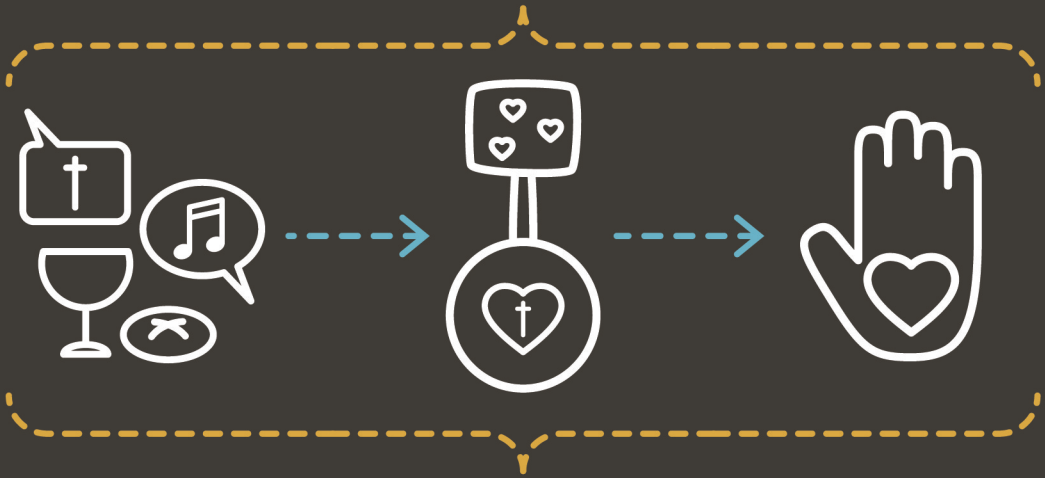


—Intro to—
MINISTRY, MISSION, & ROLES



All Souls is a community
where we are spiritually formed
as we gather people to **rehearse** God's story,
nurture people to **receive** God's grace,
equip & send people to **respond** in love
until the glory of God covers the earth
as the waters cover the sea.

Our Mission Statement

All Souls is a community...

A community is more than a crowd. Community involves shared beliefs, purpose, and values, as well as responsibility and accountability. The community of the church is accountable to the undershepherds, who are accountable to Christ for their care of the community (Heb 13:17).

where we are spiritually formed...

An "immediate end" of the church is the spiritual formation of believers into the image of Jesus. Only the Spirit can transform us. But God gives us means which we use, in prayerful dependence upon the Spirit (2 Co 3:18).

as we gather people to rehearse God's story...

We regularly gather as a community to be renewed in grace and grow in grace through the means of grace. We do this by reminding one another of the story of the gospel through the reading and preaching and study of the Scriptures, dialogical worship, the celebration of our acceptance with the Father in baptism and at the Lord's table, and in communion with our Father through corporate prayer (Heb 4:14–16; 10:19–25).

nurture people to receive God's grace...

We not only rehearse and remember the gospel; we must also receive God's grace into our hearts through repentance and faith. We must not only believe the gospel in an intellectual way; we must die to our old

lives and receive new life in Jesus by repenting of sin and trusting in Christ. To that end we desire to foster heart-level, honest discussions in light of the story of grace that drives the gospel more deeply into the heart, until it shapes our thoughts, desires, choices, and actions (Lk 6:43–45; Heb 3:12–13).

equip and send people to respond in love...

The gospel changes us, conforming us to the image of our Savior, Jesus. As changed people we are then sent out into the world to represent Christ where we live, work, and play as stewards of grace. In our families, vocations, and neighborhoods, we represent Jesus by our gracious words and our sacrificial love as we give ourselves away for the glory of God and the good of neighbor. To this end we seek to have minimal, necessary “programming”—focused on giving grace, giving guidance, and then getting out of the way so people are free to engage with grace where they live, study, work, and play (Jn 13:34–35; Ep 4:11–16; Co 4:5–6; 1 Pt 3:15).

until the glory of God covers the earth as the waters cover the sea.

The end goal of it all is that God's glory would be seen, known, and enjoyed by us and, through us, by others (1 Jn 1:3–4). The glory of God is that which is most satisfyingly beautiful. Our great hope is God's great promise that the glory of his name will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea, that one day every knee will bow and every tongue confess, and every eye will see him... and he will wipe away every tear (Nu 14:21; Isa 11:9; Hab 2:14; Php 2:9–11; Rv 1:7; 20:4).

Our Ministry Teams

We have structured the above mission under six ministry teams, given oversight and support by the elder-shepherds and deacons.

