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OVERVIEW OF MEMBERSHIP GROUPS

OVERVIEW OF MEMBERSHIP GROUPS

We're glad you decided to join us in this process toward membership. Here at Traders Point Christian Church (TPCC), we are passionate about seeing every person come to Jesus just as he or she is and then flourishing toward maturity in Him. It's why we do everything we do.

When I was growing up, church seemed kind of bland and stale, and many times irrelevant. So for me, engaging people with God's love and what He has done for us has always been very important. We want everything we do here to engage people—whether that's with our facility, our worship services, our preaching, our kids' ministry, or how we serve the community.

We also want to have a culture that inspires people to follow Jesus—not just out of duty or obligation, but out of a genuine love and appreciation for what God has done for us, what He is still doing in us, and what He's up to around the world. Most people don't expect to be inspired when they come to church, so when I hear people say, "Wow, I never expected to be impacted at church, but that video... that testimony... that message... really inspired me to read God's Word and serve others," I know we are accomplishing what we've set out to do.

Lastly, we're committed to seeing every person *equipped* as a whole-hearted follower of Jesus (what the Bible calls a "disciple") through his or her unique passions, gifts, and relationships to make a difference in the world for Jesus. You will often hear me say that people in our congregation will have a ministry I can never have—and it's true. When every person is growing and serving together, we can truly be the church God has called us to be.

As you probably already know, there is no such thing as a perfect church—but there can be such a thing as a healthy church. The membership process is one of our pathways to unity and is a key way that we, as a church family, remain healthy and connected. The intent of our membership process is to propel

us in discipleship and to unite us in doctrine, values, mission, and, ultimately, as a local church body that is a part of the universal Church. Only a united and healthy church can accomplish the mission Jesus has given His followers.

But first, a little background on our church. Traders Point was founded in 1834 as Ebenezer Christian Church. To give you some reference, Andrew Jackson was the President of the United States during that time. As the population shifted and started to expand westward, Traders Point was established. A group of families living on the northwest side of Indianapolis came together around a gospel-centered vision to study God's Word and live together in community. From the beginning, our congregation gathered around the authority of Scripture, unity in the Body of Christ, and being on mission in our community. From our inception, this church has been committed to the doctrine, structure, and mission of the church laid out in Scripture, with the Bible as our ultimate authority.

The membership group you are a part of is designed to help you develop relationships and learn what is at the heart of Traders Point's belief and mission. The group will also help to clarify what it means to become a church member. We ask that you come prepared each week, having read the chapter, and ready to discuss, ask questions, and grow. The chapters are designed to give you important content and spur on discussion. Your membership group leader(s) will walk with you through the process, answer questions you might have, and help you in any way they can. Our prayer for you is that through this process, you gain a deeper understanding of what Traders Point is about, connect to others in the church, and grow in your personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Our hope is that at the end of this process, you will have an increased desire to pursue Jesus, imitate His holiness, and live out His mission.

Let's get started.

Aaron Brockett
Lead Pastor



THE CHRISTIAN: WHO IS IT?

THE CHRISTIAN: WHO IS IT?

Throughout history and in the world today, people have disagreed on the subject of God and whether or not He exists. If God does exist—who is He, and what is He like? Is God merely a fuzzy feeling and an idea people invented for their own ends, or is He much bigger than anything we could imagine?

Unfortunately, many of us have painted a picture of God that is different than who the Bible actually claims Him to be. Many people perceive God as a harsh and distant being, preoccupied with getting people to follow His rules. Some see Him as a stern disciplinarian always pointing the finger at us. Others see Him as the man upstairs, a grandfatherly type who wants to give us whatever we want—a sort of cosmic vending machine. But Scripture paints a different picture. The Bible describes God as a loving father, sovereign over all of our lives, longing to rescue, redeem, and restore us and be in relationship with us. The questions about who God is, what He is doing in the world, and what He says about Himself are critical to how we understand and approach the conversation about Christianity. A.W. Tozer said it best, “What you think about God is the most important thing about you.”

So, who is God?

GOD	MAN
Infinite	Finite
Holy	Unholy
Perfect	Imperfect
Loving	Self-focused
Righteous	Unrighteous
Just	Unjust
Faithful	Unfaithful

The Bible describes God as the Supreme Being; the Creator and Sustainer of the universe. He is eternal and unchangeable in His nature. He is wisdom, all powerful, holy, and just. The Bible says He is perfect, and in Him is no darkness at all (1 John 1:5). In essence, He is everything we are not.

It's important for us to understand the main narrative of Scripture, which follows the story of creation, the fall, redemption, and restoration. In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth; He spoke the universe into existence. Then God created man in His own image and said it was very good—everything was perfect. And this is what we were created for: to enjoy our relationship with God in a place where there was no sin or darkness.

But something happened that fractured our relationship with God and our world. Adam and Eve bought into the lie that they didn't need God, and that they were missing out on being as powerful as their Creator. Consequently, sin entered the world, and because of sin, we are all now fractured, broken, and separated from God. (Genesis 1-3.)

So what is sin? The Bible describes sin as the breaking, or transgression, of God's law (1 John 3:4). Simply put, sin is defined as disobedience or rebellion against God (Deuteronomy 9:7), as well as independence from God. The original translation actually means to "miss the mark" of God's holy standard of righteousness.

That might sound harsh, but when we really think about it, we don't need much proof to believe this. One look around the world, or just watching the nightly news, bears witness to this fact. We are a lost and broken humanity in desperate need of a Savior and redemption. However, before we can really grasp the heart of the gospel, we need to understand the consequences of our sin. Until we know the severity of our sin, we cannot truly taste the sweetness of grace and all that Jesus did for us on the cross.

There's a great example of the essence of the gospel told in

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HE IS EVERYTHING
we are not

THE CHRISTIAN: WHO IS IT?

John 4. In John 4:6-26, the scandalous grace of Jesus is put on display when He encounters a Samaritan woman trapped in a life of sin. She goes to draw water from the well and there she meets Jesus, who offers her something she didn't totally understand or even know that she needed. She had a wrong assumption of God, was living in hopelessness, and was isolated from a series of broken relationships. Yet Jesus came to her—in all of her mess—and offered her a better way of life, a new life. Her sin had physical and spiritual consequences, to be sure, but it didn't have to define her. There at the well, Jesus offered her a way out, he offered redemption and promised restoration.

And then at the cross, Jesus destroyed the power of sin, offering all of us the same living water He talked about when He encountered the woman at the well. Not just hope for this life, but for eternity.

To move a little further on why what we believe is so important, let's take a look at a recent Barna study about what people believe about the afterlife and eternity. In 2011, their study revealed that when it comes to the topic of eternity, most Americans believe there is an afterlife and that most people will go to heaven. Even more surprising was that Christians aren't that far off from what culture says about heaven and hell. In this same study, born-again Christians (Barna described born-again Christians as those who have made a commitment to Jesus Christ and who believe they are going to heaven because of the confession of their sins) are all over the map when it comes to conclusions about where we go when we die. Twenty five percent of born-again Christians said that all people are eventually saved or accepted by God, and that it doesn't matter what religious faith you follow because they all teach the same lessons. An even larger percentage of born-again Christians (40 percent) indicated that they believe Christians and Muslims worship the same God.

PAUSE FOR DISCUSSION:

What do you think is the primary way our culture views God?

How is the way our culture sees God different from the way the Bible portrays Him?

THE CHRISTIAN: WHO IS IT?

