

CHRIST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

 ECO A Covenant Order
of Evangelical
Presbyterians CPCRVA.COM

Christ Presbyterian Church ECO¹ | Community Agreement and Values

Preamble

Christ Presbyterian Church is loved by God in Jesus, and sent out in the Holy Spirit's power to love God, one another, and the world.

This Community Agreement is a living document, open to refining and revision, which describes some of the main ways we feel God inviting us to lives of love. It states—for our community partners, affiliates, and those wanting to know generally what we stand for—our understanding of what God is calling us to be and do together as a church. It outlines commitments we actively embrace and affirm. We desire to be identified with the vision this document gives for our life together, and we commit to using our personal gifts in its service.

This document presumes agreement with what C. S. Lewis called “mere Christianity”. The Community Agreement is not intended to provide detailed theology for members of CPC to adopt, but any description of what a local church desires to be and do is rooted in and shaped by its theological beliefs. Nor is it intended to create a set of rules and regulations that would bind an individual's conscience or, in any way, create an “in group” that would exclude other members of the CPC family. Instead, it reflects our conviction that we are loved by God and sent to love, and it highlights specific areas in which we feel God calling us to move out in love.

Mission

Our mission is to be an authentic community that helps people know, grow, and show the love of Christ.

¹Christ Presbyterian Church ECO is a congregation of ECO: A Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians, whose mission is to build flourishing churches that make disciples of Jesus Christ. Its theology and beliefs are described on its website (<http://eco-pres.org/theology/essential-tenets/>). Elders and deacons of Christ Presbyterian Church ECO will “receive, adopt, and be bound by” that theological statement. Members will likely agree with its theology, keeping in mind that the goal is not to be same-minded, but like-minded. We hope that affiliates, who are not members, will participate in the church's life to the extent their consciences allow them to do so and to consider full membership when and if they desire to do so.

Community Agreement

Through God's grace, we seek to be a community, loved by God in Jesus, and sent in the Holy Spirit's power to love God, love one another, and love the world.

Loving God (Matthew 22:37-38)

*We were created to know and love God. Because God has loved us through Jesus, we are free to love Him in return. **God is sending us to love Him through:***

Worship: We will praise God together, learn together, know and grow in the gospel together, celebrate the sacraments together, serve together.

Prayer: We will seek to know and love the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit through prayer— listening to God, adoring him, confessing our sin, thanking him and trusting him with our lives.

Knowing God's Word: We will regularly and prayerfully study, meditate on, and engage with God's Word, on our own and with others. We will seek to know the Bible's story and to believe God's promises more deeply.

Obedience: By the Holy Spirit's power, we will seek to live holy, obedient, and faithful lives, obeying God's Word, repenting from our idolatries, and trusting in Jesus.

Generosity, stewardship and hospitality: We will give of our time and money to the church and to others. We will seek to know and use well the gifts and resources that God has given us.

Openness to the Holy Spirit: We will expect and welcome the gifts of the Holy Spirit and seek to be sensitive to how the Holy Spirit is at work among us and through us.

Loving One Another (John 13:35; Matthew 22:39)

*God made us for relationship with each other, and we want the quality of our relationships to reflect the goodness of God's kingdom. **God is sending us to love one another through:***

Prayer: We will pray for one another, that we would grow more and more into the likeness of Christ.

Participation: We will not be mere spectators or consumers of worship services, but rather participants in community. We will look for ways to engage in the different gatherings of the church's life, and we will sensitively look for ways to be involved in each other's lives throughout the week.

Hospitality: We will look for ways to welcome each other into our lives and homes, eating meals together, meeting practical needs, and using our resources to bless one another.

Confession and Forgiveness: We freely admit that we will inevitably fail as individuals and as a congregation to be and do what would honor God. In view of God's grace, we will confess sin and the ways we have wronged one another and, when called for, express apologies to others. In view of God's grace, we will forgive before God and extend forgiveness to each other in grace and mercy. We will praise God for the mercy and grace He extends to us even in our failures.

Christian Formation: We will seek out brothers or sisters in Christ who will help us follow Jesus faithfully, and we will seek out others whom we can help follow Jesus faithfully. We will commit to person-to-person, relational ministry as a primary means of Christian formation. We will be responsive to one another and open to one another's affirmation and correction, in truth and in love.

Children and Youth: We will welcome and love the young people among us, investing in their lives, praying for them regularly, and helping them grow into the likeness of Jesus. We will promote their development both in families and in the church body.

Healing: We believe that Jesus heals and that he is healing us—physically, psychologically, emotionally, and spiritually. We will seek to be a community that welcomes and cares for broken and hurting people, just as Jesus has welcomed and cared for us in our brokenness and hurt.

Loving the World (John 3:16; Matthew 22:39)

*As a community, we exist not only for God and for each other, but also for the good of our neighbors, city, and world, whether Christian or not. **God is sending us to love the world through:***

Prayer: We will pray for our neighbors, coworkers, classmates, and colleagues. We will pray for the coming of God's Kingdom in Metro Richmond, Virginia, the United States, and the world.

Evangelism: We will cooperate with the Holy Spirit to share the good news about Jesus in word and deed.

Vocational and Recreational Stewardship: We will view our current occupations and vocations as opportunities to glorify God by serving others. We will also view our recreational and leisure activities as opportunities to love and glorify God.

Care for Creation: We will care for God's creation and practice good stewardship of the earth, remembering God's plan to make all things new.

Neighboring: We will seek to strengthen our neighborhoods by being good neighbors, knowing our neighbors, building authentic relationships with them, and using our homes for hospitality and outreach.

Partnering: We will partner with other churches and ministries to work for the common good of Richmond.

Sending: We will send and support missionaries around the world, believing that God's love is for every nation, every culture, and all people. We will be open to God sending us into different communities, cultures, and people groups.

Community Values

As we are sent by God to love, we embrace the following values, desiring that they shape our life together.

1. Kingdom over Congregation

We believe the church exists to be a sign, foretaste, and instrument of God's kingdom. But the church is not the kingdom. Practically, this means that we will be ready to partner with others for the common good of our city and eager to send out individuals from our body for the sake of God's kingdom. Our focus will be more on equipping our members for ministry in the world than on growing our congregation.

2. The Community over the Christian

We believe we know God, grow in Christlikeness, and serve the world best when we do it together. The Christian life is always personal but rarely, if ever, private. We will continually look for ways to be the church together. We also value differences among Jesus' followers, and we seek to be a community that makes room for faithfulness in all its forms.

3. People over Programs

We believe people are more important than programs. If we invest time and energy in programs, it will be to the extent that they help us and others grow in Christ. Our focus will be more on the health of the vine than the quality of the trellis. We will pursue Christian growth more through relationships more than through programs.

4. Seven Days over Sunday

Church is not an activity we do, not a place we go, but rather a people we are, by God's grace. We are the church in our gathered and scattered lives throughout the week. We will seek to make our time together on Sunday serve our being the church throughout the week. Because all of life is the Lord's, we will serve the Lord seven days a week.

5. Priesthood of All Believers over Professional Pastor

We believe the Holy Spirit is generous, giving every member of the body gifts for its edification and mission. We want to share leadership and ministry responsibilities throughout our body according to our gifts and callings. We will encourage and help each other to see how God is gifting each member of the body for ministry and mission, and we will actively look for ways to be involved in the church's life and mission.