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# Welcome to Holy Trinity Church

Thanks for taking the time to find out more about the family of Holy Trinity Church. This booklet is designed to introduce you to our church. Specifically we want to tell you about what is unchangeably important to us, what we want to see God do, why we exist, who we are and how you can become involved.

## Our Core Values

At HTC we understand values to be convictions that are intrinsic to us. They are the kinds of things that end up going with us wherever we are simply because they are internal characteristics that form the fabric of our lives.

For example, if our church were somehow magically transported to a deserted island, our values would have arrived with us intact. Many things would have been left behind — our great city, our places of residence, our jobs, our toys, our stuff, etc. But our values would have come with us. We could no sooner leave our values behind than we could change our DNA. We would never dream of abandoning our values; after all, they are what make us HTC. To date we have identified seven:

### **1. The Centrality of the Word**

Everywhere you go within HTC you will find people striving to explain, to learn, and to align their thoughts and actions to the Bible. Put differently, you could say that belief in the total authority, veracity, and sufficiency of God's Word flows within the very core of our being. The reason for this is simple: we believe that the Bible is God's Word. God's words are very different than our words. God creates, redeems, judges, and saves by his all-powerful Word, and wherever God's Word is read and proclaimed, God's voice is heard. How thrilling to know that God has something to say to us and to his world! At HTC we value equipping ourselves in God's Word. We want to know it and be transformed by it. We work hard at listening to it and joyfully submitting our entire lives to it.

### **2. The Power of the Gospel**

Today many people are wondering "What in the world is God up to?" The conviction of HTC is that God has answered that question by sending Jesus into the world. God's gospel — or good news — is the message of Jesus' death and resurrection. We believe that this gospel is spreading, active, and growing in our world. In fact, we hold that God has promised to expand the horizons of this good news until new Christians and new churches spring up from every people group in

the world. We value spreading the gospel by our witness — for the gospel is the power of God to transform all who believe. We count it a privilege to pray for, equip, train, and send people out to spread the gospel wherever His Spirit enables them.

### **3. The Supremacy of Jesus Christ**

Just before Jesus left his disciples and ascended into heaven he told them that God had given him all authority in heaven and on earth. On the basis of his supremacy as the Christ, Jesus commanded his followers to go and make disciples of all nations, teaching them to observe everything he had told them. Because Jesus is God's king and supreme ruler, he alone deserves the allegiance and praise of every person. So each person in HTC seeks to honor and serve God by making disciples of Jesus. To this end we gather together regularly to exalt Christ in the power of his Spirit. We are humbled by our privilege of speaking directly to God through prayer in Jesus' name. We take great joy in exalting Jesus' name by singing songs of praise directed to him. Further, we acknowledge the supremacy of Christ in all we say and do — every hour of every day. So we give ourselves to a life of worship and witness with joy, reverence, and a sense of awe for all that God has done for us in Christ.

### **4. The Significance of Family**

God designed the family to be integral to the structure and well-being of society. What is more, the Bible teaches that while the truth of the gospel rests upon strong churches, the health of the church is directly connected to the character and godliness of its individual members and homes. Therefore, we desire to help people in our city build strong homes and families for God. We hold marriage in high esteem and we celebrate the children in our midst. Further, for those in our community who are away from their families, we intentionally orchestrate our congregational life to support and nourish them. Indeed, we have found that the welfare of the HTC family is indispensably enriched by the many single people God has brought into our individual families. We welcome one another into our homes and are eager to share our lives as well as the abundance of gifts God has given to us.

### **5. The Life of Mercy**

The entire family of HTC has experienced the mercy of God in Christ Jesus; thus, we place a high value on extending God's mercy to others in need. This value of extending mercy goes to the core of our being. We want to see the love of Jesus extended to every neighborhood in our city. We want to serve Christ by bringing *relief* to the physically suffering and impoverished, *refreshment* to those in spiritual misery, *restoration* to those experiencing broken relationships, and

*renewal* to the social fabric of our city. And while we value loving our neighbor, we also have a particular concern to show mercy to our Christian brothers and sisters in need, whether within our own congregation, in our city, or on the other side of the world.

