



# OPENING THE DOORS

PREPARED FOR  
**THE COUNCIL OF CALVARY CHURCH**  
**A CHRISTIAN REFORMED CONGREGATION**

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## OUR PURPOSE FOR THIS DOCUMENT

The leading of the Holy Spirit has been evident throughout the history of Calvary Christian Reformed Church. In the spring of 2002, God provided Calvary the opportunity to greatly expand our facilities and in the process, take on greater responsibilities in his Kingdom. This opportunity came at a time in Calvary's history when the Spirit was readying the hearts of many in the congregation for change, both in terms of the size and ministry of the church.

With the leading of the Spirit, we stepped forward in faith and moved to a new location. We now find ourselves seeking God's plan for our ministry and anticipating what else God has planned for Calvary. What will Calvary look like in the future? Where is God leading us? This document attempts to provide a glimpse of what that future may look like and how we believe God desires to take us there.

Although our future will look different than what it would have at our old location, our purpose remains unchanged—to *go and make disciples of all nations*. Our new facility allows us to carry out this purpose in a way that may not have been possible at our old location. This document identifies the model for ministry that we will use to evaluate if our ministries are helping us fulfill our purpose. The model for ministry focuses on growing our relationships with Jesus Christ by knowing more about him and his Word, serving him, and sharing him with others. If we faithfully carry out our purpose by making and equipping disciples who know, serve and share Jesus Christ, Calvary will become a Christian driving force of cultural change in the Twin Cities.

Fulfilling this purpose is an awesome responsibility. Barriers will always be present that hinder Calvary in its efforts to fulfill its purpose. These barriers represent doors that we as a church must open in order to carry out our purpose faithfully. This document will be used by church leadership to identify the doors standing in the way and with God's help, open them.

By allowing us to move to our new facility, God has already opened one door of opportunity. However, other doors are currently blocking the path to fulfilling our purpose. We trust that God will help us identify and open these and any other doors that will emerge in the future. The more doors we open the greater Christian impact we will have on society.

As you read this document, think of what doors must open for God to use you to help carry out Calvary's purpose and be comforted in knowing that we are focused on our purpose—to go and make disciples of all nations. Opening doors will inevitably require change, individually and collectively. In the midst of the confusion and stress associated with impending change we tend to think we are isolated and alone. The Biblical story, however, shows that the change and flux in which we find ourselves has been happening throughout history, and is a part of God's encounters with his covenant people. Let us openly embrace this encounter with joyful anticipation.

"I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge – that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen." (Ephesians 3:16-21)



## OUR MINISTRY THEME

To kick off this new ministry plan for Calvary Church, we have developed a theme to guide us in communicating our new mission and vision, and also to help us begin to take our new mission and vision from concept to implementation.

### OPENING THE DOORS

This vision theme has several meanings for Calvary Church at this time:

- God is opening new doors of possibilities and a new chapter in the life of Calvary Church as a result of our move from Bloomington to Edina, which is allowing us the opportunity to craft and implement a larger vision for God's work at Calvary.
- We are opening the doors of our new church to our new neighbors, inviting them and welcoming them into the many ministries and programs we have and will be creating.
- We are leading people to open the door of their heart to the Holy Spirit, with our prayer that they come into a growing and committed relationship with Jesus Christ and his church.
- We are equipping people to open the doors of opportunity to lead others to Christ, thus ultimately realizing our vision and beginning our mission anew in another person.
- God may be opening doors to new ministries, while possibly challenging us to close the doors to other ministries, some of which we may currently be involved in, allowing us to implement a plan for ministry that is purposeful, relational, culturally relevant, and aligned, while utilizing people's gifts in carrying out that ministry plan.
- We are opening the doors for people to move from no knowledge of Christ to a deeply committed relationship with him. We accomplish this by creating and maintaining a comprehensive, purposeful ministry model that contains the necessary steps for people to grow closer to Christ.
- We are defining the keys for unlocking the potential influence Calvary may have for Christ. This document is the first step of many in breaking through the barriers that hinder Calvary's Christian impact in our community, ministry effectiveness, and organizational growth.



## WHO WE ARE

“The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body...and we were all given one Spirit to drink” (1 Corinthians 12:12-13). Calvary Christian Reformed Church is a body of believers, unified in our purpose and our faith in Jesus Christ.

