



IN-COVENANT CLASS

IN COVENANT CLASS

Sundays 9:00-10:15am

- Session 1: WORSHIP (begins on page 3)
- Session 2: COMMUNITY (begins on page 7)
- Session 3: MERCY (begins on page 13)

OUR VISION

Liberti Church seeks to live, speak, and serve as the very presence of Jesus Christ for the Harrisburg region, that together we might enjoy and share the freedom of His Gospel.

What does this freedom look like in the life of a follower of Jesus? We're freed by Jesus to pursue a life of worship, community, and mercy.

Worship	freedom to love God
Community	freedom to love each other
Mercy	freedom to love our neighbor

So the purpose of everything we do at Liberti Church - gathered worship services, serving opportunities, student and kids ministries - the purpose of all of it is to facilitate and further this pursuit of a lifestyle of worship, community and mercy.

That's an important distinction. It's NOT that we worship on Sundays, have community in groups and do mercy through partnerships and service opportunities. Instead we simultaneously pursue worship, community and mercy in everything we do as a church. Of course, how that looks in a particular environment, ministry or opportunity will differ slightly. But at the end of the day if something we do as a church doesn't foster those three things, we shouldn't do it.

In this class, it's helpful to break these three things apart so we can seek to understand what each of these things mean. But at the end of the day, we want to put it all back together and seek to pursue all three concurrently.

WORSHIP

Jesus frees us to love God

How Do We Relate to God? (Luke 15:1-2, 11-32)

- Two brothers; two kinds of people:
 - different searches for worth, different approaches to laws and rules
 - two kinds of lostness - two kinds of running from God
- One way home to the Father, one way to the feast and celebration.

God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. - 2 Corinthians 5:21

The Gospel Changes Everything.

- We don't earn God's favor by our obedience to him – his unmerited favor (“grace”) is ours through faith in Jesus Christ.
- Yet, because of his love and free grace toward us, we offer him obedience and worship him as a joyful response.
- Our worship and obedience to God is motivated by his grace, not guilt
- We preach the Gospel to believers, not just unbelievers (Romans 1:16)

Worship is Life, Life is Worship.

- We are all worshippers, the difference is who or what we worship
- Because we are created for worship, when we do not worship God, we worship other finite things; we set our hearts on relationships, careers, money, accomplishments, approval, comfort, power. These are things we all tend to ‘worship’ instead of worshipping God.
- Proper worship is directed toward God. Instead of setting our affections on other, lesser things, deriving our meaning and sense of self-worth from them, we set them on God.

Turning Back to God: A life of Worship in Response to Grace

The Christian life is a life that turns back to God through Jesus Christ and begins to listen to and follow him as we live life in the world. Consider the 10 Commandments, found in Exodus 20, a biblical guide for obeying God:

1. “You shall have no other gods before me” (v.3).
God comes first – nothing else. Not power, pleasure, possessions, relationships, sex, or money.
2. “You shall not make for yourself an idol...” (v.4)
Love God as He has revealed himself. Don't imagine Him to be like yourself, or lower. Worship and serve God only in the way the scriptures teach.
3. “You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God...” (v.7)
Be serious about God. Treat His name with reverence and honor Him with you thoughts, and with your language. Realize that His honor is at stake in everything you do. When you encounter heresy (lies about God), guard His reputation by standing up for the truth.

4. “Remember the Sabbath day by keeping it holy” (v. 8)
Use Sunday as day of worship and fellowship. Rest in the righteous life Christ offers you. Treat all time as God’s time and find true rest in Him rather than production or accomplishments.
5. “Honor your father and your mother...” (v. 12)
Treat your parents and all those in authority with proper love and respect.
6. “You shall not murder.” (v. 13)
Life is sacred. Don’t be a person of malice, cruelty, violence, or revenge. You should struggle for the oppressed – before they are born (abortion), and after (combating homelessness, hunger, poverty, racism, suicide, euthanasia). You should seek to love your neighbor as yourself in all situations.
7. “You shall not commit adultery.” (v. 14)
Sex is sacred. You are to honor it as God has created it – an act of intimacy, love, communication, and (sometimes) procreation between a man and a woman within the covenant of marriage. Other expressions of sexuality outside the marriage covenant are not pleasing to him. Christian married couples should see sex as a positive command to seek to serve, please, and fully give themselves to one another.
8. “You shall not steal.” (v. 15)
“Love to your neighbor requires you to hold sacred not only his person (6th commandment) and his marriage (7th commandment), but also his property and his due.” – Martin Luther. You are to be impeccably honest. You shouldn’t steal time from your employer, or cheat on your income taxes. You should pay your debts, and use your money for the benefit of the poor, and the kingdom of God.
9. “You shall not give false testimony against your neighbor.” (v. 16)
Truth is sacred. Be sincere in all your dealings. You are never to gossip, lie, or put a spin to things that distorts reality, or does your neighbor harm. You should always speak the truth in love, and for your neighbor’s good. You should be a peace maker, and always zealous for you neighbor’s reputation. Without being naive, always put the best construction on things.
10. “You shall not covet...” (v. 17)
Be content. Don’t lust for more than you have or for what others have. Don’t worry or be anxious, but delight in the love of Christ, and seek His kingdom and righteousness. Be thankful for all God’s providence’s in your life.

The Gospel Creates a New Worshipping Community.

- Gathered worship and scattered worship
 - When we gather:
 - Come to give your praise and adoration to God
 - Come to worship expecting God to work in your life.
 - Come to worship expecting God to work in the lives of your friends.
 - Priorities of gathered worship at Liberti Church
 - the centrality of the Gospel
 - traditional and dynamic
 - God-centered and comprehensible
 - When we scatter: (more on this in the Community and Mercy sections)

The Gospel Causes Us to Want Others to Worship Too.

- We expect, welcome, and respect non-Christians in our worship gatherings, with any questions, objections, struggles, and doubts. We want others to experience the freedom of Jesus regardless of where they are in life right now.
- In worship gatherings, we are purposefully conscious of and welcoming to non-Christians, seeking for comprehensibility at all times.
- In daily life, we embrace the call to love our neighbors
- Bottom Line: The Gospel makes us a community where Christians say, "These are the people I want around my non-Christian friends. The Gospel of Jesus is what they need to hear, and we want to help them hear it in loving, respectful ways."

Someone Who Wants to Enter Into Covenant With Liberti Church...

- Believes the Gospel; sees the life, death and resurrection of Jesus as beautiful and necessary, and trusts that work to free us from the penalty and power of sin.
- Understands that all of life is worship, and seeks to offer up his/her life to God as an act of worship in response to the mercy of God. (Romans 12:1-2)
- Is committed to the gathered worship of our church (Hebrews 10:25).
- Is committed to plug in relationally and join us as we pursue a relationship with Christ and a life together serving God in this region

What We Believe:

- We believe Jesus Christ lived the life we should have lived and died the death we deserved to die. His resurrection from the dead is the central fact of both human history and personal meaning in life. We are a people who are finding freedom and life as we are learning to trust Jesus, let go of our unbelief and fear, and find joy in the mission he calls us to.
- See our **Doctrinal and Confessional Statement** and **Statement on Marriage, Gender and Sexuality** in Appendices I and II beginning on page 18.

Relevant Rhythms of Grace:¹

1. **Gathered Worship.** On Sunday we gather together weekly to worship God and, through His Spirit, rehearse the gospel and re-center our lives in Jesus Christ through song, Scripture, prayer, the sacraments, and corporate fellowship. When we cannot be at the church where we are members, we seek to worship elsewhere, or in some other way join in the fellowship of other believers to observe the Lord's Day.
2. **Daily Prayer and Bible Study.** Everything in the Christian's life flows from encounter with God in prayer. We bring each day's joys and needs to the God who cares for us, and we also read His Word, allowing it to change us and help us grow. When together with one or more brothers and sisters, these prayers and readings can be recited jointly. When absent from one another, we will pray on our own. This rhythm also involves deeper study of theology, which may need to be a weekly or monthly practice rather than a daily one.
3. **Sabbath.** We rest from our work and celebrate our new life in Jesus Christ for one full day each week. The biblical rule of Sabbath is rooted in the principles of recreation and

¹ See Appendix IV for explanation and full list of the Rhythms of Grace

restoration; these principles are emphasized in the two accounts of the Ten Commandments being delivered to Israel. This rhythm may include other annual or bi-annual retreating rhythms in order to intentionally reflect upon our relationship with God, ourselves, and with others. Disciples rest with Christ, just as they work with Him.

