

"Mission Church Handbook"
Artwork as seen by Luke Mckiernan aged 6!
2022

Welcome

Welcome to ***The Mission Church Members Handbook!*** If you are reading this then you are either praying about becoming a member or have just become a member of the Church. Either way, this gives us great joy. It really does give us all at The Mission Church the greatest pleasure that you either are or you are thinking about wishing to profess faith in Jesus and commit yourself to the work that God is doing through the local Church in this community. We are committed as a Church to reaching as many people as possible with the Good News of Jesus and to seek to engage the entire congregation in doing this.

In this Handbook we hope to explain something about what it means to be a member of a Church and provide a point of reference to support you in your Christian journey. We also have "The Church Constitution and Church Rules", along with other Church Polices, which we can provide you a copy of should you wish so. If you have any questions at all, please ask!

Our vision is:

"TO CONNECT PEOPLE TO THE TRANSFORMING LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST IN EVERYDAY SITUATIONS AND TO BUILD HIS CHURCH BOTH SPIRITUALLY AND NUMERICALLY"

We try and live this out in a local Gospel Community where, through the Bible, we raise awareness, provide opportunities to be able and finally to be in agreement with the Scriptures. We can do this through what we consider to be five important areas, highlighted as the "5 G's" - Gospel, Growth, Groups, Gifts and Giving! More information can be found below, and will help you understand what The Mission Church "tastes or feels like."



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GOSPEL!

The following is "The Mission Church Basis of Faith" and sets out what we believe.

We believe:

In the **one true God**, the **Holy Trinity** of persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, each of whom is co-equal, co-eternal and sovereign;

That **Jesus Christ, the eternal, divine, Son of God** became a real man and therefore is truly God and truly man;

That salvation from sin and the hope of eternal life is gained only through **faith in Jesus Christ** and on the basis of His death on the cross and His physical resurrection from the dead. This salvation is **all of grace** - it cannot be earned or deserved - and human beings are dead in their sins until made alive by the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit;

That on the cross **Jesus died in the place of sinners**, bearing their due punishment and the wrath of God, so that those who believe in Him will be counted righteous in God's sight;

That **God has revealed Himself** supremely in His Son Jesus Christ, and has also revealed Himself through His Word, the **Bible**, which is completely **trustworthy, true and without error*** and as such is the Christian's guide for faith and living;

That God **the Holy Spirit is active** in believers and in the church today, regenerating and sanctifying those who believe in Jesus;

That the same Holy Spirit continues to give all the **spiritual gifts** to the church, as He sees fit, for the benefit of believers and the church as a whole;

That all who have saving faith in Jesus are part of **the body of Christ**, the church, and as such should have fellowship with one another, pray for, support and minister to one another;

That **Jesus Christ will return** to earth to judge the living and the dead;

That those who believe in Him look forward to the sure and certain hope of **eternal life** whereas those who do not will spend eternity **separated from Christ**, in hell;

That the church's **great commission is to make disciples** and that each local fellowship of believers has the duty and privilege of presenting the good news of Jesus Christ to unbelievers, that they might gain the hope of eternal life.

*i.e. it is infallible and inerrant

What does it mean to be a Christian? How would you answer this?

Let's come back to the Bible!

Read Romans Ch6:23:

- For the wages of sin is death - How the gospel call is made!
- but the gift of God - How the Gospel call is received!
- is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord - How the Gospel call is responded to!

The Gospel:

- saves lives – Mark Ch8:35
- brings rewards - Mark Ch10:29
- is the power of God for salvation - Romans Ch1:16
- declares God will judge – Romans Ch2:16
- will attract enemies – Romans Ch11:28
- is veiled to those who are perishing – 2 Corinthians Ch4:3

How the Gospel call is made!

Scripture is clear. Sin, no matter how it reveals itself, whether in nature, thought, attitude or act, separates us from a holy God, leaving us spiritually dead, facing the righteous judgment of God!

The Gospel call is made through God's chosen people, who know Jesus, know the truth about who He is, why He came, and what awaits those after death. They invite people to repent and believe! However, we can't just talk about the facts, we have to invite people to repent and believe. All around God's earth, believers gather in worship because someone has shared the truth about the gospel of Jesus Christ and invited them to repent and believe!

What is this gospel that invites repentance and belief?

The Gospel is the great news that God became man in JESUS CHRIST! He lived the life that we should have lived and died the death that we should have died, in our place. Three days later He rose from the dead, proving that He is the Son of God and offering the free gift of salvation to all who repent and believe the Gospel!

This gospel call is a call to believe in a living Saviour, Jesus Christ!

How the gospel call is received!

How this good news is received is the work of God. Only God can bring about the change in an individual's heart before a believer is able to respond in faith. This response brought about by God imparting new spiritual life is sometimes called "regeneration."

This imparted new spiritual life, though not always immediately realised, results in:

- a transformed heart
- a transformed character
- a transformed life

A regenerated person experiences a new love for God, a love for His Word, a love to be like Christ, an openness to the Holy Spirit and a love to serve!

How the gospel call is responded to!

Responding to the gospel call, which involves repenting to God over our sins and believing in Jesus Christ, His life, death, resurrection and ascension, is transformational.

As Christians we will be willing to deny ourselves (deny our Lordship), take up our crosses daily (to put to death all our earthly desires) and follow Christ (our hands, minds, talents, visa cards, time, homes, cars, everything).