Hospitality Team

We want to be a welcoming community (Ro 12:13; 15:7; Heb 13:2). The Hospitality Team's mission is to make sure we are just that.

Worship Team

The Worship Team's role is to help facilitate the worship gatherings of our church (Ps 100; Ac 2:42; Heb 4:16).

Education & Discipleship Team

This team oversees Sunday school, small group discipleship, and women's and men's discipleship (Ac 5:42; 20:20; Tt 2:3–5).

Mission Team

The Mission Team helps facilitate our support of and involvement in missions locally and globally (Mt 28:18–20; Php 4:14–18; 3 Jn 5–8).

Building Team

The Building Team helps us be good stewards of the physical structure God has entrusted to us (Nu 1:50; Ro 16:5; 1 Co 16:19; Col 4:15; Phm 1:2).

Administrative Team

The Administrative Team makes sure everything keeps running smoothly (Ac 6:1–3—the general principle is to appoint people to specific work so others are free for the work of prayer and preaching).

The Work of the Officers

Christ exercises his shepherding care through officers. When they exercise their role faithfully, as they shepherd, Christ is shepherding; as they serve, Christ is serving (1 Co 4:1–2; 11:1; 1 Th 2:13; Heb 13:7). Multiple offices are necessary because one person cannot fully represent the multifaceted care of Christ for his people (Ex 18:17–18; Ac 6:1–2).

The Pastors

The pastors minister to God's people through the ministry of the Word, the sacraments, and prayer, so building up the body of Christ, equipping the church for the work of ministry (Ex 18:19–20; Mt 28:18–20; Ac 6:4; 20:20–21; Eph 4:11–16; 1 Ti 4:11–16; 6:20; 2 Ti 2:2, 15; 4:1–5).

The Elders

The elders shepherd the flock, seeking the fruit of the preached Word, helping with interpersonal issues, admitting people into the community and, when necessary, removing people from it (Ex 18:21–22; Mt 16:18–19; 18:17–18; 1 Pt 5:1–4).

The Deacons

The deacons care for the physical and practical needs of the flock, both individually and corporately (Ac 6:1–3; 1 Ti 3:8–13).

Scripture calls the congregation to submit to their leaders (Heb 13:17). This doesn't mean you always agree with them (as with any human authority). But there should be deference in doctrine, ethics, and practice as church leaders declare what is true, call for obedience to God's Word, and order church life according to the general rules of Scripture.

The Church Gathered

The Church's Mission

The church's mission is to gather the nations through the proclamation of the gospel that the nations might be conformed to Christ's image and find blessing in his name to the glory of our Triune God. Some Christians will directly proclaim the gospel. All must help promote it. Proclamation and promotion, speaking and serving, word and deed—every Christian has a different role, emphasis, and gifting. And there are different roles and responsibilities when we gather together as the church and when we scatter into the world for service. However, every Christian has a general calling to participate in the life of the body in, at least, the following ways.

1. Public Praise

Every believer is called repeatedly in Scripture to gather with the body and draw near to God to receive his grace and respond in praise and thanksgiving. This public declaration of praise is itself a witness to others who might visit the church or witness the gathering of God's people each week (1 Ki 8:41–43; Ps 96:1–10; 1 Co 14:23–25; 1 Pt 2:4–9; Heb 13:15).

2. Missional Prayers

God's people are also called to lives of prayer, by both the example and exhortation of Christ, as well as Paul and others in the New Testament. Our prayers should not be limited to the circumstances of our lives, or even the lives of those around us. Rather, we must pray for the work of the gospel, for our pastors' preaching, our personal witness, the conversion of our friends, neighbors, and enemies. We

pray for God to raise up workers and for the work of the gospel to go forth, and God's name to be made great in all the earth. God works through earnest prayer. (Mt 9:35–10:1, 5; Lk 6:12–13; Ac 13:1–3; Ro 15:30–32; 2 Co 1:8–11; Ep 6:18–20; Ac 4:29–31; Co 1:9–12)

3. Mutual Encouragement & Service

Every Christian has a role within the church toward his brother and sister. We are to speak the truth in love and serve one another in love. We should play to our gifts and yet serve as we have opportunity, knowing that God blesses as we serve in weakness, giving of ourselves for the good of our fellow believer (1 Pt 4:10–11; Ro 15:5–7; 2 Co 12:9; Ga 5:13; Ep 4:11–16, 25–29; Php 2:3; Co 3:16; 1 Th 5:11; Tt 2; Jas 5:16).

