

A
VISION
FOR
LAMAR AVENUE
CHURCH OF CHRIST
2015 - 2024



*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 3:20-21

Our Vision revolves around three core values of our individual growth, our treatment of other believers in Christ, and our response to those who do not know Christ.

CONNECT WITH GOD

We will continually seek a deeper connection with God through **sincere worship** and **spiritual disciplines**. We will reach out and **make disciples** that do the same.

UNITY OF BELIEVERS

The complete **unity** of all believers will be increasingly evident through how we **love**, **show grace** toward, and **partner with** all who claim Jesus as Lord (John 17).

RESTORE ALL THINGS

Responding to God's plan to restore all things to Him, we will purposefully bring **Christ's love and hope** to our **community**, and to the **ends of the earth**.

CONNECT WITH GOD

We will continually seek a deeper connection with God through **sincere worship** and **spiritual disciplines**. We will reach out and **make disciples** that do the same.

Here we imagine how we will empower individual believers to grow in their ability and desire to interact personally with our Lord. It is in those interactions that God's grace changes people from the inside out. We will become people who bear good fruit naturally because we are rooted so deeply in God (Matthew 7:17, Luke 6:43-45). Because we are interested in the spiritual growth of our congregation, we will first encourage the spiritual growth of each individual member (2 Timothy 2:15, Philippians 2:12-13).

Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. And we all, who... contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.

2 Corinthians 3:17-18

CONNECT WITH GOD

Sincere Worship

Our worship environment will glorify God and be characterized by love and mutual trust. Our congregation is made up of people who have come to worship God with different personalities, experiences, and perspectives. We are gifted to serve, work, and worship in different ways (1

Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4, Romans 12). Some people are more animated in worship, for example, choosing to raise or clap their hands; others show little outward emotion. Some prefer traditional worship; others prefer it more contemporary. We will not fear these differences. We will welcome them because our focus will be on bringing glory to God. Accepting and valuing our differences will also strengthen the church, unify us, and make us more like Jesus himself (Ephesians 4:11-13).



Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe
Hebrews 12:28

CONNECT WITH GOD

Spiritual Disciplines

The individuals that make up our Lamar Avenue family will be encouraged and expected to follow the way of Christ by committing to and practicing spiritual disciplines in our lives. Spiritual Disciplines are nothing more than habits formed in order to purposefully connect with God. They are inspired by Christ himself and include study, meditation, solitude, fasting, prayer and the like (Luke 6:40). These practices allow us to interact with God and when we interact with him, he transforms us to be more like him (2 Corinthians 3:17-18). These are lifelong practices, just as ours is a lifelong transformation into the likeness of Christ.



*... everyone who is fully trained will be like his teacher.
Luke 6:40*

CONNECT WITH GOD

Disciple Making

Becoming better disciples of Christ through worship and spiritual disciplines prepares us to make disciples of others. What is a disciple? A disciple is a learner, a student, a person who is training to become like his teacher (Luke 6:40). All disciples make disciples. No one is exempt. So while we continue to train to be like our Teacher, we will also intentionally train others to become like Christ. Discipleship is Jesus' plan to reach the world and it was his final command to his followers (Matthew 4:19, Matthew 28:18-20). Jesus showed us that disciple making is primarily about relationship. Although Jesus preached to the masses, he spent most of his time investing in the lives of 12 men. He taught them the Scriptures, mentored them, and modeled the character of His Father over a span of years. And so, we will follow his pattern, each of us investing heavily in a few to train them to become more like Christ, expecting that they too will become disciple makers.



"Come follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men."
Matthew 4:19

UNITY OF BELIEVERS

The complete **unity** of all believers will be increasingly evident through how we **love**, **show grace** toward, and **partner with** all who claim Jesus as Lord (John 17).

Here we imagine how we will work with other believers so that the outside world sees Jesus and his love in our unity. This was the vision of Jesus for his people (John 17:20-23). Paul also calls for us to have no divisions among us, but that we be perfectly united in mind and thought (1 Corinthians 1:10). Our focus and our unity must be based on Christ. We may never agree on every idea, opinion or doctrine, but we can and **must** agree on one thing: Jesus is Lord. If we have that in common with others, then we will walk alongside them in search of knowing Christ better. Our unity will be based on Jesus, not on our uniformity.

May the God who gives endurance give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus, so that with one heart and one mouth you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.
Romans 15:5-6

UNITY OF BELIEVERS

Love

In regard to our treatment of other believers in Christ, tolerance is not our primary aim, nor is instruction; our highest aim is love. We may disagree with others' perspectives or doctrine, but we will not allow our differences to keep us from the foundational unity we have in Jesus Christ. In our relationship with other believers, we will always protect, always trust, always hope, and always persevere (1 Corinthians 13).