4. **Bodily Consecration.** God created everything invisible and visible. Therefore, disciples seek to put every physical thing to the good use that God intends. This includes faithful use and care of our bodies (our fasting and feasting, our drinking and abstaining, our sexual expression or restraint, and all that we do with our eyes and ears and hands). It also includes how we use our bodies and time to care for God's good but fallen creation and all living things within it. "So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God." (1 Corinthians 10:31).

Relevant In-Covenant Vows:²

1. Do you admit that in your own strength you are a slave to sin, resulting in degradation and God's judgment, and that your only hope is in God's mercy through the liberating work of Jesus Christ?
2. Do you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God and Savior of sinners, and do you receive Him and depend on Him alone for salvation and redemption as He is offered in the Gospel?
3. Do you now resolve and promise, in humble reliance upon the grace of the Holy Spirit, that you will seek to live as a follower of Christ with all of your heart, mind, soul and strength?

^{2 2} See Appendix V for full list of In-Covenant Vows

COMMUNITY

Jesus frees us to love each other

The Church Is Not

- an institution, place or event.

The Church Is

- A Body (1 Corinthians 12:12-26).
- A Family (Hebrews 2:11-12; Galatians 6:1-2, 10).
- A Community. (Acts 2:42-47)

The Call of the Community of God

- We are to be a worshipping community (Deuteronomy 6:4-7)
- We are to be an unconditionally loving community (John 13:34)
- We are to be a holy, mercy-receiving community (1 Peter 2:9-10)
- We are to be a truth-telling community (Ephesians 4:25)
- We are to be an encouraging community (Hebrews 10:25)
- We are to be a sacrificially generous community (Acts 4:32-35)
- We are to be a suffering community (Matthew 5:11-12 - 1 Peter 3:8-22)
- The “one-anothering” commandments: (see supplemental handout for a list of these)

The Community of God is a Means of Grace

Relationships with other Christians are God’s gift to you. It may not always feel that way, but the fact is that we experience the big story of God in community with people.

We’re created with a need for community, we live out our sinfulness and brokenness in community, we’re redeemed into a new community, and we’re destined for perfected, restored community. And so relationships with other Christians point to and are an experience of God’s grace to us.

God intends for us to grow through being a part of a community, and because we almost always become like the people we spend the most time with, relationships with other Christians are designed for the good of everyone involved.

The Community of God is a Means of Mission

Community has value all by itself, but it’s also meant to serve a purpose beyond just the people currently involved. Christians in community are meant to be “fellow workers for the sake of the gospel.” Community is the means for us to participate in God’s mission in the world.

That happens in two ways. First, community becomes a testament of the worth of Jesus for the rest of the world. The quality of our relationships, particularly our love for each other, becomes a distinguishing marker that non-Christians observe and are invited to respond to. Second, as we grow through our community, we are equipped and sent into our networks and neighborhoods to serve others by our words and our actions. Sent to both show and tell the

good news of the gospel. And connected to community as we do that, we're encouraged and challenged to press on together.

Covenant, Not Consumption

Throughout Biblical history, we encounter the recurring theme of God binding himself to his people by promising to bless and save them. The biblical word for these loving promises is "covenant." At Liberti Church we use the word "covenant" for our membership because we seek to model that same covenant love in our relationships together as a community.

In other words, we believe you are called to be much more than a consumer of religious goods and services, or member of a volunteer organization. Rather, each of us is called to echo the promise-making love of God in Christ to each other in communal, covenantal relationships. Each of us should not only ask how the gifts of others in this church family might benefit us, but how our gifts can benefit others.

How Do We Begin To Live This Way? (Acts 2:42-47)

- common time
- common practices
- common place
- common resources

Relational Discipleship at Liberti Church

We are committed to the biblical principle that **disciples make disciples**. In other words, that though a church can and must provide opportunities for connection and community, the quality and faithfulness of our Christian community will only happen as we individually and collectively seek our own growth and the growth of others in Christ.

Take a few minutes to read through **Appendix III: Discipleship at Liberti Church** located on page 23. During the class, we'll spend some time discussing this and what this might look like in your life as an in-covenant member of Liberti Church.

Relevant Rhythms of Grace:³

5. **Relational Pursuit.** We meet with other people, becoming friends and helping each other to live as disciples of Jesus Christ. We seek to encourage and care for our brothers and sisters in Christ and also to accept their input in our own life. There are a variety of venues and ways these relationships can form at deepen in our church. But, generally speaking, we encourage you to pursue people across different ages and life stages: someone older and wiser, peers at the same/similar stage of life, and a younger person - either in the faith, by age, or both.
6. **'One-Anothering through Spiritual Gifts.** The Biblical bedrock of relationships among Christians are the 55 "one another" commandments of the New Testament. These are what inform our understanding of godly, healthy, thriving community in the church. They compel us to care for each other as Christ cares for us, and transform us into a community that is

³ See Appendix IV for explanation and full list of the Rhythms of Grace

not focused on ourselves, but those who God has divinely placed around us. This means that we are going to help in the shepherding of others' souls and hearts, and care for the needs of the church community and the community at large.

Relevant In-Covenant Vows:⁴

3. Do you promise to join your brothers and sisters at Liberti in seeking to live a life of worship, community, and mercy, joyfully serving with your time, talents, and treasure as God enables you?
4. Do you covenant to humbly receive input and correction from your brothers and sisters, always to strive for unity and peace in our community, and also to submit yourselves to the oversight and discipline of the elders?

⁴ ⁴ See Appendix V for full list of In-Covenant Vows

COMMUNITY APPENDIX:

SERVANT LEADERSHIP IN COMMUNITY

Why We Need the Gospel To Talk About This:

- Without the Gospel there is either arrogant, crippling authoritarianism, or arrogant, crippling anti-authoritarianism.
- Because of the Gospel, we have a different model of leadership, a different kind of “model” leader, and we see Jesus modeling leadership where authority and service are not contradictory.

Who Originated the Idea of Leadership in the Church? (Ephesians 4:7,11-16)

“But to each one of us grace has been given as Christ apportioned it. ... It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.”

This Passage Underscores Several Things:

- Christ is the head of the church, not pastors or leaders.
- God has set up leadership in the local church for its good. This is not an invention of the modern church movement.
- Church is not an amoeba.
- Maturity, unity, knowledge, and wholeness are pursued by everyone doing their part, including servant leaders who equip and ‘prepare God’s people for works of service.’

The Nature of Leadership in the Church

- The character of this leadership (John 13:1-17; 1 Peter 5:1-5)
- an elder-led church (1 Timothy 3; Titus 1)

The Elders’ Covenant

Your leaders want to be up front with about what we are promising to do as pastors who are “in covenant” with you. This makes clear the serious nature of covenant process, but we also sincerely hope and pray that this will be a great encouragement to you that we are willing to make these promises.

Your pastors and elders covenant to:

- Lovingly shepherd you and seek your growth in Christ (Heb. 13:17; 1 Thes. 5:12)
- Pursue a lifestyle of worship as those who are being freed from the slavery of sin through Jesus Christ, and to oversee our worship gatherings so that they are faithful and true to Christ, upbuilding and encouraging, joyful and reverent, and inviting and challenging to those who do not yet believe.

