



Revision - Identity

An identity is a description of the character of a person; it highlights who they are, what they value, and what directs their lives. A church identity helps us understand how Jesus' gospel-ordered purpose for the Church Universal applies to us in the particular circumstances of our community. This guides us in understanding how the Spirit will lead us to become identified by this identity.

Purpose: Why are we here?

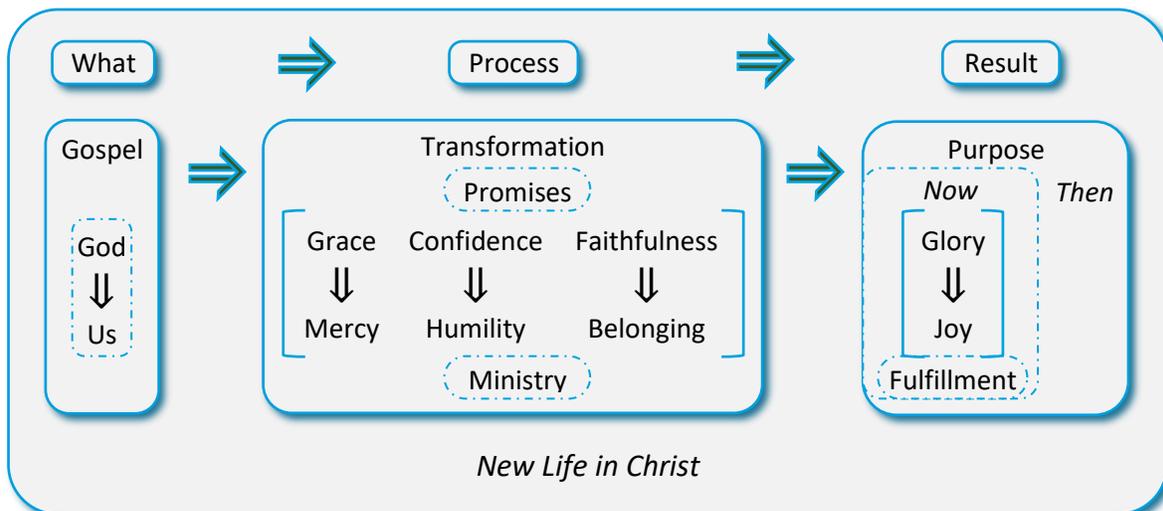
Most people in our community express some sort of belief in Jesus Christ. They've said, "I'm a sinner." They've asked Jesus to "come into my heart." They're trying real hard, in their own power, to live a good life. They're doing the best they can to live right. They're hoping for the best when they stand before Jesus and He judges both their belief and their lives. Yet they live under the shadow of an unspoken fear. Rather than the joy Jesus promised, they live under the threat of "Or else!" This is not the new life that Christ gives.

Being just like our family, friends, and neighbors, but having had this threatening fear removed, we believe God has given us this purpose. We are here:

To help people who ...	<i>But what is "it"?</i>
... think they get <i>it</i> ,	The awesome,
... but ain't enjoying <i>it</i> ,	radical,
... figure out they don't got <i>it</i> ,	new life
... so that they get <i>it</i> ,	in Christ!
... and enjoy <i>it</i> !	

Mission: In short, we serve so that our community experiences the awesome, radical, new life in Jesus.

Values: The following are qualities of God that He holds so dear that He gives them to us in Christ. The Spirit grows them in us so that they become cherished, indelibly marking our thoughts, desires, judgments, and choices. They serve to *identify* our new life in Christ. (See after this diagram for specifics highlighting each of these values.)



With our purpose in mind, we've arranged these values to picture the spiritual process that moves someone from an unbeliever to someone who is experiencing a mature expression of the new life in Christ.

What (key parts of the process)

- *Gospel*: This is the good news that Jesus Christ has done what was necessary to end the misery and futility of ordinary life. Since Jesus paid the debt of our rebellion, God now adopts us as His own dearly loved children. Colossians 2:13-14
- *God*: In a world full of displays of power, God uses the rather weak proclamation of the gospel as the means by which He ends our life of futility and gives us new life as His beloved children. Romans 1:16-17
- *Us*: We are the display of the greatness of God's gospel plan. Weak ourselves, we receive the gospel's results so that we now have joined the "family business": giving others the gospel. Ephesians 1:18; John 20:21

Process (critical factors of the process)