## **6. The Richness of Community**

If there is a single word people have used to describe HTC so far, it has been *community*. For us, this value has three dimensions. First, *the richness of the fellowship we have in Christ*. In Christ we share some amazing benefits— forgiveness of our sin, reconciliation with God, fellowship with one another, and bearing one another’s burdens through prayer, just to name a few. Second, we value *the richness of the diversity we have in Christ*. In fact, we believe that the more integrated racially, culturally, and socio-economically we become as a church, the richer our fellowship will be. Finally, we value *enriching the wider community around us*. We are eager to see our city enhanced as we actively serve and seek her welfare. We long to see the richness, weight, and truth of the gospel come to bear on every realm of human life, including the arts, business, law, government, and the academy.

## **7. The Irony of Weakness**

While the world places a high value on strength, our church is learning to value and live in weakness. Why? Because when we are weak, we are actually strong. You might call it the irony of weakness: God uses humble, reliant people. Weakness is divinely intended for us by God. Indeed, a life of dependence on the Spirit, of devotion in prayer and a willingness to suffer for Christ is a beautiful life. So we value *dependence on the Spirit* rather than dependence on self. We value *prayer*, which is the opposite of pride and self-sufficiency. And though we do not seek out *suffering* we know that it is part of a gospel life. Christ is our strength!

## **Our Vision**

HTC is a church that is eager to get about the work God has given us to do. In crafting our vision we have made every effort to be biblically grounded, contextually informed, and culturally engaged.

The vision of HTC is:  
*To see the city of Chicago  
transformed by the power of the gospel  
of Jesus Christ.*

Now, after reading our vision statement you might be wondering: "That sounds great, but what does it really mean? It appears to be biblically grounded, contextually informed, and culturally engaged — but what exactly does it mean?"

### **Transformed**

Very simply stated, we want to see lives changed by the gospel. You could call it conversion. You might call it salvation. You could call it new birth. The idea of transformation denotes fundamental change. The dictionary says 'transform implies a change either in external form or in inner nature.' The gospel accomplishes both. When a person hears the gospel of Jesus Christ and responds to it by repenting in the power of the Holy Spirit, God fundamentally changes them from the inside out. People who were dead spiritually are made alive to God. But it does not end there; the fundamental interior change leads to changes that are visible externally as well. Attitudes change. Addictions are overcome. Sins are conquered. People make progress in holiness. That is our vision – the transformation of Chicagoans from rebels to those who are now in a right relationship to God, from sinners to servants, from God haters to God lovers.

### **The City of Chicago**

Changed lives will change our city. We are under no illusions that we can 'Christianize' Chicago, nor do we have any intentions of doing so. We do not expect to have less opposition to the gospel in the future. We expect more. But we are convinced that as people become followers of Christ they become more productive for the good of the city than they ever were before. Teachers will care more deeply for their students; business people will do business with increasing integrity. Our vision is for a city that is more compassionate to the disadvantaged, more loving toward neighbors, and more generous with resources, time, and finances. We believe a transformed city is the result of individual lives that are renewed by the gospel.

### **By the Power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.**

The good news of Jesus is God's power to save in the world today. Our hope does not rest in politics, nor in the goodness of humanity, nor in our ability to organize people around a cause. Our hope is grounded in events that happened 2000 years ago. When Jesus Christ hung on the cross, he endured God's wrath for our sins. He was then buried and on the third day he rose again.

The Bible promises that the resurrection power that raised Jesus Christ from the dead is available today by faith, through grace. That power will transform individual lives; that power is the power that will renew our city.

