



NEW CITY FELLOWSHIP ST. LOUIS

Our Mission



NEW CITY FELLOWSHIP MISSION STATEMENT

We are committed to being a church where all the nations God has placed within the St. Louis community are welcomed to experience the reconciling love of God in Jesus Christ...

- Through a restored relationship with God and with one another across all racial, social and economic divisions
- Through redeemed multi-cultural worship where the delight of God in us and our delight in Him is experienced
- Through Christian community relationships where fellowship, love, increased knowledge of God and a commitment to take care of all basic human need is practiced
- And through an equipping of the people of God that mobilizes each member to be a part of extending God's justice and mercy to the nations and proclaims the unsearchable love of God in Christ Jesus to St. Louis and throughout the world.

1. We are committed to being a church where all the nations God has placed within the St. Louis community are welcomed to experience the reconciling love of God in Jesus Christ.

Rev. Barry Henning, the founding pastor of New City St Louis, served as an Associate Pastor under Randy Nabors at New City Chattanooga from 1987-1992. New City Chattanooga had been living out and working on issues of reconciliation between Anglos and African Americans since their beginning in 1968. Some very basic, key principles this church put into practice included *intentionally learning about and from each other's culture, recognizing and supporting ethnic leadership, embracing each other's styles of worship, and working together to address each other's basic needs, both spiritual and physical, as well as the needs of the surrounding community.*

These are some of the core issues of justice, mercy and walking humbly with God that we have embraced and given ourselves to while we proclaim forgiveness and salvation through faith in Jesus Christ.

In 1992, under the pastoral leadership of Barry Henning (Anglo) and Jeff McGee (African American), New City had several years of exclusive focus on building Anglo-African American relationships with one another, while developing both the internal care ministries of the church and many of our ongoing outreach ministries to the West End and University City communities of St. Louis.

Over time, New City Fellowship St. Louis has become more intentionally multi-ethnic in its reconciliation efforts. We have made this commitment because of the ways God has led us into reconciliation on a broader scale than we first imagined.

When we began our work, the focus was clearly on relationships between the Black and White communities, with an openness to any other group the Lord might bring along. All the foundational work we did proved critical in our training and maturing for the next, unexpected stage of growth for us as a church. The large number of immigrants and refugees who began arriving in St. Louis throughout the 1990s broadened our reach far beyond anything we had anticipated.

By 1996, Bill Yarbrough, a former missionary in central Mexico, had begun attending New City when he and his family came for studies at Covenant Seminary. During the same time period, a large number of Latin American immigrants began arriving in St. Louis from almost every country in South America, Cuba, and Puerto Rico. Bill led us into relationships with these newly arriving families. We also formed a connection with the St. Louis International Institute - a refugee and immigrant relocation non-profit organization that partners with the United Nations High Commission on Refugees and the U.S. State Department. We soon added Latino leadership to the church and began worshipping in Spanish.

By 2000, a large number of African Refugees and Immigrants began relocating to St. Louis and once again God opened a door for us to minister to these families by providing unexpected leadership through Leon Mukendi from the Democratic Republic of Congo and Macklann Basse from Togo.

By 2006, our New City South worship site began connecting with Burmese and Nepali refugees, this time led by Pastor Kham, a Burmese pastor who had moved to St. Louis to study at Concordia Seminary. We added French, tribal languages, and eventually Burmese and Nepali worship to our Sunday morning gatherings.

God Himself opened all these doors for spreading the Gospel and reconciling the nations. All we had to do was essentially step into the opportunities, armed with the faith and confidence that God would lead us.

2. We are committed to build our unity as a church and advance the Kingdom of God through restored relationship with God and with one another across all racial, social and economic divisions, and with special care for the poor and oppressed.

This commitment comes out of a recognition that God has designed us to live and work in His world with loving fellowship with Him as our Creator and with one another. We recognize from the history and the teaching of the Word of God, as well as the nature of the ministry of Christ, that as the people of God, ***we need everyone, with all their diversity of wisdom and gifting.*** The early church in the book of Acts was described as being made up of “slave and free, Jew and Gentile, male and female.”