At The Mission Church we believe the following are part of a Christian's core essential beliefs:

1. **The Bible:** We believe that the 66 books of the Old and New Testaments (and only these books) are the verbally inspired Word of God in their entirety. These books are the final authority for faith and life, since they are breathed out by God, they are without error, infallible and God-breathed.
2. **God:** There is One God, creator, ruler and sustainer of all that is (All things were made by Him and for Him and exist for His Glory). God eternally (i.e. He has always been this way) exists in a community of three persons – the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (what theologians call the Trinity). Three persons but one God. Each divine person is co-eternal in being, co-eternal in nature, co-equal in power and glory, sharing the same attributes and perfections. This Tri-une God is all-powerful, all-knowing. He is just, wise, loving, gracious, patient and good.
3. **Jesus:** Jesus is the eternal Son of God, the second person of the Godhead (see reference to the Trinity above). He is fully God and became man without ceasing to be God, being conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of a virgin. Jesus

came to earth to both reveal God and to redeem sinful man. He lived a sinless life in perfect obedience to God; died on the Cross as a willing substitute for our sins, taking the death we deserve as our representative, bearing God's punishment on sin (2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20; Psalm 24:1; Deuteronomy 6:4; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Matthew 28:19; Matthew 1:18; Luke 1:30-35; Isaiah 7:14; John 1:1; John 14:19; Mark 10:45). After three days He rose (literally, physically) from the dead which assures us of our justification. After His resurrection He ascended into Heaven, where He prays for us as our representative and where He is exalted as Lord of all at the right hand of God. From there He will come again to bring an end to this world and judge the living and the dead. Jesus is the sole mediator between God and men. There is no hope, no salvation in anyone else.

4. ***The Holy Spirit:*** The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Godhead. He is a person, not an impersonal force (Ephesians 4:30; Acts 5:3). The Holy Spirit convicts the world of sin, of righteousness and of judgment (John 16:8) and He comes to live in every Christian (Acts 2:38). He applies the work of Jesus to us, distributes spiritual gifts to us (1 Corinthians 12), teaches us (John 16:14), gives us power for daily life ((Acts 1:8) and His indwelling is God's seal on us until the day of Redemption (Ephesians 4:30).
5. ***Sinfulness of Mankind:*** We believe that men and women were created equally in the sight of God in His full image and likeness (Genesis 1:26). Humanity has a unique dignity because of this (Genesis 9:6). Adam and Eve, our first parents, disobeyed God and sinned in the Garden in Eden (Genesis 3). Since then death, pain, suffering and evil entered into God's good creation. From Adam's sin every human being inherits a sinful nature (Psalm 51:5; Romans 5:12) and, by nature, is alienated from God (Ephesians 2:1-5; Colossians 1: 21-22; Romans 3:23). We believe in the total depravity of the human heart (not that we are as bad as we can be but that every part of us is affected by sin). Of ourselves, we are utterly unable to remedy our lost state in the sight of God (Ephesians 2:8-9). Hebrews 8:2, 7:25, Psalm 110:1, Acts 1:9, 1 John 2:1-2, Acts 1:11, Matthew 26:64, Matthew 24:30-31, Acts 17:31, 1 Timothy 2:5.
6. ***Salvation:*** We are saved by faith alone, in Christ alone, through grace alone. Salvation cannot be earned in any way (Ephesians 2:8-9; Romans 6:23). All that needed to be done has been done by Jesus. He lived the perfect life that God demanded that we couldn't, died bearing God's punishment in our place and rose again triumphing over sin, Satan and death (Ephesians 1:7; 1 Peter 1:18-19). God in His love offers reconciliation, love, joy, life to all people through the Gospel. He forgives sinners whom He calls granting them repentance and eternal life. When our faith is placed in Jesus what Martin Luther called 'The Great Exchange' takes place. We get credited with the perfect righteousness of Jesus and our sin is forgiven in Jesus. Once in Christ, believers are kept by God's power and can never be lost. In short,

salvation is a gift from God through grace, received through personal faith in Jesus. We contribute nothing!

A special prayer was composed for the Lambeth Conference of 1948:

“Almighty God, give us the grace to be not only hearers, but doers of thy holy word, not only to admire, but to obey thy doctrine, not only to profess, but to praise thy religion, not only to love, but to live thy gospel. So grant that what we learn of thy glory we may receive into our hearts, and show forth in our lives; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen”

RECOMMENDED BOOKS

- Gospel D.N.A – Richard Coekin
- Planting for the Gospel – Graham Beynon
- Christian Beliefs – Wayne Grudem
- Ready Steady – Ray Evans Grow



GROWTH!

As you read the Bible, you will read about both personal growth and growth within Church. As individuals spending quality time with God through reading His Word, praying, putting into practice His commands and allowing more of God to reign within our lives, real growth in holiness takes place. Whilst we gather as Church and are taught God's Word, where we minister to Him, minister to His people and carry out His mission, we can also grow in holiness, becoming more like Jesus.

Growth comes from listening to and obeying God and His Word! The passage below links together, a life worthy of Christ, the unity that is purchased by Him and the need for growth in Him. Growth to God is really important!

Let's come back to the Bible!

Let's read from the Book of Ephesians Ch4:1-16:

- Where does unity come from? - Ephesians Ch4:1
- Who maintains the unity? - Ephesians Ch4:2-3
- Can unity be destroyed? - Ephesians Ch4:4-6
- Who gives unity as a gift? - Ephesians Ch4:7
- Why is it given? - Ephesians Ch4:11-12
- Why is this necessary? - Ephesians Ch4:13-16

As we grow in our understanding, through the Bible, of God's heart for His rescued, redeemed people, the Church needs to develop "Governing Documents" that help set out how things should be carried out, in accordance to God's Word. Below is an example of this, especially when it comes to growth.