Calvary Christian Reformed Church was organized in the spring of 1961 when 50 committed and visionary people gathered for worship for the first time. Its first facility on the corner of France Ave and 90<sup>th</sup> Street in Bloomington was dedicated in 1965. The congregation has been served faithfully by seven pastors in its 42-year history, has grown to about 500 members, has gone through two building expansion programs, and in August, 2002, relocated to its present site in Edina, MN. With this move we believe God is opening new doors of opportunity for Calvary Church to lead many people to a new and growing relationship in Jesus Christ and to be a community of God’s people where no one is a stranger.

Our denomination, the Christian Reformed Church (CRC), calls itself *Christian* because it forms one small part of Christ’s church on earth. It recognizes as fellow-Christians all people who accept the teachings of the Bible as they are summarized so beautifully in the Apostle’s Creed. This includes believers from many denominations such as Roman Catholic, Orthodox, Lutheran, Baptist, Presbyterian, and Pentecostal. We may disagree with these believers on some practices or teachings, but we recognize them as sisters and brothers in Christ if they believe in God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and if they confess that Jesus died for their sins, rose from the dead, and ascended into heaven.

Together with other Protestant churches, the CRC teaches that

- the Bible is our only reliable guide to what we should believe and how we should conduct our lives (2 Timothy 3:14-17). It is God’s unfailing Word to us. It shows us who God is by telling us the great things God has done. The Bible leads us to a saving knowledge of Jesus Christ.
- God saves us by grace, by his acts of kindness and love that we do not deserve. Our own efforts cannot rescue us from sin. Only Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross can make us right with God (Ephesians 2:8-10). The good we do is the *result* of our salvation, not its *cause*.
- we can be saved only by grace through faith in Jesus Christ (John 3:16-18).

The CRC calls itself *Reformed* because it stands in the tradition of the Reformed churches. These churches follow the teachings of the sixteenth-century church reformer John Calvin. Calvin struggled valiantly to return Christianity back to its biblical roots. CRC teachings are closely akin to Presbyterian and other Reformed churches, and it enjoys solid relationships with many of them.

The rest of this document is our attempt to state in words, our limited view of what we believe God is leading Calvary to do and to become as he uses us to spread the Good News of Jesus Christ throughout our community and our world.



## OUR PURPOSE FOR MINISTRY

We believe Jesus Christ commissioned the church and Christians everywhere through the Great Commandment and the Great Commission. Therefore, Calvary Church clearly focuses its purpose in light of these biblical teachings, and to do so in a way that gives clear direction to the ministry of the church. We believe a great commitment to the great commission and the great commandment will produce a great church.

OUR PURPOSE IS  
TO LEAD PEOPLE INTO A COMMITTED AND GROWING  
RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS CHRIST AND HIS CHURCH.

Each phrase of our purpose has significant meaning for Calvary Church.

### **Lead People**

“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:18-20). We are to go out in the name of Jesus Christ to find people where they are, and lead them into a growing life with Jesus Christ and his church.

### **Committed**

Jesus instructs us to take up our cross and follow him (Matthew 10:37-39). This means we are to be willing to publicly identify with him, to experience almost certain opposition, and to be committed to face even suffering and death for his sake. God calls us to a life of commitment, not to a life of ease. He promises to be with us *through* suffering and hardship, not to spare us from them (Act 9:15,16).

To commit ourselves to the Lord means entrusting everything – our lives, families, jobs, possessions – to his control and guidance. To commit ourselves to the Lord means to trust him, believing that he can care for us better than we can ourselves. We should be willing to wait patiently for him to work out what is best for us (Psalm 37:4-7). By laying aside our striving for advantage, security, and pleasure, we can serve God lovingly and freely. Releasing control of our lives and transferring control to Christ bring eternal life and genuine joy (John 12:25-26).

Each of us must be completely committed to Jesus Christ, and through that commitment lovingly and selflessly serve God through the use of our gifts. In addition, the church as a body must also exhibit this complete commitment and total dependence upon God.

### **Growing**

Believers need to learn God’s Word, pray, and mature in the faith. Every person in a relationship with Christ must seek out other believers for fellowship, prayer, and teaching. This is the way we grow in Jesus Christ and his church (Acts 2:40-47). Our goal therefore, is not simply to lead people to Jesus Christ, but to teach them to obey everything that Christ commanded (Matthew 28:20).



### **Relationship**

God is relational and we are made in the image and likeness of God. Therefore, we believe every Christian should continually pursue three vital relationships: intimacy with God, community with believers, and influence with others. In developing these three relationships, a believer grows closer to God. Calvary Church partners with people in their relationships by creating environments for these relationships to develop and grow.

