

Manifesto

Statement of Core Beliefs and Philosophy of Ministry

(Version 1.0, Spring 2008)



Sanctuary

Christian Reformed Church

Making Space for God in our Hearts...in our Relationships...and in our World

Welcome to the Sanctuary Manifesto!

If you've been around Sanctuary for very long, hopefully you've seen the line, "Making Space for God" somewhere...our website, the handouts you get Sunday morning, our big blue banner, the sandwich boards that tell you where to park, on water bottles, etc. This really encapsulates the core of what we are about here in this little corner of Greenwood. Our desire is to build a worshipping/servant community with a vision of "Making Space for God...in our Hearts, in our Relationships, and in our World."

Making Space for God doesn't mean slipping God into small openings in our lives. Making Space for God means opening up *all* of our lives for God, making space for God in our personal life, in our relationships with others, and in whatever corner of the world we find ourselves in, whether that's Greenwood or Tacoma, Google or SPU. Every square inch of creation belongs to God...and we want to live into that.

Sanctuary is a fairly young church, only four years old, and so in many ways we are still fleshing out what it means to be us. Recently the leadership of Sanctuary has been going through an exercise to refocus who we are and what we are all about. The line "Making Space for God, in our Hearts, in our Relationships, and in our World" is one outflow of this discussion. Another outcome has been the realization that it's important that each of us who call Sanctuary our faith community be able to verbalize what our mission and core beliefs are. This document is our first step towards putting this all down on paper. The hope is that by putting words to who we are and what we believe we can avoid confusion and/or disappointment.

There is no one right way of doing church. While the Bible gives examples of church communities in the New Testament, there are about a billion ways that these passages can and have been interpreted. We've probably each experienced quite a spectrum of communities that all call themselves "church" and they all *are*. It IS, however, important that each church be unified in its own unique vision and style. As you consider making Sanctuary your spiritual home we hope that you will rally behind the core beliefs and philosophy of ministry contained in this document and become committed to making it happen. We realize that nothing in here is perfect. Goodness knows it was written by quirky humans. But we also realize that as we continue to grow into the community God has in mind for us to be it's crucial that we all be moving in the same direction *together*. Also, while we view ourselves as first and foremost Christians participating in the kingdom of God, we also acknowledge that we are faithful members of the Christian Reformed Church in North America (CRCNA), a denomination with a rich history and a workable church order by which we abide. You can always read the specifics about the CRCNA by going to the website www.crcna.org and browsing various topics, including church order.

Finally, if you find the vision for church life described in this document one that connects with you we hope that you will take the next step and ask the key question-

“How can I go beyond just learning about Sanctuary, to becoming key player in the game of life and ministry that’s being played at Sanctuary?”

We say in our membership classes that the difference between participants and attenders is that when it comes to the need for leadership, time, talents or financial resources, members are the ones who have said, by their very joining, “Hit the ball to me!”

Grace and peace to you as you read,

Randy Rowland, Pastor

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Our Story

Sanctuary Christian Reformed Church is a 4 year old church plant of the Christian Reformed Church in North America located in the Greenwood neighborhood of Seattle, Washington and has had a significant impact on the surrounding community through various ministries. In fact, we have actually been participating in a multi-cultural church multiplication movement in the Puget Sound area that has fostered the start up of 6 new churches and three significant ministries in just 4 years!

Sanctuary is a bi-generational congregation consisting largely of a blend of young adults ranging from college students to young married's and baby boomers or empty nesters. Our church is gifted with excellent teaching and preaching from our Senior Pastor, the Rev. Dr. Randy L. Rowland and gifted team of teachers which includes several of our elders and members. Sunday morning worship is a mixture of contemporary and traditional songs, visual art, live painting, silence, and prayer; all typically focused around the Biblical message. We value the rich tradition and practice of liturgy, while desiring to remain flexible in our response to the Spirit. We are blessed with gifted lay leaders in our congregation who lead small groups, volunteer in various outreach opportunities and serve as Elders.

Our small group ministry connects congregation members together in small communities for the purpose of fellowship, study and prayer. Small groups range from consistent long-term groups to short-term gatherings on specific topics like community, worship, Old Testament survey and Finances to monthly Women's Soup Nights, Monday Night Football and Golden Gardens Summer Nights at the Beach.

