



# **Introduction to Cross Sound Church**

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# Introduction to Cross Sound Church

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## Our Story

Cross Sound Church began in 1996 with a group of people who felt the call to launch a new expression of the Gospel on Bainbridge Island. For 20 years, not a single new church had come to the Island. And while the local churches were a good representation of various expressions of the Christian faith, the launch team for Cross Sound Church believed there was room for an outreach and service-oriented body of believers. The Rev. Paul Schuler moved his family here and served faithfully as our founding pastor until 2011.

Rooted in the belief that the historic Christian Gospel is true, compelling, and promises to change lives powerfully, in the direction of freedom, hope, and generosity, our theological commitments are

evangelical and Reformed. As evangelicals we are committed to the authority of Scripture and the priority of God's grace. Our Reformed heritage is reflected in such documents as the Westminster Catechism of Faith and the Heidelberg Catechism.

Our approach to ministry is outward – intentionally partnering with community institutions and other ministries in our area and throughout the world to meet the needs of people in many places. This includes feeding the hungry, providing medical care for the sick, serving the poor and planting new churches – both globally and locally.

We are a body of believers seeking to be both “salt and light” in our communities and around the world.

## SEMINAR PURPOSE

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This seminar is designed to provide you with information about Cross Sound Church. It is also designed to answer some common questions about what it means to be a believer in Christ, what it means to be part of the Presbyterian Church (PCA), and what it means to be a member of Cross Sound Church in particular. We will explore how you can best take advantage of and become involved in the opportunities that come with being a part of our community here on Bainbridge Island.

Specifically, we will

We hope that *Introduction to Cross Sound Church* will be just the first step in a long and fulfilling process of spiritual growth and fruitful service in your ministry here at Cross Sound. We are glad that you are here.

### Working Together

1. Are you a native to the Pacific Northwest or did you move here from somewhere else?
2. How did you find out about Cross Sound Church?
3. What keeps you coming back?



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## Vision

Astonished by grace, Cross Sound Church is united in God, to bring hope and healing to the world.

"Astonished by  
Grace"

## Core Experience

Blessed to be a Blessing

*1 The LORD had said to Abram, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you.*

*2 "I will make you into a great nation  
and I will bless you;  
I will make your name great,  
and you will be a blessing.*

*3 I will bless those who bless you,  
and whoever curses you I will curse;  
and all peoples on earth  
will be blessed through you."  
— Genesis 12:1-3*

"Blessed to  
be a  
Blessing"

The Starting Point

There are three Big Ideas that shape and underline the Christian faith. These ideas are unique to Christianity, set us apart from "religions" and impact everything else. They are:

Big Idea #1 — The Trinity.

*Q. How many persons are there in the Godhead?*

*A. There are three persons in the Godhead: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory.*

*— Westminster Catechism question #6*

This is a classic summary of what historic Christianity of all varieties has taught. When Christians talk about "God" they don't just mean deity in general. Very specifically, the bible and the Christian faith speaks of God as persons living together in unity and harmony. God existed before his creation as a personal community, a divine "family."

The implications of this are staggering: This means that love and personhood and community and honor and relationship are at the heart of the ultimate reality.

*"All the wonderful things we find in personality — intelligence, compassion, creativity, love, justice — are not ephemeral data, doomed to be snuffed out in cosmic calamity; rather they are aspects of what is most permanent, most ultimate." — John Frame*

When we practice Christian community we are "mirroring" God!

Big Idea #2 — The Incarnation.

*Q. 21. Who is the Redeemer of God's people?*

*A. The only Redeemer of God's people is the Lord Jesus Christ, who, being the eternal Son of God, became man, and so was, and continues to be, God and man in two distinct natures, and one person, together. — Westminster Catechism question #21*

*"The Christian claim is that in Jesus of Nazareth God took human nature to himself once and for all and forever; that his incarnation in Jesus was decisive, permanent and unrepeatable, the turning point of human history and the beginning of the new age; and that reigning at God's right hand is precisely 'the man Christ Jesus' still human as well as divine, although now his humanity has been glorified. Having assumed our nature, he has never discarded it and he never will. — John Stott The Contemporary Christian*

Again, this is at the core of historic Christianity. Jesus is the God-Man-forever. God identifies with us completely, speaks our language, enters our world in order to transform.