So this is our vision: *to see the city of Chicago transformed by the power of the*

*gospel of Jesus Christ. May God vindicate the power of his gospel and increase his glory in our day and in our city!*

## **Our Mission**

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*The mission of HTC is to glorify God and enjoy him forever, in and through Jesus Christ. By stating the mission of HTC in these words we openly confess to you that we are borrowing considerably from language first used by Christians in the distant past. Some of you will know that the heart of our mission statement was penned over 350 years ago. For others this statement will be entirely new. In either case, a few paragraphs given to unpacking what our mission statement means should prove helpful.*

### **To Glorify God**

The word *glorify* is a difficult word to get our minds around. To understand what we mean when we say that our mission is *to glorify God*, perhaps a definition of the word *glory* might help. There are two dimensions to the word *glory*: the first is the splendor and beauty that come forth from an object; the second is the weight and majesty of an object. Thus the beauty and aroma of a flower are said to be its glory but also the size and grandeur of a mountain are its glory. For HTC then, when we say that our mission is *to glorify God* we mean that we exist to reflect and enlarge the beauty and grandeur of God forever. How do we glorify God? We believe it happens through the Great Commission and the Great Commandment. When people encounter HTC we want them to see and taste something of the brilliance and majesty of God.

### **To Enjoy Him Forever**

The word *enjoyment* carries with it the idea of experiencing something that gives us pleasure. In this world we find only momentary enjoyment in things that satisfy our personal desires. Every person at HTC has pursued temporary pleasures in hopes of finding lasting satisfaction. Thankfully, we now find ourselves running a different race. Because God created us to enjoy *Him*, nothing but God himself will ever satisfy our deepest needs and desires. We could never be satiated with the enjoyment of God because He is infinitely perfect, beautiful, and personally satisfying. HTC knows the fulfilling reality of existing to happily enjoy the character and presence of God forever.

## **In and through Jesus Christ**

The last phrase in our mission statement is very important to us. After all, the Bible teaches that as a once hostile and rebellious people we are still prone toward a self-glorifying mission in life, and we find ourselves drawn to find satisfaction in lesser things. That is why we can only glorify God and enjoy Him forever through personal faith *in the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ*. Jesus is the only One who perfectly reflected the beauty and grandeur of God in this world. He is also the only One who experienced the joy of a complete and satisfying knowledge of God. We must, therefore, be found in Him by faith to glorify God and enjoy Him. In other words, we can only fulfill the eternal mission God has given to us *in and through Jesus Christ*.

## **Our Identity**

If someone had the opportunity to spend a few days with the people of Holy Trinity Church, they would soon discover our identity; we are a group of people who once lived in rebellion against God, but now have come into a right relationship with Him through faith in Jesus Christ.

Our identity does not originate with us or with new or novel ideas, rather, the identity of HTC flows from the ancient stream of historic Christian faith: a faith that is revealed throughout the whole of the Bible, expressed in the historic Apostles' and Nicene Creeds and recaptured by the Protestant Reformers.

If we were to choose a name that captured our identity, we would simply call ourselves Christians. As followers of Christ the Bible teaches we are: the *Family of God*, the *Body of Christ*, and the *Dwelling of the Holy Spirit*. The first identifying picture is familial, the second, relational, and the third, architectural.

### **The Family of God**

The Bible describes the church using the most intimate and personal terms; it identifies the church as God's adopted family. Any person who receives Jesus and believes in his name is called *a child of God!* This wonderful truth has at least two important implications for HTC. First, with God as our *father*, we are brothers and sisters in Christ who now have the joyful responsibility of loving one another as members of the same family. Second, although many people today claim that everyone is a child of God and has God as their Father, we must humbly maintain that the Bible teaches something different. A person comes into the family of God only through faith in Jesus Christ as God's one and only Son and Savior. Without this faith people are living outside of God's family and are in danger of missing the eternal comforts promised for everyone in his household.

## **The Body of Christ**

Perhaps the most awesome and humbling privilege of the church is to be identified as *the body of Christ*. Can any reality be more exalted or more overwhelming? The body metaphor points to two things: first, the intimacy and authority Jesus has with his church. Jesus is the head of his body and so he alone rules and directs the church. In other words, a vital aspect of the identity of HTC is that we are a people under submission to our Head. Second, the body metaphor points to the union Christians have with each another. As members of Christ's body, HTC is united to his Spirit and therefore we are personally united to one another. Thus our identity will be manifested as we recognize each member as vital to the health and well-being of the overall body, all the while sharing the mutual responsibility to care for and nurture other members.