### **Jesus Christ**

We recognize it is only because of and through Jesus Christ that we receive salvation and forgiveness for our sins. "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life" (John 3:16).

### **His Church**

A church building is sometimes called God's house. In reality, God's household is not a building, but a group of people. He lives in us and shows himself to a watching world through us. People can see that God is love and that Christ is Lord as we live in harmony with each other and in accordance with what God says in his Word. We are citizens of God's kingdom and members of his household (Ephesians 2:19-22).

All believers are joined into this church by faith in Jesus Christ as Savior, the same faith that Peter expressed (Matthew 16:18). It is faith in Christ that is the foundation of Christ's kingdom. A healthy Christian community attracts and leads people to Christ. That church will grow in numbers (Acts 2:42-47).



## OUR DISTINCTIVE TEACHINGS

The Christian Reformed Church shares some distinctive teachings and emphases with the other churches in the Reformed tradition that help guide us in why we believe in our purpose and how we carry out that purpose. Here are five important ones.

### **Our God Reigns**

The CRC teaches that nothing in this world happens outside God's control—our Creator is in control of all things. No forces in heaven, earth, or hell can frustrate what God promises to do for us (Psalm 2). That does not mean that everything that happens *is* God's will. God allows us to exercise our human freedom, and it is our own disobedience that sets into motion many disastrous events. But our actions and decisions are under our heavenly Father's restraining, providing care. Nothing we do can spoil God's wondrous plan for us (Romans 8:28). This gives us the confidence to do our Lord's work in this world. Our Provider's loving, guiding hand will sustain us in good times and in hard times as well.

### **Jesus is Lord**

The CRC emphasizes Christ's authority over all creation. Jesus is not only our crucified Savior. He is also our Lord. He not only rose from the dead but he also ascended into heaven. From there he now rules the whole world (Ephesians 1:22). He will not only rescue our souls from hell but also raise us from the dead and give us eternal life. There's more! When he returns, Jesus will restore this spoiled creation. He will make it truly good and glorifying to God. Through God's Word and Spirit, Jesus has already begun this work and claims our lives as his own. In our worship, work, relationships, and recreation, our Lord calls us to be disciples, to live our whole lives under his leadership (Colossians 3:1-17).

### **God Gives Us Assurance**

The CRC teaches that we can be sure that we belong to God and confident that we shall inherit eternal life. Of course we do not base this certainty on our own ability and strength. We know ourselves too well for that! We base our conviction on God's faithfulness. Our heavenly Father has chosen us and rescued us through Christ (Romans 8:29-30). God assures us that we are safe in the protecting, sheltering care of our Good Shepherd. No one can tear us from Jesus' hand (John 10:27-29), not even our own failings or the weakness of our faith (Luke 22:31-32). This teaching does not make us complacent about living our lives in God's service. It fills us daily with deep gratitude and an earnest desire to live as God's joyful, obedient children (Romans 8:12-17).

### **God With Us**

The CRC believes that our Lord speaks to us through the faithful preaching and teaching of God's Word. He confirms what is spoken through baptism and the Lord's Supper. Unlike some Christians, we do not believe that the elements of the Lord's Supper turn into Jesus' actual body and blood. But we do believe that this celebration is more than just a reminder of Jesus' sacrifice. Jesus is present with us through the Holy Spirit in our hearts (John 14:15-18). Christ, our host, strengthens our faith as we participate, remember, and believe.



### **We Are Part of God's Family**

Believers belong to God. Our Creator adopts us as members of his family and grants us the precious promise of eternal life (Ephesians 1:3-5). The Bible calls this relationship the covenant. It's God's agreement with us to fulfill his promises if we accept them with a repentant, believing heart (Hebrews 8:6). Because we can fulfill our part only when he gives us the Holy Spirit, God takes the initiative in this agreement. We celebrate our covenant relationship in baptism and in the Lord's Supper. Through the cleansing water of baptism God shows us we belong to the family. The bread and the cup we share in the Lord's Supper remind us of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross by which he draws us into fellowship with God and with each other (Matthew 26:27-28).

The Bible teaches that God also includes our children in this covenant. They also receive the promise (Acts 2:39). Therefore, we baptize them, even while they are still infants. To be able to accept and benefit from that promise, they need the Holy Spirit. The Spirit alone can give them the faith in Christ that will let them inherit eternal life. To confirm that they accept Jesus as their Savior and Lord, we ask children and new believers, when they are ready, to make a public profession of their faith (Romans 10:9-10). By doing so they confess and accept their covenant with God. They also commit themselves to joining with all believers to fulfill the task God gives us: to take the Good News of Jesus Christ everywhere (Matthew 28:18-20).