One implication: When we practice Christian missions we are "mirroring" the work of God in Christ, entering our world in order to bring out transformation.

### Big Idea #3 — The Atonement

*Q. What do you believe concerning "the forgiveness of sins"?*

*A. I believe that God, because of Christ's atonement, will never hold against me any of my sins nor my sinful nature which I need to struggle against all my life. Rather, in his grace God grants me the righteousness of Christ to free me forever from judgment.*

*— Heidelberg Catechism Question 56*

The heart and soul of historic Christian teaching is that Christ did not come primarily as a teacher or an example but as a substitute. Christianity is basically an exchange. He becomes what he was not (standing in the place of sinners) in order that we might become what we are not (standing before God as righteous). He became the God-Man in order to stand in our place, pay the punishment we deserved, and transfer his righteousness before God to us. This is what we call the gospel. When it is understood and practiced it transforms everything!

It is these three "Big Ideas" that the church is founded on, teaches and mirrors the Trinity, the Incarnation and the Atonement. The job of the church is to teach and reflect these truths to every culture and generation.

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## The most important thing in the world

The one doctrine which I have supremely at heart, is that of faith in Christ, from whom, through whom, and unto whom all my theological thinking flows back and forth day and night. This rock...which we call the doctrine of justification...

Christian righteousness, the righteousness of faith...God imputes it to us apart from our works--in other words, it is passive righteousness. For we do nothing for it, and we give nothing for it--we only receive and allow another to work--that is God....

So, have we nothing to do to obtain this righteousness? No, nothing at all! For this righteousness comes by doing nothing, hearing nothing, knowing nothing, but rather in knowing and believing this only--that Christ has gone to the right hand of the Father, not to become our judge, but to become to us, our wisdom, our righteousness, our holiness, our salvation!

Now God sees no sin in us, for in this heavenly righteousness sin has no place. So now we may certainly think:

'Although I still sin, I don't despair, because Christ lives, who is both my righteousness and my eternal life.' In that righteousness I have no sin, no fear, no guilty conscience, no fear of death. I am indeed a sinner in this life of mine and in my own righteousness, but I have another life, another righteousness above this life, which is in Christ, the Son of God, who knows no sin or death, but is eternal righteousness and eternal life.



**Blessed**

Martin Luther





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## Some Key Scripture Texts

At the formation of the Old Testament church God made it clear that his people were to be a conduit for God's grace to flow to others.

*The Lord had said to Abram, "Leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you. <sup>2</sup> "I will make you into a great nation and **I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing.** <sup>3</sup> I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you." — Genesis 12:1-3*

This theme is repeated by Jesus in the Great Commission:

*Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup> 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, <sup>20</sup> 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*

But you are a CHOSEN RACE, A royal PRIESTHOOD, A HOLY NATION, A PEOPLE FOR God's OWN POSSESSION, so that you may proclaim the excellencies of Him who has called you out of darkness into His marvelous light;

--1 Peter 2:9



**To be a  
Blessing**

*"Christians are not meant just to try to do good, be nice and help the world work a little bit better. They are instead to act as signposts to another order, another way of life, another kingdom, which can be glimpsed in this world, but has not yet arrived completely."  
— Graham Tomlin*

## The Core Values Cross Sound Church

### 1. We are convinced the gospel can change anyone at anytime.

#### A. Embracing a New Story

(from the first gospel sermon of Peter)

*23This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross.*

*32God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of the fact. 33Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear. 34For David did not ascend to heaven, and yet he said,*

*“The Lord said to my Lord:  
“Sit at my right hand*

*35until I make your enemies  
a footstool for your feet.” ‘*

*36”Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.”*

*37When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?”*

*38Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.”*

— Acts 2: 23, 32-35,36-39

The Gospel is:

#### 1. A re-telling of real history:

(Jesus died, Jesus rose, Jesus ascended)

#### 2. Announcing the meaning of the story.

(Jesus died for our sins, Jesus rose for our new life, Jesus ascended and is now the whole world's true King)

#### 3. An invitation to all:

(King Jesus offers amnesty and pardon for those who repent of their treason and believe the announcement)

Embracing the Gospel results in:

(**Life Together** in Community with God and others. The gift of the Holy Spirit and Baptism into the new humanity)



## Response to the Gospel

All of us, whether we have been "believers" for only a short time or for many years, need constantly to focus on the same truth - the truth of the Gospel. You see, one becomes a Christian and one grows as a Christian in exactly the same way: by embracing the gospel - turning from sin and trusting in Jesus. In other words, a Christian is a gospel-centered person.

