



Our Mission

What is God Doing In Us?

If the Church is God's universal plan for making His glory known to the world, what is God calling to come alongside Him to see that plan unfold particularly in San Diego? When we use the term "Mission" we are speaking of our path to see God's Vision embodied in Central San Diego and beyond.

The second-largest city in California, San Diego is one of the most beautiful cities in the nation. Hosting over 35.1 million tourists a year, our city offers an alluring and compelling beauty. As one of the top of the US destinations, San Diego represents slow-paced Southern California to many; however, for the steady stream of refugees who have been coming for decades, San Diego represents so much more: a fresh start and a land of opportunity. Many of these refugees find themselves in a few concentrated, more affordable parts of the city, City Heights being one of those nexus points. Within one zip code, over 100 languages are spoken, which means the world is literally in our backyard.¹

The ugly underbelly to such a beautiful city is less obvious but equally real. Our city is a known hub for human-trafficking, being so close to the border with Mexico. The homeless population has been burgeoning for years, and few people know how to address our homeless neighbors with dignity and a lasting hope. Additionally, in 2019 alone, there were more than 3,000 children in foster care.

San Diego is a place of great spiritual interest but little real substance. People are hungry for answers, but tend to look to the literal sea or the sea of religious syncretism for truth. Just as the physical ground is dry and cracked due to prolonged drought, the spiritual climate is hungry for the living water that can only come from Christ who is the living water.

Center City Church will focus on an under-churched, central area of our city, diverse in population and highly inter-generational.

In light of God's universal plan and our particular place, we have prayerfully landed on a mission statement (What is God doing in us?). However, before we explain the statement itself, we want to expound upon a few thoughts that guided our thinking.

First, we wanted to keep our statement *simple, sticky, and sound*. *Simple* means using the fewest words possible. Simplicity is needed for our particular context in post-modern, post Christian San Diego. As we are seeking to reach largely unchurched and dechurched folks, a simple and clear mission statement goes a long way. *Sticky* means memorable, repeatable and pass-on-able. As we seek to equip the saints for the work of ministry (Ephesians 4:11-12), we

¹ <https://www.pewforum.org/religious-landscape-study/metro-area/san-diego-metro-area/>



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want our people to be able to share our mission easily and succinctly. *Sound* means that while we cannot say everything that we want to say, we want each chosen word and phrase to have strong biblical foundations undergirding them. Lastly, our mission statement must be true not only to who we are and but also to who we continually aspire to be.

That said, our Mission Statement is the following:

We are a family of God centered on knowing Christ and making Him known.

A family of God:

For many people in San Diego, the word church carries vague or nondescript connotations. By defining the Church as the family of God, we are seeking to help our members understand the familial love and connection of those united by the precious blood of Christ. In such a multicultural city with so many different definitions and approaches to family, the Church as the family of God inspires relational unity, purpose, and love that are only possible through the life, death, and resurrection of Christ.

As our society moves toward increasingly dysfunctional families, identifying primarily as the family of God denotes relationships, love, time spent, intentionally, and one-anothering. Christ Himself sought to teach His own disciples this reality in Matthew 12:46-50.

46 *While Jesus was still talking to the crowd, his mother and brothers stood outside, wanting to speak to him. 47 Someone told him, "Your mother and brothers are standing outside, wanting to speak to you." 48 He replied to him, "Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?" 49 Pointing to his disciples, he said, "Here are my mother and my brothers. 50 For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother."*

What a profound jaw-dropping statement, especially in the context of a communal culture where family was everything. Christ, who redefined theological realities, spiritual realities and religious expectations, also redefining family. By God's grace, we long for a more true and Godward experience of the family of God.



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Centered on:

While they are short words, prepositions are significant. The difference between doing kingdom work *for* God and *with* God is profound. It is easy to slip into thinking we are doing kingdom work for God, as if God were served by human hands and needed anything (Acts 17:23-24). Yet, all kingdom work is really an invitation to more deeply live out of our union with Christ by abiding in Him who is the vine (John 15). Apart from Him, even with the best strategy, the best building, and the best music, we can do nothing. It is natural to share the disciples' excitement at being used to advance the kingdom of God (Luke 10:17). However, we want to remember to rejoice that our names are written in heaven (Luke 10:20).

As God shows us the work He is doing in the world, we are seeking to come alongside Him and praying that He would establish and give permanence to the works of our hands (Psalm 90:16-17). We recognize that unless the Lord builds the house, they labor in vain who build it (Psalm 127:1). That said, we know that we have a part to play in doing the works of light while it is still time (John 9:4).

...knowing Christ and making Him known:

"But whatever was gain to me I count as loss for the sake of Christ. More than that, I count all things as loss compared to the surpassing excellence of knowing Christ Jesus my Lord, for whom I have lost all things. I consider them rubbish, that I may gain Christ and be found in Him, not having my own righteousness from the law, but that which is through faith in Christ, the righteousness from God on the basis of faith. I want to know Christ and the power of His resurrection and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to Him in His death, and so, somehow, to attain to the resurrection from the dead."

-Philippians 3:7-11

Knowing Christ by faith, personally, relationally, powerfully is at the heart of our church. To know Christ is to know God: "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30). The word that the Apostle Paul uses here 'to know' is not just intellectual but also affectual; this knowledge is not only factual knowledge but personally and experiential. We want people to know Christ through justification, sanctification, and glorification. Knowing Christ personally means knowing Him through His word. Peter declared *where are we to go; you have the words of eternal life*. (John 6:67). Later on the road to Emmaus with two of His disciples, *'beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself* (Luke 24:27)'.



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To make Him known is the inevitable reality and overflow of knowing Him. In the book of Acts an amazing statement is made of those who came to know Christ powerfully and personally: *Acts 4: 13 When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus.* These unschooled and ordinary men went on to say six verses later: *Acts 4:19 But Peter and John replied, "Which is right in God's eyes: to listen to you, or to him? You be the judges! 20 As for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard."* They who had grown to know Him and be with Him, couldn't stop making Him known.