



OUR MISSION

The mission of Jesus Christ's followers has never changed. The message is the same, but the methods are new. The call is consistent, but the context is ever-changing. Our mission statement succinctly describes our heart and our reason for being here.

*To lead all people to become authentic followers of Jesus
who engage our world for good.*

OUR VALUES

The values of Chatham Church serve as the foundation of our ministry and capture God's thematic purposes found in Scripture. These are the guardrails that keep us on the right track.

Chatham Community Church seeks to be a church that is...

- gospel-centered
- biblically-guided
- relationally-connected
- generous-hearted
- outwardly-focused

OUR VISION

The mission of Chatham Community Church, “To lead all people to become authentic followers of Jesus who engage our world for good,” is really a restatement of Jesus’ command to go and make disciples of all nations. What does that look like at Chatham Church? Here is how we interpret that goal... (these are the things you’ll hear us say a lot!)

TO LEAD ALL PEOPLE

“as many people as possible”

All people matter to God, so all people matter to us. We want to be a church that is impacting an ever-expanding community of people. We will do whatever it takes to connect people to Christ and help them learn to live for Him. When it comes to reaching people with the gospel, the essential message of the gospel will never change, but our methods of outreach will. Our cultural traditions are expendable, because we believe sacrificing for the gospel sometimes starts with giving up what is comfortable to us.

We believe that if Christ left the comfort of heaven and clothed Himself in our flesh in order to reach us, we should be willing to do whatever it takes to reach others for Him. We want to connect with our unchurched, dechurched or poorly churching friends, so we consider those outside the church in all that we do.

There are two kinds of churches. One says, “You can come to us, learn our language, learn our interests, meet our needs.” The other says, “We will come to you, learn your language, learn your interests, meet your needs.” We want to be the second kind of church, following Christ’s incarnation as our motivation and our model. We want to create a missional movement.

We do not believe, however, in growing large at the expense of truth or the expense of a healthy church. Our “ultimate goal” is not gathering lots of people into a room on Sunday morning, but we do want thriving communities with as many disciples as we can effectively reach and teach. We believe God is looking not only at the breadth of our ministry, but also the depth.

“building bridges”

Jesus was revolutionary in his ability to build relational bridges across the typical dividing lines. We want to do the same. We believe we can help people who are new to the area *and* people that have been here all their lives. We can help people who are poor *and* people who are rich. We want to be a place where PhDs and GEDs can learn from one another. We can help people from different political viewpoints, different cultures, and different generations. We will purposefully build bridges across dividing lines to connect with those that are not like us. We will model a respect and a reciprocal love for one another that goes beyond Southern hospitality and social politeness. We will show our world there is a better way to live together. Because we are only part of God’s work in the world, we will seek to establish partnerships in our community that will maximize our impact.

TO BECOME AUTHENTIC FOLLOWERS OF JESUS

“a life-changing relationship with Jesus”

We believe the reason people often feel unsettled and discontented with life is that they have sought significance and happiness in something other than God. When we have sought worth in something other than

God, we have rejected God's rule over our lives. Our rejection of God leaves us in a state of brokenness and isolation, and our separation from God leaves a void in our hearts. Jesus came as a rescuer to redeem us from our failure and bridge the gap between us and God the Father.

The gospel (or good news) of Jesus Christ says that while we are more broken and helpless than we ever imagined, we are also more loved and accepted in Jesus than we ever dared to hope. This belief changes us and restores us to the relationship with God we were created for. We believe the gospel is the way we enter into a personal relationship with God, and the gospel is also the way we grow in a relationship with God. This is what we mean when we say that we are a gospel-centered church.

We look to the Bible as our guide in all of life. We're not into superficial answers or spiritual quick-fixes. While psychological techniques and behavior modification may have some short-term benefit, these can never fully restore our hearts. Belief always precedes behavior. We believe we must turn from our self-worshipping, self-serving lifestyles and by faith experience the life-changing love of God. Struggle is a normal part of the growth process as we learn to trust God with our lives, but God specializes in life-change and never leaves us along the way. We grow as we bring our lives increasingly into alignment with the gospel we believe. This doesn't happen in a day—it is a life-long journey of learning, growth and transformation.

