So please take a few minutes to set up your account and fill out your profile.

A. How To Set Up a Profile on the City

1. Sign-up for the City
 - Need an invitation? Email info@cpcmansfield.org with "Invite me to The City please!"
2. Fill out Profile
 - Be sure to fill out your contact information.
 - Add your interests, recommended books, and skills (i.e., graphic design, tutoring, or nunchucks³).
3. Upload a Profile Photo
 - This is really important! Give your name a face.
4. Select Notification Settings
 - Sometimes it is easy to forget to check the City, so we recommend having the City notify you of any new posts. Check the "Daily Email" option to stay current, and only have one email sent to your Inbox each day there's something new on The City.

³ Bonus points to anyone who gets this reference.

[Notes/Questions](#)

5. Get Involved on the City!

- Add friends by viewing their profile and clicking the green plus sign below their profile picture.
- Update your status. Just share what's on your mind, what's going on in your life, how we can pray for you, or just share something interesting from what your reading.
- Post a topic for discussion.

6. Once your profile is complete, you will see a 100% progress bar under your profile picture.

Connect on Social Media

If you are on any of these platforms, please follow the appropriate steps to connect with Christ Church Mansfield and be a contributing part of our "online presence" and community.

One quick note. It might seem like a small thing, but this is really important. Your engagement and participation on these social media platforms is highly significant. In our day and age, where a website and online presence help people find and discover more about churches, every Like, Comment and Share is a factor in how much we pop up on internet searches.

If there is something you even remotely Like, go ahead and like it. If something we post prompts a thought, a question, a concern or just a simple "Amen!", say it! If something really grips you and you want to share it with other, please share it. These simple acts play a larger role in how the church ranks in things like online searches (search engine optimization, or SEO), as well as how many other folks in our extended networks actually see and view the things we put out on these platforms.

In other words, every little bit helps, so please help by Liking (or Favoriting, +1-ing), Commenting and Sharing (Re-Tweet, or RT on Twitter).

To get any of these Apps, just go to your App Store on either your iPhone, iPad or Android devices and download them. If you need any help learning these apps and tools, Chris Gensheer wouldn't mind helping you out at all.

Contact him at chris@cpcmansfield.org or 817-575-7882.

Facebook <https://www.facebook.com/ChristChurchMansfield>

Go and "Like" the page itself (not just a post or an image). This will allow you to see most of the posts we put out on Facebook. I say most, because Facebook is notorious for changing their "post and see" algorithm, and currently, even if you Like a Page, Facebook makes a decision as to whether or not to show you the post or update. This is why every "Like", "Comment" and "Share" of a post or update on Facebook is helpful. It let's Facebook know that we are producing some good content worth putting in front of other people.

So take a little bit of time if you are on Facebook to go over to our page - just enter "Christ Presbyterian Church Mansfield TX" in the search bar, scan a few of the things we post, and whatever grabs your attention, Like, Comment and Share (or do it for everything we post, we don't mind).

We will post announcements here as well as pertinent information for everyone - members, regular attenders, and those not connected to the church yet. But we will also post interesting and timely articles, quotes and other engaging content that may have nothing to do with the church directly. We want to add value on our Facebook page in relation to living out the gospel and the implications of the Christian life, not just promote our church. So engage with us here!

REALLY IMPORTANT: One really big factor and critical help in our online engagement and reach is to "**check in**" whenever you come to gathered worship on Sunday mornings. Take a moment when you arrive to check into Christ Church Mansfield on Facebook, and share a quick thought ("Glad to be here" or "Come, Let us worship God!") and even a picture or two.

Twitter <https://twitter.com/ccmansfieldtx>

If you are on Twitter, follow us at @ccmansfieldtx and feel free to "Favorite" and "RT" (retweet) our posts. It once again helps us with our online presence and reach into the community online.

Instagram <https://instagram.com/ccmansfieldtx/>

Again, if you are on Instagram, go ahead and Follow us there. Every "heart" and "comment" helps increase our reach and engagement. Even check out an App called "Repost" and you can start sharing our "grams" with your friends and followers.

Google+ <https://plus.google.com/+CpcmansfieldOrg/posts>

If you are on Google+, please Follow Us and Add us to your circles - <https://plus.google.com/+CpcmansfieldOrg/posts>

Youtube <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCbZfPwYobsSSC-fyx6eLPw>

Don't worry if you miss a sermon or a week. You can catch up at least on the sermons though our Podcast (iTunes) accessible on our website, or via Youtube and watch them. Again, every Like, Comment and Share is extremely helpful. We are always working too on finding shorter clips to make and make it even easier to share with your friends

HOME ASSIGNMENT: PERSONAL INFO & EXPLORATION OF GIFTS

CHRIST CHURCH MANSFIELD PERSONAL INFO

Today's date _____

Dr., Mr., Mrs., Ms., Miss

First _____ Middle _____ Last _____

Maiden Name _____ Preferred Name _____

Birth Date _____

Marital Status: Single _____ Married _____ Widow(er) _____ Divorced _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Res. Ph. _____ Bus. Ph. _____ Cell Ph. _____

Fax _____ Email _____

In case of emergency, contact: _____ Ph. # _____

Name of Business _____

Business Address _____

Title, Position _____

Spouse's Name _____

Children:

Name _____ Birthday _____ Baptized? Yes ___ No ___

Name _____ Birthday _____ Baptized? Yes ___ No ___

Name _____ Birthday _____ Baptized? Yes ___ No ___

Name _____ Birthday _____ Baptized? Yes ___ No ___

In which ministries and activities at Christ Church are you presently involved?