A new focus is developing a clear progression within our church, drawing members from worship into small groups and then out into service or outreach of both Word and deed. The Sanctuary Council has identified spiritual development of members, development of intimate covenant relationships and a strong outreach/evangelism program as the direction that our congregation must grow. With strong leadership and God's grace we are well positioned to continue to impact current and new areas of ministry and mission.

We are not looking to simply build a church of significance. Nor, are we seeking to build strong programs. We seek to build **STRONG PEOPLE** who are self-sustaining disciples of Jesus Christ capable of worshipping, loving, relating, serving and blessing wherever they may go!

Our Purpose

Making Space for God in our Hearts

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ The second is this: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ There is no commandment greater than these.”

Mark 12:30-31 (TNIV)

Making Space for God in our Relationships

“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and miraculous signs done by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.”

Acts 2:42-47 (TNIV)

Making Space for God in our World

“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Matthew 28:18-20 (TNIV)

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

Acts 1:8 (NIV)

For our church family, these simple purpose statements help us stay on target with what we believe Jesus calls us to as a community. They also challenge us to ask ourselves key questions:

- ❖ Is everything we are doing focused on, motivated by and enabling us to honor God?
- ❖ Are we challenging each other consistently to be fully committed Christ-followers, not just learning more but practically applying it to our daily lives and relationships?
- ❖ Are we embracing all that it means to be a loving community, in each ministry within our church and in our leadership?
- ❖ Are we doing everything we can to get the word out about the message of Jesus and God’s desire to see all people set free from religion and discover true relationship with him and each other?

Our Core Beliefs

God as Trinity

At Sanctuary we believe that there is only one God, who mysteriously and wonderfully exists as a trinity of three persons; Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

- ❖ **God the Father and Creator-** We believe God the Father is the creator of heaven and earth who delights in what he makes, and says “it is good...very good.” We believe God is an intimate God who knows us intimately and delights in each of us as a parent delights in a child. Because of God’s great love for us he has pursued restored relationship with us, his people, since the moment the first humans turned away from him in the Garden of Eden.
- ❖ **God the Son-** We believe God’s only Son, Jesus Christ, is fully God and yet fully human. We can’t explain how but we believe that the Son existed before creation but was born in human form to the virgin Mary. Scripture tells us that Jesus is the savior of the world (**John 3:16-17**) yet lived the life of a servant, teaching and caring for the powerful and outcast alike and healing the sick and unclean. Scripture also tells us that he was eventually “handed over to death for our trespasses and... raised for our justification.” (**Rom. 4:24-25**)
- ❖ **God the Holy Spirit-** We believe the Holy Spirit intercedes for us to the Father, claims us in baptism, calls and equips us for ministry and gives us the courage to seek and pursue God’s will in our lives. At the end of his earthly ministry Jesus promised the Church the ongoing and personal presence of the Holy Spirit as our comforter and guide.

Creation

- ❖ We believe God is amazingly creative and created everything that is not because he *needed to*, but as a free act of grace. God created man and woman in his image so that we could exist in loving relationship with God and with each other. It is this loving relationship that exists eternally within the Trinity and because of God’s grace now we can experience and participate in it too!

The Problem

- ❖ We believe that *everything* God created was “good.” But as a result of humanity’s willful turning from God (known as *sin*) creation has been corrupted. The result of our sin has been the distortion of the good image of God that he placed in each one of us. The sins of humanity have resulted in the infiltration of God’s good creation by evil, pain and brokenness.

The Solution

❖ **A Messiah from the Line of David in the House of Israel-**

We believe that Jesus is God's answer to the problem human sin has created. We believe because of God's deep, deep love for us, God chose a specific people, Israel, to be God's instrument of blessing to all nations. But the Israelites were human too and in their sinfulness they turned away from God, refusing to fulfill God's purpose for them. God didn't give up though. In love God sent his only Son, Jesus Christ, a descendant of King David of Israel, to fulfill Israel's purpose and to pay the penalty for their sins and the sins of all humanity; past, present and future. Jesus, in the most unimaginable act of grace, allowed himself to be mocked, beaten, falsely accused and nailed to a cross...a scapegoat for undeserving sinners so that we all might have hope of a new life, a fresh start and eternity with God.