- Provide teaching, preaching and counsel from the Scriptures, and we covenant that this teaching will span the whole counsel of God's Word. (Gal. 6:6; I Tim. 5:17-18, Acts 20:27-28)
- Help you become prepared and equipped to serve and to be an example of those who are pursuing a lifestyle of mercy. (Eph. 4:11-13)
- Love each other as elders and to model meaningful community as we pursue being a church community together. We covenant to submit to each other out of reverence for Christ, and to be accountable to and for each other.
- Do our best to see that you are helped in times of need (Acts 2:42-47, 4:32-35, Jm. 2:14-17).
- Ensure that your elders and deacons and deaconesses will meet the criteria assigned to them in the Scriptures (I Tim. 3:1-13 & 5:17-22, Titus 1:5-9, I Pt. 5:1-4).
- Pray for you regularly, boldly, and persistently, particularly when you are sick (Jm. 5:14).
- Exercise church discipline when necessary (Matt. 18:15-20; I Cor. 5; Gal. 6:1).
- Humbly lead this community as we together pursue our vision as a church. We covenant to do this to the best of our ability as we study the Scriptures and seek God's wisdom in prayer (Acts 20:28, I Peter 5:1-5).
- Strive to set an example; and to join you in living as followers of Jesus Christ (1 Co. 11:1, Philip. 3:17, I Tim. 4:12).

Liberti Church and Its Elders Are In Community

"How do Liberti elders and members function in community with other churches?"

Liberti Network: (www.liberti.org)

We were planted by Liberti Church of the River Wards (Liberti East) in Philadelphia. We are sister churches with about 10 other Liberti Churches. As sister churches we desire to be on Christ's mission together and also provide encouragement and accountability to each other.

Acts 29 Network: (www.a29.org)

The Acts 29 Network is an international, inter-denominational network of church-planting churches with a statement of faith and a few key distinctives. We are organized as a church plant in this network. Visit the Acts 29 website for more information.

What Do I Owe the Elders?

The Gospel should lead to humility and respect towards the leaders of a local church:

- Hebrews 13:17 - *"Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you."*
- 1 Thessalonians 4:12-13 - *"Now we ask you, brothers, to respect those who work hard among you, who are over you in the Lord and who admonish you. Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other."*
- Liberti Covenant Vow #5: Do you covenant to humbly receive input and correction from your brothers and sisters, always to strive for unity and peace in our community, and also to submit yourselves to the oversight and discipline of the elders?

Accountability Within the Local Church

What does love look like when someone is refusing to repent, harming themselves and others? What are you supposed to do? What are you supposed to do as a fellow Christian? What does

faithfulness and love look like for your Christian leaders? It's not fun to talk about these matters, but it's only wise for us to consider such scenarios.

Discipline is pursued within the family of those "in covenant" for several reasons:

- 1) for God's glory
- 2) for the good of the rest of the church
- 3) for the sake of the person who is being disciplined.

God views discipline as a blessing and sign of genuine love (Ps. 94.12; Prov. 6.23; Rev. 3.19). Conversely, God views a failure to discipline as being unloving and hateful (Lev. 19.17; Prov. 5.23; 13.24). God will hold church leaders accountable if they neglect to exercise needed discipline or if they misuse their authority in the exercise of church discipline (Heb. 13.17).

If I Enter Into Covenant With Liberti Church, How Do I Get Out?

You simply write a letter and say that you no longer want to be in covenant, and this will be received and officially recognized by the elders of Liberti. Some of you will probably move one day. You can of course decide to go to another church, although we would hope that not be a decision you treat lightly. What you can't do is decide to withdraw from being "in covenant" when a discipline process has begun. This short-circuits the whole process and makes the commitment meaningless. It would be like getting married and vowing "for better or for worse...unless I don't like what's going on"

What If I Don't Come Into Covenant With Liberti Church?

If you decide to stay involved with Liberti without entering covenant, you will not be treated as a second-class citizen. Entering covenant is a privilege and a blessing, both for you and for others. However, we will urge people who are Christians to join either this church or another one, rather than to remain unconnected to a church for an extended period of time. It is not healthy, nor was it the intention of Jesus.

Why Do I Sign an In-Covenant Agreement?

On page 32, you'll find an In-Covenant Information Form. At the bottom is an agreement we ask all in-covenant members to sign. Signing this agreement has a three-fold purpose:

1. It is an affirmation that you have read, understood and agree with important statements that articulate our church's views and practices.
2. It's an expression of your commitment to the church and an expression of your desire that, if you were ever to find yourself in a place of willful, persistent, unrepentant sin, you want the elders of Liberti Church to pursue you and call you back to repentance and faithfulness
3. It affords freedom and legal protection for Liberti Church elders to fulfill their commitment and vows to pursue people and call them to faithfulness to Jesus.

The Process For Entering Into Covenant With Liberti Church:

- In-covenant class
- Interview by elders to answer any questions, and so they can pray with you
- Complete and sign the **In-Covenant Information Form** located on page 32
- Baptism, if you have not been baptized (see handout about baptism if you're interested)
- Affirmation of vows in worship at Covenant Entrance Day.

MERCY

Jesus frees us to love our neighbor

The Gospel is good news of God's mercy - Luke 10:25-37

- What's the question that prompts this story?
- Why are they asking this question? What is at stake?
- How is the reaction of the third person in the story different than the first two?
- What does mercy cost the Samaritan?
- Don't miss Jesus' answer to the original question (v. 27):

Love for God: God is infinitely worthy of our all (heart, strength, mind). We are depending on the Gospel of God's infinite mercy in Jesus for our failings to worship Him with our lives.

Love for Others: We are to love others as ourselves, with the boundless love of the Samaritan. We are depending on the Gospel to love each other and our neighbors. Central to the good news about Jesus is that we are a people who have experienced the great mercy of God and are called to tangibly express the mercy of God.

How does this challenge us individually?

"Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God" (Ephesians 5:1-2). The Gospel means we are a loved people, a "mercy people", who love others and show mercy. How should we live as those who are empowered and motivated by God's mercy?

- We befriend our coworkers and neighbors. "Mercy people" want to love others and let others know about the mercy they have experienced.
- We understand that every Christian is called to pursue a lifestyle of mercy. Mercy isn't just for a special team of deacons or for people with certain gifts
- Grace and mercy impact our vocations and jobs. "Mercy people" are grateful for their jobs, and see why work matters to God.
- The mercy we have experienced influences the causes we care about. "Mercy people" love justice, and seek out the things that are broken, that they might be fixed.
- We point other people to the source of the same mercy we've received. "Mercy people" look for loving, respectful, hospitable ways to help others understand that Jesus Christ is the source of all mercy - and the mercy we trust for our own salvation.
- We pursue a life of both "showing" and "telling" the good news of God's mercy. "Mercy people" help people experience the kingdom of God by serving and meeting tangible needs. But "mercy people" don't just want others to experience God's kingdom, but to enter it - to see their own need for mercy and trust the finished work of Jesus themselves.

How does this challenge us corporately?

What does mercy look like for Liberti Church? How, specifically, are we charged to live a life of love, empowered and motivated by God's love for us and others?

- We know our neighbors' names and needs, and pray for them.
- We encourage volunteers to serve community organizations that serve worthy causes (whether operated by Christians or not).

- We partner with other local churches who reach out to those who we are not reaching. We also express God's mercy across the region with the entire family of Liberty churches, through various initiatives like the Easter Outreach.
- We start ministries and plant churches that reach more people than we ever could by ourselves.
- We host service opportunities. This involves beautification, construction, providing meals to those in need, etc.
- We strive to meet the tangible needs of our neighbors
- We learn about, pray for, and support the work that God is doing outside of our neighborhood and around the world.
- We equip the people of our church to ask good questions and speak coherently about our faith in Jesus, so that we might point others to Him as the source of all mercy.
- Most importantly, we spur one another on toward a lifestyle of service and mercy, by keeping each other accountable to dream and act in ways that are a blessing to our neighbors.

A Note on Programs:

We do not want people so busy with church activities that they cannot maintain ongoing/spontaneous interactions with friends and neighbors. That said, the above venues give an opportunity for many people in our community to exercise their gifts and serve others consistently.

The One-And-a-Half:

At Liberty Church, we want all of our in-covenant members to be fully engaged in at least one ministry of the church. This is something you should expect to take an hour or two of your time each week outside of Sunday mornings. In addition, we want each in-covenant member to assist in at least one ministry which, though vital, does not require the same amount of time and energy.

For example, you might be "all-in" with our music team or a team that helps plan and oversee men's events or local partnerships. That's your "one." In addition, you might then serve one Sunday each month as a teacher or helper in Liberty Nursery or Liberty Kids. That would be your "half."