What does it mean to be a Christian? Well, there are many ways to summarize what it means to follow Christ, but a simple tool is *ABCD*.



1. **There is something to *admit*.** Christians are people who believe that they are weaker, guiltier, and more sinful than they would have ever dared admit. By nature and by choice, we are not in a relationship with God - even though for such a relationship we were created - *shalom*. Instead, by nature and choice, we live self-centered rather than God-centered lifestyles, and we are helpless to break this pattern without the power of God.
2. **There is something to *believe*.** Christians are people who believe that God loves people so much that He sent His only Son to earth to become a man, Jesus Christ, and that Jesus died on the cross as our *substitute* and was raised from the dead in order to offer us complete forgiveness. Through the cross, we see that we are more loved, valued, and accepted by God than we would have ever dared imagine.
3. **There is something to *consider*.** Christians are not naive, but have counted the cost of following Jesus. Being a Christian involves acknowledging Jesus' authority and lordship *in every area of life*, welcoming his work to change us from the inside out, and rejoicing to spend time with him and with his followers in the life of the church.
4. **There is something to *do*.** We receive Christ as Savior and Lord by self-consciously turning from sin and self-centeredness (which the Bible calls *repentance*) and trusting in Jesus alone for forgiveness and acceptance by God (which the Bible calls *faith*).

### **Working Together**

1. What is your "religious" background?
2. How is it different/similar from what you've heard so far in the seminar?
3. Have you had a conversion experience and if so please describe it.

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## A summary statement and a prayer:

Lord Jesus Christ,

*I admit that I am weaker and more sinful than I ever before believed, but, through your life, suffering, death, resurrection and ascension I can be more loved and accepted than I ever dared hope.*

*I thank you for paying my debt, bearing my punishment and offering forgiveness.*

*I turn from my sins and receive you as King and Savior.  
Amen.*



### The Power for Deep Change

The gospel is not just the “A-B-C” but the “A-to-Z” of the Christian life. ***The gospel is not just the way to enter the kingdom, but is the way to solve every problem and is the way to proceed at every step.***

### The gospel changes everything.- a few examples.

1. **If Jesus is now the king** and you are his welcomed beloved subject you have nothing to fear, nothing to worry about, nothing to hide, nothing to lose. There is incredible freedom.
2. **If Jesus is the king of the whole world** and offers amnesty to all there is no reason to be exclusive. The gospel subverts racism, sexism, classism, nationalism. We are free from the slavery of superiority or inferiority.
3. **If Jesus is the king of the whole world** and is bringing about a new humanity and a new creation we have reason to be hopeful and joyful. The gospel can change anyone, anywhere, "any anything" — Even Me!

..... The list is endless!

Therefore, growing as a Christian is simply the process of working out the implications of the gospel in every situation and issue that we face.

This approach effects the way we do everything at Cross sound—how we motivate people, how we help them work through counseling problems, how we worship, how we take criticism.

## 2. We are a diverse/multi-generational community.

God calls us each individually to himself but does not leave us to be “lone ranger” Christians. He calls us into a living relationship with others in the church. This togetherness is described beautifully by Luke:

*They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.... All the believers were **together** and had everything in common. <sup>45</sup>Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. <sup>46</sup>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, <sup>47</sup>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

The apostle John in the book of Revelation receives a vision of the kingdom of heaven in terms of radically diverse groups bonded together:

*After this I looked and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and in front of the Lamb. They were wearing white robes and were holding palm branches in their hands. <sup>10</sup>And they cried out in a loud voice: "Salvation belongs to our God, who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb."*

— Revelation 7:8-10

The picture here is of a huge multi-cultural, multi-national, multi-generational gathering of people from across history --- united in Christ, singing the songs of grace. The church today is designed to be a preview of that vast gathering.

**TOGETHER!**

**Learning**  
**Praying**    **TOGETHER!**  
**Sharing/Giving**  
**Living**    **TOGETHER!**  
**Praising**  
**Welcoming outsiders**  
**TOGETHER!**



A big part of our strategy at Cross Sound is to gather diverse people together in all kinds of different groups and settings with Jesus in the middle. We do this because we believe God works in us in unique ways as we rub shoulders and lives together.