The Mission Church Rules state the following when it comes to how we as a Church, see membership being worked through in commitment to Jesus, to His people and to His Mission:

"Part 2- Rules for the Internal Governance of the Church

2.1 Members and Membership

2.1.1 Members of the Church shall be the persons who first adopted the Constitution and these Rules and whose membership has not been suspended or terminated, together with those persons who have subsequently confirmed in writing their unreserved agreement to the Basis of

Faith and their acceptance of these Rules in their entirety and whose Membership has been approved and has not been suspended or terminated, all in accordance with the provisions of this Rule 2.1.

2.1.2 Membership brings with it certain ***privileges and responsibilities. The privileges are identified as membership of the local Body of Christ in all its work and worship, to be able to partake in discussing and agreeing the way in which the local church should move forward and fulfil its Biblical role in the local community and the benefit of Pastoral care. The obligations of membership are to participate in the work of the Church and its activities, to regularly attend meetings, to bear each other up before the Lord in prayer, and to share in the financial needs of the Church. In particular this will involve:***

- a. Regular attendance at Sunday worship. (Acts 20:7, Heb. 10:25)
- b. Regular personal prayer and Bible study. (2 Tim 3:15-17, Phil. 4:6)
- c. Regular attendance, when possible, at the main weekday meeting of the church for prayer, Bible study and fellowship. (Acts 1:14, 2:42)
- d. Sharing in the life, work and witness of the local church. (Rom. 1:16, 1 Cor. 15:58)
- e. Regular giving to the local church and the Lord's work in general. (1 Cor. 16:2, 2 Cor. 9:6-7)
- f. The showing of Christian love and concern, both for the members of the church family and for the community at large. (John 13:35, 1 Thess. 3:12)
- g. An endeavour to live a life consistent with the faith we profess. (Rom. 6:1-2, Eph. 4:1)
- h. Regular attendance at the Lord's Supper – the pattern of frequency being a matter for the individual member to decide. (Acts 2:42, 20:7)
- i. Submission to the authority and leadership of the Elders in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution and Church Rules. (Heb 13:7, 13:17, 1st Thessalonians Ch5:12-13)"

The Scriptures also help us to understand that:

- Christ is the head of His Church (Ephesians Ch1:9-10, 22-23; Ch4:15; Ch5:23)
- Christ is the apostle who plants a Church (Hebrews Ch3:1-6)
- Christ is the leader who builds a Church (Matthew Ch16:18)
- Christ is the Chief Shepherd who rules the Church (1 Peter Ch5:4)

- Christ is the one who closes down Churches who become either faithless or fruitless (Revelation Ch2:5)

Therefore it is vital that a Church:

- Loves Jesus!
- Obeys Jesus!
- Imitates Jesus!
- Follows Jesus at all times according to the teaching of His Word!

In order that a Church is cared for and lives out Jesus' commands, **JESUS ESTABLISHES HIS SERVANT RULERS!**

Let us examine Scripture to understand how Jesus wants His Church governed!

“Paul and Timothy, servants of Christ Jesus, To all the Saints in Christ Jesus at Philippi, together with the overseers and deacons.” (Philippians Ch1:1)

Packed in this one verse we discover the three kinds of leaders who take responsibility for the health and mission of the local Church! Serving under Jesus are overseers (elders), deacons, and church members!

ELDERS – Are men, who love Jesus and take responsibility for the spiritual welfare of the Church, through protecting the Church from false teachers, feeding God's people through the faithful preaching of the Holy Scriptures, and caring for the Saints by visiting and praying with them . They also lead the people by imitating Jesus as their ultimate example of living out the Gospel!

DEACONS – Are both men and women, who love Jesus and take responsibility for the practical day to day running of the local Church, holding positions which at The Mission Church incorporate Deacon for Church Secretary, Church Treasurer, Church Operations and Church Evangelism.

CHURCH MEMBERS – Are God's people or the Saints who love Jesus and take responsibility to help lead the local Church in it's health and mission by using their gifts and resources (time, talents and treasure).

These offices within Jesus' Church are crucial to growing as individuals and as Church, growing in holiness and purity, especially as we live in a time where:

- authority is not always accepted
- authority is not always respected
- authority can sometimes be misused
- authority can on occasions be “ourselves” and not Jesus

How can this be guarded against at The Mission Church?

By seeing Jesus as the beginning and end of all authority and by making sure we grow in our understanding and obedience of Biblical Authority!

By asking God the Holy Spirit to help!

By teaching the Bible, and being willing to listen, learn, and live out what we are taught!

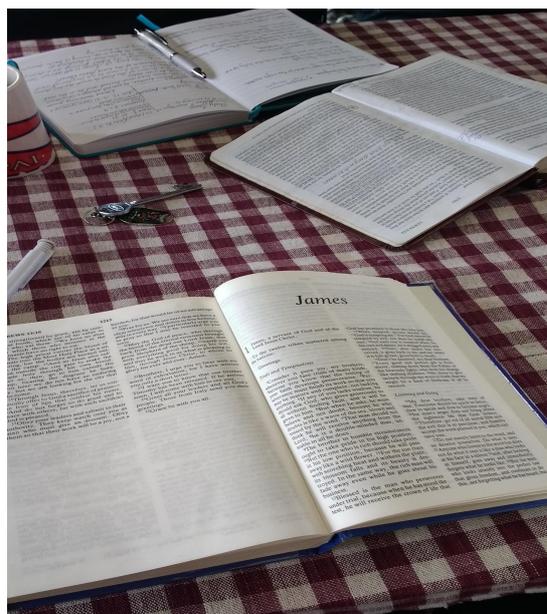
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“Almighty God, give us the grace to be not only hearers, but doers of thy holy word, not only to admire, but to obey thy doctrine, not only to profess, but to praise thy religion, not only to love, but to live thy gospel. So grant that what we learn of thy glory we may receive into our hearts, and show forth in our lives; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen”