We believe Jesus willingly allowed himself to be nailed to a cross and crucified, taking upon himself the punishment for the sins of all humanity. In this act Jesus overcame the power of sin and death and offered to *a//*salvation freedom from sin and eternity with Him. We believe Jesus offers these gifts freely, that we can't earn them, but must simply accept them as free gifts of grace.

The Church

- ❖ **Our Mission-** We believe the Church is the body of Christ, made of all believers throughout time, empowered by the Spirit and guided by the Scriptures to be God's tool to reach out to those who don't yet know him. The Church is not simply an institution or a building but is the living, active body of Christ called to proclaim the abundance of life in Christ in word and deed and to advocate for justice and righteousness for all. We believe each believer is uniquely positioned, equipped and called to contribute to Christ's work.

The Sacraments

- ❖ We believe there are two sacraments given by God and modeled by Christ; the Lord's Supper and baptism. These sacraments are physical signs of God's grace and when the worshipping community celebrates them God's grace is powerfully and inexplicably showered down upon us. We believe the power of the sacraments rests not on the administrator but solely on Christ's blessing & the Spirit's work.
- ❖ **The Lord's Supper-** We believe we celebrate the Lord's Supper to remember the saving life and death of Jesus and to look ahead with expectation to Christ's second coming and the glorious feast that will take place when his Kingdom finally comes here on earth. We believe in the Lord's Supper the Church experiences the real, spiritual presence of the Spirit of Christ in a unique and powerful way.
- ❖ **Baptism-** We believe baptism is first of all a sign of what *God* is doing, of God's grace at work in the life of an individual. Only secondarily does baptism celebrate the decision of an individual to accept God's grace. This is why we celebrate both infant and believer baptisms in the life of the church and why each believer need only be baptized once whether as an infant or an adult.

The Bible

- ❖ We believe the Bible is the Word of God, written by inspiration of the Holy Spirit. It contains an account of God's relationship with and pursuit of God's chosen people as well as the Good News that God has sent his only son to save us from our sin. The Bible itself tells us that it contains everything necessary for salvation and guides us in the life of faith. With confidence, as we read the texts of the Old and New Testaments in private or in public, in devotion or in teaching, we may say together with awe and wonder, "THESE...are the very words of God!"
- ❖ We believe the Bible should be the Church's primary source of authority as well as the measuring stick we measure all Christian teaching against. While tradition and personal experience are also valid sources of authority they must always agree with and submit to the ultimate authority of Scripture. We do not pass judgment on the Scripture, the Scripture "passes on" and leads us to a relationship with God.

The Future

- ❖ We believe the coming of the Kingdom of God has been in ongoing process since Jesus' earthly ministry. We believe the Kingdom of God has already come in the sense that Jesus, the messiah lived and died two thousand years ago for our sins. Satan has been conquered, the battle has been won. The Kingdom *has* already come but hasn't been fully realized yet and won't be until the end of times when Jesus comes again to reign for all eternity. Until then we will continue to experience evil, and suffering...realities of the old kingdom. Our mandate as followers of Jesus Christ is to live into all that the Bible teaches, all the Lord calls us to, in the midst of this present reality and in light of the hope of things to come. Reading along with **2 Corinthians 5**, we believe that we are part of a "new creation" and that we are participating in the reconciliation of all things in Jesus Christ. Indeed, every square inch of Creation has, does and will always belong to God.

Our Response

- ❖ Jesus taught that faith is the only meaningful and appropriate response to God's grace. Faith means trusting the message of the Gospel. But bigger than that it means being willing to put our weight down on that trust and stepping out into a new life centered on Jesus rather than our own self-centered agendas. While human response and responsibility are a part of the call of Jesus Christ on our lives, we do not urge one another, "Keep the faith"...for it is truly, "Thanks be to God that in Jesus Christ, the Faithful One, keeps us!"