## SESSION TWO    *The Cross Sound Vision: Core Values and Beliefs*

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The following are some examples of **Getting Together** at Cross Sound:

- a. **Weekly worship service** (Large Group)
- b. **Affinity Events** (Medium Sized Group)

### c. **Community Groups**

Community Groups are at the core of Cross Sound church. They are the primary place of care. They are also the place where people learn, minister, discover their gifts, develop as leaders- basically live out the Christian life.

A small group is a gathering of 6 to 18 people meeting in individual homes/ restaurants/offices throughout the community during the week. In small groups a primary Christian community is developed and fostered. People are nurtured, equipped and released for God's work in the world. They also provide an opportunity for intimacy, mutual support, practical love and service, learning about the Christian faith, prayer, and sharing of what God is doing. All groups are led by trained lay-leaders from the congregation who are given continued oversight and support.

### d. **Cross Sound Leadership teams**

These are all opportunities to serve:



*The gospel can change anyone at anytime*

#### **Outreach**

Welcome Lunches  
Welcome book  
Signage  
Greeters  
Community Groups  
Website  
Monday Night Football

*Seeking the peace and prosperity of our cities*

#### **Finances**

Budget  
Facilities  
Rental agreement  
Liaison

*Seeking the peace and prosperity of our cities*

#### **Missions**

Local:  
Suquamish Kitchen: Trish Maguire  
New Horizons: Maree Zawoysky  
M.O.P.S. Betty Ann Lyons  
R.U.F. (Reformed Univ. Fellowship):  
Drew Burdette  
International:  
Cuba: Allen/Marilyn Thompson  
Mexico City: Victor Cruz  
China: Heidi Ifland  
First Aid Arts: Curtis/Grace Romjue  
Ensenada: Tom Crane

*Intentionally Intergenerational*

#### **Education**

Children's Ministry  
Youth Group  
Jr/Sr High  
Men's Ministry  
Women's Ministry  
New Members  
Confirmation  
Baptisms  
School of Discipleship  
Round Table Discussions

*Intentionally Intergenerational*

#### **Leadership**

Elders  
Elder Training  
Deacons Transition  
Stephen Ministry  
Education  
Seminars/Retreats  
Staff

*The gospel can change anyone at anytime*

#### **Worship**

Preaching  
Music  
Prayer  
Space

### 3. We are seeking the peace and prosperity of our communities.

At the formation of the Old Testament church God made it clear that his people were to be a conduit for God's grace to flow to others.

*For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. 12 Then you will call upon me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you.*

*--Jeremiah 29:11-12*

*Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the LORD for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper."*

*--Jeremiah 29:7*

This theme is repeated by Jesus in the Great Commission:

*Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 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, 20 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*

#### The Old Paradigm: "We do Missions"

Missions was something done "overseas" or in "non-Christian cultures"-- in a church it was often a separate department.



#### The New Paradigm: "We are Missional"

"How is it possible that the gospel should be credible, that people should come to believe that the power which has the last word in

human affairs is represented by a man hanging on a cross? I am suggesting that the only answer, the only hermeneutic of the gospel, is a congregation of men and women who believe it and live by it."

—Leslie Newbigin

*"Western culture is now in many ways as deeply resistant to Christianity as many never-Christian cultures. Churches in the west, then, find themselves in a dis-orienting new situation — "on the mission field"—Dr. Tim Keller*

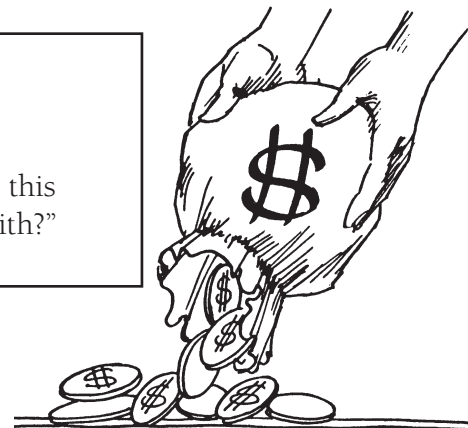
**In a missional church** every public event is to be something we do “before the world”, and we expect to be “overheard” by many friends who do not believe or who don’t know what they believe. (So we work hard to avoid Christian insider jargon)

**A missional church** equips and motivates every member into an “outward faced” lifestyle. We expect members to be praying for and engaging their non-Christian friends with the gospel. We believe that the church should be in **partnership** with individual believers to reach their web of relationships for Christ.

