



STATEMENT OF VISION  
AND CORE VALUES

EVANGELICAL  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH



## WHO WE ARE

The Evangelical Presbyterian Church (EP Church) was established here in Annapolis in 1964. The founding members came from a variety of protestant backgrounds, but had a common passion: to see a church in Annapolis that held unswervingly to the Scriptures and called people to everlasting life through faith in Jesus Christ. Today, EP Church continues to strive toward this same passion.

## WHAT'S IN A NAME

The terms “evangelical” and “presbyterian” are not arbitrary religious words that we have chosen to include in our name. “Evangelical” comes from the Greek word in the New Testament that is translated *Gospel*. This word means "good news" or "glad tidings". We include this term in our name because we hold the Gospel of Jesus Christ in high regard. In our culture, the word, *evangelical*, has come to connote a number of ideas. The primary emphasis of the Gospel is that God has done what is necessary to bring us into a relationship with him. Whereas other religions and philosophies provide a list of rules and good deeds to perform, God provides Jesus, who lived a life of perfect obedience for us, and then transferred the credit for His performance to our account, taking on himself the record (and therefore the punishment) for our sin and failure.

Consequently, neither the sinfulness of the irreligious person nor the moral achievement of the religious person counts for anything. The only thing that counts is the righteousness of Christ on our behalf. The gospel tells us that we are more wicked than we ever dared believe, but at the same time, we are more loved and accepted in Christ than we ever dared hope. It is the knowledge of our acceptance in Christ that motivates our obedience to God by gratitude, rather than by fear or through spiritual “resume building”.

## WHAT'S IN A NAME

“Presbyterian” is also derived from a New Testament Greek word, translated *Elder*. This is a reference to the fact that EP is a church that is governed by elected officers called “Elders”. The Presbyterian form of government is a representative form of government. Elders are elected from among the congregation, then govern together by consensus. The spiritual qualifications for Elders are listed in I Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9.

Additionally, Presbyterianism has historically been associated with a doctrinal perspective, often referred to as *Covenant Theology*. As adherents to this perspective, we believe that the Scriptures reveal God primarily relating to His people in the context of a community. While the Lord has often revealed Himself to individuals, those revelations virtually always serve God’s promises and purposes for the larger community of God’s people. Consequently, while we are passionate about what God is doing in the midst of this one congregation in such a time as this, we must never lose sight of the fact that we are a part of something much greater that God has been doing and continues to do throughout history and throughout the world. To be “Presbyterian” is to see God’s faithfulness in our lives as nothing less than His faithfulness to fulfill His word given to His people throughout history.

## IS EP PART OF A DENOMINATION?

EP is affiliated with a denomination called the *Presbyterian Church in America* (PCA). The PCA is a growing denomination committed to biblical mission and values. We are also affiliated with the other churches in Anne Arundel County that share the *Evangelical Presbyterian* name. These are like-minded PCA churches that are working together to assist each other in church planting, mercy ministries, and church development. All of this simply means that we have much freedom to develop a form and style of ministry that best suits Annapolis, while still being held accountable to other ministries. For more information on the PCA you may visit its website at <http://www.pcanet.org>.

## STATEMENT OF VISION AND CORE VALUES

A Community of God's people seeking the renewal of Annapolis and the surrounding community as we are moved by the Gospel into a greater...

Devotion to Jesus Christ,  
Love for His Family, and  
Service to His World...

that Christ would be glorified, and that people from every nation, tribe, and tongue would worship and serve the living God.

## KNOWING CHRIST

***Knowing Jesus Christ* as He is revealed to us in the Holy Scriptures . . .**

Truth is the foundation of our ministry. We believe that God himself, being the Truth and Life, has revealed himself intelligently and accurately in the person of Jesus Christ and in the errorless body of truth we call the Scriptures. We are therefore committed to the authority and centrality of the Scriptures in all of our ministries. It is our expressed purpose to communicate God's truth with clarity and relevance to all of life's situations, so that Christ may be seen as Lord in all things.

Ephesians 4:4-6; Joshua 1:8; 2 Timothy 3:16,17



*Loving Jesus Christ as the Holy Spirit has shown Him to us in the Gospel . . .*

If Truth is our foundation, then Grace is the cornerstone of our ministry. Left to ourselves, we all deny our need of God's unmerited favor (grace). Instead we cling to the impossible: the production of a self-made righteousness. But this only leads to fear-based behavior and slavish efforts to make oneself good.