RECOMMENDED BOOKS

- Ready, Steady, Grow – Ray Evans
- Disciplines of a Godly Man – R. Kent Hughes
- Disciplines of a Godly Woman – R. Kent and Barbara Hughes
- Disciplines of a Godly Family – R. Kent Hughes
- Gospel Eldership – Robert H. Thune
- Church Discipline – Jonathan Leeman
- Biblical Eldership – Alexander Strauch



GROUPS!

Being a Christian, means being part of a group, a Church or a Gospel Community! For us to grow in our Biblical understanding of this, we need to come back to the Scriptures. We have chosen to provide an overview of a Book from the Bible called “Romans”, we could take a short cut, but in doing so we could miss out on so much, so we have provided a necessary overview which will help us understand key Biblical truths, that in turn will help us to understand the importance of “GROUPS”.

Let's come back to the Bible!

Let's read from the Book of Romans Ch12:1:

“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship.”

It is likely that the church in Rome was a network of smaller household churches or, as they might be called today, ‘missional communities’ or ‘gospel communities’.

The latter term is defined as a ***small community of believers formed by the gospel, for the gospel***. As a term, it can be used to refer to a church, or a sub-unit within a church. Paul Barnett says: “At the beginning of the letter, there is no greeting to ‘the church in Rome’ in a focused sense but only to ‘God’s beloved ones, called to be saints’. At the end of the letter, Paul expresses his greetings no less than ***thirteen times***, most likely indicating at least thirteen discreet clusters of believers.”(Barnett, P. Romans, Focus on the Bible Series, Christian Focus, 2003, 284.)

Romans Ch12 presents a portrait of life in a gospel community. It begins:

“Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship.”

This verse is not just a command to offer our bodies as a living sacrifice. It is that - but it is much more!

It is first and foremost a reminder of God’s mercy. When Paul writes “In view of God’s mercy”, there is a sense in which the primary command is to ***keep God’s mercy in view***. The portrait of a gospel community set out in Romans 12 should inspire and excite us as we seek to live life as the people of God together. But we must never start with the call to be good members of a gospel community. We must always start with God’s mercy!

The verse begins with the word ‘therefore’. All that Paul says in this chapter builds on what he has said in chapters 1-11. ***If you want to be the kind of gospel community described in chapter 12 you need to be a community that keeps in view the mercy of God described in chapters 1-11.***

“In view of God’s mercy ...” - ***Who we are, leads to what we do.*** Romans Ch1-11 shows us God’s mercy to us, in giving us:

A new future (chapters 1-4)

Our future used to be judgement. Paul says in Ch2:5: “But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgement will be revealed.”

A day is coming when everyone will face the judgement of God. Paul goes on in Ch2:16: “This will take place on the day when God will judge men's secrets through Jesus Christ, as my gospel declares.”

In Romans Ch1-3 Paul establishes that everyone is condemned. Non-religious people are without excuse because “since what may be known about God is plain to them” (1:19). The problem is, “against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth” (1:18). We push the truth of God away because we refuse wilfully to submit to God.

But religious people are also condemned. Paul says in Ch2:1: “You, therefore, have no excuse, you who pass judgment on someone else, for at whatever point you judge the other, you are condemning yourself, because you who pass judgement do the same things.”

Our outward behaviour might be very respectable, but God will judge the secrets of our hearts (2:5,16). On that day of judgement our proud, selfish hearts will be on display.

Our future used to be judgement because outside of Christ, there is no future other than judgement and condemnation.

But in Christ, God gives us a new future. Paul says: “And are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. God presented him as a sacrifice of atonement, through faith in his blood.” (3:24-25). To be ‘justified’ means to be declared ‘not guilty’. We can face the day of judgment with confidence.

Why? Because Jesus has redeemed us. Jesus has died as a sacrifice in our place. Jesus has taken the judgement we deserve. Because of Christ, God can be both just (he judges our sin at the cross) and the justifier (acquitting sinners). We have a new future, grounded in the cross and resurrection of Jesus. “[Jesus] was delivered over to death for our sins and was raised to life for our justification” (4:25).

We offer ourselves as a living sacrifice to God because God offered his Son as a sacrifice for us.

A new life (chapters 5-8)

We were born 'in Adam'. We all share some common traits of humanity. We are all also born with an in-built bias towards sin. We are slaves to sin, subject to law and destined to die. "Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned" (5:12).

But now by faith we are in Christ. We have been born again into His new humanity. We are no longer under the power of sin and no longer under the condemnation of the law, destined only for death. Romans Ch5:17 says: "For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God's abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ."

We have spiritual life in our bodies: "And if the Spirit of him who raised Jesus from the dead is living in you, he who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through his Spirit, who lives in you" (Romans 8:11). We have the Spirit of life to lead us and empower us. We no longer have to live the life we used to live. We can change to become like Jesus, and are free to be the people we should be: "For sin shall not be your master, because you are not under law, but under grace" (Romans 6:14).

We offer our lives because we have been given new lives. We offer our bodies because Christ offered his body on the cross for us.