Before you leave today, please make sure you take a copy of the **In-Covenant Class Follow-Up Form**. On it, there's an opportunity to indicate the ways you'd be interested in getting more involved at Liberty, including opportunities to serve inside and outside our church. This is a great resource to help you think and pray about what your "one-and-a-half" might be.

MERCY APPENDIX:

MERCY AND YOUR MONEY

How mercy shapes our view of money:

The issue of money is tied to the topic of mercy in the Bible. Yet this can be a very difficult subject because of the scandals and hypocrisy of church leaders involving money. There are other reasons the subject of giving and money is difficult. Why?

1. We take it too seriously. We live in a society where everything is for sale. Even the way that we view interpersonal relationships has been warped by our fixation with money:
 - a. “Time is money.”
 - b. We “spend” time with those we care about.
 - c. We think about the “opportunity costs” of relationships—what we gain/lose by doing something—and “invest” in relationships that will “profit” us.
2. We don’t take it seriously enough. Money is not just a neutral medium of exchange — it has deep meaning. Jesus himself spoke of money as either a master or something to be mastered by: Matthew 6:24: *No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money.*

Why do we give?

1. We give because giving is an act of worship. We give not only when its easy or convenient, or when we feel like we can give a lot. Giving is never about impressing God or others. It is our heart’s reaction to the mercy of God. When we are struggling, or in a season where we do not have much, we are still called to give, and God delights in it. (Mark 12:41-44)
2. We give to show the wideness of God’s mercy from the corner of the block to the corner of the world, through funding local ministry, and new church plants domestically and internationally. We give resources away to people and ministries that cannot provide any strategic return to our local church, because this is what we believe Jesus would do.
3. We give because money can be our master. Even more important than the ways in which our funds actually help fund the ministry, giving away what we have reflects the spiritual realities the Bible talks about - that love for money can actually cause us to wander from our faith (1 Tim 6:10). As Jesus explains, money has a way of being an idol and mastering us (Luke 16:13).
4. We give because money is a reflection of what we value. Jesus became poor for our sake. We too want to live more simply, that others may simply live. “Mercy people” are able to enjoy God’s gifts without guilt because they know that every good gift comes from God, and they are newly freed to enjoy things without being mastered by them. Ultimately, mercy people give because we know how much we have been given, and because our treasure is not in more stuff, but in God and people.

5. We give to support the work of those who are called to do ministry full and part time. This includes all the tools needed week in and week out to make ministry happen (cf. Numbers 18, 1 Corinthians 9:1-19, 1 Timothy 5:17-18).

We should give:

- Faithfully (2 Corinthians 9:7)
- Generously (2 Corinthians 9:11)
- Sacrificially (Mark 12:41-44)

A word about our finance team:

In your own life, and as a church, we are called to be generous, responsible and financially accountable. It's important that you know where your money goes. Liberti Church has a finance team made up of a handful of those who have been in-covenant for at least one year. At least one elder always serves on the finance team. Two times a year (January and July) we host a vision and budget meeting where the head of our finance team gives updates on our budget. You can always request a copy of the current year's Budget Report or schedule a meeting with an elder or member of the finance team with any questions.

How to give at Liberti:

There are several ways you can contribute tithes/offerings or special gifts at Liberti Church. These are detailed on the "Giving" page of our website: LIBERTIHARRISBURG.ORG

Relevant Rhythms of Grace:⁵

7. **Mission.** God is a missional God. And Jesus has established his church to carry this mission of God in the world. So we pursue rhythms of both showing and telling the good news of the gospel with those who don't currently know and trust Jesus. This includes the essential Christian practice of evangelism, but it is far more than this. Mission includes any rhythm of inviting others into your life — including those who are different from you (race, class, political party, faith tradition, etc.)
8. **Generosity.** We share what we have with others, and we seek to live simply. This includes the discipline of giving regularly, sacrificially, and generously to the local church. It also transcends that discipline by seeking to live with less, saving the difference, and use it to love God and love others around the entire world. Generosity encompasses not only our money, but our homes, our time, truly all that God has entrusted to us.
9. **Service.** We seek out opportunities to help people and institutions, including our own local church. Our time and talents, in addition to our treasures, come into view in our efforts to serve both the church and the world. Our service nurtures God's will in the world, and it delivers people from hardship and suffering. We ask God to open our eyes to the needs of those near us, and we bring needs to the attention of others in the church who can serve better than we can.

⁵ See Appendix IV for explanation and full list of the Rhythms of Grace

Relevant In-Covenant Vows:⁶

3. Do you now resolve and promise, in humble reliance upon the grace of the Holy Spirit, that you will seek to live as a follower of Christ with all of your heart, mind, soul and strength?
4. Do you promise to join your brothers and sisters at Liberti in seeking to live a life of worship, community and mercy, joyfully serving with your time, talents, and treasure, as God enables you?

⁶ ⁶ See Appendix V for full list of In-Covenant Vows

APPENDIX I:

DOCTRINAL AND CONFSSIONAL STATEMENT

Introduction:

As a member church in the Acts 29 Network and partner with the Redeemer City to City Network, Liberti Harrisburg, is not formally connected to a Christian denomination. We do, however, affirm the summary of biblical doctrine contained in the Lausanne Covenant. Liberti Harrisburg recognizes and subscribes to the historic confessions of the Apostles Creed and Nicene Creed which the Church has affirmed across the centuries as helpful summaries of the essence and activity of God.

Furthermore, we affirm and adopt the confessional statement of The Gospel Coalition as a faithful articulation of our views and beliefs as a local congregation in Jesus' Church. The following 13 points are pulled from The Gospel Coalition's website: www.thegospelcoalition.org

1. The Triune God. We believe in one God, eternally existing in three equally divine Persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, who know, love, and glorify one another. This one true and living God is infinitely perfect both in his love and in his holiness. He is the Creator of all things, visible and invisible, and is therefore worthy to receive all glory and adoration. Immortal and eternal, he perfectly and exhaustively knows the end from the beginning, sustains and sovereignly rules over all things, and providentially brings about his eternal good purposes to redeem a people for himself and restore his fallen creation, to the praise of his glorious grace.

2. Revelation. God has graciously disclosed his existence and power in the created order, and has supremely revealed himself to fallen human beings in the person of his Son, the incarnate Word. Moreover, this God is a speaking God who by his Spirit has graciously disclosed himself in human words: we believe that God has inspired the words preserved in the Scriptures, the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments, which are both record and means of his saving work in the world. These writings alone constitute the verbally inspired Word of God, which is utterly authoritative and without error in the original writings, complete in its revelation of his will for salvation, sufficient for all that God requires us to believe and do, and final in its authority over every domain of knowledge to which it speaks. We confess that both our finitude and our sinfulness preclude the possibility of knowing God's truth exhaustively, but we affirm that, enlightened by the Spirit of God, we can know God's revealed truth truly. The Bible is to be believed, as God's instruction, in all that it teaches; obeyed, as God's command, in all that it requires; and trusted, as God's pledge, in all that it promises. As God's people hear, believe, and do the Word, they are equipped as disciples of Christ and witnesses to the gospel.

3. Creation of Humanity. We believe that God created human beings, male and female, in his own image. Adam and Eve belonged to the created order that God himself declared to be very good, serving as God's agents to care for, manage, and govern creation, living in holy and devoted fellowship with their Maker. Men and women, equally made in the image of God, enjoy equal access to God by faith in Christ Jesus and are both called to move beyond passive self-indulgence to significant private and public engagement in family, church, and civic life. Adam and Eve were made to complement each other in a one-flesh union that establishes the only normative pattern of sexual relations for men and women, such that marriage ultimately serves as a type of the union between Christ and his church. In God's wise purposes, men and women are not simply interchangeable, but rather they complement each other in mutually enriching ways. God ordains that they assume distinctive roles which reflect the loving relationship between Christ and the church, the husband exercising headship in a way that displays the caring, sacrificial love of Christ, and the wife submitting to her husband in a way that models the love of the church for her Lord. In the ministry of the church, both men and women are encouraged to serve Christ and to be developed to their full potential in the manifold ministries of the

people of God. The distinctive leadership role within the church given to qualified men is grounded in creation, fall, and redemption and must not be sidelined by appeals to cultural developments.

