

The Sermon - In 10 Sentences Or Less

Ancient Future Church 6 - The Presbyterian Bull's Eye:



1. The "great ends" of any Presbyterian church, as expressed in the Book of Order (F-1.0304), are: a) the proclamation of the gospel for the salvation of humankind, b) the shelter, nurture, and spiritual fellowship of the children of God, c) the maintenance of divine worship, d) the preservation of the truth, d) the promotion of social righteousness, and e) the exhibition of the Kingdom of heaven to the world.
2. Do we expect to experience anything less than "salvation" at KirkWood, that is, something akin to a rescue from danger or deliverance from military siege (i.e., Rom. 1.16)?
3. The "salvation" we offer others is the very same we ourselves desperately need.
4. Martin Luther's famous image for church is that of a hospital, in which we are all patients, and there is only one doctor, Jesus Christ.
5. Part of "preserving the truth" is the reformation commitment to "sola scriptura" (only scripture) as our spiritual authority.
6. In the Bible, God's own people all too often confuse or blur their own traditions or teachings with God's word (for example, see Matthew 15.6-9).
7. So another facet to "preserving the truth" is the commitment to be "reformed, and always reforming": while scripture is our unrivaled spiritual center, our current understanding of or traditions built upon it are not.
8. A chief goal of all Presbyterian churches is "to promote social righteousness," a goodness, justice, and moral rightness that is bigger than yourself and that benefits others not named you.
9. The good news of Jesus isn't not fully proclaimed unless it includes this social justice and goodness component (according to the Presbyterian General Assembly in 1958).
10. This "promoting of social righteousness" has two components according to The Confession of 1967, 9.25: a) we collaborate and partner with other groups and authorities who seek the common good, thus meaning we don't try to do it all alone, and b) we fight against the pretensions and injustices of culture, exercising the church's necessary prophetic ministry.

Quotes to Remember

"The church is not a select circle of the immaculate, but a home where the outcast may come in. It is not a palace with gate attendants and challenging sentinels along the entrance-ways holding off at arm's-length the stranger, but rather a hospital where the broken-hearted may be healed, and where all the weary and troubled may find rest and take counsel together." (John H. Aughey, Presbyterian pastor, 1828-1911)

"We acknowledge that the church even at its best is a frail and fallible human institution. We know that we "hold these treasures in earthen vessels" ...Recognizing how far short we fall from God's intentions, we continually submit all our doctrines and structures to be reformed according to the Word of God and the call of the Spirit. The church is a...pilgrim people, a people on the way, not yet what we shall be. The church, because of who we are, remains open to always being reformed...This motto , "reformed and always being reformed," calls us to something more radical than we have imagined. It challenges...the habits and agendas we have lately fallen into. It brings a prophetic critique...It invites us, as people who worship and serve a living God, to be open to being "re-formed" according to the Word of God and the call of the Spirit." (The Presbyterian Mission Agency)

KirkWood's Prayers for KirkWood

Below is a verbatim copy of today's Prayers of the People: they represent a combining of all the emailed prayers I (Pastor Chris) received over the last few days. These are our prayers for us.

"Lord, these are our prayers for the church we call home and love:

- That every family unit or individual connected to KirkWood, members or friends, survive the Covid pandemic, and reach out to our local community and the world, to spread the love that God has so blessed us with.
- That we can reunite as soon as it's safe, because we miss each other very much, and because we want to open our arms and doors to new families and continue to grow in our faith and missions to our community.
- That we can reach those that don't know Christ in a personal way and that we can be God's instruments in leading them to salvation.
- That we would provide a warm and welcoming fellowship where people can find, worship, praise, and serve our Lord.
- That we may be a fruitful branch of Christ, the true vine, and a conduit of His love.
- That we would reach beyond our local fellowship to share blessings with our community, as Jesus asked us to do, and that we would equip our members for ministry where their talents and passions lead them.
- That KirkWood would be courageous in exploring ways to tackle the basics - so that it may become a vibrant growing committed congregation.

- That we would be a people of joy and inspiration, especially during such a hard time like CoVid, and that our every meeting and worship service would uplift and be full of delight.
- That 30 years from now KirkWood will still be doing for its families what it has for so many over the last three decades.
- And that we would be filled with all truth and peace. Where we are corrupt, purify us; where we are in error, direct us; where in anything we are amiss, reform us; where we are right, strengthen us; where we are in need, provide for us; and where we are divided, reunite us. We ask this for the sake of Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Savior, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, now and forever, amen."