

# Why?

Over the past year, as pastors, we have heard a consistent theme come from our church members. We feel dry, distant from the Lord. Our lives are busy, and our pace is too fast. Our church has experienced a difficult year, from cancer diagnoses to chronic pain to loss of loved ones, Covenant has suffered this year.

So how do we respond when suffering and dryness hit us? We must get closer to Jesus. The answer isn't better programs or a permanent building. The answer is Jesus. We must stay close to him as his people if we want to find life in the desert and hope in brokenness.

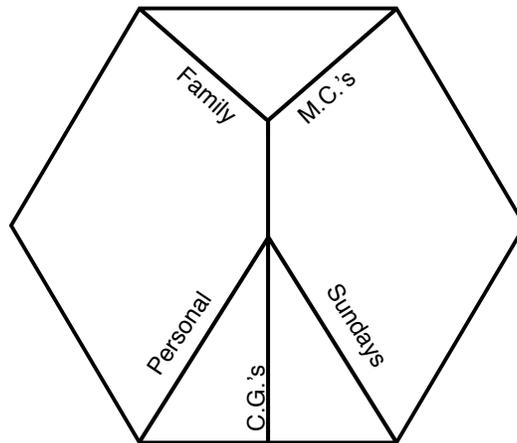
As your pastors, we've been praying and working to lead us well toward Christ over the next year, and as a result, we have developed a vision and a hope for 2016. We are calling it "Rooted".

# What?

Psalm 1 describes a wise and blessed and happy man. He doesn't do what everyone else does. He doesn't follow the course of the culture, or the advice of the lost. "But his delight is in the law of the Lord, and on that law he meditates day and night. He will be like a tree planted by the rivers of water that yields fruit in season. His leaf does not wither. In all that he does he prospers." We need deep roots in the revelation of God. We need to listen when he speaks, to obey when he commands. Jesus told his disciples that he is the vine and we are the branches. "Whoever abides in me, and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me, you can do nothing" (John 15:5).

This year we want to put down roots into God's Word. We want to abide in Jesus as a church family so that we would thrive and bear fruit as his people.

Here's the plan.



## DEVELOP THREE ROOTS!

- 1) **Personal Devotional Life:** We will journey through the entire bible as a church family. We will also be praying through a psalm each day in our devotionals. We will share the same reading plans.
- 2) **Covenant Groups:** Each week we will have a "Covenant Group Focus Chapter" that we want you to go through with one to three other people of the same sex. Reading the bible in community will serve to help you understand and encourage each other in believing and obeying King Jesus.
- 3) **Sunday Gatherings:** Every Sunday we will preach through a text that you will have read the previous week (and it will typically be the same chapter you read through for CG).

## **PRUNE TWO BRANCHES!**

- 1) **Family:** Your family is a great place to start obeying Jesus. Rather than simply learn God's word, we hope to hear it and do the hard work of obeying. We hope that families will begin to make time for the Bible, for Prayer, and for action this year. We hope and pray that this bears fruit in your marriage and in your kids hearts. We will have ideas every week for you to share what you're learning with your kids, and how to get started obeying King Jesus together.
- 2) **Missional Communities:** As we drink in God's word, we will find that God has good for us to enjoy and good for us to do. Each missional community will be given goals and assignments based on what we've learned from God's Word throughout the year.

# Hopes

## **Our hopes for this series in 2016 are many!**

We hope that we grow to be more:

- in love with Jesus. He is a King that invites us to draw near to him.
- encouraged by the gospel. The gospel is our story! It is good news of great joy.
- dependent on his Spirit. We have been given a helper to need as we abide in Christ.
- familiar with the bible. We have been given God's written word to guide us into truth.
- obedient to his commands. We have been given instructions about how to live.
- excited about his mission. The lost are dying apart from Christ. Let's bring good news.
- united in purpose. We have been given a family with whom to obey Jesus.
- hungry for his return. The story has an ending! Jesus is making all things new.

# How to Prepare

- Start building a habit of personal bible reading and prayer.
- Get in a Covenant Group!
- Don't miss Sundays.
- Start having regular bible time with your family or your spouse (Advent is a great time to start).
- Spread the word.
- Pray for your church.
- Encourage one another! This is a challenge, but it is a good challenge.
- Buy anything you might need. (Kids bibles, audio bibles, journals, etc.)
- Download the "Youversion" bible app. You can listen to streaming audio bible as well as subscribe to our reading plan. It is listed as "Eat This Book" reading plan.