## OUR STATEMENTS OF FAITH

Christians often confess their faith in simple, elegant ways: “My Lord and my God! (John 20:28); “Jesus Christ...is Lord of all” (Acts 10:36). Such confessions or creeds summarize the heart of our faith. They also safeguard the truth of the Bible against false teachings. For these reasons many churches adopt creeds to show clearly where they stand.

The CRC has done that as well. It does not adopt creeds to add teachings that are not in the Bible, but rather to give a clear summary of what God’s Word teaches. While the CRC expects its members and leaders to affirm the teachings of these creeds, it does not ask for rigid agreement with how they formulate them. Confessions are human works, always open to improvement. The CRC commits itself to revise the creeds if there is anything in them that goes beyond Scripture.

The CRC holds three creeds in common with most other Christian churches.

- *The Apostles’ Creed* comes from the fourth century. It elegantly expresses our faith in God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- *The Nicene Creed* comes from the fourth century, when some people taught that Jesus was only a creature. This creed boldly emphasizes the biblical message that Jesus is truly, fully God.
- *The Athanasian Creed* affirms the biblical teaching that the Father is God, the Son is God, and the Holy Spirit is God, but in such a way that there is only one God. It then goes on to confess that Jesus Christ is at the same time fully God and fully human.

There are also three confessions that the CRC shares with other churches of the Reformed faith.

- *The Belgic Confession* was written as a defense against accusations that the Reformed churches promoted false teachings. It summarizes what the Bible teaches about itself, our fall into sin, Christ, salvation, the church, civil government, and our Lord’s return.
- *The Heidelberg Catechism* provides an excellent tool for teaching the Reformed faith. It emphasizes that our rescue from sin is a free, unearned gift of God through Jesus Christ. Responding to that gift, we show our gratitude to God by living in faith and obedience to our Lord.
- *The Canons of Dort* assert that we cannot save ourselves because sin has affected every part of our nature. We cannot even come to faith by ourselves. God must break through our stubborn rejection. God takes the initiative, choosing us in Christ without consideration of any good in us, not even foreseen faith. God’s Spirit alone can work in us the miracle of saving faith that gives us new life in Christ.

In 1986 the CRC adopted a new statement of faith to counter modern secularism. Secularism is the widespread belief in our culture that our faith in God is limited to our private lives. It denies that it has any real influence in the marketplace, the classroom, the office, or the legislative assembly. The contemporary testimony *Our World Belongs to God* reasserts the claim of our Lord over every area of life. Being Jesus’ disciples means that we serve God everywhere, all the time.

If you would like to learn more about our statements of faith, all of these creeds and confessions are included in the back of the Psalter Hymnals found in the Calvary Church worship center.



## OUR CORE VALUES FOR MINISTRY

Our distinctive teachings and statements of faith describe who we are as a church. Our core values describe what we do as a church. These values are the bridge between what we believe, and how we put these beliefs into action. Our core values are the non-negotiables regarding our model of ministry, and they are used to continually evaluate the approach and the effectiveness of every part of the ministry of Calvary Church in fulfilling our purpose and vision, while remaining true to our faith. Obviously, there are many things that are important to us, and many principles and ideals that we hold dear. However, we highlight six values that are particularly important in guiding how we do ministry at Calvary Church.

### **Spirit Led**

Before every important event in his life, Jesus took time to pray (Luke 6:12). Likewise, our first step in anything we do is to pray for the Holy Spirit's power and guidance. Through the guidance of the Holy Spirit we can begin to know God's thoughts, talk with him, and expect his answers to our prayers. However, it does no good to seek God's advice if we ignore it when it is given. We must ask for God's direction, and then follow that direction when given.