For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit. 1 Corinthians 12:13

For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise. Galatians 3:27-29

Throughout history, different groups have divided against one another along ethnic, social-economic, and even gender-expectation lines. ***We confess we need the redeemed rich and the redeemed poor. We need male and female. We need the academically educated and the person with street smarts. We need the whole variety of ethnicities and the whole variety of social classes in our St. Louis community in order for the church to display the full measure of God's wisdom to this world.***

This mystery is that the Gentiles are fellow heirs, members of the same body, and partakers of the promise in Christ Jesus through the gospel. Of this gospel I was made a minister according to the gift of God's grace, which was given me by the working of his power. To me, though I am the very least of all the saints, this grace was given, to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to bring to light for everyone what is the plan of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things, so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places. Ephesians 3:6-10

The “manifold” or “multi-faceted” wisdom of Christ can only be fully displayed through the redeemed diverse nations that make up the actual body of Christ. This means, among other things, looking for and acknowledging leadership gifts from each community that God brings us into contact with. It means embracing their godly wisdom in shaping the life of the church.

At the same time, God has revealed a core truth about the nature of His Kingdom rule that we must embrace as His chosen people, which gives us a unifying focus and purpose as we now live together and become the One New Humanity in Christ: ***The persons to whom we must pay the most careful attention are the very ones the world in its rebellion against God tends most to neglect - the poor, the fatherless, the widow and the stranger*** (a term interchangeable in the Scriptures with the “sojourner,” “immigrant,” or “refugee”).

Jesus announced that the Kingdom of God had come “for the poor” (Luke 6:20) and the Apostle Paul emphasizes that special care and recognition is to be given to the members of the body who lack it (1 Corinthians 12:21-24), while James warns us against the natural tendency to give preference to the rich (James 2:1-9).

And he lifted up his eyes on his disciples, and said: “Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God.” Luke 6:20

The eye cannot say to the hand, “I have no need of you,” nor again the head to the feet, “I have no need of you.” On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and on those parts of the body that we think less honorable we bestow the greater honor, and our unpresentable parts are treated with greater modesty, which our more presentable parts do not require. But God has so composed the body, giving greater honor to the part that lacked it. 1 Corinthians 12:21-24

My brothers, show no partiality as you hold the faith in our Lord Jesus Christ, the Lord of glory. For if a man wearing a gold ring and fine clothing comes into your assembly, and a poor man in shabby clothing also comes in, and if you pay attention to the one who wears the fine clothing and say, “You sit here in a good place,” while you say to the poor man, “You stand over there,” or, “Sit down at my feet,” have you not then made distinctions among yourselves and become judges with evil thoughts? Listen, my beloved brothers, has not God chosen those who are poor in the world to be rich in faith and heirs of the kingdom, which he has promised to those who love him? But you have dishonored the poor man. Are not the rich the ones who oppress you, and the ones who drag you into court? Are they not the ones who blaspheme the honorable name by which you were called? If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself,” you are doing well. But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. James 2:1-9

We do not believe by announcing the good news of the Kingdom of God “for the poor” that Jesus was implying only poor people could be saved. ***We believe he was saying that the purpose and the look of the Kingdom of God was very much focused on making sure the basic the needs of the poor are taken care of.***

“When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.’ Then the righteous will answer him, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?’ And the King will answer them, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.’ Then he will say to those on his left, ‘Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. For I was hungry and you gave me no food, I was thirsty and you gave me no drink, I was a stranger and you did not welcome me, naked and you did not clothe me, sick and in prison and you did not visit me.’ Then they also will answer, saying, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to you?’ Then he will answer them, saying, ‘Truly, I say to you, as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to me.’ And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

Matthew 25:31-46

This is actually good news for everyone - from every ethnic and socio-economic background. The kingdom rule of God pays special attention to those most in need and reflects the very nature of our compassionate God and His glory.