Do you agree with the statement, "Until we grasp the severity of our sin, we cannot truly taste the sweetness of grace and all that Jesus did for us on the cross?" Why or why not? How have you experienced this in your life?

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This gap represents something significant that we don't want to just skip over or take lightly. At Traders Point, we believe an individual dies two deaths—one physical and one spiritual. All of us are guaranteed to experience physical death; death is certain



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¹ "What Americans Believe About Universalism and Pluralism," Barna Group, accessed April 28, 2011, <https://www.barna.org/barna-update/faith-spirituality/484-what-americans-believe-about-universalism-and-pluralism#.U9VRl4BdXzc>

THE CHRISTIAN: WHO IS IT?

and unavoidable. Spiritual death, however, is eternal separation from God in a real place the Bible calls hell. While this is a difficult subject to talk about, we have to because we don't want to give people false hope. More than that, it's what makes the Good News so good—that while we were sinners, Christ died for us and spares us from dying a spiritual death (Romans 5:8).

Simply put, a Christian is someone who recognizes he or she has sinned, is lost and separated from God, and has put his or her faith and trust in the finished work of Christ. We're saved by the work of Jesus, and as a result, the biblical response is to believe, confess, repent, and be baptized. J.D. Greer says, "Salvation is a posture of repentance and faith that you begin in a moment and continue for the rest of your life."

BELIEF

CONFESSION

REPENTANCE

BAPTISM

PAUSE FOR DISCUSSION:

Does The Barna Group's research about what Christians believe about heaven and hell surprise you? Why or why not?

What's the difference between spiritual death and physical death?

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BELIEVE: Believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of the Living God, and that He fulfilled God's standard of perfection on our behalf. He lived the life we were supposed to live, and died the death we were supposed to die, and rose from the dead.

CONFESS: Confession is an act of humility, and the Bible says that those who confess their sins will find mercy and be healed. God does not reject a broken and humble spirit, in fact, He welcomes it and promises to honor and heal those who approach Him in this way.

REPENT: After confession comes repentance—true and lasting change. Repentance actually means to turn in the opposite direction, to turn from a former way of living and walk in a new direction. God gives His people the ability to be set free not only from the penalty of sin, but also from the power of it. The Bible says that God has made us alive in Christ (Colossians 2:13-14), meaning that when God looks at us He sees the perfect sinless nature of His Son, Jesus. The gospel is not just the forgiveness of sins or the affirmation of your value and worth, but a call to a new quality of life that overcomes the power of sin. Repentance is belief in action.

BE BAPTIZED: We believe that baptism is by immersion and is a biblical response to faith. In the New Testament, the Greek word for baptism is "baptiso," meaning to plunge, dip, or immerse. In every baptism account in the New Testament, the mode we see is immersion. Jesus Himself was immersed and calls for those who profess saving faith in Him to be baptized, as well. Baptism does not produce salvation, but rather, is a response to it. Baptism is an outward response to an inward transformation, and is for everyone who has put his or her faith in Christ. As we see in Romans 6, baptism is symbolic of someone dying to him or herself, being buried with Christ, and becoming a new creation. Baptism is a part of the membership process at TPCC. If you have never been baptized by immersion, but have confessed faith in Christ, we encourage

BAPTISM

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is an *outward response*
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you to be baptized. Because Jesus modeled and commanded it, we want to participate and be obedient to that, and we would love to answer any questions you have and help you walk through the process.

If you want to learn more about believing, confessing, repentance, and being baptized, see the sermon at tpcc.org/eastermessage2015.

When you take the step to follow Christ, you start the journey of following Christ and the path of discipleship. The way our relationship first and foremost comes through is through spending time with God, getting to know Him by studying His Word. And also, we grow in community with other believers. There's no such thing as an isolated Christian; it doesn't exist. **A Christian is someone who possesses faith, proclaims faith, and practices faith – living alongside other believers and sharing the Good News of what God has done in their lives.**

We'll talk more about our value of discipleship in chapter 5, but to learn more about what this looks like, check out the sermon about intentional discipleship at tpcc.org/deepwells.

THE CHRISTIAN: WHO IS IT?

PAUSE FOR DISCUSSION:

What is the significance of baptism? Have you been baptized by immersion?

If you have been baptized, share your baptism story with the group.



THE CHURCH: WHAT IS IT?

THE CHURCH

THE CHURCH: WHAT IS IT?

So, what is the church? It seems like a pretty easy question, right? Is it just a building people go to for religious goods and services—a club for insiders, or is it something more?

There are a lot of misconceptions when it comes to what people assume when they hear the word “church.” Some people think the church is any place where two or three people gather, whether that’s at Starbucks or on the golf course. Others think it was man’s idea, and that this man-made institution exists to serve the needs of men. But actually, the church was God’s idea, and is the primary means He chose to communicate the gospel, grow mature disciples, and continue His mission of redemption and restoration. He could’ve chosen any path—and yet He chose to work through sinful and broken people like us to continue His mission.

It’s important to have an accurate perspective on what the church is and what it isn’t because of the cultural climate we live in today. For many, the church is seen as bad and immoral, and ultimately—something that harms people and society. For others, the church is considered a completely irrelevant institution and maybe even a waste of time. Even among some Christians, there’s been a move away from the local church, thinking the church is unnecessary to be spiritual or close to God. While we definitely acknowledge that the church is far from perfect, and it never will be on this side of eternity, we also believe the church is God’s primary tool for redemption of mankind. It is also a gift from God to us.

Jesus died for the church, and the church is His primary vehicle to communicate His word and continue His rescue mission throughout the world. It is also the primary context God uses for a Christian to grow in his or her faith, and an imperfect glimpse of the eternal blessing we get to enjoy as being a part of God’s family.

Let's back up, though, and get a little background on where the idea of church came from. The word "church" originally comes from the Greek word "ecclesia," which is formed from two Greek words meaning "an assembly" and "to call out," or "called-out ones." In Scripture, the Church is described as the bride of Christ (Ephesians 5:25-27, Revelation 19:7-9), and should be treated with honor and respect. The church is made up of a diverse group of imperfect people who have confessed faith in Jesus Christ, and have experienced the transforming power of His grace. These individuals are committed to gathering for worship, studying and applying God's Word, growing in Christ-likeness and holiness, observing the biblical sacraments of baptism and communion, and scattering for the mission of God.

**...THE CHURCH IS MADE UP
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In Matthew 16:13-18 (ESV), Jesus is having a conversation with His disciples when He asks them, "Who do people say that the Son of man is?" They replied, "John the Baptist is, others say Elijah and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." Jesus said to them, "But who do you say I am?" And after Simon Peter confessed Jesus as Lord, Jesus replied, "You are Peter, and on this rock (referring to Peter's confession) I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it."

THE CHURCH

THE CHURCH: WHAT IS IT?

PAUSE FOR DISCUSSION:

Describe the kind of church background, if any, you have experienced prior to coming to Traders Point.

What misconceptions does our culture convey about church?

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Did you know that the church was God's idea, or have you previously thought it was a man-made institution? Explain.

THE CHURCH: WHAT IS IT?

In Acts 2, the church takes off. Jesus had been crucified, buried and resurrected, and had ascended into heaven. Peter was beginning to powerfully preach the gospel in Acts 2 and says in verse 36, "So let everyone be assured of this, that this Jesus, whom you crucified, God has made both Lord and Christ." Scripture says that those who heard were pierced and cut to the heart and said, "What must we do to be saved?" Peter replies, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."