4. The Fall. We believe that Adam, made in the image of God, distorted that image and forfeited his original blessedness—for himself and all his progeny—by falling into sin through Satan’s temptation. As a result, all human beings are alienated from God, corrupted in every aspect of their being (e.g., physically, mentally, volitionally, emotionally, spiritually) and condemned finally and irrevocably to death—apart from God’s own gracious intervention. The supreme need of all human beings is to be reconciled to the God under whose just and holy wrath we stand; the only hope of all human beings is the undeserved love of this same God, who alone can rescue us and restore us to himself.

5. The Plan of God. We believe that from all eternity God determined in grace to save a great multitude of guilty sinners from every tribe and language and people and nation, and to this end foreknew them and chose them. We believe that God justifies and sanctifies those who by grace have faith in Jesus, and that he will one day glorify them—all to the praise of his glorious grace. In love God commands and implores all people to repent and believe, having set his saving love on those he has chosen and having ordained Christ to be their Redeemer.

6. The Gospel. We believe that the gospel is the good news of Jesus Christ—God’s very wisdom. Utter folly to the world, even though it is the power of God to those who are being saved, this good news is christological, centering on the cross and resurrection: the gospel is not proclaimed if Christ is not proclaimed, and the authentic Christ has not been proclaimed if his death and resurrection are not central (the message is: “Christ died for our sins . . . [and] was raised”). This good news is biblical (his death and resurrection are according to the Scriptures), theological and salvific (Christ died for our sins, to reconcile us to God), historical (if the saving events did not happen, our faith is worthless, we are still in our sins, and we are to be pitied more than all others), apostolic (the message was entrusted to and transmitted by the apostles, who were witnesses of these saving events), and intensely personal (where it is received, believed, and held firmly, individual persons are saved).

7. The Redemption of Christ. We believe that, moved by love and in obedience to his Father, the eternal Son became human: the Word became flesh, fully God and fully human being, one Person in two natures. The man Jesus, the promised Messiah of Israel, was conceived through the miraculous agency of the Holy Spirit, and was born of the virgin Mary. He perfectly obeyed his heavenly Father, lived a sinless life, performed miraculous signs, was crucified under Pontius Pilate, arose bodily from the dead on the third day, and ascended into heaven. As the mediatorial King, he is seated at the right hand of God the Father, exercising in heaven and on earth all of God’s sovereignty, and is our High Priest and righteous Advocate. We believe that by his incarnation, life, death, resurrection, and ascension, Jesus Christ acted as our representative and substitute. He did this so that in him we might become the righteousness of God: on the cross he canceled sin, propitiated God, and, by bearing the full penalty of our sins, reconciled to God all those who believe. By his resurrection Christ Jesus was vindicated by his Father, broke the power of death and defeated Satan who once had power over it, and brought everlasting life to all his people; by his ascension he has been forever exalted as Lord and has prepared a place for us to be with him. We believe that salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name given under heaven by which we must be saved. Because God chose the lowly things of this world, the despised things, the things that are not, to nullify the things that are, no human being can ever boast before him—Christ Jesus has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness, and redemption.

8. The Justification of Sinners. We believe that Christ, by his obedience and death, fully discharged the debt of all those who are justified. By his sacrifice, he bore in our stead the punishment due us for our sins, making a proper, real, and full satisfaction to God’s justice on our behalf. By his perfect obedience he satisfied the just demands of God on our behalf, since by faith alone that perfect obedience is credited to all who trust in Christ alone for their acceptance with God. Inasmuch as Christ

was given by the Father for us, and his obedience and punishment were accepted in place of our own, freely and not for anything in us, this justification is solely of free grace, in order that both the exact justice and the rich grace of God might be glorified in the justification of sinners. We believe that a zeal for personal and public obedience flows from this free justification.

9. The Power of the Holy Spirit. We believe that this salvation, attested in all Scripture and secured by Jesus Christ, is applied to his people by the Holy Spirit. Sent by the Father and the Son, the Holy Spirit glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ, and, as the other Paraclete, is present with and in believers. He convicts the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment, and by his powerful and mysterious work regenerates spiritually dead sinners, awakening them to repentance and faith, and in him they are baptized into union with the Lord Jesus, such that they are justified before God by grace alone through faith alone in Jesus Christ alone. By the Spirit's agency, believers are renewed, sanctified, and adopted into God's family; they participate in the divine nature and receive his sovereignly distributed gifts. The Holy Spirit is himself the down payment of the promised inheritance, and in this age indwells, guides, instructs, equips, revives, and empowers believers for Christ-like living and service.

10. The Kingdom of God. We believe that those who have been saved by the grace of God through union with Christ by faith and through regeneration by the Holy Spirit enter the kingdom of God and delight in the blessings of the new covenant: the forgiveness of sins, the inward transformation that awakens a desire to glorify, trust, and obey God, and the prospect of the glory yet to be revealed. Good works constitute indispensable evidence of saving grace. Living as salt in a world that is decaying and light in a world that is dark, believers should neither withdraw into seclusion from the world, nor become indistinguishable from it: rather, we are to do good to the city, for all the glory and honor of the nations is to be offered up to the living God. Recognizing whose created order this is, and because we are citizens of God's kingdom, we are to love our neighbors as ourselves, doing good to all, especially to those who belong to the household of God. The kingdom of God, already present but not fully realized, is the exercise of God's sovereignty in the world toward the eventual redemption of all creation. The kingdom of God is an invasive power that plunders Satan's dark kingdom and regenerates and renovates through repentance and faith the lives of individuals rescued from that kingdom. It therefore inevitably establishes a new community of human life together under God.

11. God's New People. We believe that God's new covenant people have already come to the heavenly Jerusalem; they are already seated with Christ in the heavenlies. This universal church is manifest in local churches of which Christ is the only Head; thus each "local church" is, in fact, the church, the household of God, the assembly of the living God, and the pillar and foundation of the truth. The church is the body of Christ, the apple of his eye, graven on his hands, and he has pledged himself to her forever. The church is distinguished by her gospel message, her sacred ordinances, her discipline, her great mission, and, above all, by her love for God, and by her members' love for one another and for the world. Crucially, this gospel we cherish has both personal and corporate dimensions, neither of which may properly be overlooked. Christ Jesus is our peace: he has not only brought about peace with God, but also peace between alienated peoples. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity, thus making peace, and in one body to reconcile both Jew and Gentile to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. The church serves as a sign of God's future new world when its members live for the service of one another and their neighbors, rather than for self-focus. The church is the corporate dwelling place of God's Spirit, and the continuing witness to God in the world.

12. Baptism and the Lord's Supper. We believe that baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordained by the Lord Jesus himself. The former is connected with entrance into the new covenant community, the latter with ongoing covenant renewal. Together they are simultaneously God's pledge to us, divinely ordained means of grace, our public vows of submission to the once crucified and now resurrected Christ, and anticipations of his return and of the consummation of all things.

13. The Restoration of All Things. We believe in the personal, glorious, and bodily return of our Lord Jesus Christ with his holy angels, when he will exercise his role as final Judge, and his kingdom will be consummated. We believe in the bodily resurrection of both the just and the unjust—the unjust to judgment and eternal conscious punishment in hell, as our Lord himself taught, and the just to eternal blessedness in the presence of him who sits on the throne and of the Lamb, in the new heaven and the new earth, the home of righteousness. On that day the church will be presented faultless before God by the obedience, suffering and triumph of Christ, all sin purged and its wretched effects forever banished. God will be all in all and his people will be enthralled by the immediacy of his ineffable holiness, and everything will be to the praise of his glorious grace.

Conclusion: Final Authority for Matters of Belief and Conduct

This Doctrinal and Confessional Statement is not an exhaustive list of our beliefs. The Bible itself, as the inspired Word of God, without error in the original writings, speaks with final authority concerning truth, morality, and the proper conduct of humanity, is the sole and final source of all that we believe. For purposes of Liberti Church's confessions, doctrine, practice, policy, and discipline, our Board of Elders is the church's final interpretive authority on the Bible's meaning and application.