Sing to God, sing praises to his name;
lift up a song to him who rides through the deserts;
his name is the LORD;
exult before him!
Father of the fatherless and protector of widows
is God in his holy habitation.
God settles the solitary in a home;
he leads out the prisoners to prosperity,
but the rebellious dwell in a parched land.

Psalms 68:4-6

This focus of the kingdom ***frees the rich to use their wealth for the eternal-life giving purposes of God*** and delivers them from the snare of the love of money, which is the source of all kinds of evil.

And he said to them, “Take care, and be on your guard against all covetousness, for one's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.” And he told them a parable, saying, “The land of a rich man produced plentifully, and he thought to himself, ‘What shall I do, for I have nowhere to store my crops?’ And he said, ‘I will do this: I will tear down my barns and build larger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I will say to my soul, “Soul, you have ample goods laid up for many years; relax, eat, drink, be merry.”’ But God said to him, ‘Fool! This night your soul is required of you, and the things you have prepared, whose will they be?’ So is the one who lays up treasure for himself and is not rich toward God.”

Luke 12:15-21

For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evils. It is through this craving that some have wandered away from the faith and pierced themselves with many pangs.

1 Timothy 6:10

Rather than descend into factions about our various cultural differences and preferences, we are free to spend our time and energy making the love of God in Jesus Christ known to all those lost around us, and disciple everyone to live out the very practical justice and mercy of the Kingdom.

3. We are committed to build our unity as a church and advance the Kingdom of God through redeemed multi-cultural worship where the delight of God in us and our delight in Him is experienced.

In John chapter 4, Jesus gave the definitive word about the change in worship that His rule and reign has ushered in. *There is now no longer one ethnic expression of the worship of God rooted exclusively in the history and tradition of the Jewish nation.*

Jesus said to her, "Woman, believe me, the hour is coming when neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem will you worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we worship what we know, for salvation is from the Jews. But the hour is coming, and is now here, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for the Father is seeking such people to worship him. God is spirit, and those who worship him must worship in spirit and truth." John 4:21-24

We believe the basic elements of worship that God requires for every tribe and nation to put into practice has been revealed in clear principles and commands throughout the Scriptures. At the same time, we acknowledge that worship has been wonderfully and beautifully developed in a variety of styles by different ethnic groups and cultures over the generations, as the Gospel has made its way among the nations.

Our call is to be careful that we do not hold on to our own cultural styles of worship in an exclusive fashion, especially not in a way that would keep up us segregated from one another. The most important characteristic of worship to God our Father is that it is done in the Truth revealed in Jesus Christ, His Son, and through the living presence of the Holy Spirit, who both blesses God's people, and also carries our praise to the throne room of God.

In a church where many ethnic groups are coming together as an expression of the multi-faceted body of Christ, this means each group can bring its worship style to bear, while no one style will dominate. We are all giving something up (an exclusive expression of our rich and cherished heritage), but gaining much more in exchange (a loving embrace of one another in the presence of God).

4. We are committed to build our unity as a church and advance the Kingdom of God through Christian community relationships where fellowship, love, increased knowledge of God and a commitment to take care of all basic human need is practiced.

The clear promise, command and expectation of God is that when we commit our lives to Jesus Christ as our Lord it means we have become a part of the family of God. *Here in the church, we are meant to enjoy all the benefits and all the responsibilities of being this New Humanity as a functioning family.*

And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved. Acts 2:44 – 47

This description of the life of the early church means there is a very deep, profound commitment in following Christ that calls us to ***practically grow in our faith and physically care for one another's needs***. At one point in his ministry someone came to Jesus to tell him his mother and brothers were outside wanting to talk with him. Here was his response:

And stretching out his hand toward his disciples, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers! For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother." Matthew 12:49-50

While we are clearly meant to take care of our own biological family and our own children (Ephesians 5:25-6:4, 1 Timothy 5:8) we are also never free to ignore the relational and spiritual and physical needs of the rest of the family of God.