We receive God's guidance when we want to be guided and we realize that God's primary guidance system is his Word, the Bible. Psalm 119 tells of the endless knowledge found in God's Word. By reading it and constantly learning from it, we will gain the wisdom to perceive God's direction for our lives. When we are willing to seek God, learn from his Word, and obey his commands, then will we receive his specific guidance. Finally, we can ask the Holy Spirit to intercede for us in accordance with God's will (Romans 8:26-27). The emphasis is on God's will, not our will. When we communicate with God, we don't demand what we want, rather we ask him what he wants for us. If we align our prayers to his will, he will listen and he will give us what we asked of him. Therefore, we pray with confidence! (1 John 5:14-15)

### **Purposeful**

"We constantly pray for you, that God may count you worthy of his calling, and that by his power he may fulfill every good purpose of yours and every act prompted by your faith" (2 Thessalonians 1:11,12). Our purpose is not to build up a church of which we can be proud, but rather to be faithful to God's calling. To be purposeful, everything Calvary Church does must lead people to Christ as their Savior and help them grow in their relationship with Christ and his church. This is how we fulfill the great commission.

### **Ministry Alignment**

We believe that all ministries, our staffing model, our organizational and governance structure, and every other aspect of Calvary Church, must be aligned to fulfill our purpose and realize our vision. To this end, we view our ministries not as separate programs with separate staff, funding, and ministry space, but rather as steps people take in growing closer to Jesus Christ. This allows us to look for gaps by asking whether it is difficult for people involved in a ministry to take the next step in knowing, serving, and sharing Christ. We avoid creating great programs that are not coordinated as part of a broader ministry, as these programs will simply compete for space, leaders, and money. Not every program fulfills all aspects of our mission, but every activity must support and enhance some part of our purpose. We believe this is one way in which we are to be stewards of the people, space, and money God has entrusted to us.



### **Relational**

There are three principles behind true Christian fellowship. First, our fellowship is grounded in the testimony of God's Word. Without this underlying strength, togetherness is impossible. Second, it is mutual, depending on the unity of believers. Third, it is renewed daily through the Holy Spirit. True fellowship combines social and spiritual interaction, and it is made possible only through a living relationship with Christ. We build strong relationships with other Christians by loving, sharing, caring, sorrowing, rejoicing, and praying with them. Love, however, sometimes means we must confront those we care about by holding them accountable to God's standards. To be relational, our ministries must facilitate strong, loving relationships rather than have relationships form in spite of or between the ministries. This is how we fulfill the great commandment.

### **Culturally Relevant**

Our world was created by and belongs to God. Therefore, culture need not be God's enemy. If it does not violate his commands, it can aid in accomplishing his purpose. Many leaders in the Bible learned all they could about their culture so they could do their work with excellence. But, while they learned, they maintained steadfast allegiance to God, and God gave them skill and wisdom (Daniel 1:17). Likewise, Jesus crossed all cultural barriers to share the gospel (John 4:7-9), and we who follow him must do no less.

However, we recognize the world may hate us because our values differ from the world's. As Christ's followers, we do not cooperate with the world by joining in their sin, and we are therefore, accusations against the world's immorality. Therefore, we continually learn about our culture in order to use it in leading people to Christ, while at the same time realizing we are also called to be a prophetic witness to redeem a culture that is straying.

### **Gifts Based Ministry**

All spiritual gifts come from the Holy Spirit, and he calls us to use those gifts to build up Christ's body, the church. To use them effectively, we must (1) realize that all gifts and abilities come from God; (2) understand that not everyone has the same gifts; (3) know who we are and what we do best; (4) dedicate our gifts to God's service, not to our personal success; and (5) be willing to utilize our gifts wholeheartedly, not holding back anything from God's service (Romans 12:4-8).

God's work involves many different individuals with a variety of gifts and abilities. There are no superstars in this task, only team members performing their own special roles. No one person should do everything. Christian ministry should be a team effort. We must be content with the contribution God has given us to make, and carry it out wholeheartedly. Our ministries must help people identify, develop, and use their God-given gifts in the pursuit of our purpose, and we are committed to selecting and developing leaders for ministry based on their spiritual gifts.



## OUR MODEL FOR MINISTRY

Our vision clarifies how God is calling us to fulfill our purpose, it helps remove the barriers keeping us from realizing our purpose, and it builds the ministry capacity necessary to carry out our purpose.

OUR PURPOSE IS  
TO LEAD PEOPLE INTO A COMMITTED AND GROWING  
RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS CHRIST AND HIS CHURCH  
  
BY CREATING ENVIRONMENTS WHERE PEOPLE ARE  
ENCOURAGED AND EQUIPPED TO BE  
KNOWING CHRIST, SERVING CHRIST, AND SHARING CHRIST.

As with our purpose, each phrase of our vision has significant meaning for Calvary Church.

### **Creating**

Calvary Church is continually evaluating and improving our ministry, therefore, we believe our church's organization and its ministries must always be re-creating themselves in order to remain purposeful, culturally relevant, and aligned.