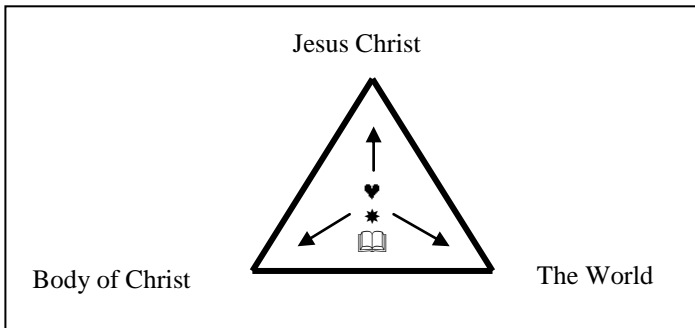
The Gospel is the "Good News" that God has done what is necessary to bring us into a relationship with Him. Whereas other religions and philosophies provide a list of rules and good deeds to perform, God provides Jesus, who lived a life of perfect obedience for us, and then transferred the credit for his performance to our account, taking on himself the record (and therefore the punishment) for our sin and failure. Consequently, neither the sinfulness of the irreligious person nor the moral achievement of the religious person counts for anything. The only thing that counts is the righteousness of Christ on our behalf. The Gospel tells us that we are more wicked than we ever dared believe, but at the same time, we are more loved and accepted in Christ than we ever dared to hope. It is the knowledge of our acceptance in Christ that motivates our obedience to God by gratitude, rather than by fear or through spiritual "resume building". We are committed to the prominence of this grace in all that we do.

*Ezekiel 36:26,27; Ephesians 3:16-19; Romans 12:1*

## SHOWING CHRIST

*Showing Jesus Christ* as we relate biblically in our circles of influence . . .

If Truth is our foundation and Grace is our cornerstone, then God's Glory is our "Center of Gravity". Glory literally means "weight". To glorify God is to give God's perspective the most "weight" in every area of life. This happens when we show forth Jesus Christ as being supreme in all of life...



## AS WE WALK WITH THE LORD

*John 16:7-11; John 4:23,24; John 15:1-11*

***Repentance and Faith***—We desire to help God's people respond to the Gospel with continual repentance regarding sin and righteousness and judgment; and surrendered devotion to Christ's Lordship. The Gospel liberates us to break the bondage of things (even good things) that once drove us, so that we might serve the Lord—and Him only.

***Worship***—In worship we gather to adore and celebrate Jesus Christ, our living King. He is the primary audience who promises to gather with his people to receive their praise, thanksgiving, repentance, and devotion. This is why we endeavor to offer a kind of worship that is fitting for the all-powerful, risen King; majestic, earnest, sincere, and joyful. Reverence and awe do not exclude the expression of joy and emotion. True worship will engage the whole person, mind and emotions, resulting in renewed passion for Christ. We express our connection to the past (heritage) and our relation to the present through musical diversity and the use of historic creeds and confessions.

## AS WE WALK WITH THE LORD

***Discipleship***—The Christian life is a life of *followership*. To be surrendered to the Kingship of Christ is to not only walk in obedience, but to become a student of what pleases Him. To be a disciple is to be a “learner”. As disciples of Christ we draw near to Him so that His heart might infect ours. The result is that we are transformed after His image and His communicable attributes are passed along to us as His Spirit works in us. We desire to equip people to feed themselves from God’s word, cultivate a life of prayer, and develop the practice of stewardship so that they grow as *learners* and followers of Christ.

## IN THE BODY OF CHRIST

*Ephesians 2:11-22; Ephesians 4:7-16; John 15:12-17*

***Community of Grace***—The Gospel creates a new community which not only nurtures individuals but serves as a sign of God’s coming kingdom. In this new community we should see classes of people loving one another who could not have gotten along without the healing power of the Gospel. Christ gives us a radically new identity, freeing us from both self-righteousness and self-condemnation. Christ liberates us to accept people we once excluded and show love and respect toward those who do not share all of our convictions. Additionally, we need not be surprised that those around us (even those we perceive to be the most mature) struggle with temptation and sin. Nor do we need to be afraid for others to know that we struggle as well. Our church is a place for “Big Sinners” who need a “Big Savior”.

***Family***—While the Body of Christ serves as a new and extended “family” for God’s people, we believe the family unit continues to be central to God’s plan for the nurturing of his people. While we may endeavor at times to minister to men, women, youth, and children in specialized groups, we unapologetically affirm both the right and the responsibility of parents to disciple their children and of family heads to nurture and shepherd their families. It is our desire to equip God’s people to thrive in godly marriages and families.