**A missional church** is engaged in the local community incarnating the love of Christ in practical ways.

**A missional church** seeks to see its life through the eyes of those who are "outsiders"

**The key question** we keep asking is not,  
“What kind of a church will meet my needs?”  
but,  
“What kind of a church do we need to be to reach and disciple this whole community? How can we include those outside of the faith?”



Some "Getting Out" Ideas:

- Use your involvement in Youth Sports or Y guides as a "mission field"
- Join a book club at Eagle Harbor books. Engage in thoughtful conversations.
- Be the "hub" of Neighborhood parties.
- Join some others in a Service Saturday. Invite a friend to join you.
- Go on a Thanksgiving Mexico Home building trip. Take some pictures and share them with your friends. Invite them to come with you next time.
- Get involved with the Cross Sound Jr. High or High School program as a mentor, class speaker, or to just hang out with kids.

..... the possibilities are limitless...



4. We are an equipping community where every member is a minister.

*And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, 12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, 13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, 14 so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. 15 Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.—Ephesians 4:4-12-16*

*We delete the comma between the words ministry and for intentionally in this quote to remove any hint that it is the responsibility of church officers alone both to equip church members and to build up the body of Christ. That is not the sense of the verse. On the contrary, Paul means that while church leaders must equip the saints to do ministry, this ministry of building up Christ's body (the church) is collective. All of us have a role to play in advancing the people of God to maturity in His Son (see 1 Cor. 12).—Ligonier Ministries*

5. We are a gospel culture where it's safe to be open about our wounds, doubts, hopes and joys.

*For thus says the One who is high and lifted up, who inhabits eternity, whose name is Holy: "I dwell in the high and holy place, and also with him who is of a contrite and lowly spirit, to revive the spirit of the lowly, and to revive the heart of the contrite." Isaiah 57:15*

**What is a gospel culture?**

*The shared experience of grace for the undeserving: the corporate incarnation of the biblical message in the relationships, vibe, feel, tone, values, priorities, aroma, honesty, freedom, gentleness, humility, cheerfulness – indeed, the total human reality of a church defined and sweetened by the gospel.*

Why does this matter? Why must our church preach the gospel and live out a gospel culture at the same time, by God's grace?

Because faithfulness to God requires more than having a right doctrinal. It also requires relational attractiveness. But it is possible sincerely to preach true doctrine while, at the same time, utterly deny that doctrine by an ugly anti-gospel culture.

*"Every church culture is communicating something. If a church is not positively communicating the gospel both by what it says and by what it is, then that church risks unsaying by its reality what it is saying by its theory. Isaiah alerted the people of God in his generation: "How the faithful city has become a whore!" (Isaiah 1:21). Their problem was not what they believed officially; their problem was what they were personally, and they didn't even see it. Similarly, Peter in Antioch was not preaching a false gospel by his words; he was subverting the true gospel by his deeds (Galatians 2:11-21), and he didn't even realize it. When Paul said to Peter, "I do not nullify the grace of God" (verse 21), he was not implying that Peter's teaching was nullifying the doctrine of God's grace; he was implying that Peter's behavior was nullifying the culture of God's grace – which, in effect, did deny the doctrine! Paul saw what Peter did not see – that Peter's behavior was deconstructing nothing less than the doctrine of justification by faith alone. If our churches today are not easy-to-read, in both doctrine and culture, as living proof of God's grace, we too risk betraying the gospel without even realizing it."*

--Ray Ortlund

### Theological and Doctrinal Connections.

#### 1. Cross Sound is committed to historic Christian doctrine.

We hold to those basic teachings which have been believed by all those churches throughout history that have proclaimed historic Christianity. These teachings, are seen in the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds. The three basic teachings are (a) the Trinity (one God in three persons of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit), (b) the Incarnation (that Jesus is both God and man), and (c) the Atonement (that Jesus died on the cross and was raised from the dead in order to save sinners.)