## **The Dwelling of the Holy Spirit**

A third picture painted on the pages of the Bible concerning our identity is *the dwelling of the Holy Spirit*. HTC believes that the Holy Spirit is the person who secures our adoption into God's family and unites us to Christ and to each other. His transforming presence in each person makes the church the dwelling place of God with His people. The church is therefore God's holy temple built upon the foundation of the word of God, with Christ as the cornerstone and enlivened by his Spirit. We find it thrilling to consider that according to God's word, the people who comprise HTC are nothing less than God's building project in process! Ours is truly a rich identity.

## **Our Church Life**

We want to highlight three aspects of church life: Neighborhood Groups, membership, and Hope for Chicago. Our Neighborhood Groups are a way of providing community and shepherding. If you are interested in becoming a member of HTC this will provide a glimpse of the process. Hope for Chicago is our mercy ministry which provides opportunities for you to share the love of Christ with others.

### **Neighborhood Groups**

We're convinced that everyone at HTC needs to be part of a Spirit-led community, marked by people gathering around God's Word in an environment of love, seeking to reach out in evangelism and exalting Christ in all they do.

Our Senior Pastor, David Helm has stressed the importance of Neighborhood Groups this way, “We have no other strategy to shepherd our people outside of Neighborhood Groups.”

Our groups are intended to serve a three-fold purpose:

1. To strengthen the growth of the gospel in your life.
2. To encourage the growth of the gospel in the lives of others.
3. To spread the growth of the gospel by serving others.

### **Exploring Neighborhood Groups**

There are three different ways to explore Neighborhood Groups. Talk to someone at our Sunday gathering. Fill out the tear off portion of the worship folder and indicate your interest in a Neighborhood Group, or if you already know someone from Holy Trinity, you are welcome to join their group.

### **Membership at Holy Trinity**

The first step towards becoming a member is to get involved in a neighborhood group. Then express your interest to your neighborhood group leader and they will guide you through the process. Every member must be able to affirm the six questions below.

1. Do you acknowledge yourself to be a sinner in the sight of God, justly deserving His wrath, and without hope save His sovereign mercy?
2. Do you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and Savior of sinners, and do you place your faith and trust in Him alone for salvation as He is offered in the Gospel?
3. Do you believe the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament, as originally given, to be the inerrant Word of God, the only infallible rule of faith and practice?
4. Do you now resolve and promise, in humble reliance upon the grace of the Holy Spirit, that you will endeavor to live as becometh a follower of Christ?
5. Do you promise to support this church in its worship and work to the best of your ability?
6. Do you submit yourselves to the government and discipline of the church and promise to study its purity and peace?

## **Hope for Chicago**

### **Need**

Every one of the 77 neighborhoods in Chicago has needs. Homelessness. Drugs. Gangs. Poverty. AIDS. Forgotten children. Hunger. Injustice. Every neighborhood in Chicago needs hope.

Hope is precisely what is offered in the gospel of Jesus Christ. God's gospel offers freedom from the enslavement of sin, forgiveness, and the promise of new life through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It offers lives transformed to serve, sacrifice, and suffer.

We believe the Spirit has hope for Chicago. In 2003 HTC founded Hope for Chicago as subsidiary organization under the umbrella of our church. As such it has its own board of directors and legal status.

### **Vision**

Hope for Chicago exists for one purpose: to extend the love of Jesus Christ to every neighborhood in Chicago. We motivate, train, and mobilize Holy Trinity Church's members and friends to invest their lives (time and money) so that mercy and justice ministries flourish in Chicago.

### **Partnering Ministries**

Hope for Chicago is a web of relationships within Holy Trinity Church that connects with ministry communities outside of Holy Trinity Church. The web of relationships includes people from a variety of backgrounds, ethnicities and walks of life, living out the Gospel and bringing the hope of Christ to our neighborhoods in both word and deed.

Currently Hope for Chicago is partnering with CareFirst, Good News Jail and Prison Ministries, Hallelujah Faith Ministries, and Kids' Club.

### **Becoming a Volunteer**

If you are interested in finding out more about Hope for Chicago or becoming a volunteer please visit the welcome table for more information.