## IN THE BODY OF CHRIST

***Spiritual Gifts and Service***—We believe that God has provided each person in the church, male and female, with spiritual gifts for the edification of the Body of Christ. Not only is every person in the church gifted, but every person is also called to put their gift(s) to service. We view every member at EP Church to be a “minister”. When properly put to use, our spiritual gifts serve as tangible expressions of God’s grace to the church. Our hope is to help God’s people to recognize their gifts, nurture them as individuals, and entrust them with ministries.

***Larger Christian Community***—We have no illusions that our single church, or even our Presbyterian tradition, is sufficient to renew all of our surrounding community spiritually, socially, and culturally. We are therefore committed to cooperating in meaningful ways with other churches and organizations to further God’s Kingdom, working for a renewal of Gospel vitality in our community.

## IN THE WORLD

2 Corinthians 5:14-21; Matthew 6:9,10; Luke 10:25-37;  
John 15:18-27

***To the Seeker***—While it is true that left to ourselves there is no one who truly seeks after God, we also believe that God has set ‘eternity in our hearts’ (Ecclesiastes 3:11) in such a way that all people have a void in their lives which they are seeking to fill in one way or another—and that can only truly be filled by Jesus Christ. Further, God’s word promises that whoever earnestly seeks after the Lord will find Him. In light of this, we desire to provide a safe place where people can ask questions in their search for truth and God. We desire not only to provide truthful answers but also to encourage questions about the profound issues concerning God and life. We live among a generation that increasingly questions the existence of truth and holds tolerance to be the highest virtue. We deny that tolerance requires us to say that no one is wrong. Yet the Gospel is the only message in the world that proclaims propositional truth and deals lovingly with its opponents. We desire to help God’s people respond to the Gospel by engaging this world with the hope of Christ by building redemptive relationships with the people whom God has placed in our lives.

*To the Hurting*—The Gospel is a haven for those struggling with the futility of works-based religion or the confusion of misunderstanding freedom to be the absence of constraint. Our hope is that people will find at EP genuine grace and truth in the person of Christ and among the people of God. We want to repent of putting forth the image that we all have our lives together (and therefore no longer have need of the Gospel) and, in turn, provide both refuge and new beginnings for those struggling with sin, as well as for those who have been overcome by the difficulties of life.

*With Words and Deeds*—God has called us to present nothing less than the love of Christ to our community. Just as Jesus consistently ministered to the whole person, spiritual and physical, we also desire to minister Christ's love to our neighbors through tangible deeds of mercy in the hope of building bridges to Christ.

*With an Outward Face*—We believe that outreach is not simply a program, but an attitude of love and grace toward those we don't know. While evangelism is not the stated purpose for everything that we do in our ministry, we want to assume that virtually everything that we do and say is being "overheard" by people who don't believe in Christ, or who may not be sure of what they believe.



*To Annapolis*—We believe that nothing promotes the peace and health of any community like the spread of faith in Jesus Christ. It renews both individual lives and reweaves the fabric of whole neighborhoods. Nothing moves Christians to humbly serve, live with, and love all the diverse people of our community like the Gospel does. As the Body of Christ, we are called to be both prophets and priests to our culture. As prophets, we are called to graciously speak the truth to those around us. As priests, we are called to petition our God for the salvation of those around us. When all is said and done, we want not merely to be a great church in Annapolis; we want Annapolis and the surrounding community to be a great place. We believe that the Gospel has a deep, vital, and healthy impact on the arts, business, government, media, and academy of any society. Therefore we are committed to supporting Christians' engagement with culture, helping them work with excellence, distinctiveness, and accountability in their professions.

*Gathered and Distributed*—The church is not defined by her walls or her programs; she is defined by her people. The church gathers each Lord's Day to worship, and periodically throughout the week to serve and learn. But beyond these times the church does not cease to be the church. We merely transition from being the church *gathered* to being the church *distributed*. We don't need church programs in order to worship God in our households throughout the week. Nor do we need church programs to carry the Gospel to those whom God has placed in our lives. We are empowered to initiate ministry wherever we are and wherever we go. We hope to encourage God's people to start Bible Studies, engage in mercy ministry, care for the hurting, and be the church in all arenas of life.

*To the World*—God commands us to reach all peoples of the world with the good news of his grace. We seek to help accomplish this by prayerfully and financially supporting those who take the Gospel across cultural and geographical barriers, and by sending out from our own congregation individuals and teams for short and long term missions.





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