Base Line

## Apostle's Creed

**I believe in God, the Father Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth;  
And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord,  
Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the Virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, dead, and buried.  
He descended into hell (death),  
The third day he arose again from the dead.  
He ascended into heaven,  
and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty.  
From thence he shall come to judge the quick and the  
dead.  
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic\* Church,  
the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.**



(\*that is, the true Christian church of all times and places)

## 2. Cross Sound is committed to Historic Reformation doctrine.

Particularly, we are committed to those doctrinal views associated the Presbyterian and continental Reformed churches and with the names John Calvin, John Knox, Martin Bucer, etc that were articulated in the Protestant Reformation.

### *Sola gratia* (“by grace alone”)

Salvation comes by God’s grace or “unmerited favor” only — not as something merited by us. It is an unearned gift from God for Jesus’ sake.

### *Sola fide* (“by faith alone”)

The doctrine of sola fide or “faith alone” asserts that it is solely on the basis of God’s grace through the believer’s faith alone in Christ’s work that believers are forgiven and declared right before God.

### *Sola scriptura* (“by Scripture alone”)

The Bible as God’s written word is self-authenticating, clear to the rational reader, its own interpreter, and sufficient of itself to be the only source of Christian doctrine.

### *Solus Christus* (“Christ alone”)

Christ is the only mediator between God and man, and there is salvation through no other (Acts 4:12).

### *Soli Deo gloria* (“Glory to God alone”)

All glory is due to God alone, since salvation is accomplished solely through his will and action—not only the gift of the all-sufficient atonement of Jesus on the cross but also the gift of faith in that atonement, created in the heart of the believer by the Holy Spirit.



## 3. Cross Sound is committed to Evangelical doctrine.

By using the word evangelical, we are stating that we reject the down playing of these historic Christian doctrines by some 19th and 20th century “modern” critics. Specifically, we believe that the Scriptures are completely trustworthy and our ultimate authority for our beliefs and our lifestyles. We believe that salvation is only by God’s grace and is received solely by faith in Christ. We believe in the historicity of the biblical miracles, of the virgin birth, and the reality of Christ’s Second Coming.

**Cross Sound Church's attitude regarding our beliefs**

- a. We believe in majoring on the majors and minoring on the minors.
- b. We believe that in the essentials there must be unity and in the non-essentials there must be charity.
- c. In order to Join Cross Sound Church, you must adhere to the essentials of the Christian faith.

The essentials include:

1. A Trinitarian belief in God
2. The deity and resurrection of Christ
3. The substitutionary and atoning death of Christ,
4. The sinfulness of man,
5. Salvation through faith in Christ alone,
6. The inspiration and authority of the Scriptures.



Note: You don't have to be a Presbyterian to be a Presbyterian! While we are a Presbyterian church, and therefore our members need to understand our commitments and be able to work with those who hold them all that is required for membership is a credible profession of faith in Christ, not agreement with every detail of Reformed theology.





## What's a Presbyterian Church? (the basics of Presbyterian structure)

### **1. Multiple officers.**

Every congregation was governed by multiple officers, not just one person. Philemon 1:1; I Timothy 3:1-7; Acts 21:17, 18.

### **2. There are two classes of officers:**

Elders (teaching and ruling) and Deacons (ministry leaders). Titus 1:5-7. Elders = Bishops. Each church had several elders and several deacons. Ephesians 4:11. Apostles, prophets, evangelists seem to be traveling leaders. Elders and Deacons were local.

**3. The office of elder is an office of authority.** Elders set the course for the church. They admit, discipline, and remove members. They are accountable for the health and well-functioning of the church. (Hebrews 13:17, 1 Peter 5:1-4, 1 Tim. 5:17). In our particular denomination this office is open only to men.

**The office of deacon** is an office of service and ministry directed especially at the physical and material needs of the congregation. They are to lead the congregation in caring for the hurts of people both within and outside the church (Acts 6:1-4).

**4. Officers are chosen by the people**, though their election only recognizes the gifts for office as they are given by Christ (Acts 6). The people elect, but they elect the ones with "wisdom" for the job of leadership.

**5. Ordination is done by elders.** I Timothy 4:14; Acts 13:1-3; Acts 6. There is a sense in which they have "veto" power. They set apart, but they do not elect.

**6. General assemblies** of church officers serve as a court of appeal with real authority over all churches represented. Acts 15. An issue is debated in a council of elders and apostles. The result is considered binding on churches (Acts 16:4, 5) Thus, local congregations are not independent. All the churches in the area are called simply "the church" singular (Acts 5:11; 9:31; II Corinthians 12:28). Elders governed house churches in a city.