Organization and Methods

A Multiplying Church- From the moment Sanctuary was born it has been a multiplying church. Our vision is to be constantly training and equipping leaders, not simply to remain at Sanctuary but to go out into the greater Seattle area to plant new churches. This vision is flourishing as we send Ben Katt to plant *Awake* on Aurora and Tim Soerens to plant *Dust* in South Lake Union. Brian and Betsy Turnbull have planted *The House* in Wedgewood/Ravenna. Clarence Presley is our partner in the *Gospel with Word of Truth Church* and *Truth Center Community Center in Tukwila*. As far north as Bellingham, we have supported and nurtured a church plant called *Mosaic* and a coffee house and church called *Three Trees*. We also have close relationships with *Emmaus Road* in Bell Town and several others. Mark Mohrlang from Sanctuary and several other musically talented men and women from a variety of local churches are partnering together in a bold periodic public worship/arts event called *Urban Hymnal*.

Part of this church planting/multiplication of ministry vision is a monthly Leadership Development Network (LDN) which provides training and encouragement for CRCNA pastors and up and coming young leaders from a wide variety of churches in the greater Seattle area. Monthly attendance ranges from 27-45 leaders learning and dreaming together.

Shared Leadership Team- The New Testament outlines the practice of the church having an eldership that provides overall leadership (**Acts 15**) as well as key ministry leaders who serve the church family with specific leadership abilities (**Ephesians 4**). Here is how our leadership is structured

- ❖ *Pastors*- The group of elders that are paid (usually) that give day-to-day leadership to the ministry of the church family. They provide teaching, training, equipping and organization to all aspects of our various ministries. Our pastors and staff are “equippers” of all the people of God to help mobilize us to live and speak of Jesus in our world.
- ❖ *Elders*- The group of elders elected by the church family to oversee the entire ministry of Sanctuary. Our staff report to this team & they ensure we are on target with our mission, are financially responsible, & are a healthy and growing church. They also function as key ministry leaders in worship, fellowship, prayer, outreach and training.
- ❖ *Lay Leaders*- God has gifted each of us with unique and valuable gifts to be used for the building up of the Kingdom of God (**I Corinthians 12**). Our hope is that each committed member of our faith community would use their particular gifts to build up the ministries of our church. Jesus taught about the importance of sending out workers into the fields (**Matthew 9**) and we believe that *YOU* are the workers Jesus was talking about.

Ministry Teams- We also have teams that serve our community. These include both ministry teams (focused on the lifting up of the Sanctuary community) and mission teams (focused on serving and ministering to those not yet a part of our

Sanctuary community). These include our Hospitality Team, Congregational Care Team, Children's Ministry Team, Preaching Team, Worship Team, Small Group Leadership Team and various Outreach Teams. Each of these teams is led by lay leaders with elder and/or staff oversight and support and enable us to work cooperatively to care for the people who are part of our community as well as provide opportunities for people to come and explore the teachings of Jesus.

Partnered with other like-minded Organizations- Our vision is to have 4-5 teams made up of people from the Sanctuary and Green Bean communities. Each team would be committed to supporting one local ministry in a mutual caring and supportive relationship. These teams will raise awareness within our community to the needs and opportunities to serve in these ministries. They will also be responsible for committing to at least a year of prayerfully partnering with their particular ministry and offering gifts of their time, treasure and talents in their chosen area.

Our Commitments

At Sanctuary we desire for each person committed to being a part of our faith community to commit to three things:

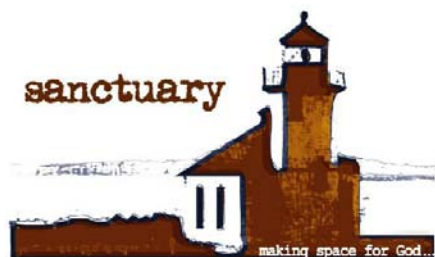
- 1) Making Space in their Hearts
 - through personal time in prayer and in the Word and
 - participating in the corporate worship of Sanctuary.

- 2) Making Space for God in our Relationships
 - through investing in the lives of our brothers and sisters at Sanctuary and Greenwood and
 - participating in a committed Small Group for the purpose of growing deeper in relationship with God and with others and for time in prayer.

- 3) Making Space for God in our World
 - through participation in outreach and service in Greenwood or whatever community you find yourself in the midst of. Our hope is that those in our faith community would invest of their time, talents and treasures in the ministry of the Green Bean coffee shop (Sanctuary's open door to the community) as well as other justice, mercy and evangelistic ministries.

Sanctuary

Christian Reformed Church



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