A new people (chapters 9-11)

We have become part of God's people. The Jews thought only Jews could be God's people, but Paul says in Ch9:8: "In other words, it is not the natural children who are God's children, but it is the children of the promise who are regarded as Abraham's offspring." What makes us part of God's people is God's choice and the faith he gives us in the promise of Christ. Because Israel rejected her Messiah, the gospel goes to all nations. And, because the gospel goes to all nations, Jews are provoked to turn to Christ. The key verses are Ch10:12-13: "For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile; the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, for, 'everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.'"

It used to be just Israel that was God's people. But God has created a new people, a whole new humanity in Christ, to which anyone can belong, whatever their ethnic background. All that matters is Christ and faith in him. Look at Ch9:15: "For he says to Moses, 'I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.' It depends not on human will or exertion, but on God, who has mercy." 'It' here means belonging to God's people. We are saved and become part of God's people not because of our effort or even our desire. It is God's initiative and it is His mercy.

We are a new people with a new life and a new future, who have seen God's amazing mercy. What kind of people does this create? What activity does this generate? The answer is worship: ***"Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship."***

We must not forget God's mercy to us, which is precisely what we are prone to doing!!!

What is Church? How would you answer this?

"Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship."

- Therefore in view of God's mercy - Identity in Christ!
- Offer your bodies as living sacrifices holy and pleasing to God this is your spiritual act of worship - Mission in Christ!

IDENTITY IN CHRIST!

Why, as human beings are we so prone to forgetting God's goodness to us? Think opening scene of "Saving Private Ryan". Earn it! But God's scandalous grace and mercy to us is completely and utterly different, however, we are so prone to forgetting!!!

Church is not a meeting you attend or a building you enter, it is ***an identity that is ours in Christ!*** Bought by Christ! Built by Christ! Sustained by Christ! Matured by Christ! Sanctified by Christ! The Church is the rescued, redeemed people of Christ!

Who we are, leads to what we do!

We are, through Christ, called to be faithful to God, faithful to His Word and faithful to His gospel community! To help us to be "faithful" to His Gospel community, God directs us by His Word in the following ways:

MARK CH9:50 - be at peace with each other.

JOHN CH13:34-35 - A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another.

ROMANS CH12:10 - Be devoted to one another in brotherly love. Honour one another above yourselves.

ROMANS CH12:16 - Live in harmony with one another....

ROMANS CH14:13 - Therefore let us stop passing judgment on one another....

ROMANS CH15:7 - Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.

ROMANS CH15:14 - I myself am convinced, my brothers, that you yourselves are full of goodness, complete in knowledge and competent to instruct one another.

1 CORINTHIANS CH1:10 - I appeal to you brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought.

1 CORINTHIANS CH12:25 -so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other.

GALATIANS CH5:13 - You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love.

GALATIANS CH5:15 - If you keep on biting and devouring each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.

GALATIANS CH5:26 - Let us not become conceited, provoking and envying each other.

GALATIANS CH6:2 - Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfil the law of Christ.

EPHESIANS CH4:2 - Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love.

EPHESIANS CH4:32 - Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.

EPHESIANS CH5:19 - Speak to one another with psalms, hymns and spiritual songs. Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord...

EPHESIANS CH5:21 - Submit to one another out of reverence for Christ.

COLOSSIANS CH3:9 - Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices...

COLOSSIANS CH3:13 - Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you.

COLOSSIANS CH3:16 - Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.

1 THESSALONIANS CH5:11 - Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.

1 THESSALONIANS CH5:15 - Make sure that nobody pays back wrong for wrong, but always try to be kind to each other and to everyone else.

HEBREWS CH3:13 - But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called, Today, so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness.

HEBREWS CH10:24 - And let us consider how we may spur one another on towards love and good deeds.

HEBREWS CH10:25 - Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another – all the more as you see the Day approaching.

JAMES CH4:11 - Brothers do not slander one another...

JAMES CH5:9 - Don't grumble against each other....

JAMES CH5:16 - Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed...

1 PETER CH1:22 - ... love one another deeply, from the heart.

1 PETER CH3:8 - Finally, all of you, live in harmony with one another...

1 PETER CH4:9 - Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling...

1 PETER CH4:10 - Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others...

1 PETER CH5:5 - ... All of you clothe yourselves with humility towards one another...

1 JOHN CH1:7 - But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another.

1 JOHN CH3:11 - ... We should love one another.

1 JOHN CH3:23 - ... And to love one another as he commanded us.

A special prayer was composed for the Lambeth Conference of 1948:

“Almighty God, give us the grace to be not only hearers, but doers of thy holy word, not only to admire, but to obey thy doctrine, not only to profess, but to praise thy religion, not only to love, but to live thy gospel. So grant that what we learn of thy glory we may receive into our hearts, and show forth in our lives; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen”

RECOMMENDED BOOK

- God's New Community by Graham Beynon + Nine Marks of a Healthy Church – Mark Dever
- Nine Marks of a Healthy Church – Mark Dever
- The Deliberate Church – Mark Dever and Paul Alexander
- What is a healthy Church? – Thabiti M. Anyabwile
- A Meal With Jesus – Tim Chester



GIFTS!

As Christians God grants us “charismata grace gifts”, yes it's true! Every child of God is blessed with gifts to build His Kingdom! The following Scriptures will help us to understand more about this.

Let's come back to the Bible!

Let's read from the Book of 1st Corinthians Ch12:1-11:

SPIRIT INSPIRED SPEAKING V1-3

V1 - Ignorant – lacking knowledge or awareness. There was something about the Corinthian's spirituality that made them ignorant, lacking something and unaware of something! The Corinthian Christian thinking was that “the more taken over or possessed, the less you are in control, the more spiritual you are” (David Jackman, Let's Study 1 Corinthians, pg201).