### **Environments**

We have two tools for the process of evangelism: relationships and ministries. Our job is to present the Good News, but then God's Holy Spirit must work in the non-believer's heart to accept that message. We recognize that relationships are best developed by people and ministries are best created by the church. The environments, then, that we seek to create consist of ministries that present the Gospel of Jesus Christ in culturally relevant ways that allow people to bring non-believing friends into the church. However, these environments must be consistent across ministries, must be needs driven, and must be aligned with our purpose, beliefs, values, and vision. Ministry alignment also says that we will maintain consistency across ministries, meaning every ministry must contain programs for people in all stages of their relationship to God, from the distant to the deeply committed.

### **Encouraging and Equipping**

Relational ministries resulting in gifts-based ministry is the essence of encouraging and equipping. Our ministries must intentionally provide the training, discipling, and environments necessary for believers to develop relationships with non-believers in an effort to lead them to a relationship with Jesus Christ and his church.



### **Knowing Christ**

To know Christ is to acknowledge him as Lord and Savior of our lives, know what God requires of us, and then willingly obey him. In addition, we should always strive to know more of God and serve him ever more fully. In other words, we are to pursue intimacy with God. If our hearts are right with God, then our relationships with other people can be made right, too. "We know that we have come to know him if we obey his commands. If anyone obeys his Word, God's love is truly made complete in him. This is how we know we are in him: whoever claims to live in him must walk as Jesus did." (1 John 2:3,5-6).

### **Serving Christ**

Knowing about Christ is not enough, as even the evil spirits know of Christ (Mark 3:11). Knowledge of Christ is not just for our information, but it is for our transformation. Becoming a Christian means beginning a whole new relationship with God, not just turning over a new leaf or determining to do right. Believers have a changed purpose, direction, attitude, and behavior. We are no longer seeking to serve ourselves, but we are bearing fruit for God through our love for one another. Love is a result of our new life in Christ. Christian love is a decision to *act* in the best interest of others. When we serve others through caring, fellowship and discipleship, we are serving Christ.

### **Sharing Christ**

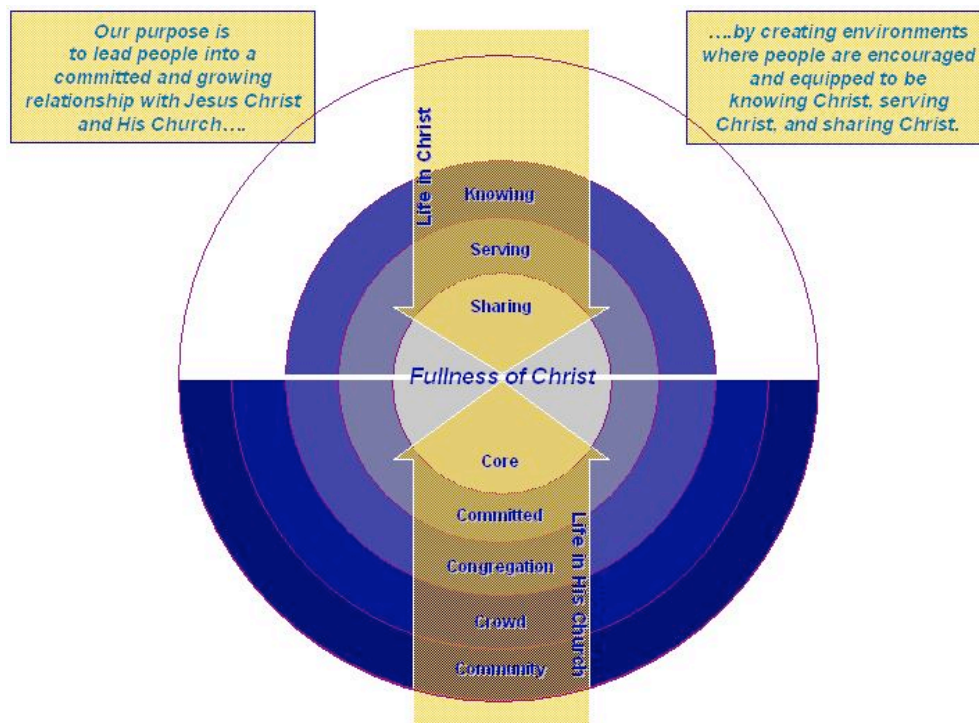
It is important to tell others how he has changed our lives, and then trust that God will use our words to help others believe in him, too. We do not need to know all the answers in order to share Christ with others. Our vision, then, is to see every believer begin our purpose all over again in the life of another.