Three thousand people were added that day, and the church was born. Now, 2,000 years later, Traders Point exists because a few people took Jesus' words seriously. This is not just an abstract mission; this is an invitation for those who follow Christ to jump in and play a significant role in impacting the world for God's kingdom.

**THIS IS AN INVITATION
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So, if the church is God's vehicle to accomplish His mission here on earth—what are the elements of a healthy church? What should the church be about and what does a healthy church look like? In spring of 2014, we spent ten weeks going through a series called, *What Should I Look For In A Church?* (We encourage you to go back and listen to or watch this series—as this will be a great reference and tool for understanding a healthy church.) In summary, here are the marks we see as a healthy church:

The gospel that confronts us (Ephesians 2:1-10)

The gospel says more than, "I was guilty, and now I'm innocent." The gospel says, "I was dead in sin, but because of Christ, I am now alive." The gospel is at the center of everything our church believes, communicates, and pursues. You'll hear us say over and over that the simple truth of the gospel is that we are saved by grace, through faith, in the finished work of Jesus Christ. Jesus came to live the life we could never live and died the death we deserved the die, so that we might have new life in Him.

A mission that challenges us (John 17:13-19; Matthew 28:16-20)

Just as Jesus was sent into the world, we too are sent to be His witnesses and to be a part of His redemptive work all around the world. When we respond to the gospel, the good news shouldn't end with us. In fact, it should spur us on to be a part of the redemption, healing, and restoration of lost and hurting people.

Worship that reminds us of who God is and what He has done

(Genesis 1, Romans 1)

We have to be reminded to put Jesus at the center of our lives, because without it, something or someone else will become the center of our attention. We should strive for every aspect of our lives to be an act of worship.

Discipleship that grows us (2 Timothy 2:2)

Jesus' call was not just to be a believer, a church attender, or a convert—but also to be a whole-hearted follower of His. We are

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committed to seeing every person grow into full maturity in Christ and then reproduce that life into others.

Preaching that changes us (2 Timothy 4:1-8)

Preaching gives voice to things God desperately wants said because communication is a form of affection. God uses preaching and the proclamation of His word to change our hearts and reveal truth.

Membership that accounts for us (Ephesians 2:11-12; 1 Corinthians 12:12-27)

The church is a place where people are equipped as followers of Jesus, where people care for one another, where they grow, and where we can be on mission together.

Leadership that cares for us (1 Timothy 3:1-7)

God structured the church under qualified leadership to oversee the direction and health of the church. True, godly leadership allows God's people to grow and flourish in their walks with Him.

Compassion that's bigger than us (Luke 10:25-37)

As a church, we want our compassion to reflect Jesus' compassion. Jesus has been gracious with us and we have the opportunity to partner with Him to act compassionately towards others in our communities and around the world.

Discipline that restores us (Hebrews 12:3-13; 1 Corinthians 5:1-13)

Restorative discipline is evidence of God's love, not the absence of it. Accountability and discipline matter because they help us grow as we seek to grow into fully devoted, mature followers of Jesus.

There will be times where we're strong in some and weak in others, but these should all be our focus as we pursue what God is doing through this congregation and body of Christ. We're not perfect, we're striving, but we never want to become complacent.

PAUSE FOR DISCUSSION:

What stands out to you about this chapter?

How can you prepare your heart and mind for worship before you attend services on the weekend?

What excites you about being a part of Traders Point and living life according to Christ's mission?



THE VALUES: WHY ARE THEY?

THE VALUES: WHY ARE THEY?

People who have visited our church often tell us that Traders Point is a warm and friendly place. That's not an accident; what people experience at TPCC represents our church culture and DNA. What establishes that culture and DNA is our values. Our values help guide us so that we can accomplish the mission, and so that everyone feels welcome at Traders Point. We really believe that above everything else, as a church and in our personal lives, we need to stay humble and hungry: humble before Jesus, knowing that we cannot do anything without Him, and hungry to see more lives transformed by being introduced to Jesus and salvation, grace, and redemption He offers to all.

WE NEED
TO STAY
HUMBLE

HUNGRY

Several years ago, a single mom, Jenny*, and her daughter visited TPCC. Everything went great. She loved the service, felt impacted by the biblical preaching, and had a great experience with the kids ministry. Overall, though, she felt like she probably wouldn't come back. On her way out, one of our members recognized Jenny from work and walked up, gave her a hug, and asked if anyone had shown her around the building yet. After taking her on a tour of our campus, they invited her and her daughter over for lunch that afternoon. Jenny said, "she's the reason I came back."

What changed that day for Jenny wasn't a program, a sermon, or the music. What changed was that a member of our church engaged with her and made her feel like she mattered. We highly value having a healthy church culture. Our values shape not only our church culture and the decisions we make, but also the vision and direction for the future of our church. The culture and DNA of Traders Point is not just the staff and leaders, though—it's set by our members. Members set the tone at Traders Point and have even a more impactful ministry than the staff will ever have. When members step up and become the church they've always wanted to attend, it has an incredible impact on everyone around them. Members shape our culture, which is why we view membership at Traders Point as such an important part of the church; members are culture-setters.

**ALL OF US HAVE A PART
TO PLAY IN MAKING
THIS THE CHURCH WE
WANT TO ATTEND.**

THE VALUES: WHY ARE THEY?

Values have to be more than what we say on a website, a wall, or in a sermon series—it has to be backed up with action, energy, time and resources. And while most churches would say they have a mission, and helping people achieve personal and spiritual growth. Often, however, we have a tendency to overlook the how. How are we going to actually accomplish these things? How do our beliefs really change the way we live? How are we going to grow personally and spiritually? The answer to how is always found in what we value.

No matter how long you've been at Traders Point, if you're a part of our membership class that's because at some point, you've decided to make this place home. Part of coming home and finding a home is willing to make a home for someone else—to actually create a space at the table for someone else. Our values are not just for our leadership and staff, they're for everyone who calls Traders Point home. We hope everyone here owns these values as their own, to help make a home for others so they, too, can find the hope we've found in Jesus.

Here are our seven values:

VALUE ONE | WRECK THE ROOF: RELATIONAL EVANGELISM

(Mark 2:1-12; Luke 5:27-32)

We will “wreck the roof” by removing unnecessary barriers that keep people from Jesus. Evangelism, in its simplest form, just means that you've found something good and you can't wait to share it, and the relational part usually means that the first person you want to share good news with is someone you' already know.

In Mark 2, there was a man who was paralyzed who had four great friends who wanted to get him to Jesus, but there was a barrier—the house Jesus was in was crowded full of people. So his friends tore a hole in the roof, carried him up and through the roof to get him to Jesus. In the same way, we want to remove any unnecessary barriers that would keep people from Jesus.

To learn more about our value of relational evangelism, check out week one of Hills We Die On at tpcc.org/sermons, and episode 10 of the Traders Point Podcast Show at tpcc.org/podcastshow.

VALUE TWO | ABOVE US NOT BEYOND US: BIBLICAL AUTHORITY

(2 Timothy 3:1-17; Isaiah 40:8)

We will hold the Bible above us as our authority, while striving to help everyone understand and apply it. God will receive you just as you are, and want to create a “come as you are” kind of environment. No matter what you’ve done or what you believe, you are welcome here. At the same time, God loves you too much to leave you as you are—He has something so much better for each of us.

There are two postures we can have toward the Bible: I have authority over it, and my thoughts and feelings come before the Bible, or the Bible has authority over me. We hold a high view of Scripture and believe that it’s the perfect, inerrant Word of God.