APPENDIX II:

STATEMENT ON MARRIAGE, GENDER AND SEXUALITY

1. We believe that God wonderfully and immutably creates each person as male or female. These two distinct, complementary genders together reflect the image and nature of God. (Gen 1:26-27.) Rejection of one's biological sex is a rejection of the image of God within that person.
2. We believe that the term "marriage" has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture. (Gen 2:18-25.) We believe that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other. (1 Cor 6:18; 7:2-5; Heb 13:4.) We believe that God has commanded that no intimate sexual activity be engaged in outside of a marriage between a man and a woman.
3. We believe that any form of sexual immorality (including adultery, fornication, homosexual behavior, bisexual conduct, bestiality, incest, and use of pornography) is sinful and offensive to God. (Matt 15:18-20; 1 Cor 6:9-10.)
4. We believe that in order to preserve the function and integrity of Liberti Harrisburg as the local Body of Christ, and to provide a biblical role model to the Church's Members and the community, it is imperative that all persons employed by Liberti Harrisburg in any capacity, or who serve as volunteers, agree to and abide by this Statement on Marriage, Gender, and Sexuality. (Matt 5:16; Phil 2:14-16; 1 Thess 5:22.)
5. We believe that God offers redemption and restoration to all who confess and forsake their sin, seeking His mercy and forgiveness through Jesus Christ. (Acts 3:19-21; Rom 10:9-10; 1 Cor 6:9-11.)
6. We believe that every person must be afforded compassion, love, kindness, respect, and dignity. (Mark 12:28-31; Luke 6:31.) Hateful and harassing behavior or attitudes directed toward any individual are to be repudiated and are not in accord with Scripture nor the doctrines of Liberti Harrisburg.

APPENDIX III: DISCIPLESHIP AT LIBERTI CHURCH

What is Discipleship?

Let us first clarify what a **Disciple** is. A disciple is a follower of Jesus Christ who is pursuing a life of obedience, in accordance with the Scriptures, and is willing to let the truths of scriptures impact, inform, and transform every area of their life. (John 14:15, Acts 5:29, 1 John 5:3, Luke 6:46, Jer. 7:23, Matt 28:19-20, James 1:22-25, Rom 12:2, 2 Tim 3:16, Phil 2:1)

Discipleship is the process in which we become disciples and grow as disciples. What the Bible teaches and what we encourage is that the pursuit of becoming a disciple is best done in the context of the local church with intentional relationships that help both you and others grow as followers of Jesus Christ. (1 Cor 12:27, Heb 10:25, Luke 14:27, 2 Tim 2:2, Acts 2:42, John 8:31-32, Luke 6:40, 1 Cor 1:11)

How Have We Pursued Discipleship at Liberti Church?

Historically we asked every adult to be committed to two things: Sunday Worship Services and Home Groups (small groups). Though we saw some really valuable things happen in Home Groups, as a church we struggled to clearly define their purpose. Home Groups led to some good relational connections. But, for the most part, those connections didn't translate into effective discipling relationships. Broadly, we didn't see them help people become more rooted in the gospel and formed in Christ.

As we evaluated Home Groups in the fall of 2017, we realized these groups had been tasked with facilitating three huge things: Communion with Christ, Connection, and Care. These three things remain essential to our church, but we struggled to do all of them well in a Home Group setting. And our sabbatical from Home Groups helped us to realize that what we needed wasn't simply a new approach to small group ministry, but a renewed vision for what each of us are called to in the Christian life.

Etched in Granite vs. Written in Sand

In a book called *Church Unique*, Will Mancini urges churches to consider the difference between what is etched in granite and written in sand: "Every leader needs to etch some things in granite (never-change core) and write some things in sand (must-change methods). The problem is that when we fail to clarify and nurture the things written in granite, our people get too attached to the things written in sand..... As the fluid and flexible stuff of the kingdom they not only should change but must change."

In other words, there are core principles that a church must always be pursuing. These must be etched in granite. We must always pursue making disciples and equipping one another to grow in Christ and live faithfully and fruitfully as God's people in the world.

However, the methods and specific approaches to pursue these principles need to be written in sand. They need to be constantly reexamined and open to change in order to more faithfully pursue the actual principles. Home Groups for Liberti have been just that, a method that we used to pursue the granite aspects of Communion with Christ, Care, and Community.

Below is a brief definition of these three principles:

Communion with Christ: Our daily personal worship of Christ through Bible reading, prayer, fasting, singing, Bible study, memorization of scripture, and serving. But communion with Christ isn't limited to individual rhythms. It happens in the context of relationships.

Connection: The ways we connect socially and spiritually to one another. Connection with other believers is a response to the goodness and love of God for others in the body of Christ. Our hope and goal is to create an entire church community where this is happening for everyone. This connection should move well beyond brief encounters and shallow relationships and involve truly inviting people into our homes and our lives.

Care: In response to God's care for us, we care for one another. The way we do this is through prayer and meeting both physical needs (meals, transportation, general help etc.) and spiritual needs (visiting, praying, encouraging etc.) Care isn't just for professionals or a special team of people in the church, but is an "every member" responsibility. (see the supplemental article by Matt Looloian, *Pastoral Care in Community*, for more on this)

So learning from our past and distilling the real principles of what we were after in years gone by, here is how we envision pursuing discipleship going forward.

How Will We Pursue Discipleship at Liberti Church Going Forward?

All churches need programs and systems to function, but these must foster and facilitate growth in individuals and in the community at large. Every church offers different types of systems and programs that attempt to help direct believers in their pursuit of connection, care, and communion with Christ. But the more programmatic approaches to discipleship and spiritual growth is a relatively new venture in the history of the church. In the early church, there's a beautiful simplicity to it: "*They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.*" (Acts 2:42)

Jesus didn't establish a series of programs; rather, he injected himself into the lives of people for the explicit intent of bringing them back into relationship with His Father. In turn, Jesus calls each of his disciples to make disciples (Matt 28:19-20). So it is each of our responsibility to pursue a relationship - not only with Christ himself - but with others in the church to continue this model of disciples making disciples.

No system or program can automate this for us. In order to truly pursue being disciples we must both be following Jesus individually and corporately. Biblically and historically, it's only ever disciples, loved by the Father, sent by the Son, empowered by the Spirit, who make disciples.

Moreover, church programs and church systems, while helpful, can provide a false sense of security in the Christian life. Ultimately programs are only intended to be a support structure for making disciples - like scaffolding around construction project. The point isn't the scaffolding; the point is what the scaffolding is enabling us to build!

But rather than pursue relationships and own the responsibility for growth (our own and others) we can become dependent on programs to do the hard work only disciples can do.

The best we will ever be able to do as a church is to create venues, facilitate connections, and equip people to be disciples who help others become disciples. We are renewed in our commitment to pursue that at Liberti Church.

A Paradigm Shift, Not A New Program

Below, we'll lay out a few ways Liberti Church will attempt to create those venues, facilitate those connections and equip people as disciples. But it's essential for us all to grasp that it's not simply a new series of programs we're after, but a paradigm shift in each of our hearts.

Disciples make disciples. That's the paradigm shift. And therefore, each of us must **own responsibility for our own growth in Christ AND the growth of others in Christ**. For the entire history of the church, it's always people who love Jesus and faithfully pursue him and his kingdom who replicate that same love for God and others into their lives.

Our hope is that each person at Liberti Church who considers himself/herself a Christian would desire to both grow as a disciple of Jesus AND invest in the lives of others to help them grow as a disciple. We want to encourage each person to enjoy the richness of deepening relationship with Christ and the good gift of community that he has called us into.

This requires more than participation in a group. It requires heart-level buy-in. It requires being truly compelled by the grace of God to make the time and space to know and pursue others.

Your Role and Liberti Church's Role

Your Role

Stepping into this new paradigm requires both you and the church to work in tandem. Here's what we're asking of you:

Pursue Communion with Christ and Pray.

Charles Spurgeon once said *"Nobody ever outgrows Scripture; the book widens and deepens with our years."*

There is no discipleship and there are no disciples apart from communion with Christ. Therefore, daily personal worship is essential for all Christians. This personal worship-- time in prayer, regular Bible study, solitude, service, study, and celebration-- is an individual responsibility that is fleshed out and applied in the context of relationships. So pursue communion with Christ in your own life and share it with those you are relationally investing in.