- *Transformation*: Through the gospel, God is transforming our lives. Day by day, they are becoming more and more like Jesus' amazing life, as we learn to live by simple faith and repentance. 2 Corinthians 3:18
- *Promises*: Our transformation rests on God's unshakeable promises, found throughout the Bible. It is as He keeps these promises to us that we become more like Jesus. 1 Thessalonians 5:23-24
- *Ministry*: Our church's purpose is the ministry of this transformation. We minister the gospel, knowing that God the Spirit is present to work through our faith both to grow us and to transform others in our communities. 1 Peter 2:5, 9
- *Grace*: This is all of God's grace – the Spirit's presence to keep the Father's promises to make us like the Son. Nothing we've done earns this, and yet it is essential to living our new life. Titus 3:4-7
- *Mercy*: Because we've been given grace, we give mercy to others. Knowing how hard life without hope in Christ is, we learn to offer others kindness, gentleness, and forbearance. Colossians 3:12-13
- *Confidence*: God grows our faith into confidence, confidence in Him and His plan for our lives. We live as those who are becoming fountains of life where others find hope and comfort. Ephesians 3:11-12
- *Humility*: We are deeply aware that the wonders of this transformation are utterly undeserved. This yields humility which God honors with more grace. 1 Peter 5:5-7
- *Faithfulness*: We still struggle with the old life and its threats of ruin. Yet in our transformation God secures us with His own faithfulness; He always comes through for us, so that we thrive! Lamentations 3:22-23
- *Belonging*: Gone is the fear that one day we will be all alone. In Jesus, we now know a belonging that fills all the longings of our fearful hearts. God is ours! We are His! Forever! Jeremiah 29:11; Romans 8:28-32

Result (key outcomes of the process)

- *Purpose*: We all know we were meant for a purpose, one that is gloriously satisfying. In Jesus, God has rescued us from the ruin of self-purpose and has restored us to His original mind-blowing purpose. Ephesians 1:11-12
- *Glory*: Why does God do all this wondrous stuff for us, in us, through us?! Because this is how He shows the world how awe-inspiringly, stupendously fantastic He truly is. In our weakness, His glory shines brightest! John 15:8; 2 Corinthians 12:9

- *Joy*: The experience of being His glory-bearers yields immense joy: lives overflowing with delight and love, peace and purpose. John 15:11
- *Fulfillment*: This dual experience of glory-joy yields the deep-settled satisfaction that our lives are not meaningless. Through the gospel, God restores us to what we all know in our hearts: that we were meant to live forever in never-ending fulfillment that keeps increasing the display of His glory! Psalm 73:25-28; 2 Corinthians 4:16-18
- *Now/Then*: The full experience of our purpose waits for Jesus' return. Yet God has given us faith that looks to the perfection that will be ours *then* and yields our increase of it *now*. Hebrews 11:1; 1 John 3:1-2

Motto: A motto is a short phrase that serves as a very brief representation of the identity of the thing to which it refers. When written well, a motto instantly evokes emotions and ideas, associating them with that identity. Good mottos are also easily remembered and can become part of the cultural landscape of a community. We will use this motto right below our church name – it is the THING we want people to remember when they hear our name.

With these things in mind, the motto underscoring our identity is: For a new life of glory and joy!

Vision: While there remains a strong memory of Christ in our community, the experience of the new life in Christ grows more and more distant. Most of us still express some sort of belief in Jesus. But the power of His presence? Increasingly, that is foreign to us.

As we consider our growing re-discovery of the new life in Christ, and our community's need for the same, we are compelled by the love of Christ to answer this plea for vision with our own prayer for vision:

Our vision is to become a church where...

... the rejected find acceptance,	... the hurt find safety,	... the disappointed find delight,
... the frustrated find encouragement,	... the fearful find trust,	... the anxious find serenity,
... the burdened find relief,	... the bored find purpose,	... the empty find fulfillment,
... the weary find rest,	... the angry find calm,	... the judged find grace,
... the lonely find belonging,	... the prideful find humility,	... the hopeless find hope,
... the troubled find quiet,	... the skeptical find truth,	... the sorrowful find joy,
... the grieving find comfort,	... the driven find contentment,	(but especially...)
... the seeking find answers,	... the timid find confidence,	... where people find the new life.

Outcomes: When a person commits to be a part of this family of God, what will it look like when they've got *it*, when they are experiencing the new life in Christ?

In their lives, they will:

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| • be gospel-driven in all they think, desire, value, and choose | • live a grace-based life | • be family-faithful |
| | • have faith + repentance habits | • be church-devoted |
| | • be morally focused | • be community-committed |

In their worship, they will:

- faithfully participate in Sunday worship, family worship, and private worship, giving sincere attention to the ministry of the word, sacraments, and prayers in their lives, their families, and our communities.

In their discipleship, they will:

- give intentional effort to participate in the discipleship ministries of our church, both in being disciplined and sharing in discipling others.

In their witness, they will:

- actively join in the witness ministries of our church, and pursue their own private witnessing, particularly in faithfully praying for their contacts and then witnessing the gospel to them and others as God provides opportunity.

In their ministry, they will:

- use their natural abilities, passions, and spiritual gifts to serve their brothers and sisters in our church, and then use these gifts through our church to bring the gospel, in word and deed, to our communities.

Name: An identity is associated with a name. When there is a change in the identity, a person will change their name. The same applies to our church. We've adopted a name that marks our new identity while maintaining our history:

- *The Church at Chantilly, PCA:* Our new identity strongly emphasizes that we are called to serve the community in which we are located. This location-oriented name does the same.
- *Historic First Presbyterian Church of Montgomery:* Because of God's honoring our repentance for the sins of our past, we believe it is important to keep our original name. Adding "Historic" highlights it in a manner that emphasizes God's gospel work among us.



The Church at Chantilly, PCA
Historic First Presbyterian Church of Montgomery
for a new life of glory and joy