

Liturgy

Community

Mission



The church of the living God is the pillar and ground of the truth.

-1 Timothy 3:15

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Liturgy, Community, and Mission

These three words compose our abbreviated mission statement. The fuller the statement reads: "Holy Trinity Reformed Church exists to worship and serve the Triune God in liturgy, community, and mission."

Short statements of any kind always contain a certain level of ambiguity due to their abbreviated nature. Concise does not typically equal "to the point." It may leave things unsaid, but that only makes things unknown. Certainty requires an adequate level of knowledge and explanation.

Additionally, a culture that does not believe in absolutes makes abridged statements empty and ambiguous. When words do not have meaning, communication becomes impossible.

Our society has become uninformed, misinformed, and visualized to the point that verbal communication is absurd. When everything is ambiguous, we become ignorant of everything?

Because of these difficulties we currently face, it is necessary to remind us of these three descriptions we desire to define us as a church.

Liturgy

Our use of this word begins with the idea of worship. Webster's 1828 Dictionary defines liturgy as "all public ceremonies that belong to divine service." The current online Merriam–Webster Dictionary defines liturgy as "a rite or body of rites prescribed for public worship."

When we use the word liturgy, we are talking about public worship as has been prescribed by God in His Word and administrated by the Church. We do not use this word loosely to include man-made commandments of men but only that which belongs to Biblically-based divine service. It is divine service because it is the performance of duties God requires of His people in worship.

Therefore, we state on our website:

"Holy Trinity Reformed Church is a particular church of professing Christians, with their children, associated together for divine worship and godly living, agreeably to the Scriptures, and submitting to the lawful government of Christ's Kingdom. Our ordinances are prayer; singing praises; reading, expounding and preaching the Word of God; administering the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper; public solemn fasting and thanksgiving; catechizing; making offerings for the relief of the poor and for other pious uses; exercising discipline; the taking of solemn vows; and the ordination to sacred office."

We desire to be a church that worships according to the way God has prescribed, but we also want to be a church that delights in the worship of God. It is one thing to know what God has commanded, but another to delight in what God has commanded. Worship is not to be spiritless but in the right spirit. True worship consists of spirit and truth.

Notice how the Psalmist describes his delight in the house of the Lord.

"Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me
All the days of my life;
And I will dwell in the house of the Lord
Forever." —Psalm 23:6

"One thing I have desired of the Lord,
That will I seek:
That I may dwell in the house of the Lord
All the days of my life,
To behold the [b]beauty of the Lord,
And to inquire in His temple." —Psalm 27:4

"How lovely is Your tabernacle,
O Lord of hosts!
My soul longs, yes, even faints
For the courts of the Lord;
My heart and my flesh cry out for the living God." —Psalm 84:1-2

"I was glad when they said to me,
'Let us go into the house of the Lord.'" —Psalm 122:1

"Behold, bless the Lord,
All you servants of the Lord,
Who by night stand in the house of the Lord!
Lift up your hands in the sanctuary,
And bless the Lord." —Psalm 134:1-2

It is not enough to have the right form without the right disposition. As Jesus said in John 4:23-24, "But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

Our worship must consist of both—spirit and truth!

Community

Our use of this word begins with the idea of being a society of Christians who have the same privileges, rights, and interests under the sovereign rule of Jesus Christ. It is first a statement of our union in Christ. In Christ there is unity. This unity is the basis of community. There cannot be a community without unity in love and truth.

Because of this unity, we are to be defined by the community and not by individualism, isolation, and independence. Community necessitates that we are incorporated, integrated, and interdependent. This is the only way we can live in mutual love for God and one another in Christ's Church.

"And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, "Be saved from this perverse generation." Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their

possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved." —Acts 2:40-47

Mission

Our use of this word begins with the idea of evangelism. We want to be on mission as ambassadors of Jesus Christ to advance His Kingdom through the promulgation of the gospel. However, there is a lot of confusion about mission and evangelism. For many of us, our idea of evangelism was formed by 20th Century Fundamentalism and Evangelicalism. This is not the kind of evangelism we are talking about.

Our understanding of evangelism must be the proclamation of the gospel through the means of grace by, in, and through the Church. The very essence and presence of the Church are evangelistic. The spiritual work of the three marks of the true Church—the preaching of the gospel, the administration of the Sacraments, and its exercise of discipline—is evangelism. It is the mission of the Church. And yet, its physical work—the maintenance and advancement of its resources—is evangelistic. It also belongs to the mission of the Church.

Expansion is not necessarily evangelism. While we are commanded to advance the Church throughout the whole world, expansion does not change the essence, presence, or mission of the Church. This mission is the preach the gospel, baptize believers, and disciple believers in complete obedience to Christ.

The Church is the embassy of Christ and its members are ambassadors for His kingdom. Here at Holy Trinity Reformed Church, the Lord has given us 7542 E Landersdale Road. This property belongs to Jesus Christ and His kingdom and is our base of operations to advance the kingdom of Christ. Holy Trinity Reformed Church is a consolute of the Heavenly Jerusalem commissioned to declare that Jesus is both Lord and Christ over all nations and call all people to declare their allegiance to Him as the King of kings and the Lord of lords.

"And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.' Amen." –Matthew 28:18-20

"But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth."
–Acts 1:8

Conclusion

Liturgy, community, and mission may be dim and distorted in this post-modern culture, but for us, it should be a rallying cry to faithful service in Christ. Holy Trinity Reformed Church is commissioned as a particular church of our Lord Jesus Christ to be a worshiping community of saints to advance the kingdom of Jesus Christ in Camby, Mooresville, Morgan County, and unto the uttermost parts of the earth. These three descriptions should not only define us but are the core of our corporate identity in Christ.