The aspect of communion with Christ many of us are prone to minimize is prayer. So devote yourself to prayer. In this new paradigm, we hope to provide continual opportunities and venues where discipleship relationships can develop. But none of it will be effective without prayer:

- that we, as God's people, would have our hearts directed toward Him
- that our love for Jesus and His love for us would compel deeper love for others
- that we would respond with hearts of humility and obedience to the commands of being disciples
- that we would do the good works that Christ has prepared in advance for us to do.
- that we will fulfill our calling to live, speak, and serve as the very presence of Jesus in the Harrisburg region.

Pursue Relationships.

God's design for humanity and his design for the church is that we would not be isolated but that we would live and enjoy the good of community. We need community and others need our community with them. Three dimensions of community that we would encourage each person to pursue and receive.

First, pursue someone older and wiser (Job 12:12, Deut 32:7, Titus 2:3-5, Prov 13:20). We believe that having an older and wiser person in your life is of great value to you and your family, your future, and your growth in Christ. Find someone who is further down the road than you are in terms of their life experience and spiritual maturity. Ask them to speak into your life and to connect with you on a regular basis.

Second, pursue a peer at the same or similar stage of life (Prov 17:17, 18:24, 27:6 27:17, John 15:13, Rom 1:12, Eccl 4:9-10). Great good comes from knowing and being known by broth-

ers and sisters who are going through some of the same challenges you are. These rich relationships encourage, challenge, and bless us immensely in our daily walk with Christ and in our community. Find one or two of these types of relationships among the people of our church.

Third, pursue a younger person - either in the faith, by age, or both - to invest in. (1Tim 1:2, Titus 1:4, Phile. 1:10, Philip 2:22, 1 For 4:17, Heb 2:13, 1 Cor 4:14, Gal 4:19, 1 Tim 1:18, 1 Pet 5:13, 1 John 2:1, 12 3 John 1:4). Who can you come alongside and help with the life experience and spiritual growth God has brought in your life? With whom are you sharing the great riches of our faith? For some of us this is our children, for others this is a younger believer in the faith, for all of us it is a faithful call to be always pouring out our lives for the good of another.

Pursue the 'One Others' of Scripture.

The Biblical bedrock of relationships among Christians are the 55 “one another” commandments of the New Testament. These are what inform our understanding of godly, healthy, thriving relationships. They compel us to care for each other as Christ cares for us, and transform us into a community that is not focused on ourselves, but those who God has divinely placed around us. This means that we are going to help in the shepherding of others' souls and hearts, and care for the needs of the church community and the community at large.

Liberti Church's Role:

For many, this is perhaps a new paradigm, a new way of looking at discipleship. This new approach can be intimidating. But we are confident you will see God work in ways that will surprise you. Our desire is to help you both experience and propel discipleship at Liberti Church. We want to come alongside you in this difficult, but worthwhile pursuit.

As mentioned above, the best way a local church can do that is by both equipping you and providing venues that facilitate connections, meaningful conversations, and opportunities to pursue this discipleship with others.

Going forward, here are some of the ways we envision doing that:

Coffee Hour: Every Sunday morning before our worship service, you have an opportunity to meet people and talk with people over coffee or tea. This is a great place to begin knowing and being known - and where we hope many of these relationships with older folks, peers, and younger folks begin to take shape.

Seminars: Throughout the year, we'll offer various short term studies and seminars. These will be specifically designed to equip you as disciples, sometimes in a specific area of discipleship (like marriage or money), and other times in things like how to study Scripture or how to talk about the gospel with friends and neighbors. Making the commitment to attend these will provide opportunities for you to grow both spiritually and relationally.

Bible Studies: We have men's, women's and co-ed Bible Study Groups that meet weekly or bi-weekly. By focusing the time on engaging with Scripture and by keeping these groups small, we've found that Bible studies have been much more effective in facilitating connection, care and communion with Christ among the people of Liberti Church. But remember - Bible Study Groups can just as easily become another program we become dependent upon. What we need isn't just a new kind of group, but this new paradigm for discipleship.

Church Center App (Planning Center Online): This resource isn't just for online giving and contact information. There are also groups and events you can register for and connect with people from our church.

Prayer Cards: On the back of our “Hi” cards, we recently added a place for you to share prayer requests with the leaders and prayer team of Liberti Church. This is a great way to receive care if and when you need it. Know that your pastors, elders, deacons and leaders want you to be cared for at this church. Help us do that well by letting us know what you’re going through.

None of these things are ends in themselves. But we believe these offerings, combined with a new paradigm and renewed commitment in each of us, will greatly improve our pursuit of connection, care and communion with Christ.

Start Here:

If, after reading this, you find yourself confused or concerned. Or if you have no idea how this paradigm shift will work in your life. Or if you have no idea where to begin, let a member of our staff team or elders know. Our elders and a few other leaders at our church would love to sit down with you one-on-one and discuss what this might look like in your life.

Our renewed commitment to discipleship at Liberti Church isn’t just philosophical. It’s a renewed commitment to YOU. So please don’t hesitate to let us know where you need us to come alongside you as together we increasingly become disciples who make disciples.

APPENDIX IV: RHYTHMS OF GRACE

INTRODUCTION:

“We are creatures of habit. Knowingly, perhaps mostly instinctively, we crave and create meaningful patterns to our living. It’s so mundane we miss it — three religiously observed square meals, meticulous hygiene rhythms, the morning ritual of making and savoring the first cup of coffee, a kiss to loved ones as you head out the door, habitual email checks, the exercise regimen or daily walk, watching the evening news or catching up online. All are pieces to the daily puzzle of ordering our days, and we notice when one is missing.

“Like the God who created us, we nail down the disorder of our day into a framework of meaning. We simply can’t enjoy the freedom of life without a form, some skeletal structure on which to hang the flesh of our days. This dynamic operates not only in everyday living but also as we walk out our faith in Jesus Christ.”⁷

At Liberti, we have a mission we’re excited about: “to live, speak, and serve as the very presence of Christ for the Harrisburg region, that we may together enjoy the freedom of His Gospel.” And we are guided in this mission by our three core values of **Worship, Community, and Mercy**.

Still, it’s important to further clarify what exactly it looks like for faithful followers of Jesus to flesh this out in our homes, neighborhoods and lives on a daily basis.

As a thought experiment, ask yourselves: what are the day-in, day-out **habits** (or “**rhythms**”) that form the structure of your days? The above quote from Eugene Peterson illustrates the inescapable force of habit in our lives, whatever those habits may be. Whether a good or bad, a habit is something that has been formed in us through repetition until it becomes second nature.

Moving forward, we desire to provide a clear, shared, communicable understanding of what the pursuits and rhythms of Jesus’s disciples ought to be. In other words, we want to put forward the individual and corporate habits that make *Worship, Community, and Mercy* not just theoretical values, but embodied values.

The Scriptures teach us many practices that bring about the spiritual formation of a disciple. We want better establish these as rhythms of our lives. As a church family, Liberti Church is spending the next year putting nine of these “rhythms of grace” into practice. You do not need to begin attempting to focus on all nine practices at once. Start by choosing one or two and letting these be your focus.

If you feel ready, you might consider mapping out a schedule of where/when some or all of these practices will happen in your life. This is not meant to be a legalistic regimen that is used to justify us before God, but simply a way of providing structure for the habits that we wish to cultivate in order to accomplish our action-oriented (and hopefully grace-saturated) mission.

As you read through the following, ask yourself: How will I intentionally practice each of these rhythms on a daily, weekly, or monthly basis? Name some practical steps you will take....

⁷ Peterson, Eugene. *Seeking God’s Face*.

WORSHIP

Jesus frees us to love God. The following rhythms help us cultivate worshipful lives:

1. Gathered Worship

“Sunday morning, corporate, ritualized worship is the most important thing that you do in your entire life and it’s the most important thing that a church does. It’s the central act in the life of God’s people.”⁸

On Sunday we gather together weekly to worship God and, through His Spirit, rehearse the gospel and re-center our lives in Jesus Christ through song, Scripture, prayer, the sacraments, and corporate fellowship. When we cannot be at the church where we are members, we seek to worship elsewhere, or in some other way join in the fellowship of other believers to observe the Lord’s Day.