4. Financial Support

Our resources follow our hearts (Mt 6:19–21). As our hearts are changed by the gospel we long to see that same gospel reach others. Part of Christian ministry is supporting ministers of the gospel in general (1 Co 9:3–14; Nu 18:8–20) and missionaries in particular (Lk 10:4–8; Ro 15:24; 1 Co 16:6; 2 Co 11:7–9; Tt 3:13). Financial support **is** partnership in the work of the gospel (3 Jn 5–8; Php 1:3–5; 4:14–18). Not everyone can give a lot. But we should each give according to our means (2 Co 8:1–5, 12–15; 9:6–8).

The Church Scattered

The Christian's Mission

The Christian's mission is to live as the image of Christ, to suffer and serve, as an instrument of blessing and light to the nations (Mt 5:14–16; Ro 8:29; 13:14; Ep 4:1, 20–24; Co 3:9–10). This happens in at least seven ways:

1. Vocational Service

Our daily work, whatever our vocation, must be intentionally modeled after the life, death, and resurrection of Christ. He came to give of himself for the good of his bride. We now give of ourselves for the good of others through our daily work. As we begin to see our work as an act of Christ-like love, it will transform our work. We may still do the same things, but we will do them differently (Ge 1:26–28; Lk 3:12–14; Ep 4:28; Co 3:24–25; 2 Th 3:12; 1 Th 4:11–12).

2. Missional Living

One goal of Christian living, according to the Scriptures, is to bear witness to a watching world of God's grace, Christ's Lordship, and the Spirit's transforming power in our lives. We live *for* God, but *before* a watching world. This is true in every area of our lives and plays out in the next four areas (Mt 5:16; Php 2:14–15; Col 4:5; 1 Th 4:11–12; Tt 2:7–8; 1 Pt 2:12; 3:15–16).

3. Godly Behavior

Our behavior matters. The way we live, the manner of our lives, the ethics we employ, the character we display, bear witness to Christ's work in our lives. We will never do this perfectly. But even our humility,

confession, and repentance are all part of our witness to God's grace at work in our lives (Jn 13:35; Php 2:12-16; Tt 2:9-10; 1 Pt 3:1-2; 4:3-5).

4. Good Deeds

Christians being conformed to Jesus' image go out of our way to give of ourselves for the good of others as Christ gave himself to us. Deeds are not sufficient for witness (people must hear the good news). But good deeds are one thing God uses to shine his light through us (Mt 5:14-16; 1 Pt 2:11-12; 4:9-11; Ga 6:9-10; Heb 13:1-2, 16).

5. Gracious Speech

All Christians are called to speak the truth in love, have "salty" speech, and give an answer for the hope we have. Sometimes our speech is "come and see," and sometimes it is "go and tell." We pray for, seek after, and take the opportunities as they come, to point others to Christ and proclaim him as Lord (2 Ti 4:2, 5; 1 Co 9:16; Ep 4:15; Co 4:5-6; 1 Pt 3:14-16).

6. Undergoing Trials

Christians being conformed to the image of Jesus should expect to suffer as Jesus suffered. And since we bear witness to a suffering savior, by God's providence, part of that witness is bearing up under suffering ourselves (Ro 8:16-17; 2 Ti 3:12; 1 Pt 2:20-21; 4:14-16; Jas 1:2).

7. Parachurch Organizations

Parachurch organizations are not the church but come alongside the church to assist the church in its work, either the church proper in its gathered work or Christians generally in their scattered work. We participate in such organizations as they help the church to do its work.

What We Value Along the Way

Gracious, Welcoming Community

We want to welcome others as Christ has welcomed us. This means welcoming others into our space on Sunday mornings as well as welcoming people into our homes for small groups and welcoming people into our lives, in all their beautiful mess (Ro 15:7).

Gospel-Centered Story

The message of grace is central to everything we do. Not law, but grace. Not what we can do, but what Christ has done. Not niche interests, but the universal gospel of salvation through Jesus. The whole Bible, from Genesis to revelation is about the work of the Savior, and so our goal, day after day, week after week, year after year, is to listen to God's voice speaking grace in the Scriptures (Lk 24:44-47).

Church-Centered Ministry

The message of grace creates not just new individuals, but a new people, the family of God. This people is given the means of grace for the upbuilding of the body through Jesus' under-shepherds. This family then builds itself up by speaking the truth in love (Ep 4:11-16).