In addition to sharing the good news about Christ, we are to share Christ by sacrificially sharing and giving of ourselves. This includes intentional stewardship of all God has entrusted to our care and providing for the financial needs of the church. This also includes sharing of our time and Spiritual gifts by identifying opportunities where God is calling us to use our gifts to further build his church. Finally, sharing Christ also includes fully devoting ourselves to the teaching of the Gospel, to true fellowship with believers, and to providing for the physical and spiritual needs of others.

"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved." (Acts 2:42-47)



Our model for ministry is illustrated below. While there are limitations to what can be communicated in a simple diagram, the visual depiction of our model for ministry helps to visualize how we carry out our purpose and vision. Some of the terms in the diagram are described in previous sections, while others are described below. Two terms not readily apparent in this diagram are the words “committed” and “growing” found in our purpose statement. The committed part of our relationship with Jesus Christ and his Church are represented by the lines between the circles and is more fully defined in the sections below for Community, Crowd, Congregation, Committed and Core. The arrows, continually moving us and pushing us toward a fuller and deeper relationship with Jesus Christ, depict the growing part of these relationships.



### **The Fullness of Christ**

“It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ” (Ephesians 4:11-13).

Our goal is not simply to lead people into a relationship with Jesus Christ, but to truly experience life with Christ and life in Christ. Growing in our life in Christ and life in his church is a continuous process, not just milestones to be reached and passed. Each step in our growing life with Christ builds on the previous steps and relies on a continual development of those steps. We must know Christ before we can serve him, and we must be growing in knowledge of Christ and service to Christ before we can truly share him, however, we can never stop knowing, serving, or sharing Christ.

Likewise, life in Christ’s Church is a never-ending process. As we progress through the various steps, we must continually reach back into the community, crowd, and congregation to come along side others and walk with them in their spiritual journey.



### **Community**

The community consists of those who do not believe in Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior. These are unbelievers, who may or may not be seeking, but to whom we are called to witness. These people are unchurched, having never experienced life with Christ and his church, or dechurched, having previously experienced Christ and his church but have fallen away. These people occasionally attend church but have made no commitment to either Christ or the church. Our primary focus is to welcome these people into our fellowship and develop relationships with them in order to influence them to make a decision and commitment for Christ.

### **Crowd**

The crowd consists of believers and unbelievers who are unchurched, dechurched, or underchurched. They have informally made a commitment to regularly attend church, but typically are not otherwise involved in the life of the church. Our primary focus is to welcome these people into our fellowship, enfold them into a ministry, and lead them to commit their life to Christ.

### **Congregation**

The congregation consists of those who have become members and are committed to growing in their knowledge of Jesus Christ. They have been baptized in a Christian church, completed the Discovering Calvary Membership class, and signed a membership covenant. Our primary focus for the congregation is to help them grow in their knowledge of Christ and his church. Public baptism and recognition of membership should be a regular part of our celebrations as a body of believers.

### **Committed**

The committed consists of the communicant members of Calvary who are committed to growing in their knowledge and service to Christ and his church. They have completed the Discovering Spiritual Maturity class resulting in a public profession of faith, if they have not previously done so in a Christian church. They have also signed a maturity covenant, committing to regular tithes and offerings, a daily quiet time, discipleship, accountability, service, and small group participation. Public professions of faith should be a regular part of our celebrations as a church. Our primary focus is to help these people continue to grow in their knowledge of Christ through discipleship and to grow in their service to Christ through the ministries of Calvary.

### **Core**

The core consists of those who are actively knowing, serving, and sharing Christ. They are the dedicated minority of workers and leaders. They have completed the Discovering My Ministry class, signed a ministry covenant, and have been publicly commissioned for ministry. Our primary focus is to help these people make and fulfill ongoing commitments to personal discipleship, service, and ministry so that they are always modeling what it means to be knowing, serving, and sharing Christ. We require people in the core to continue growing by completing the Discovering My Life Mission class and signing a missions covenant.