2. Daily Prayer and Bible Study

Everything in the Christian’s life flows from encounter with God in prayer. We bring each day’s joys and needs to the God who cares for us, and we also read His Word, allowing it to change us and help us grow. When together with one or more brothers and sisters, these prayers and readings can be recited jointly. When absent from one another, we will pray on our own. This rhythm also involves deeper study of theology, which may need to be a weekly or monthly practice rather than a daily one.

3. Sabbath

We rest from our work and celebrate our new life in Jesus Christ for one full day each week—this is related to “Gathered Worship” as described above, but it is distinct enough to consider separately, because the principle transcends the weekly exercise of gathered worship.

The biblical rule of Sabbath is rooted in the principles of *recreation* and *restoration*; these principles are emphasized in the two accounts of the Ten Commandments being delivered to Israel. In Exodus we are reminded that God rested to appreciate the goodness of creation (Exodus 20:11). In Deuteronomy we are reminded how sabbath is designed to critique our cultural notions of ‘productivity’ — we are no longer slaves (Deuteronomy 5:15)! This rhythm may include other annual or bi-annual *retreating* rhythms in order to intentionally reflect upon our relationship with God, ourselves, and with others. Disciples rest with Christ, just as they work with Him.

4. Bodily Consecration

God created everything invisible *and* visible. Therefore, disciples seek to put every physical thing to the good use that God intends. This includes faithful use and care of our bodies (our fasting and feasting, our drinking and abstaining, our sexual expression or restraint, and all that we do with our eyes and ears and hands). It also includes how we use our bodies and time to care for God’s good but fallen creation and all living things within it. *“So, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.”* (1 Corinthians 10:31).

COMMUNITY

Jesus frees us to love each other. The following rhythms help cultivate community with each other:

5. Relational Pursuit

We meet with other people, becoming friends and helping each other to live as disciples of Jesus Christ. We seek to encourage and care for our brothers and sisters in Christ and also to accept their input in our own life. There are a variety of venues and ways these relationships can form at deepen in our church. But, generally speaking, we encourage you to pursue people across different ages and life stages: someone older and wiser, peers at the same/similar stage of life, and a younger person - either in the faith, by age, or both.

⁸ “Heavenly Participation”. The Church of the Incarnation, membership materials.

Confession of sin and related accountability relationships are included here, as are the simple pleasures of shared meals, outings, and hobbies with other Christians. Disciples make disciples. And disciples enjoy time and life with other believers.

6. 'One-Anothering through Spiritual Gifts

The Biblical bedrock of relationships among Christians are the 55 “one another” commandments of the New Testament. These are what inform our understanding of godly, healthy, thriving community in the church. They compel us to care for each other as Christ cares for us, and transform us into a community that is not focused on ourselves, but those who God has divinely placed around us. This means that we are going to help in the shepherding of others’ souls and hearts, and care for the needs of the church community and the community at large.

An essential part of ‘one-anothering’ is knowing your spiritual gifts and putting them into practice. In the New Testament, the church is referred to as one body with many members (1 Cor 12-14). The body thrives when each member play his or her role. So as part of this rhythm of ‘one-anothering,’ we seek to build up the church in the specific ways God has gifted us to contribute.

MERCY

Jesus frees us to love our neighbor. The following rhythms help us cultivate lifestyles of mercy:

7. Mission

God is a missional God. And Jesus has established his church to carry this mission of God in the world. So we pursue rhythms of both showing and telling the good news of the gospel with those who don’t currently know and trust Jesus. (see the supplemental article by Tim Keller, *The Missional Church*)

This includes the essential Christian practice of evangelism, but it is far more than this. Mission includes any rhythm of inviting others into your life — including those who are different from you (race, class, political party, faith tradition, etc.) There’s a wide range of venues in which mission can occur - locally in neighborhoods, workplaces and schools and globally through partnerships and direct international mission work. At times it also includes prophetic speech against oppression or other injustice in our society or in other societies.

Mission often happens in unplanned, spontaneous moments throughout our lives. But if we go weeks, months, or even years without showing and telling the gospel regularly, we must reconsider a rhythm of life that leads us to either more clearly perceive and step into our current opportunities for mission or to pray, plan and pursue new opportunities for mission.

8. Generosity

We share what we have with others, and we seek to live simply. This includes the discipline of giving regularly, sacrificially, and generously to the local church. It also transcends that discipline by seeking to live with less, saving the difference, and use it to love God and love others around the entire world. Generosity encompasses not only our money, but our homes, our time, truly all that God has entrusted to us.

9. Service

We seek out opportunities to help people and institutions, including our own local church. Our time and talents, in addition to our treasures, come into view in our efforts to serve both the church and the world. Our service nurtures God’s will in the world, and it delivers people from hardship and suffering. We ask God to open our eyes to the needs of those near us, and we bring needs to the attention of others in the church who can serve better than we can. As we say in our in-covenant class, “we hold one another accountable to dream and act in ways that are a blessing to our neighbors.”

APPENDIX V: IN-COVENANT VOWS AND EXPECTATIONS

IN-COVENANT VOWS:

1. Do you admit that in your own strength you are a slave to sin, resulting in degradation and God's judgment, and that your only hope is in God's mercy through the liberating work of Jesus Christ?
2. Do you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God and Savior of sinners, and do you receive Him and depend upon Him alone for salvation and redemption as He is offered in the Gospel?
3. Do you now resolve and promise, in humble reliance upon the grace of the Holy Spirit, that you will seek to live as a follower of Christ with all of your heart, mind, soul and strength?
4. Do you promise to join your brothers and sisters at Liberti in seeking to live a life of worship, community, and mercy, joyfully serving with your time, talents, and treasure as God enables you?
5. Do you covenant to humbly receive input and correction from your brothers and sisters, always to strive for unity and peace in our community, and also to submit yourselves to the oversight and discipline of the elders?

EXPECTATIONS OF THOSE IN COVENANT:

Pursue a life of worship: In response to God's grace in the Gospel, gather with other Christians in weekly worship. Read your Bible and pray regularly. Pursue rhythms of sabbath rest. And faithfully care for your physical bodies as you care for your soul.

Pursue a life of community: Seek to develop deep and meaningful relationships with other Christians in this church. Pursue one another relationally - encourage and care for your brothers and sisters in Christ and also to accept their input in your own life. Put your spiritual gifts to use in practice of the 55 "one-anothers" of the New Testament.

Pursue a life of mercy: Determine the best ways for you to serve, both inside and outside the church, given your gifts, passions, and available time. (What's your "one-and-a-half"? - see page 14). Give generously as God enables you. Show and tell the gospel of Jesus Christ in the places where God has put you: at home, at work, in your circle of friends. Bring and include new people into the life of Liberti Church and let the Gospel overflow from your life into the lives of those around you.



IN-COVENANT INFORMATION FORM

Name: _____

Birth Date _____ Age: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ Zip: _____

Home Phone: _____

Work Phone: _____

E-Mail _____

Marital Status: Single___ Single Parent___ Married___ Divorced___ Separated___ Widow___

Name of Spouse (if applicable):_____ Anniversary: _____

CHILDREN	Birth Date	Sex	Baptized
First/Last name	Day/Month/Year	M/F	Y or N
_____	____/____/____	_____	_____
_____	____/____/____	_____	_____
_____	____/____/____	_____	_____
_____	____/____/____	_____	_____

Have you been a member of a church before? Yes ___ No ___

If so, have you been recently involved of the life of that church? Yes _____ No _____

Church: _____

Address: _____

Name of Pastor: _____

Have you been baptized? No ___ Yes: as an infant ___ as an adult ___ Date _____

What responsibilities have you had in previous churches?

What do others and you think your gifts are?

Are you in a Bible Study at Liberti Church? If so, who is the Leader? _____

In-Covenant Agreement:

I have read and understood the explanation of all the In-Covenant Vows and Expectations of Those In Covenant. I have read, understood and affirm Liberti Church's Bylaws, Doctrinal and Confessional Statement and Statement on Marriage, Gender and Sexuality. I understand that I cannot withdraw from being in covenant if a discipline process is instituted until the discipline process is over.

Signed Name

Printed Name

Date