V2 – Influenced and led astray by mute idols, and these mute idols have NO PERSONALITY, NO POWER! However, behind these mute idols are demons (1 Corinthians Ch10:20-22). We are not sure as to what they would do exactly, when they were influenced or led astray to mute idols, but Paul goes on to distinguish between the Spirit inspired speech and the non-inspired speech!

V3 - Inspired by the Spirit. 11 times in 11 verses the word “SPIRIT” comes up or references to Him are made!!! The HOLY SPIRIT is not mute! The HOLY SPIRIT speaks! He reveals who JESUS is, and declares that JESUS CHRIST is LORD! He resides, dwells inside us! He teaches us, enables us, influences us and ultimately is the agent used to transform us to become more like JESUS. He is the mark, the deposit that guarantees our future inheritance! Only through His divine inspiration, can we declare that JESUS is LORD!

Paul does not want the Corinthian Church to be ignorant about GOD the HOLY SPIRIT and His gifts to the Church! He wants them to be clear, to have solid foundations, that can unite and heal any differences within GOD's Church!

SPIRIT INSPIRED DIFFERENCES V4-6

V4 - The Greek word for gifts “charismata” used in 1 Corinthians Ch12:4 means “grace gifts”. Not only are we saved solely by grace, but part of our **salvation package is a capacity and motivation to serve others, in a particular way!** Each truly born again Christian will have a deep desire from GOD to make a valued contribution to the Church.

V5 - There are different kinds of service and the purpose of this service is not to bring attention to ourselves but to build GOD's community.

V6 - talks about “working”. The root meaning of the Greek word for “working” incorporates both “energy and effect”. Therefore when Christians use their GOD given gifts it will reveal itself through both “energy and effect”, it will leave an imprint.

SPIRIT INSPIRED BUILDING V7-11

Paul's main thrust in these verses is for the Christian Community to know the source of these gifts, the unity that these gifts bring, and the distribution of these gifts.

V7 - The Greek word “phanerosis” – means the “public display of” or the “showing of”. These “showings” of the Spirit are not meant for the personal benefit or status of the individual, but to advantage the whole community.

V8-V10 – In these verses Paul lists 9 gifts, Wisdom, Knowledge, Faith, Healing, Miraculous Powers, Prophecy, Distinguishing between spirits, Tongues and the Interpretation of Tongues. Paul is teaching that these gifts are given to Christians, to build Christian Communities and that there is great variety in these gifts. We could put these gifts into categories like speaking gifts, gifts of signs and service gifts, only to help us see more clearly the purpose. The use of these gifts should build unity!

V11 – Paul concludes this section, by pointing out that it is **GOD the HOLY SPIRIT** that determines who will receive His gifts and what they shall be! Staggering!!!

There should be no complaint amongst believers about each others gifts!!!! **IN THEORY!!!!**

Our new position is “righteous” before God! In light of this new position, we **are** part of Christ's family, His body!! Christ has created the Church, those people past, present and future who believe in Christ, who are meant to live out their new identity as part of a local Church!! **How? By using their God given gifts!!!**

Membership of a local Church must be a reflection of a living commitment or it is worthless!

We should be more clear that Spiritual Gifts come from GOD the **HOLY SPIRIT**. That, these gifts are given and revealed for the benefit of the Church Community and are not for personal benefit or status. There are various gifts that could be put into categories to help us understand things more clearly, for example, **supporting gifts, speaking gifts, sign gifts and service gifts.**

A special prayer was composed for the Lambeth Conference of 1948:

“Almighty God, give us the grace to be not only hearers, but doers of thy holy word, not only to admire, but to obey thy doctrine, not only to profess, but to praise thy religion, not only to love, but to live thy gospel. So grant that what we learn of thy glory we may receive into our hearts, and show forth in our lives; through Jesus Christ our Lord.

Amen”

BOOK RECOMMENDATION

- The Joy of Service – Trevor Archer and Dan Green
- Systematic Theology – Wayne Grudem
- The Trellis and The Vine – Colin Marshall and Tony Payne



GIVING!

Our gracious Heavenly Father wants us to be like His Son when it comes to giving! At The Mission Church we can give in three different ways, our time, our talents and our treasure!

Let's come back to the Bible!

Let's read from the Book of Acts Ch2:42-47:

Make a list of the characteristics and functions of the early church which are evident from this passage, try and see what verses reveal what answers:

1. The Church trained and educated its members. V
2. The Church brought its members together. V
3. The Church moved members into relationships of mutual support and fellowship. V
4. The Church had both small group meetings and large group meetings. V
5. The Church practised the ordinance/sacrament of the Lords supper. V
6. The Church spent much time in group prayer. V
7. The Church practised radical stewardship. V
8. There were deeds/actions of power which verified the apostles teaching. V
9. The Church had a general spirit of JOY. V
10. Community life was extraordinarily attractive to outsiders. V
11. The Church was evangelistically effective. V
12. When people were saved they were incorporated into a deep relationship into the Church body not just the Lord. V

What we see from this particular passage, is the use of the Christian's - Time, Talents and Treasure! So, of the 168hrs a week that Jesus graciously gives us, we need to ask "How does He want us to use that time?"

At The Mission Church we try and use "this time" in some of the following ways:

- ***Sunday Mornings*** – Weekly meeting on a Sunday morning where we minister to God, each other, and a dying world. This consists of corporate worship and praise, prayer, teaching our children and preaching. Fun, interactive, time together whilst also being challenging and shaping for our growth.
- ***Connect Groups*** – Weekly evening meeting during the week to continue our growth and discipleship together. Usually in someone's home with tea, coffee, teaching, prayer, fellowship. A great time to be together and share in

each others highs, lows and everyday life.