But if anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for members of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever. 1 Timothy 5:8

But if anyone has the world's goods and sees his brother in need, yet closes his heart against him, how does God's love abide in him? Little children, let us not love in word or talk but in deed and in truth. 1 John 3:17-18

We have established a system of House Churches modeled after the Acts 2 example. These smaller groups are overseen by Elders and other Ministry Leaders and are the place where more intimate fellowship and sharing the many burdens of life takes place. ***Our basic commitment to one another is that no one will ever go hungry or lack shelter and care for the most basic needs of life. These House Churches are the first line of defense when one of our members become ill or have special, immediate needs.***

Individuals and any House Church as a group are always free to connect with the Elders and Deacons to assist with more difficult or demanding needs. We are also committed to these House Churches as places where we can grow spiritually by studying the Scriptures together, deepening our relationships, sharing and praying for each other, worshiping together, and advancing of the Kingdom of God.

5. We are committed to build our unity as a church and advance the Kingdom of God through an equipping of the people of God that mobilizes each member to be a part of extending God's justice and mercy to the nations and proclaiming the unsearchable love of God in Christ Jesus to St. Louis and throughout the world.

We believe every Christian, regardless of their station in life, regardless of their history, and regardless of their present circumstances, has been granted the ***freedom, power and privilege*** of entering into the glorious calling of taking their part in ***bringing God's justice and righteousness to the nations and proclaiming Jesus Christ as Redeemer and King.***

Behold my servant, whom I uphold,
my chosen, in whom my soul delights;
I have put my Spirit upon him;
he will bring forth justice to the nations.
He will not cry aloud or lift up his voice,
or make it heard in the street;
a bruised reed he will not break,
and a faintly burning wick he will not quench;
he will faithfully bring forth justice.
He will not grow faint or be discouraged
till he has established justice in the earth... Isaiah 42:1-4

All the different leadership gifts God has given to the church exist for the sake of equipping and training all God's people to fulfill this calling:

And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. Ephesians 4:11-14

We believe there is a direct correlation between doing the "work of ministry" we are being equipped for, and the "maturity of manhood" for the people of God. The work of ministry is a key element that is meant to bring us to the place where we are no longer controlled or driven in our thinking by the cunning and deceptive teachings of those who oppose the Gospel.

We see this equipping and empowering as the explicit "job description" of the pastors and various leaders at New City, by providing spiritual and physical care for one another. *The New City leaders are here to be servants who comfort, encourage, teach, and bear burdens - with an ultimate purpose of training, mobilizing, and equipping the people of God for the work of the Kingdom that only **they** can bring to expression.*

We also believe the Holy Spirit of God has been poured out on all God's people, **young and old, male and female**, and given them vision and gifting to advance the kingdom of God.

"And in the last days it shall be, God declares,
that I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh,
and your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,
and your young men shall see visions,
and your old men shall dream dreams;
even on my male servants and female servants
in those days I will pour out my Spirit, and they shall prophesy.

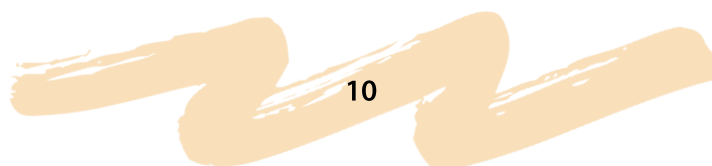
Acts 2:17-18

Our goal as pastors is to help God's people understand their gifting and vision in connection with the people of God as a "ministering team." ***Our calling from God is to empower and equip the people of God to see their God-given vision brought to expression in relationship with other members of the body who share the same passion and vision and have the diversity of gifting needed to bring it to expression*** (1 Corinthians 12).

This Spirit-led vision from God includes the Lord leading us into a meaningful commitment to the global expansion of the Gospel. All God asks of us, what he has chosen us for and called us to, is that we simply take our part - however large or small that may seem to be - in the advance of His kingdom and salvation in this world.

We are called to pray for the global church and to pray for the nations. We are called to share our resources whenever we can. Some are called to physically go and participate with our missionary God by leaving their own homes and families for either short periods of time - or sometimes for a lifetime. *Whatever that calling looks like, we are here as a family to support and encourage one another in the spread of the Gospel.*

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