At the same time, we don’t believe we need to teach it in such a complicated way that it doesn’t connect with people’s hearts, because God gave us the Bible for a reason. And He wrote it in words for a purpose: to connect to us. So while we believe the Bible is over us as our authority, and we aren’t going to water it down, we also don’t believe we need to make it unnecessarily complicated—we want to communicate it in a way people can understand it and apply it.

To learn more about biblical authority, check out week two of Hills We Die On at tpcc.org/sermons

VALUE THREE | DEEP WELLS: INTENTIONAL DISCIPLESHIP

(Matthew 16:24-26; Philippians 2:5-8; Luke 12:25-28)

We will intentionally dig our spiritual wells deep through study, prayer, and relationships. We believe people grow best in community, not isolation. Our hope would be that everyone at Traders Point would be in a discipleship environment that moves him or her forward in his or

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her relationship with Jesus. One way we can facilitate and foster discipleship through small groups that we call life groups.

As a church, we not only want to grow numerically because numbers represent people, but also in depth and full maturity in Christ. It's not a requirement, but it is an expectation, that members are in a discipleship environment with others because all of us grow best when we are with other people.

To learn more about intentional discipleship, check out week three of Hills We Die On at tpcc.org/sermons.

VALUE FOUR | PURPOSE OVER PREFERENCE: OUTSTANDING ENVIRONMENTS

(Luke 7:36-50; Hebrews 10:24-25; Matthew 9:36-38)

We will remember that kingdom purpose wins over personal preferences as we create environments for people to meet Jesus. We recognize that often times, the environment that someone walks into speaks louder than the truth of the sermon. People matter to Jesus, and people are the reason He left Heaven, walked among us, touched the untouchable, loved the unlovable, and died for undeserving sinners.

We want the love and grace of Jesus to come through in all of our environments. From kids ministry, to worship during the weekend service, to guest services, we hope every environment is informed by the spirit and attitude of our people, and we want every person to help us create a healthy, grace-saturated, truth-loving, and others-focused culture.

To learn more about outstanding environments, check out week four of Hills We Die On at tpcc.org/sermons and episode 11 of the Traders Point Podcast Show at tpcc.org/podcastshow.

VALUE FIVE | HUMBLE AND HUNGRY: HEALTHY CULTURE

(1 Corinthians 3:1-13; Matthew 16:18; James 3:9-12)

We will stay humble and hungry, realizing that we will accomplish more by having the right culture than we ever

will by having the right strategies. Culture is defined as “the beliefs, behaviors, and customs that a group of people accept, generally without thinking about them.” While culture might not be something people can tangibly see, it is something they experience—unhealthy or healthy.

At Traders Point, we want to am first and foremost to have a healthy culture over the smartest and most strategic strategies. We want to cultivate a culture that chooses grace first, that makes Jesus the hero, that inserts trust for suspicion, and continue to grow thicker skin and softer hearts.

To learn more about healthy culture, check out week five or Hills We Die On at tpcc.org/sermons and episode 12 of the Traders Point Podcast Show at tpcc.org/podcastshow.

VALUE SIX | THE APRON AND BIB: GIFTED SERVICE

(1 Corinthians 9:19-23; Philippians 2:3-11; Galatians 5:13; Matthew 20:26-28)

We will look for ways to contribute rather than consume. Jesus modeled a new example of leadership: He came to serve, not to be served. So like Jesus, we will put the needs of others ahead of ourselves. We pursue servant-leadership because it glorifies God, blesses others, and grows us in our families, workplaces, and communities.

Each week, we come ready to put on an apron and a bib—looking for places to jump in and contribute to the mission, while also being fed. What are your gifts, and how can they be used to propel the mission? Where do you see a need to serve at Traders Point? In Indianapolis and around the world?

To learn more about service opportunities at Traders Point, visit tpcc.org/serve, and listen to week six of Hills We Die On at tpcc.org/sermons.

THE VALUES: WHY ARE THEY?

VALUE SEVEN | GRACE GIVES BACK: JOYFUL GENEROSITY

(2 Corinthians 9:1-12; Psalm 50:8-12)

We will lead the way with the kind of generosity that only makes sense in light of God's grace. The wording of this is really important—because generosity isn't generosity without joy, that's an obligation. Generosity goes beyond our finances, too—generosity involves giving of our time, talents, and treasure to advance the mission of the gospel, both here in Indianapolis and around the world.

To learn more about joyful generosity, check out week seven of Hills We Die On at tpcc.org/sermons.

PAUSE FOR DISCUSSION:

Have you ever thought about your personal values? If so, how do your values shape the decisions you make?

PAUSE FOR DISCUSSION:

What values from the list above stand out to you? Why?

How can you own the values in your personal life? How can you own the values as being a part of the Traders Point family?



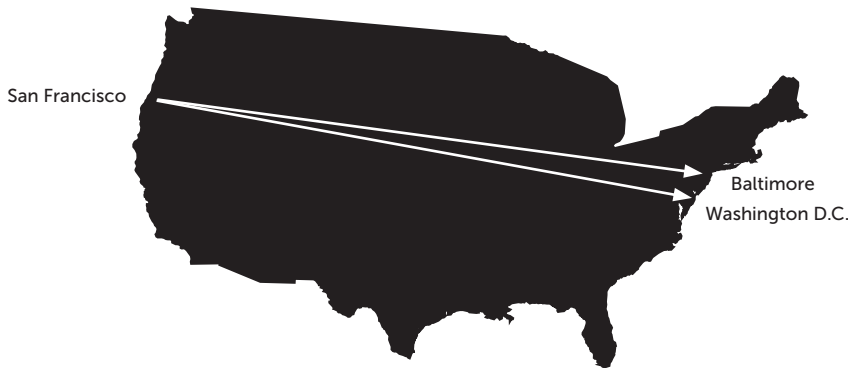
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THE ESSENTIALS: WHAT ARE THEY?

THE ESSENTIALS: WHAT ARE THEY?

Every year in the United States, nearly 3,000 churches close their doors. And although many of those churches began with a vision and mission to hold up the name of Jesus in their community and around the world, somewhere along the way, they experienced vision drift—that is, they neglected what they were really about. Maybe they failed to pour into the next generation, or maybe they compromised on what was essential. Jesus said in Matthew 12, that if we lose our saltiness, what good are we? No matter how it happened, no church intentionally sets out to drift from its mission, but can accidentally, over time, without a clear purpose and reminder of what's important, drift away from God's call and mission.



If you were to take a trip somewhere and you were off course by just one degree, after one foot, you would miss your target by 0.2 inches. Sounds trivial, right? But what about as you get further out? After 100 yards, you'd be off by 5.2 feet. After a mile, you'd be off by 92.2 feet. If you were to get from San Francisco to Washington D.C., you'd end up on the other side of Baltimore, almost 42 miles away. In a rocket going to the moon, you'd be 4,169 miles off (nearly twice the diameter of the moon). Going to the sun, you'd miss by over 1.6 million miles (nearly twice the diameter of the sun).

Little things can make a big difference.

LITTLE THINGS

CAN MAKE A

BIG DIFFERENCE

At Traders Point, we believe the church should be a catalyst that moves people towards Jesus, not an obstacle that keeps people from Him. We want to be united on the essentials and decrease the importance of non-essentials. This is why the study of God and the essentials of Scripture deeply matter. Theologian and author J.I. Packer said, "Disregard the study of God and you will stumble through life." If our trajectories are off when it comes to the essentials of Scripture, we'll end up on different sides.

