

Church of the Redeemer
Five-Year Strategy for Mission
January 2012 through December 2016
Adopted by the Council of Elders

Our Calling as Christians

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,
because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor.
He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners
and recovery of sight for the blind,
To release the oppressed,
To proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

Jesus, Luke 4:18-19

All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.
Therefore go and make disciples of all nations,
baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,
and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.
And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Jesus, Matthew 28:18b-20

In many important ways, Church of the Redeemer is no different from any other congregation of the Body of Christ. Like all our brothers and sisters throughout the world and down through the ages, we have received the same general calling from the Lord. That call is stated in the words of Jesus recorded above.

We are given

- The Spirit of the Lord.
- An anointing to proclaim good news to the poor.
- Authority through the One who has all authority in heaven and on earth.
- Faith and freedom from fear; knowing that He is always with us.

We are sent

- To make disciples across all human boundaries
- To baptize new believers in the Name of the Triune God (literally)
- To immerse all people into the reality of the Triune God (metaphorically)
- To teach other disciples to obey everything Jesus commanded
- To proclaim freedom
- To proclaim healing
- To release the oppressed
- To proclaim the time of jubilee

Church of the Redeemer's Calling

In some important ways, Church of the Redeemer is different from any other congregation in the Body of Christ. We are a specific group of individuals who have been brought together by the Spirit of God in a definite time and place. We believe that our existence as a congregation is no accident; that we are not outside the Providence of Almighty God. God has a desire for our corporate life. He has called us to "such good works as He has prepared for us to walk in."

Discerning God's voice has been the major work of those involved in "outreach" over the past many months. It is not the purpose of this document to lay out a complete strategy for how Church of the Redeemer is to meet each point of our general call as Christians. Nor is it our purpose to lay out every aspect of our specific call as specific people.

The purpose of this document is to present a concentrated and (we pray) Spirit-empowered strategy for mission so that we may bring Christ's redemption "to those nearby and those far away." It serves to guide the church's leadership in order to maximize our evangelism and outreach to both the spiritually and economically poor.

This document is about mission, specifically about the "outreach" aspect of mission. However, in discussing how we reach out we must refer to internal matters as well. So, reference will be made to matters that might otherwise be categorized as worship or discipleship.

Goals of Outreach

1. We are sent; and our going is recognized, blessed, and celebrated.
2. The economically and spiritually poor experience Good News.
3. Freedom, healing and release are offered to those in need.
4. The time of jubilee is proclaimed.

First Goal: Jesus commands us to "go." In all that we do in outreach, it is necessary that members of our congregation are sent to "go." Physically and spiritually participating in the Great Commission is a necessary aspect of all Christian discipleship. This means interpersonal involvement, as well as prayer, giving, and education. It has been a failing of the mainline church in America that outreach has been defined as giving money to other organizations, being educated about the good work of these other people, and perhaps saying a prayer for them. Jesus' commandment to us, which we must obey and teach others to obey as well, demands personal response. Therefore, Church of the Redeemer must present opportunities for physical involvement, as well as prayer, giving, and education.

Along with this, we also must recognize that many in our congregation are already "going." The "going" that we do as an institution, as well as the "going" done by us as individuals or smaller groups must be recognized, blessed, and celebrated. Ultimately, it is Jesus who sends us. Therefore, the church must send His people. Sending, going, returning, and celebrating are all important parts of Jesus' command to "go."

Second Goal: In the Bible, the "poor" refer to both the spiritually (Matthew's Beatitudes) and economically (Luke's Beatitudes) impoverished. These people are in our community; in fact, all of us suffer from some degrees and kinds of poverty. However, we are particularly drawn to proclaim the Gospel to those outside of our current family. Proclaiming the Gospel involves:

- Our having good news to share
- Our understanding of the good news being as expansive as Jesus' understanding
- Our living the good news
- Our ability and willingness to express the good news to others
- Our reliance on God as we live out the good news with others
- Our recognition that the good news is for those nearby as well as those far away

The Good News is the proclamation of Jesus Christ and His reign as King. The Good News is that God has become a man. Through his life, teachings, miraculous power, atoning death, triumphant resurrection, glorious ascension, sending of the Holy Spirit, and eventual return he rules all things. He will bring all things to their conclusion.

Third Goal: The Good News as lived and proclaimed by Jesus was marked by freedom, healing, and release. Sometimes, this is physical (the lame man walking, the blind man seeing, the demon-possessed man released). Often this healing is not physically visible (sin forgiven, mourning ended, hope restored, salvation bestowed). As we live out our vision, we will be characterized by freedom, healing, and release in both physical and non-physical ways.

Fourth Goal: In Luke 4:19, Jesus says that He comes to proclaim the year of Jubilee. In the Bible, this means that debts are forgiven, redemption is offered to all people, and human relationships return to a place of compassion and reconciliation. We are called to be people who live each day in jubilee, while we look forward to the great Jubilee to come.

Methods of Outreach

Part One: Go

We are sent; and our going is recognized, blessed, and celebrated.