## Presbyterian Church Structure

**Session** - the elders of a local church

**Presbytery** - a representative number of elders from churches of a designated geographical area (meets quarterly)

**General Assembly** - a representative number of elders from the churches of the entire U. S. and Canada (meets annually)

### **Membership in the Church Community**

To be a member of a church is to make a public promise to live according to the Word and to support the work of the congregation. In the Bible this is called "a covenant". Every believer is part of the Spiritual Body of Christ, but only by a public promise can you be part of the church as organization, as gathered. A public promise, or covenant, is the basis for all society, according to the Bible: marriage, employment, citizenship, church membership, etc. are all relationships of accountability. *There is no such thing as community without commitment.*



Membership in a church is not like membership in a social club or other organizations. Most organizations see their members as consumers, the ones whom the organization serves. The Church of Christ is a completely different community — membership means ministry and service, means going from being a consumer to becoming a provider of God's love and care to others. At Cross sound, we take seriously that we are a church not for ourselves, but for others.

### **Benefits of Membership**

Of course, many of the benefits of a vital congregation are available to anyone who becomes involved, whether they are members or not. But there is a rationale for formal membership:

1. Members have the benefits of accountability to spiritual leaders. Every believer must "obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls" (Hebrews 13:17). This command assumes that you have a covenant with certain spiritual leaders. They are responsible for you and you to them.

Some people may say, "I am accountable only to God". Ultimately, only God has authority over you. But the doctrine of sin should sober us about making ourselves the sole judges over our own hearts, "The heart is deceitful above all things and beyond cure. Who can understand it?" (Jer 17:9). Hebrews 3:13 says we need others to exhort us "daily" lest we become hardened by sin.

2. Members have the benefits of church power to shape the ministry of the congregation. It is members who can choose officers and guide the direction of the congregation. Officers are elected (Acts 6:1-6), by "the people".

Formal membership entitles you to voting rights within the government of our church. While congregational meetings are open to anyone who wishes to attend, only members may pass resolutions, vote for changes to the by-laws or nominate and elect the officers. Occasionally, we might hold a Member Dinner or Retreat to enable the voting members to carry out the business of the church. Members officially "call" the pastors to the work of the church and recommend the annual budget to the Elders.

### **Formal Membership Promises**

Cross sound belongs to a wider family — that of the Presbyterian Church in America ("PCA"), a denomination with roots in the Reformation tradition. Membership at Cross Sound means that you have committed yourself to our family of believers — that you have agreed to participate as fully as you are able in the life, ministry and government of our church. Therefore, Cross Sound members must affirm the following promises as a vow unto the Lord:

You must believe the Gospel

- 1. Do you acknowledge yourself to be a sinner in the sight of God, justly deserving His displeasure, and without hope except through his sovereign mercy?*
- 2. Do you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and Savior of sinners, and do you receive and rest upon Him alone for salvation as He is offered in the Gospel?*

You must seek to grow into the likeness of Christ, not through proud self-reliance, but through constant repentance and reliance on the Holy Spirit.

- 3. Do you now resolve and promise, in humble reliance upon the grace of the Holy Spirit, that you will endeavor to live as becomes a follower of Christ?*

Regular involvement in the life and ministry of the congregation.

- 4. Do you promise to support the Church in its worship and work to the best of your ability?*

You hold yourself accountable to the leadership and one another to live up to the above promises and you seek to be a Biblical peacemaker in your relationships.

- 5. Do you submit yourselves to the government and discipline of the Church, and promise to promote its purity and peace?*



## Principles of Generosity

### 1. Giving Must Be In Significant Proportions

- a. The guideline of the **tithe**- In the Old Testament, believers were required to give a tenth of their income to the support of the ministry and the needs of the poor. The New Testament does not specifically mention the tithe, but since we are far more blessed and indebted to God than Old Testament believers, we assume that we are held more responsible for generosity, not less. Thus the tithe (10%) annual gift of income is a kind of minimum guideline for giving.
- b. The guideline of **sacrifice**- Paul says about the Macedonians, "they gave as much as they were able and even beyond their ability" (II Cor. 8:3). That means they gave until it meant a sacrifice in their lifestyle.
- c. The guideline of **responsibility**- Christians are also to give "according to their ability" (Acts 11:29). There are seasons to economic life. And there are economic responsibilities to our families and to our debts. In many cases, good planning over time will be necessary to move our giving into Biblical proportions without renegeing on legal and personal financial obligations.