**IF OUR TRAJECTORIES
ARE OFF WHEN IT COMES
TO THE ESSENTIALS OF
SCRIPTURE, WE'LL END UP
ON DIFFERENT SIDES.**

THE ESSENTIALS: WHAT ARE THEY?

Our core beliefs are the foundation for who we are and where we go. A chief mark of a healthy church is that we are equipped to grow in our understanding of who God is and what He is doing in the world. This must be based on what the Bible actually says about God, and not just our perception of what He might be like.

Pause to read these passages:

- 1 Timothy 4:16
- Colossians 3:16
- Titus 2:7-8

Here are our essentials at Traders Point:

THE BIBLE

The Bible is the authoritative and inerrant Word of God; it is God's revelation about Himself to man. At Traders Point, we take a high view of Scripture—that is, we believe it is historically accurate and internally consistent as it tells a story of redemption and points us to see who God is, what God's plan is and for us to understand the saving grace of Jesus. We believe God's Word is our authority. God used over 40 different authors to write the 66 books of the Bible, all divinely directed by the Holy Spirit. The Bible is the living Word of God, applicable to every person throughout every time period in history. The Bible is not only the measure and standard of truth, but truth itself

For more on the Bible: Numbers 23:19, Psalm 12:6, Proverbs 30:5, John 17:17, 2 Timothy 3:16, 1 Peter 1:20-21, 2 Timothy 3:16, and Hebrews 4:1.

THE TRINITY

God eternally exists as three persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. The three distinct persons of the Trinity are all fully God; all of God's attributes are true of each person and together they are one God. While the word "trinity"

never appears in Scripture, it is an accepted doctrine based on the Bible's teachings as a whole. We see evidence of the Trinity throughout Scripture.

For more on the Trinity: Genesis 1:26, Psalm 45:6-7, Psalm 110:1, Isaiah 6:8, Matthew 3:16-17, Matthew 28:19, John 1:1-5, John 13:20, 1 Corinthians 12:4-6, 2 Corinthians 13:14, Ephesians 2:18, and 1 Peter 1:2.

GOD THE FATHER

The first member of the Trinity is God the Father. He is the Creator and Sustainer of all things. God is sovereign and infinite, meaning He has no limitations. God the Father can be intimately known, but because of His infiniteness, He can never be fully known. God the Father can only be known through

For more on God the Father: Genesis 1:1, Colossians 1:16, Acts 4:24, Hebrews 1:3, Revelation 4:11, Psalm 145:3, Jeremiah 9:23-24, Romans 11:33, Matthew 11:27, and John 14:6.

GOD THE SON, JESUS CHRIST

Jesus is the second member of the Trinity and the Son of God. He is God incarnate as man, and He was both fully God and fully human. He was born of a virgin, Mary, and conceived by the Holy Spirit. He lived a perfect and sinless life in order to be a holy and worthy sacrifice. He was tempted as we are tempted; He suffered as we have suffered, yet He did not fall into sin. He came to serve and not to be served. Jesus was betrayed, beaten, mocked, and crucified on the cross where He died. Jesus' life was not taken from Him by anyone; He gave it as a willing sacrifice for everyone. Three days later Jesus rose from the dead, conquering sin and death and showing His power over both. After He rose from the dead, He was on earth for 40 days before He ascended into heaven. Jesus will return one day to rule and reign forever, judge the world, and take those who follow Him to live in the presence of God for eternity.

THE ESSENTIALS: WHAT ARE THEY?

For more on God the Son, Jesus Christ: Luke 24:39, John 1:1, John 1:18, Romans 9:5, Colossians 1:19, Colossians 2:9, Matthew 1:18-20, Luke 1:34-35, John 15:10, 2 Corinthians 5:21, Hebrews 4:15, Hebrews 9:26, 1 Peter 3:18, 1 John 3:5, Hebrews 2:18, Hebrews 4:15, Hebrews 7:26, Philippians 2:5-11, Matthew 27:27-30, Mark 15:24, Luke 23:26-49, John 19:16-37, John 10:18, Matthew 28:1-20, Mark 16:1-8, Luke 24:1-53, John 20:1-23, 1 Corinthians 15:20, Ephesians 1:19-20, 1 Peter 1:3, Luke 24:50-51, Acts 1:9-11, Matthew 25:31-46, and John 14:2-3.

GOD THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit is the third member of the Trinity. The Holy Spirit is promised to those who profess faith in Jesus; the Holy Spirit is the presence of God living inside each follower of Christ.

The Holy Spirit:

- Teaches and bears witness about Jesus
- Empowers those who follow Jesus in different forms of ministry
- Gives different spiritual gifts to followers of Jesus for the purpose of ministry
- Empowers prayer
- Gives strength and empowers followers of Jesus to overcome spiritual opposition
- Sanctifies followers of Jesus
- Convicts the world of sin
- Guides
- Gives assurance of salvation to followers of Jesus

For more on God the Holy Spirit: Acts 2:38, Romans 8:9-11, John 14:26, John 15:26, John 16:7-15, Acts 1:8, 1 Thessalonians 1:5, 1 Peter 1:12, 1 Corinthians 12:4-11, Romans 8:26, Ephesians 2:18, Matthew 12:28, Ephesians 6:10-18, 1 Corinthians 6:11, 2 Thessalonians 2:13, Titus 3:4-7, John 16:8-11, Romans 8:14, Galatians 5:16-18, Romans 8:16, and Ephesians 1:13-14.

MAN

We are the pinnacle of God's creation, created in the likeness of God. We have rebelled against God through sin and separated ourselves from the glory of God. We are in need of redemption and restoration to the intended likeness in which we were created.

For more on man: Genesis 1:27, Genesis 5:1-2, Romans 3:23, and Romans 5:12.

SALVATION

Salvation is a gift from God that can never be earned through good works or self-improvement. Salvation is only given by grace through faith in Jesus Christ alone, the redemption of our sin. Salvation is based on the work of Jesus on the cross where He sacrificially died bearing the sin and punishment of all mankind, paying the price required of sin for all those who believe in Him.

For more on salvation: John 1:12, John 3:16, Ephesians 2:8-9, Ephesians 1:7, Romans 3:23-25, Romans 5:6-9, and Romans 6:23.

THE CHURCH

The church is the community of all true followers of Jesus Christ. The church is the body of Christ of which Jesus is the head, and is set on the mission that was given by Jesus to us to make disciples and spread the love of Christ. All true followers of Jesus should take an active part in the body of a local church. Believers gather together to worship God, to know God more intimately, to pray, to make disciples of Jesus, to serve, to encourage, and to be nurtured, all in an effort to grow and mature in faith.

THE ESSENTIALS: WHAT ARE THEY?

For more on the church: Ephesians 5:23, Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 1:8, 1 Corinthians 12:12-14, Ephesians 1:22-23, Hebrews 10:25, Colossians 3:16, Ephesians 1:12, Ephesians 5:16-20, Psalm 9:10 Jeremiah 9:24, 2 Corinthians 4:6, Philippians 3:10, Colossians 1:9-10, 1 Thessalonians 5:17, Matthew 28:19, Matthew 20:26-28, Luke 6:35-36, Acts 14:21-22, 1 Thessalonians 5:11, Ephesians 4:12-13, Colossians 1:28, and Hebrews 13:17.

BAPTISM

The Bible teaches that we are saved by grace through faith. Baptism is a public confession of faith in Jesus. Following our understanding of Scripture, we practice baptism by immersion. The Greek word used exclusively throughout the New Testament for baptism is "baptiso" which means to plunge, dip, or immerse.