I am willing to get involved in one of the key needed ministry areas presently at Christ Church (or at least find out more info) NOT indefinitely, but for at least 3-6 months, and then we can revisit together:

Set Up/Tear Down Team _____ Nursery/Children’s Team _____ Hospitality Team _____

Your service in another church: Church Name _____

Elder _____ Deacon _____ Teacher _____ Other _____

In Mansfield/South DFW since _____ Moved here from _____

What are your primary Spiritual Gifts: _____

Go to <http://giftstest.com/> and take the online survey to get started.

Important Information:

Have you been baptized? Yes ___ No ___

If yes, in what church? _____

Method of Joining:

Profession of Faith _____ Letter of Transfer (PCA Church) _____

Reaffirmation of Faith (from another denomination) _____

Name and Address of Former Church

Date of Officer Visit _____

Officer Signature _____

Date before the Session _____ Church _____

ON EXPOSING HEART IDOLATRY

Each of us build our identity on someone or something that promises to provide ultimate significance and worth. Our entire lives are energized and mobilized by some object of our devotion.

Below are some thoughts to help us get underneath what drives and ultimately shapes our lives, exposing the counterfeit "gods" that promise life but instead only ruin and destroy, and

Idolatry

"Martin Luther's larger catechism discussion of the first commandment ('You shall have no other gods before Me' [Ex. 20:3]) included 'whatever your heart clings to and relies upon, that is your God; trust and faith of the heart alone make both God and idol.' I might add here, 'whatever your heart clings to or relies upon for ultimate significance.'" - G.K. Beale, *We Become What We Worship* (17)

"And we all, with unveiled face, beholding the glory of the LORD, are being transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another. For this comes from the LORD who is the Spirit." - 2 Corinthians 3:18

"We resemble what we revere, either for ruin or restoration." - G.K. Beale, *We Become What We Worship* (22)

Identity

"I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me." - Galatians 2:20

"The gospel vies us a pair of spectacles through which we can review our own lives and see God preparing us and shaping us, even through our own failures and sins, to become vessels of his grace in the world." - Tim Keller, "Paul's Letter to the Galatians" Study

The following is adapted from Tim Keller, "Identifying Your Idols" (web article)

What we Seek	Price We Pay	Greatest Nightmare	Others Feel	Problem Emotion
Comfort (privacy, lack of stress, freedom)	reduced productivity	stress, demands	hurt	boredom
Approval (affirmation, love, relationships)	less independence	rejection	smothered	cowardice
Control (self-discipline, certainty, standards)	lonelieness, spontaneity	uncertainty	condemned	worry
Power (success, winning, influence)	burdened, responsible	humiliation	used	anger

Circle the thoughts that you can most readily identify with:

Power idolatry: "Life only has meaning /I only have worth if I have power and influence over others."

Approval idolatry: "Life only has meaning /I only have worth if I am loved and respected by

Comfort idolatry: "Life only has meaning /I only have worth if I have this kind of pleasure experience, a particular quality of life."

Image idolatry: "Life only has meaning /I only have worth if I have a particular kind of look or body image."

Control idolatry: "Life only has meaning /I only have worth if I am able to get mastery over my life in the area of

Helping idolatry: "Life only has meaning /I only have worth if people are dependent on me and need me."

Dependence idolatry: "Life only has meaning /I only have worth if someone is there to protect me and keep me safe."

Independence idolatry: "Life only has meaning /I only have worth if I'm completely free from obligations or responsibilities to take care of someone."

Work idolatry: "Life only has meaning /I only have worth if I am highly productive getting a lot done."

Achievement idolatry: "Life only has meaning /I only have worth if I am being recognized for my accomplishments, if I am excelling in my career."

Materialism idolatry: "Life only has meaning /I only have worth if I have a certain level of wealth, financial freedom, and very nice possessions."

Religion idolatry: "Life only has meaning /I only have worth if I am adhering to my religion's moral codes and accomplished in its activities."

Individual person idolatry: "Life only has meaning/ I only have worth if this one person is in my life and happy there and/or happy with me."

Irreligious idolatry: "Life only has meaning /I only have worth if I feel I am totally independent of organized religion and with a self-made morality."

Racial/cultural idolatry: "Life only has meaning /I only have worth if my race and culture is ascendant and recognized as superior."

Inner ring idolatry: "Life only has meaning /I only have worth if a particular social grouping or professional grouping or other group lets me in"

Family idolatry: "Life only has meaning /I only have worth if my children and/OR my parents are happy and happy with me."

Relationship idolatry: "Life only has meaning /I only have worth if Mr. or Ms. 'Right' is in love with me."

Suffering idolatry: "Life only has meaning /I only have worth if I am hurting, in a problem only then do I feel noble or worthy of love or am able to deal with guilt."

Ideology idolatry: "Life only has meaning /I only have worth if my political or social cause or party is making progress and ascending in influence or power."

Understanding idolatry: "Life only has meaning / I only have worth if - I understand why I am the way I am and understand my idols!"

Safety idolatry: "Life only has meaning / I only have worth if - I am pursuing the safest course of action and not taking risks emotionally or physically"

Authenticity idolatry: "Life only has meaning / I only have worth if - I am not pretending and being honest [shameless] about who I really am"

Answer these diagnostic questions:

1. What is my greatest nightmare? What do I worry about most?
2. What, if I failed or lost it, would cause me to feel that I did not even want to live? What keeps me going?
3. What do I rely on or comfort self with when things go bad or get difficult?
4. What do I think most easily about? What does my mind go to when I am free? What preoccupies me?
5. What prayer, unanswered, would make me seriously think about turning away from God?
6. What makes me feel the most self-worth? What am I the proudest of?
7. What do I really want and expect out of life? What would really make me happy?