- ***I.T*** – Our weekly group for our older generation, although there isn't an age limit! A time for fun, quizzes, stories, and a thought for the day all alongside food for the group.
- ***Kidz Connect*** – Our weekly children's group outside of a Sunday. We aim to read the Bible, pray the Bible, sing the Bible, teach the Bible, buy Bibles and memorise Bible verses.
- ***Discipleship Groups*** - Read and Relate, Bake and Not Rake, DOAGM, COG. Various different groups designed to bring people together usually around a particular group, including the Disciplines series with R. Kent Hughes and Barbara Kent Hughes, Gentle and Lowly, and Deeper by Dane Ortlund.
- ***Beginnings*** – Our parent and toddler group that meets for all at The Memorial Hall. A safe place for children to come and play, have a story, a healthy snack and be with their parent/guardian whilst they have a cuppa and a biscuit!
- ***Prayer*** – Weekly, 4 monthly. Regular prayer meetings early in the morning as well as our regular prayer weeks from 7 – 8pm Monday to Friday 3 times a year.
- ***Family Services*** – Every 6-8 weeks in line with the school term dates. Replacing our Sunday morning service we include the whole Church family in a morning of fun including an interactive Bible story, games, as well as a bouncy castle and food together.
- ***Love in Action*** – Our mercy ministry. We recognise that different families can face crises as well as different pressures. Where we can we will endeavour to assist in these circumstances as a church, this can be anything from buying flowers during a bereavement to larger issues.
- ***Finances*** – As born-again Christians Christ wants us to be cheerful, generous, regular and sacrificial givers. As a Church that seeks to steward what the Lord has given us well we seek to share with the church each month what we have been doing with His finances as we recognise that “The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world and those who dwell therein” Psalm 24:1
- ***Holiday Connect*** – Our time to be together with those who are “young at heart”! Usually four sessions very similar to Kidz Connect but during the summer holidays, focussing on one book from the Bible.

- **Local Mission** – Swansea Connect, a monthly meeting for church leaders in the Swansea area attended by one of the Elders to encourage each other, share ideas and pray for one another.
- **National Mission** – Supporting other Churches across Wales as well as spreading the gospel through this Nation.
- **International Mission** – We have been supporting Dolpa Hope Children's Home in Kathmandu Nepal since 2013 and have been connected with King's Church Kathmandu since then and Message of the Cross Church since 2018.

You are about to embark on the most exciting journey of all – the mission of God. God is on a mission to redeem a broken world and He is doing this through His Church. We are committed to keeping mission as a focus of all we do and to seek to develop a missional culture and community among our membership.

A special prayer was composed for the Lambeth Conference of 1948:

“Almighty God, give us the grace to be not only hearers, but doers of thy holy word, not only to admire, but to obey thy doctrine, not only to profess, but to praise thy religion, not only to love, but to live thy gospel. So grant that what we learn of thy glory we may receive into our hearts, and show forth in our lives; through Jesus Christ our Lord.
Amen”

BOOK RECOMMENDATION

- The Purpose Driven Life - Rick Warren
- The Purpose Driven Church – Rick Warren
- When I Don't Desire God – John Piper
- Don't Waste Your Life – John Piper



Appendix A

The Mission Church Membership Agreement

As a member of The Mission Church, I wholeheartedly agree to the Basis of Faith, the Church Constitution and the Church Rules in their entirety.

I also agree to undertaking the following responsibilities as part of my church membership:-

1. Regular attendance at Sunday worship. (Acts 20:7, Heb. 10:25)
2. Regular personal prayer and Bible study. (2 Tim 3:15-17, Phil. 4:6)
3. Regular attendance, when possible, at the main weekday meeting of the church for prayer, Bible study and fellowship. (Acts 1:14, 2:42)
4. Sharing in the life, work and witness of the local church. (Rom. 1:16, 1 Cor. 15:58)
5. Regular giving to the local church and the Lord's work in general. (1 Cor. 16:2, 2 Cor. 9:6-7)
6. The showing of Christian love and concern, both for the members of the church family and for the community at large. (John 13:35, 1 Thess. 3:12)
7. An endeavour to live a life consistent with the faith we profess. (Rom. 6:1-2, Eph. 4:1)
8. Regular attendance at the Lord's Supper – the pattern of frequency being a matter for the individual member to decide. (Acts 2:42, 20:7)
9. Submission to the authority and leadership of the Elders in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution and Church Rules (Heb 13:7, 13:17; 1st Thessalonians Ch5:12-13)

Appendix B

THE MISSION CHURCH “ANNUAL QUESTIONNAIRE!”

In order to keep on receiving feedback from the Church we have devised the following “questionnaire” that is given out around our Church Meeting every May. The answers help influence our future planning.

Please circle which answer applies to you and please feel free to add any additional information.

Can you name your Church Leaders?

- YES
- NO
- YOUR OWN COMMENT

Do you know what areas of responsibility they have?

- YES
- NO
- YOUR OWN COMMENT

Can you name the Church Trustees?

- YES
- NO
- YOUR OWN COMMENT

Can you name the Church governing documents?

- YES
- NO
- YOUR OWN COMMENT

Have you read them?

- YES
- NO
- YOUR OWN COMMENT

Do you know where you can obtain or view a copy?

- YES
- NO
- YOUR OWN COMMENT

Have you read the Independent Safeguarding Culture Review?