Jesus modeled this form of baptism and even commanded it, making baptism a symbolic act of obedience and faith. Baptism by immersion represents the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus symbolizing our old self dying, being buried in the water, and raised as a new creation in Christ Jesus. Anyone who has professed faith in Jesus Christ should be baptized at his or her conversion or soon after.

For more on baptism: Ephesians 2:8, Matthew 10:32, Matthew 3:13-17, Matthew 28:19, Romans 6:3-4, 2 Corinthians 5:17, Acts 2:38, Acts 8:12, Acts 8:36-38, and Acts 10:44-48.

COMMUNION

Communion is the Lord's Supper and is to be observed repeatedly throughout life by those who are followers of Jesus. Communion is a sign of continuing fellowship with Jesus and celebrates what He did through the cross. Communion symbolizes the death of Christ; the breaking of bread represents the breaking of His body, and the pouring of the cup represents the pouring out of Christ's blood.

Communion is to be taken by all Christians who have confessed Christ based on what the New Testament teaches regarding communion. When followers of Jesus participate in communion together, it is an act of unity. At Traders Point, we take communion on a weekly basis to remind us what Jesus accomplished through the cross. Communion is a time of reflection, prayer, and unity for our church body.

For more on communion: Matthew 26:17-29, 1 Corinthians 11:23-26, 1 Corinthians 11:26, and 1 Corinthians 10:17.

ETERNITY

Man was created for eternal existence. Jesus will return one day and on that day all will be judged. There will be just punishment and reward. For those who are in Christ Jesus there is no condemnation, and they will spend eternity in the presence of God in the new heaven and the new earth. Those who choose to reject Jesus will be separated from Him by their sin in a real place of eternal separation from God called hell.

For more on eternity: Matthew 24:44, John 14:3, Acts 1:11, 1 Thessalonians 4:16, Hebrews 9:28, Revelation 22:20, Romans 14:10-12, Revelation 20:11-15, Romans 2:5-8, 2 Corinthians 5:10, Matthew 25:34, Romans 8:1, 2 Peter 3:13, Matthew 25:41, Matthew 25:46, and Revelation 14:9-11.

Our values align us and although we come from different backgrounds, we can all be unified on the essential truths of Scripture as we pursue God's mission together.

THE ESSENTIALS: WHAT ARE THEY?

PAUSE FOR DISCUSSION:

Why is it important that we're unified as a church around essential issues? What are some of the consequences of not being unified?

In which of the essentials are you challenged to grow in your understanding?

03

THE ESSENTIALS:
WHAT ARE
THEY?

How are you carving out time each week to understand God better?



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THE MISSION: WHAT IS IT?

THE MISSION: WHAT IS IT?

Throughout our history as a church, we've seen God work in powerful ways. We've seen skeptics come to faith, families restored from brokenness, and disciples called into greater kingdom work. The gospel is alive and active in central Indiana, and we are humbled to be a part of it.

Many Christians have a false idea of "mission": that is, mission is reserved only for the truly dedicated—those who are going to serve overseas on the mission field, or the families who put their houses on the market and physically relocate to another part of the world. While God absolutely might call some of us to that, He will call others of us to stay right where we are while challenging us to live differently.

At Traders Point, we believe we are called to be on mission wherever we are—whether it's in our home, our communities, or our places of work. We exist to engage people with the love of God, inspire them to follow Jesus, and equip them to serve our world.

Our church's mission flows right out of Jesus' mission. One of the last things Jesus left us with is recorded in Matthew 28:18-19, where He gives His disciples this command, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." Then again in Acts 1:7-8, just before Jesus ascended into heaven, He said to His disciples, "It is not for you to know the times or seasons that the Father has fixed by His own authority. But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

Jesus' command for His disciples didn't end 2,000 years ago; it continues today. The church's mission is simply this: make more and better disciples. Every follower of Christ, no matter his or her age or background, is uniquely gifted to make a significant impact in Jesus' name; it's not something that's reserved for religious professionals or an elite group of people. We believe everyone has a part to play in the mission of God, because we can do more together than we can on our own.

Practically for us, Jesus' words in Acts 1:7-8 mean that we as a church are on mission in all of those places—in Jerusalem (our own city), Judea (our region and country), and the ends of the earth.

WE WANT TO BE A

CHURCH THAT MULTIPLIES DISCIPLES AND CHURCHES

So what does it really look like to multiply disciples and churches around the world? Some might say, "We have too many churches; isn't there a church on every corner?" Well, not really. Consider this. Studies suggest that evangelicals account for closer to 10 percent of the American population than the 40 percent who claim to be "born again." The United States now ranks third—following China and India—in the number of people who are not professing Christians. In other words, the U.S. is becoming an ever-increasing unreached people group.

According to *The Great Evangelical Recession* by John Dickerson, researchers have found that 70% of the millennial generation (those born between 1982 and 2000) raised in church stop attending altogether by their early twenties. And given the death of evangelicalism's largest generation and the departure of its youngest, growth among evangelicals is lagging further and further behind that of the American population.

Across the United States, an average of only 17% of Americans¹ are connected to a Bible-based church (through attendance, service, and discipleship). By applying this same statistic to the Indianapolis area, which currently sits at 2.1 million people², that means that roughly 1.7 million people (83%) are disconnected from the local church. That number doesn't sit well with us, because we know every number represents a person with a story. We want everyone to see and experience the gospel of grace. Our prayer and mission is to make a dent in that number, and that more would come to a saving faith in Christ because of the work God is doing through Traders Point. Our mission field in Indianapolis is massive.

¹Indianapolis metropolitan area. In Wikipedia. Retrieved October 8, 2014, from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indianapolis_metropolitan_area

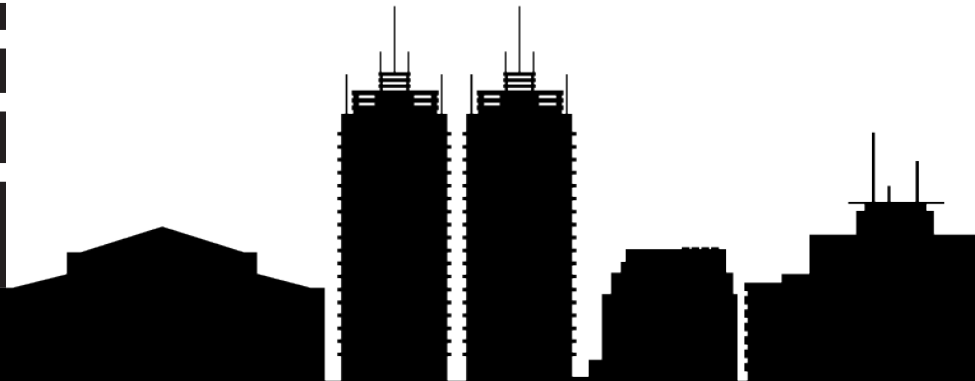
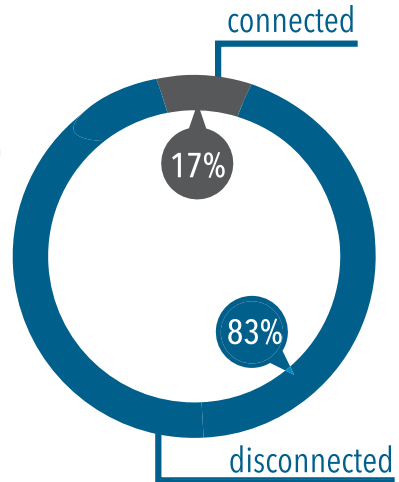
²Rebecca Barnes and Lindy Lowry, "7 Startling Facts: An Up Close Look at Church Attendance in America," accessed February 2014. <http://www.churchleaders.com/pastors/pastor-articles/139575-7-startling-facts-an-up-close-look-at-church-attendance-in-america.html?p=5>

THE MISSION: WHAT IS IT?