## WHAT MIGHT HAPPEN

*Imagine a future for Calvary Church of becoming a Christian driving force in the Twin Cities ...*

### **A Church that is GROWING yet CLOSE-KNIT**

- We believe the Spirit of God is leading Calvary to grow both spiritually and numerically.
- We envision many joining Calvary Church who are presently unchurched (not a member of any church) or underchurched (a member of a church, but not presently active in its life). We know we have much to learn about reaching these persons, and we envision our congregation developing the skills to engage in this ministry.
- We envision developing an intentional and systematic process that can help our members, and all those we reach, grow into becoming mature disciples for Jesus Christ. We know this will require significant changes in both our program design and organizational structure.
- We envision Calvary Church becoming knowledgeable of its local community and the broader region it seeks to serve, and using this information to shape its programs and ministry. We know we have much work to do in gathering the appropriate information.
- We envision implementing ministries and programs to ensure that Calvary Church continues to enfold and nurture, regardless of congregation size.
- We believe God is providing opportunities for us to become a congregation of between of 1000-1500 active participants by the 2010. We understand these numbers to be “preparedness numbers,” meaning we are committed to removing barriers, consistent with our theological commitments, that might hinder this growth from taking place.

### **A Church that is IMPACTFUL**

- We believe the Spirit of God is leading Calvary to become a regional church.
- We envision Calvary Church reaching people from throughout the Southwest suburbs where the church will be well known in this area for its various ministries and programs. We know that this will require us to rethink our present understanding of ministry and to reframe our present understanding of what it means to be a congregation.
- We envision Calvary Church serving as the host for many Christian events in the region that serve the larger Christian community. Some of these will focus on Christian witness while others will focus on Christian growth.
- We envision Calvary Church working collaboratively with Classis Lake Superior to assist in developing a strategy for helping to reach the Twin Cities with the gospel. This strategy will include sponsoring events and providing resources that serve existing CRC congregations, in addition to starting new congregations.

### **A Church that is TEACHING - REFORMED ‘WORLD AND LIFE’**

- We believe the Spirit of God is leading Calvary to become a teaching church that is able to share the gift of a Reformed understanding of life with the larger Christian community.
- We envision Calvary Church developing its regional ministry with an emphasis on teaching a Reformed “world and life” perspective able to address all spheres of life.
- We envision Calvary Church developing a leadership training center providing persons with an understanding of how to live out their Christian life within their vocations and avocations from a Reformed perspective.



### **A Church that is EFFECTIVELY STRUCTURED**

- We believe the Spirit of God is providing Calvary the opportunity to become a very large church (very large churches are defined as having between 800-1,800 active in worship attendance on a weekly basis). In this context, we must be stewards of this opportunity.
- We envision being a congregation that is proactive in putting in place the organizational structure, management system and staffing structure that is needed to support both spiritual and numerical growth. We recognize the need to go through what is known as “the 400 barrier” at present and anticipate doing the same at “the 800 barrier” within a few years.
- We envision that as we grow, we will increasingly need to rely on staff who will play a key role in equipping and empowering all members to be involved in ministry. We know we need to develop a gifts-based deployment process and a volunteer coordination system. In addition, we will need to refine the roles of how elders, deacons and ministry staff function to support a very large church.
- We envision new leaders emerging alongside of existing leaders as we grow and change, and church council that functions in a more visionary and strategic manner in making decisions. This means we will need to have a strategic ministries plan in place that is regularly updated.

### **A Church that is CONTEXTUAL**

- We believe the Spirit of God is leading Calvary to develop its ministry to relate effectively to its context with theological integrity.
- We envision Calvary Church relating its ministry to the needs and opportunities that are present in the community and region it is seeking to serve. To do this, we must know who is there through conducting a thorough study, identify our core values regarding what is enduring about our theology and faith, distinguish between what is enduring and what is a matter of style preference or cultural patterns, and build ministry and program bridges to those we seek to serve and reach.
- We envision Calvary Church developing and implementing a clearly defined approach to its worship ministry that reflects its ability to be contextual in worship with theological integrity. We believe there are alternative strategies available that should be evaluated and considered (a blended style, multiple services with different styles, etc.).

### **A Church that is PARTNERING**

- We believe the Spirit of God is leading Calvary to become a church that has multiple partners in carrying out Christian ministry.
- We envision Calvary Church being in partnership with numerous Christian organizations and congregations that work out of the facilities that Calvary owns. In order for this to be effective, these partnerships must be aligned with and support our purpose and vision, and help foster a synergism of efforts that results in ministry that is transformational. Examples of organizations Calvary is already partnering with include Families Moving Forward (FMF), Volunteers Enlisted to Assist People (VEAP), Eastern Minnesota Deacons Association (EMDA), and Calvin Christian School.