*But the greatest of these is love.
1 Corinthians 13:13*

UNITY OF BELIEVERS

Show Grace

We will respect the faith and the hearts of others to follow the Spirit, and we will not be compelled to judge them (1 Corinthians 3-4). We will have a spirit of humility, knowing that we are all on a journey, trying our best to follow the Spirit's leading. We will not boast in our knowledge or take pride in our understanding because everything we have has been given to us by the grace of God. In our disagreements with others, we will find the opportunity to listen to and learn from their journey, just as we hope they will listen to and learn from our journey. In the event that our differences remain unreconciled, we will remain unified in the Spirit and show grace and love, giving others and ourselves the time and space to continue to be led to a more complete understanding of God's will. We will have confidence that if we all are continuing to follow the leading of the Spirit, we will continue to grow more like-minded in Christ.



For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God.

UNITY OF BELIEVERS

Partner With

Not only will we continue to participate and partner with other believers in Christ in our community to benefit those people in need, but we will also seek opportunities to help the process of making peace and uniting believers in spirit. We will work in unison toward a common goal of living like Jesus and leading others to do the same. A work in the name of Jesus is a work to further the Kingdom of God. (Mark 9:38-41).



Accept one another, then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.
Romans 15:7

RESTORE ALL THINGS

Responding to God's plan to restore all things to Him, we will purposefully bring **Christ's love and hope** to our **community**, and to the **ends of the earth**.

When the world was created, all things were good and humans participated in a perfect and beautiful oneness with their Creator God (Genesis 1 & 2). After the fall of man, the prevailing theme of Scripture is the restoration of that goodness and oneness with God. God's final words in Scripture declare the future fulfillment of that restoration (Revelation 21:3-5). The death of Jesus was not only to save us from the consequence of our sin, but to reconcile us to God so that He could restore His image in us and set us free to be agents of His restoration to the rest of the world (John 14:12, 2 Corinthians 2:14-15, Galatians 6:10, Ephesians 2:10). We are now, as one writer says "on a mission, partnering with God to breathe justice and mercy and peace and compassion and generosity into the world." This is God's Vision. And so it is ours.

I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling place of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God ... for the old order of things has passed away."

*He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!"
Revelation 21:3-5*

RESTORE ALL THINGS

Christ's Love and Hope

As disciples of Christ, our ambition is to be like him. When we look at the life of Christ, every interaction he ever had was pointing to the restoration of all things. He physically restored the blind, the lame, the deaf, the sick. He socially restored the outcast and the untouchable. He emotionally restored the possessed and spiritually restored the sinner. Wherever humanity was broken, Jesus restored it. That is how he showed his love and gave hope to the world. And that is what we at Lamar Avenue will do. In all our interactions, individually and as a congregation, we will strive to restore the broken, the weary, the hurting and the outcast. We will bring peace and wholeness where there is dissension and conflict. As a part of the body of Christ, we will continue the work Christ began until he comes again to usher in the full restoration of all things (Acts 3:19-21, Romans 8:19-25).



*... your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.
Matthew 6:10*

RESTORE ALL THINGS

Our Community

The brokenness Jesus sought to restore can be found flourishing right here in Paris, Texas. When the Son of God looked down on a hurting world, he saw past the ugliness of people's sin and understood people for who they really were, valued creations made in the image of the Father Himself. And he loved them. Because he loved them, he went to them and lived among them (Philippians 2:3-8). It was that lavish display of love that drew people to Jesus and his message (1 John 4:18-20). So we will follow the example of our Lord and acknowledge the brokenness in our city, looking for ways to bring healing. We will see people for who they really are as God's treasured creations. We will seek out the lost and broken because we know about that brokenness and we know the path to healing (Matthew 18:10-14, Luke 19:5-10). We will walk alongside them, bonded by our common need for the continued restoration that Jesus offers.



"Why does he eat with tax collectors and 'sinners'?"
Mark 2:16

RESTORE ALL THINGS

The Ends of the Earth

We are eager to support, encourage, and participate with those who, like Paul, are called to bring the love and hope of Christ to places outside our borders (Romans 10:13-15, 1 Corinthians 9:13-14). We have a history of financial support for works focused on forming and teaching followers of Jesus regionally and internationally. We will continue this support while striving for a deeper, sustained impact in these locations by increasing our involvement with the Christians there. Our aim is to develop a genuine concern among ourselves for the people of those places (Colossians 2:1-3, Philippians 2:1-2). We want to know them, strengthen them and partner with them in reaching out and demonstrating the love and hope of Jesus as they continue on their own journeys of restoration and disciple-making in their communities.



All over the world this gospel is bearing fruit and growing
Colossians 1:6