In the next five years, Traders Point will be on mission to increase the number of people in Indianapolis who know Jesus by 1%. That might not sound like a lot, but 1% would be 17,462 people. This doesn't mean that in five years the church will be one building full of 17,000 individuals, but that in five years, 17,000 people will be impacted through hearing and knowing Jesus. Each individual number is a person: a person with a unique story, history, and sphere of influence that God will redeem and use for His greater purpose.

1.7 MILLION

PEOPLE
ARE
DISCONNECTED



When it comes to reaching people and multiplying disciples, however, we have some practical obstacles to overcome. When a family or individual leaves their community to attend a worship service, their involvement in ministry and ability to grow in discipleship-oriented relationships is severely limited. We want everyone who calls Traders Point home to have the opportunity to share the Good News with their friends, to grow in discipleship, and to use their gifts and abilities to serve the local church. Currently, some members travel over an hour to come to weekend services. Which is why, over the next several years, we want to continue to open up more multisite locations so that we can give as many as possible in our city an opportunity to know, trust, and follow Jesus.

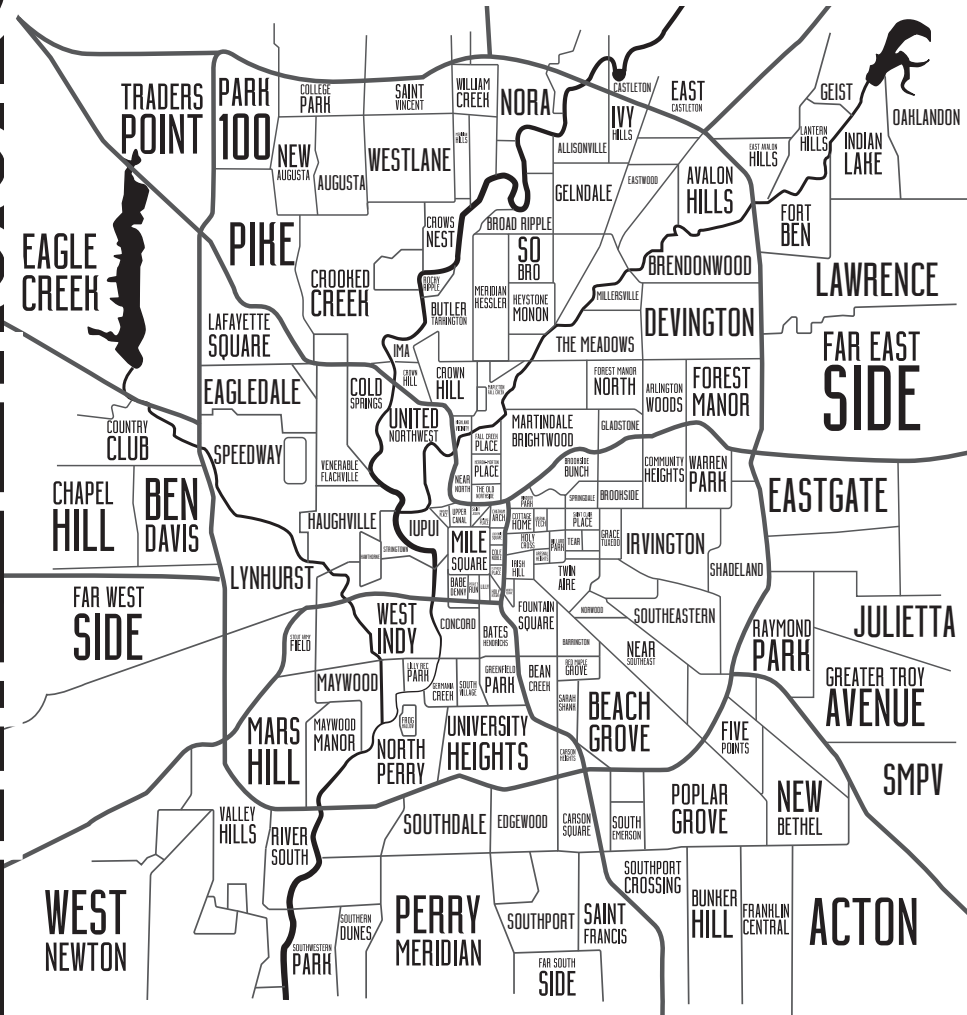
But we're not just about reaching Indianapolis. If the gospel of Jesus is going to spread around the world in the 21st century, cities will be its launching pad. The timing is urgent, and the church is losing ground. In general, American church attendance is steadily declining. Every year 1,500 churches launch, but 3,000 evangelical churches in North America will close their doors. The fastest growing religious affiliation in the United States is "none." And get this: only one in five non-Christians claim to have a genuine relationship with a person who is a Christian. We've decided to take this seriously and plant more churches. By 2019, we hope to have launched five strategic gospel-centered church plants across the United States.



THE MISSION

THE MISSION: WHAT IS IT?

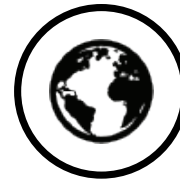
Being on mission as a church starts with being on mission as individual Christians. Everyone has people around them; neighbors, friends, coworkers, family, where they have established relationships. For us as individual Christians, these are our greatest opportunities to be on mission. We should be constantly asking ourselves, "Who do I know, who do I have a relationship with that I can start sharing the gospel with? Who can I start discipling, and how can I start by simply bringing them to church with me?" That's how we start being on mission—overtime, the missional mindset seeps into every



aspect of our lives. We want to make disciples who make more disciples, train leaders who train other leaders, and plant churches that plant other churches.

We're committed to developing whole-hearted disciples of Jesus, training up leaders to be on mission wherever they live, establishing additional campuses in and around Indianapolis (multisite), and partnering with other churches and church-planting organizations around the world.

When people become members at Traders Point, he also signs on to serve his campus, his community, his country, and around the world. When Jesus told His people to go, He meant both here and there—from the suburbs of Indianapolis to the slums of Kenya, from the streets of New York to the special needs clinic in Nicaragua, and from the Las Vegas Strip to pastor-training forums in Eastern Europe. From our own sidewalks to the ends of the earth, this is a call for every follower of Jesus and member of our church.

**CAMPUS****COMMUNITY****COUNTRY****CONTINENTS**

THE MISSION: WHAT IS IT?

PAUSE FOR DISCUSSION:

Do any of these statistics surprise you? Which ones? Why?

What jumps out at you about the mission of where we are headed? What excites you?

How might God be calling you and your family to be a part of this mission?

Is there anything that makes you hesitant when thinking about being on mission?

Will you commit to intentional prayer for the mission and ask God how you can be a part of it?

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THE RESPONSIBILITY: ALL IN?

THE RESPONSIBILITY: ALL IN?

Our culture associates membership with entitlement, privileges, and perks. But becoming a member of a church isn't the same as becoming the member of an organization or a club—it's about becoming part of a family. Family members have roles and responsibilities. So instead of just coming in to church to consume or be served, membership is about contributing and putting others first. Membership recognizes that everyone wants to belong, needed, and known. Membership means everyone owns the vision, the mission, and the values.