Relationship-Renewing Worship

In worship God draws near to his children to remind them of the gospel, renew them in their relationship with himself, and equip them with grace to go back out into the world to serve him afresh. We then respond in praise and a life lived to the glory of God (Ps 100; Heb 4:16; 1 Pt 4:1-2).

Heart-Focused Piety

We must respond to the story of grace by owning our brokenness, confessing the idols of our hearts, and placing all our trust in Jesus, the Savior of sinners. Our aim is not merely changed behavior, or a new set of habits, but changed hearts that lead to changed lives. True, gospel transformation begins in the heart (with what we worship at the core of our being) and works outward (Mk 7:14–23; Ro 12:1–2).

Service-Oriented Living

Every member of the church is given gifts to serve. Christians are called to follow Christ, by giving themselves away for the good of others. This happens in our families, through our vocations, in local neighborhoods, through world missions, formally and informally, as we each use the particular gifts God has given us to serve him in daily life (1 Pt 4:10–11).

Forward-Looking Hope

While God has given us a number of great and precious promises, the forgiveness of sins, the gift of the Spirit and more, we await the fullness of these things in the resurrection. And so we look and long for the day of resurrection, when all things will be made new, never forgetting that we are aliens and strangers here, pilgrims with our hearts set on the age to come (Tt 2:11–13).

Grounded, Needy, & Nuanced Individuals

To do all of the above, we must be a people who are grounded, needy, and nuanced: grounded in, saturated with, led by the Scriptures; aware of and open about our need for grace; thoughtful and grace-centered in our reflection on Scripture and life.

What is *Your* Role?

Remember the Goal

The greatness of God's glory will be known in all the earth (Nu 14:21; Isa 11:9; Hab 2:14). Who God is, in the depth of who he is, and the greatness of who he is will be known. Take everything you know about God and dial it up by infinity: *and the knowledge of the glory of the Lord will cover the earth as the waters cover the sea*. God will be seen and known everywhere, one day. And right now, you get to be a part of that "covering," as you participate in the mission of the church.

The question you need to ask yourself is, whoever you are—male or female, young or old, rich or poor, student or retiree—how can *you* be a part of God's work of filling the earth with the knowledge of the greatness of his glory?

1. Be Intentional

God has a call on every single Christian's life (not just pastors and missionaries!). By *calling*, we don't mean some secret mission for your life that you have to divine from the stars. There are no tea leaves or fleeces necessary! But God has prepared good works beforehand that you should walk in them. While you don't have to divine God's secret will, you won't likely fall into God's call either. You must be intentional to seek out God's call for your life (Ro 12:6; Ep 2:10; 1 Co 12:4–7; 1 Pt 4:10).

2. Listen to God's Voice

The first step to discerning one's call is to listen to God's voice. By that we don't mean to wait for an audible voice or sign from heaven, but to look up to God through prayer and Scripture. The Spirit guides us as

we commit the decision-making process to God through prayer and submit our will to his by listening to God's voice speaking in the Scriptures (Ps 119:105; Ac 13:1-3; Jas 1:5; 1 Th 4:3; 2 Ti 3:16-17).

3. Take the Opportunity

Second, look out. What needs and opportunities do I see around me? We each have different opportunities, contexts, relationships. We also notice different things. What opportunities do you see to serve and meet needs around you? (1 Chr 12:32; Est 4:14; Ep 5:15-17; 1 Pt 3:15).

4. Find Your Gift

We all have different gifts. Once you see needs around you, ask yourself: *How can I, with my gifts, talents, passions and resources, best meet these needs? What can I do here for the good of the world and the glory of God?* God has gifted you to be you and to reflect his image by serving in some capacity. What capacity has he given you? (Ro 12:6; 1 Co 12:7; 1 Ti 3:1).

This is not a solitary process, carried out in your bedroom. We seek wisdom through counselors (Pr 11:14; 15:22; 20:18) and by trial and error, testing our gifts in actual ministry situations (Ro 12:2; 1 Ti 3:10).

5. Live for God's Glory

We pursue the glory of God in our work (1 Co 10:31; 1 Pt 4:10-11). We are motivated by Christ's love for us (2 Co 5:14). And we know that, even when we don't feel like we've found our sweet spot, our life is not a waste as we live for God's glory (1 Co 15:58; Co 3:22-24). Live in such a way that Christ and his love will be known, his glory seen through you. As Tolkien put it, as white light, refracted, becomes many hues, we each refract God's glory, demonstrating its real brilliance through us.



ALL SOULS

PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

www.allsoulspca.org · contact@allsoulspca.org