Area One: Information

1. We will regularly ask our members to inform us of the ministries in which they are involved.
2. We will regularly communicate this information to the congregation to encourage prayer and thanksgiving; and we will pray for them as a congregation.

Area Two: Support

3. We will include ministries in the prayers of the people and on the prayer chain.
4. We will bless members and their ministries and celebrate their ministry publicly.
5. We will ask our members to report about their ministries in order to celebrate with them.
6. If a member of our congregation is engaged in a short-term ministry which requires financial assistance they may apply to the outreach committee. The outreach committee will determine if they application is in line with our vision, and be empowered to release funds if appropriate.
7. If a member has applied to the outreach committee, and their ministry has been discerned to be in-line with our vision, we will communicate their support needs to the congregation, but will not allow direct appeals (written or verbal).

Area Three: Long-Term Discernment

8. We will offer a discernment process to members who feel called to long-term, full-time, vocational Christian ministry.
9. If the elders of Church of the Redeemer are persuaded that an individual is called to such ministry, we will assist that individual in fundraising for training and release, as well as providing reasonable financial aid for them in our budget when possible.

Part Two: The Economically Poor

*The economically . . . poor experience the Good News.
Freedom, healing and release are offered to those in need.*

Area One: The Local Economically Poor

1. Our congregation will continue to serve Family Affair Ministries in East Nashville.. We will make regular donations to Family Affair Ministries. We will encourage our members to participate in the ministry done through that organization, both as individuals and in support of occasional large scale events.
2. Having walked alongside FAM for a number of years, we will take what we have learned from them as we engage in our own new endeavors.

Area Two: The Economically Poor Elsewhere.

3. We will encourage our members to pursue ministry through organizations which care for the poor outside of Nashville.
4. We will continue to support the work of ministries within Rwanda. When possible, we will continue our pattern of visiting Rwanda and receiving visitors from there. We hope to serve our African brothers and sisters, and to learn from them in the way of Jesus.
5. We will continue to sponsor short-term mission trips to the economically poor both in the U.S. and outside, to countries such as Guatemala. Our short-term mission trips will be in conjunction with local churches in the mission field.

Part Three: The Spiritually Poor

*The spiritually poor experience the Good News.
Freedom, healing, and release are offered to those in need.*

Area One: Interpersonal Evangelism and Discipleship

1. Members of our congregation will be trained and encouraged to share Jesus Christ, in both word and deed, with those who do not yet know His love. This training must take place in the context of
 - a. Sermons
 - b. Discipleship for all ages (Sunday school, etc.)
 - c. Cell groups
 - d. As part of ministry to the economically poor.

Area Two: Congregational Evangelism and Discipleship

2. Our congregation is called to be especially creative in how it presents the good news to those outside of the Church, and especially those in the basic geographic area of the Abbey. This creativity will require risk taking, both personally and financially, as well as an early-adaptive approach to ideas.
3. The Outreach Committee will assist individuals and groups in our congregation discern through these creative ideas, and will determine which projects will be officially supported by our church community.

Area Three: Other Organizations

4. We will engage humbly and graciously with other church bodies in our area. This includes participating in ecumenical activities that are in-line with our vision.

5. We will promote the work of organizations that are in line with our vision, as well as officially participate in events that do the same. For instance, we will set aside time in the service every quarter to promote an outside Christian organization. These organizations will be selected by the Outreach Committee.
6. Any financial support given by our church must go to an individual, event, or organization which will use the gift to promote the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
7. We will not promote any political party, candidate, or movement.

Area Four: Ministries to the Spiritually Poor

8. It is necessary that we maintain an active ministry of pastoral care in order to minister freedom, healing, and release.
9. We support addiction recovery groups in order to minister freedom, healing, and release.
10. We provide healing ministries to pray for both physical and non-physical healing to those in need.
11. We will train and release members into the ministries like catechist and spiritual director, in order to minister freedom and discipleship to those in need.
12. The Benevolence Committee will be empowered to minister to economic needs among those within our congregation who find themselves in financial need or bondage. This includes financial counseling, financial discipleship, career counseling, and monetary aid. These may be “out-sourced” by the committee to others in the congregation, or those outside the church.
13. Besides those listed above, ministry in the area of worship, music, preaching, children’s discipleship, youth discipleship, adult discipleship, fellowship, and hospitality must continually be maintained and strengthened. These must also be valued for the part they play in outreach.

Part Four: The Time of Jubilee

We live as jubilee people

1. The motto of our church is “we live and proclaim Christ’s redeeming love.” Living that out requires the Holy Spirit of God to form us into his people.
2. The people of God are jubilee people, people who walk in forgiveness, healing, compassion, truth, repentance and all the other good gifts of God.
3. Our outreach comes forth from this kind of community, a community centered in Christ, empowered by the Spirit, and glorifying the Father.
4. Jubilee is a time of celebration and joy. Our prayer is that, even in the midst of difficulties, we will be a church that gives thanks to God with joyful heart.