MEMBERSHIP RECOGNIZES THAT EVERYONE WANTS TO BELONG, BE NEEDED, AND BE KNOWN.

In the church, membership and discipleship are both individual projects and corporate activities. The church is a community of believers who confess Jesus as Savior and Lord; organize under biblical, qualified leadership; and gather regularly for teaching and worship. Church members observe baptism and communion, are unified by the Holy Spirit, and pursue holiness through spiritual disciplines.

In order to fulfill the Great Commandment and Great Commission, members are called to love others and represent Christ everywhere they go. Representing Christ and being the hands and feet of Jesus bring our faith to life. Christ followers embrace gospel-centered living as they lead their families, and interact with coworkers, classmates, and neighbors.

In the first letter to the Corinthians, the apostle Paul writes,

"For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews and Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.

For the body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot should say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear should say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would be the sense of hearing? If the whole body were an ear, where would be the sense of smell?

But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as He chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is, there are many parts, yet one body.

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, that there may be no division in the body, but that the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together; if one member is honored, all rejoice together. Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it." (1 Corinthians 12:12-27)

THE RESPONSIBILITY: ALL IN?

Membership at Traders Point is bigger than having your name on a membership list. Choosing to become a member means you are willing to partner, and potentially lead, with us in our mission to engage people with the love of God, inspire them to follow Jesus, and equip them to serve our world. With that in mind, here is what is expected of every member:

ONE

To regularly engage in service (Hebrews 10:23-25; Galatians 5:13) and participate in the life of the congregation through regularly attending and actively engaging in worship, ministering to others in the Body, praying for the church, and greeting guests.

TWO

To invest your time, talent, and treasure (2 Corinthians 8:7; 2 Corinthians 9:6-15; Matthew 6:19-21), and support the gospel here and worldwide.

THREE

To invest in people (1 Thessalonians 3:12; 1 Peter 1:22; Matthew 28:19-20) and develop authentic, loving relationships with others in the church. It also means to develop relationships with those who do not yet know Christ.

Here is what members can expect from us:

ONE

To **encounter God** in meaningful ways through worship, biblical preaching, and discipleship.

TWO

To be **loved and cared for** through life groups and engaging age-appropriate ministries for every kid and student.

THREE

To be **led by servant-leaders** who desire to model lives devoted to Christ, committed to family, and be continual learners who walk in accountability.

FOUR

To be **commissioned** for service, both to those who are a part of the church and those who are outside of it, both for local and global impact.

THE RESPONSIBILITY: ALL IN?

How and When to Leave a Church

We know that Traders Point isn't everyone's final destination, and while many churches spend a lot of time helping people get connected and engaged in the church, very few spend time talking about healthy ways to leave a church. We're under no illusion that everyone who becomes a member will be one for life. There are many good reasons to take an exit ramp from a particular church, and that includes Traders Point. So if that time should ever come for you, we want to spend time going through ways to healthily approach leaving a church home with a few questions to ask yourself:

DO I HAVE SOUND REASONS?

Among the good reasons for leaving a church are a job transfer to another city or state, a move to another part of the city where the travel distance to and from makes involvement too difficult, and unwanted and/or unexpected family challenges that make involvement for the entire family unrealistic or unhealthy (i.e. health problems, martial or blended family difficulties, school/church networks not synchronizing well for kids).

Differences in philosophy and/or theology with church leadership can sometimes be valid reasons for leaving a church, too, provided that we do so with the right heart and prayerful spirit and communicate clearly with someone in leadership before leaving. Ultimately, we would hope that for anyone leaving a church, they would be going to something instead of running away from something.

DO I HAVE A CHRIST-LIKE SPIRIT?

Before, and as, we decide to leave a church we should make sure that we have a healthy, gracious, and Christ-like spirit. We should entirely avoid gossiping with others

in the church and having a divisive attitude and behavior, as this doesn't reflect Christ's example or benefit anyone. Instead, with an attitude of reconciliation and grace, we should thoroughly discuss our areas of conflict and concern with church leaders before deciding to leave.

HAVE I COMMUNICATED WELL?

Way too often, individuals simply scoot out the back door of the church without ever communicating with others about why they're leaving, or even that they have left. There are a number of possible explanations for this—our fear of addressing issues in a proactive, healthy, and biblical fashion; our feelings have been hurt over a perceived slight; or we're ashamed of some of our life choices or habits that we know are inconsistent with the life Christ calls us to.

No matter what your reasons are, because the Bible describes the church as a family, if we take membership in the family seriously, we shouldn't leave it without clearly communicating with someone that we're leaving and why we are doing so. None of us would ever dream of bailing on our earthly families without some communication beforehand. So if and when God leads you to leave TPCC, leave by the front door, and communicate clearly with someone in church leadership.

It is our sincere desire that everyone who calls Traders Point home is closer to Jesus when they leave here than when they first arrived. All of us should be growing toward maturity as Christ-followers, and one of the biggest ways we display that is through the way we love one another.

Being a member indicates a willingness to partner, and potentially lead, with us in our mission to engage the disengaged with the love of God, introduce them to Jesus, and help facilitate their growth to full maturity in Christ. A church is no stronger than the mutually

THE RESPONSIBILITY: ALL IN?

supportive relationships found within its membership, and one way of achieving unity in our church body is to clearly state what is required to be a member at Traders Point.

Here is what you agree to by being a member of Traders Point:

- 1** HAS MADE A PUBLIC CONFESSION OF FAITH AND COMMITMENT TO CHRIST AS LORD AND SAVIOR
- 2** IS PURSUING REPTENANCE
- 3** HAS BEEN BAPTIZED BY IMMERSION
- 4** HAS BEEN REGULARLY ATTENDING WEEKEND SERVICES
- 5** HAS COMPLETED THE MEMBERSHIP CLASS
- 6** HAS COMPLETED THE MEMBERSHIP GROUP
- 7** HAS SIGNED AND AGREED WITH THE MEMBER COVENANT

MEMBER COVENANT

I will protect the unity of my church by ...

- Treating others with love and respect (Ephesians 4:1-3),
- Refusing to gossip (Psalm 15:1-3; Ephesians 4:29-32), and
- Following my church leaders (Hebrews 13:17).

I will take ownership for the life of my church by ...

- Praying for its spiritual growth and outreach (Ephesians 4:15-16),
- Inviting and welcoming the unchurched (Matthew 28:18-20), and
- Participating in the life of my church through service and fellowship (1 Corinthians 7:17; Ephesians 4:12-16).

I will support the vision and mission of my church by ...

- Discovering and using my spiritual gifts (Romans 12:4-8),
- Allowing my leaders and teachers to equip me for service (Hebrews 13:20-21), and
- Ministering with a servant's heart (Colossians 3:12-17; Ephesians 6:5-7).

THE RESPONSIBILITY: ALL IN?

I will support my church by ...

- Attending worship faithfully
(Hebrews 10:23-25)
- Giving regularly and generously
(2 Corinthians 9:7)
- Setting a clear biblical example of godly living for my family, friends, and neighbors
(Philippians 1:27, 1 Timothy 1:16)
- Continuing to grow in my relationship with Christ
(2 Peter 3:18, Romans 4:20-21), and
- Making an impact for the kingdom of God by serving (Matthew 28:18-20, Romans 12:11).

PAUSE FOR DISCUSSION:

In the past six weeks, which topic that we covered impacted you the most? What stood out to you and why?

How is church membership different from how society views membership? Is this a hurdle for you in any way?

Do you have any questions about Traders Point or membership that haven't been answered?



GROUP INFORMATION

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