- YES
- NO
- YOUR OWN COMMENT

How would you rate your Church from the experience you've had so far?

- POOR
- GOOD
- VERY GOOD
- YOUR OWN COMMENT

How well do you understand the "Mission" of the Church?

- CLEARLY
- UNCLEAR
- YOUR OWN COMMENT

Can you approach your Church Leaders?

- YES
- NO
- YOUR OWN COMMENT

What progress can you see since the Independent Safeguarding Culture Review?

- YOUR OWN COMMENT

Are you aware of any training that the Church Leaders have undertaken this year?

- YES
- NO
- YOUR OWN COMMENT

Do you know who CSS are?

- YES
- NO
- YOUR OWN COMMENT

Do you feel the Church spends money in a way that aligns with its Mission?

- YES
- NO
- YOUR OWN COMMENT

Do you feel engaged at the Church?

- YES
- NO
- YOUR OWN COMMENT

Do you feel welcomed at the Church?

- YES
- NO
- YOUR OWN COMMENT

What are some things about your Church that need developing?

- YOUR OWN COMMENT

Is there anything else you would like to add?

Appendix C

THE MISSION CHURCH “THINKING OF LEAVING, POSITIVELY” DOCUMENT!

At The Mission Church, we fully accept that people will move on as life and the challenges it brings occur, we hope that the following questionnaire will provide an opportunity for motives and attitudes when it comes to moving on, to be prayerfully explored and worked through, all for the glory of God!

WHEN CONSIDERING LEAVING YOUR CHURCH!

Nothing in this life matters more than your relationship with God. Nothing! Not even your relationship with your Church. If you can say with confidence that you will be able to grow deeper in your relationship with God at another place, then it is possible God is asking you to leave.

If you are a true Christian but aren't growing closer to God at your current Church, then perhaps it is time to reflect on how your Christian walk is going and where necessary to involve your Pastor. During periods or seasons like this it can be an opportunity to drive yourself deeper into your Gospel Community, connecting with God and the Saints in bringing about God's mission to the world.

Before you think about moving on from your Church, we would strongly encourage thinking deeply and seeking God regarding answering the following questions:

Will I be able to walk with God closer if I leave?

Will I know God better if I leave?

Am I clear about my reasons for leaving?

Is Jesus pleased with my reasons?

What can I do to improve the situation?

Have I done my utmost to do those things?

Have I communicated to my Church leaders my frustrations?

Most of the reasons that we hear from people leaving their Church are not reasons that Jesus would be happy about. When you enter into a relationship with someone, or with a Church, you have to take the good and the bad. No person is perfect and no Church is perfect, only Christ! If you are thinking about leaving your Church because it isn't perfect, search the Scriptures to see how Jesus would respond to finding out your reasons for leaving (Think about the 36 “one another's”).

Your pastor and other Church leaders are probably frustrated by many of the same things you are.

In fact, they are probably looking for people who feel the same way to help lead the charge to improve the situation. Even if your frustration is with the Church Leadership, you need to have the courage to express your frustrations to them and engage in a dialogue. By doing so, even if you decide to leave in the end, the Church will be better off.

Please don't just leave your Church without talking to your Church Leaders or at least explaining why.

Am I leaving because God has "called" me to?

When God called Abram away from his home and the only life he had ever known, He wasn't just calling him away from Haran, He was calling him to Canaan (Genesis 12). When God called Paul away from his plans to preach in Asia, He also called him to preach in Macedonia (Acts 16). Don't leave your Church just to get out. If God is calling you to leave, He is most likely calling you specifically to another community of believers. Make sure you aren't leaving just to be somewhere else.

Am I really moving to another Church?

Whatever peoples reasons are for wanting to leave their current Church, are they really moving to another Church? Make sure you are really going to get involved in another Church, rather than stay at home! Many people leave Church and stay at home!

QUESTIONS WHEN LEAVING!

To help us as a church to continue to grow in how we work through people leaving, it is necessary for the Trustees of The Mission Church to see the responses to the questions below. In addition to this the Trustees may feel it appropriate to allow the members and congregation to view the questions also. Please fill out the section below with your wishes in this regard

- I give consent for the members and congregation to know my responses to the question below
- I give consent for the members and congregation to view my responses to the questions below
- I do not wish to respond to the questions below

Is there anything that your Church Leaders can help you with?

Would you like some of the Church Leaders to visit to pray with you?

Can you share your reasons for leaving?

Have you talked through your reasons for leaving with your Church Leaders?

Have you sent a letter to the Church Secretary?

Can you share where you will now be attending?

Are you happy for us to contact them?

Would you like us to contact you in the future to see how you are doing?

CONSIDERATIONS FOR LEADERS WHEN PEOPLE LEAVE!

As Church Leaders, when people decide to leave we will remain:

- Approachable!
- Empathetic!
- Helpful!
- Forgiving and Friendly!
- Keeping in touch should people wish to do so!

Appendix D - Name of policy or procedures

The Church Constitution and Rules

Basis of faith

Safeguarding Policy and procedures

Handling and Storage of DBS information policy

Data protection policy

Privacy statement

Equal Opportunities Policy

Conflicts of Interest Policy

Financial Procedures

Reserves Policy

Health and Safety Policy (including fire drill)

Health and Safety Strategy (Sunday morning)

Grants procedure

Communication via e mail

Guidelines for family service

Church Insurance

CCLI licence

Essential reading for Trustees

Trustees' Annual Report

**** Should you wish to view any of these Documents please contact Dawn Fearn Church Secretary.***