“following Jesus is a group project”

Spiritual growth happens best with other people. Both our Scriptures and our experience tell us that *you can't follow Jesus alone*. God's plan is for everyone to be relationally-connected with others in the church.

Authentic followers of Jesus love one another. We're friends. We eat together. We play together. We're there when children are born. We're there when someone dies. Our members share with each other. We do life together. We are committed to bringing people together in these kinds of relationships, because: "Better is a neighbor nearby than a brother far away" (Proverbs).

We believe that our community ought to be a place where people know and are known. So, we are committed to growing "smaller" at the same time that we grow "bigger." We do this by developing local communities of believers that we call "small groups." These groups gather regularly in homes throughout the area to study the bible together, learn from one another, pray for one another, encourage one another. Groups thrive when group members bring a heart to serve and minister to one another rather than to "get something out of the group." It takes time and relational investment, but God does amazing things through authentic people who are seeking Him together. But those meetings are just the starting place, and small group friendships extend throughout life.

Because we want everyone who attends our church to experience these kinds of relationships, we are continually expanding and multiplying our groups to include as many people as possible. As a church, our success depends on how effectively these groups help people to become authentic followers of Jesus.

“partnering with you”

We need "all ya'll" (read this in true Southern drawl). The Church is not a building; the church is a community. Church is not *something you do*, church is *who we are*. It's not just about one hour a week on Sundays. Following Jesus is about who we are all week long. We want to be friends-on-a-mission to follow Jesus together, and that means that we are engaged in all of life together.

We can't raise your children. We can't fix your marriage. We can't find you a spouse. What we can do is partner with you as you seek to live out your faith in real life ways. We can help equip you. We are committed to growing great children's ministries, student ministries, and family ministries as vital to our mission as a church, and we'll help you discover what the Bible says about how best to live in your current life situation. We'll partner with you. But we want to empower you to be the minister.

We don't believe the church has any spectators, so we hope that every member of Chatham Church is *on mission* with us. Authentic followers of Jesus give sacrificially of their money, time and energy. We are committed to encouraging and equipping our members to use their gifts and talents to help us accomplish all God calls us to do. If we are going to maximize our redemptive potential, we need a church full of generous-hearted people who are fully engaged with us.

WHO ENGAGE OUR WORLD FOR GOOD

“we love this place”

We see “the world” as “our world”—we are very much a part of it, united with all creation under God and connected to all people in our humanity. At the same time, we are also the “called out ones” who are a part of a new community called the church. We believe that churches should be a blessing to others. Rather than isolating ourselves or rejecting our world, we want to be fully engaged with it. We want to be known more for what we are *for* than what we are *against*. We believe that we bless others when we honor God in our jobs, our friendships, our art, our environment, our social responsibility, our seeking justice, our serving the needy, our evangelism, and in every other area of our lives. We love this place and want to make it a better world because we are here.

“the gospel is the ultimate good”

We believe that all of life pales in comparison to the importance of a personal relationship with Jesus. This belief makes us prioritize the gospel over everything else. We want to be a blessing to our world in many ways, but no blessing we can give will benefit a person like becoming a new creation who will live eternally in a fully restored life with God. We were made to worship God, and a life that does not worship God is incomplete even if everything else is in good order. Because of this, every ministry of the church undergirds our focus on sharing the gospel with those who do not know God.

“the church is the greatest change-agent in the world”

We believe *the* most beneficial thing for every community is a church that can proclaim and live out the gospel of Jesus. We believe there is no organization on the planet that can compete with the church, and we believe it will survive as long as time itself. So, we are committed to planting churches in strategic locations in our region and around the world. Planting churches allows each of us to be a part of the mission to “go and make disciples of all nations.”

We are currently exploring partnerships with church planting networks to determine the best path for us to partner with God in a global church planting movement. As soon as we can chart a course for effective involvement, we will begin funneling resources to these church plants, as well as sending volunteers to serve those communities. God-willing, we will partner with our first church plant in 2010.