

Summary of the Core Values-Mission-Focus-Structure
of Mercy Hill Presbyterian Church

The following outline sets forth the core values of my calling and those Mercy Hill will embody as a church.

These are a combination of timeless and unchangeable positions (core values) as well as context-specific applications (mission, focus, structure).

CORE VALUES

Confessional Foundation... The Greek word for “confess” means “to say the same thing.” As a church, we seek to say the same thing as God’s Word: where it speaks, we wish to speak; where it is silent, we wish to be silent. This is our ultimate confession and the foundation of who we are and what we do.

Subservient to God’s Word, but helping to articulate how we understand God’s Word, includes a number of authoritative though merely human-authored confessions, such as the ancient Ecumenical Creeds (eg, the *Apostle’s Creed*, the *Nicene Creed*, etc.) and the Protestant and Reformed confessions, such as the *Westminster Confession of Faith*, the *Belgic Confession*, the *Heidelberg Catechism*, and the *Canons of Dort* (aka the *Three Forms of Unity*).

Other contemporary “confessions” include the *Book of Church Order*, which is the summary and guide to procedure, worship, and church discipline in the *Presbyterian Church of America* (and has formal weight) as well as other modern expressions of mission, such as with the missional emphases of the church planting movement called the *Acts 29 Network* and others, such as the Church Planting Network of Redeemer Presbyterian Church, called *City to City*.

These confessional elements are the non-negotiable aspects of our life and existence as a church family. Flowing from such confessions, specifically the Bible, and generally, the other biblical expressions of faith listed, Mercy Hill holds the following additional core values:

- ***Gospel Centrality...***
- ***Incarnational Community of Discipleship...***
- ***Gathered and Scattered Worship...***
- ***Practical Expressions of Mercy and Justice...***

MISSION AND FOCUS

These core values have been summarized in our church’s mission statement:
“Reaching the Lost for Jesus through Authentic Christian Living.”

Our focus for this mission can be summarized with the slogan, “Sinners, skeptics, and everyone seeking the mercy of God.”

In particular, we aim to reach people in the following “categories” (for lack of a better word) of people:

- People who don’t go to church
- People who used to go to church but have quit
- People who don’t have relationships with at least one person who knows Jesus intimately and personally

Speaking of those who don't go to church, men ages 18-34 are statistically the least likely to be in church on any given Sunday. Mercy Hill wants to be part of correcting this imbalance by gathering a community of believers who feel called to rearrange and reorient their lives (time, talents, and treasure) around the priority of raising up leaders from this group.

Our hope is that together we will build a dynamic, Gospel-centered, Kingdom-focused church planting movement in South Jersey, and around the world.

STRUCTURE

The way Mercy Hill will structure these core values, mission, and focus is through...

- Missional communities called "Crowded Houses"
- Gathered expressions of Corporate Worship, with a focus on covenantal renewal of our ancient faith through contemporary expression of liturgy and music ("ancient and modern")
- Practicing "mercy" in tangible ways in our various towns and townships, both informally as missional communities and formally as a church. We also envision in the more distant future the formation of a new 501c3 organization, "Mercy (for) South Jersey, Inc." which will help facilitate community development that flows from a Gospel foundation.

SEASONS & SCHEDULE

Church Planting takes place in "seasons" and Mercy Hill has been in the gathering season of church planting since January 2010. In this phase, we've focused on building a launch team and planning and preparing preview worship services.

The three purposes of our launch team are (1) training ourselves to participate in, and form, missional communities called "Crowded Houses"; (2) gathering a critical mass of believers and others (goal: 40) to support through time, talents, and treasure, the launch of weekly worship services and healthy Sunday-service ministry structures this fall; (3) model some elements of missional community.

As summer approaches, we will continue to gather Christians and others who feel called to be a part of Mercy Hill's vision, and will also begin the process of **training** the launch team this summer in different aspects of our values and mission. Our hope is that out of this training, several missional communities will form.

May	June	July	August
16: review of values; intro to the Tangible Kingdom	6: begin Tangible Kingdom Primer	4: Fourth of July; alternative meeting on:	1: new mcs form?
23: preview #3	13: preview #4	11:	8:
30: hike and hoagies; bring a friend.	20: Father's Day... 27:	18: 25: finish TK & TKP	15: 22: 29:

In September we're planning on holding two more preview services: on 9/5 and on 9/12, preparing for the official launch of our weekly worship event on 9/19, Lord willing.