### 2. Giving Must Be A Joyful Response To God's Grace.

Paul asked for money this way: "I am not commanding you, but I want to test the sincerity of your love for you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, he became poor, so that through his poverty you might become rich." (II Cor. 8:8-9). What a test! Paul says that the difference between moralists (those who think God accepts them for their good works) and Christians (those who know they are sinners saved purely through grace) is that a Christian wants to give as generously as he or she received. Put starkly: You always give effortlessly to those things that give your life meaning, to your "gods".

### 3. Giving Must Be planned and regular.

Paul directed Corinthians to set aside a portion of their wealth each week until he could come and take it to famine victims in Palestine (I Cor. 8:10-11). Usually "spontaneous" and unplanned giving, while perhaps joyful (principal #2) is not proportionate (principle #1). The actual tally of completely spontaneous giving usually shows little sacrifice involved. We must plan. We must allow the church to help with reminders and directions.

A Suggested plan:





## SESSION FOUR : *Giving of Time, Treasures and Talents*

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### **a. Evaluate your own heart with regard to money**

What do you most enjoy spending money on? What percentage of your income is going to: a) God's causes (church, Christian ministries), b) to people in need (Outside your family). How close is it to 10% of your income?

Read Matthew 6:19-34; I Timothy 6:6-10; II Cor. 8:1-15; 9:6-15. Do you need to adjust your giving in light of eternal values?

### **b. Evaluate the use of your all of your resources (not just money)**

### **c. Come up with an intentional plan.**

Follow these three steps (families should do these together):

- 1) Decide what percentage of your income you will give to the Lord's work this year.
- 2) Now ask two questions: Is this a sacrificial figure? On the other hand, is it a responsible figure?
- 3) Now set aside the Lord's portion first whenever the money is received. It is his, not yours.

### **d. Prayerfully distribute the money among Christian causes as you see fit.**

Remember — the more you trust God with your material treasure, the more he will entrust you with his spiritual treasure (Luke 16:9-12; II Cor. 9:10-12).



## **Ministry Involvement**

### **What Are Spiritual Gifts?**

Because we are a church with a strong desire to make an impact on the community, we are a church that emphasizes involvement in ministry and allows each individual to use their own unique "spiritual gifts." Even today's pop psychologists will say that "you are unique," but Cross Sound believes that each individual was meant to put his or her own set of talents, proclivities, experiences and background to use for the good of the whole church. (It could also be argued that you will find fulfillment and "meaning in life" if you are actively putting to use your spiritual gifts, but we'll concentrate here on what using your gifts does for the church — and consequently, the community.)

## SESSION FOUR : *Giving of Time, Treasures and Talents*

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You may have been given many natural talents from God that help you get ahead in the business world — but spiritual gifts are those which are put to use for the spiritual benefit of others. I Peter 4:10 says: "Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God's grace in its various forms." This verse emphasizes that every believer in Christ has both specific gifts and a distinct calling from God. But these individual gifts are all part of God's bigger plan to bring about his redemption of the world through the church — the Body of Christ. Here's what I Corinthians 12:4-7 says: "There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but the same God works all of them in all men. Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good."

Spiritual gifts (which are listed in Romans 12, 1Corinthians 12, and Ephesians 4), tend to fall into two categories: Word-based gifts and Deed-based gifts. (There are also special gifts that were unique to the founding of the church in the apostolic era: revelation, miraculous signs, etc. We believe that those manifestations passed with the closing of the New Testament.)

But I Thought The Staff Did All This Church Stuff...

If the leadership of this church is doing its job correctly, we're supposed to help you learn how to become a "minister" yourself! Leaders are supposed to teach you how to transform your character into Christ likeness, how to give of yourself and get involved — using your spiritual gifts. I Peter 2:9 reminds us: "You [plural] are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light."

Where Do I Serve Best?

We believe that every Christian has talents, spiritual gifts, personality traits, background experiences, and passions that contribute uniquely to the life of our church. So, we encourage you to explore your spiritual gifts and the special works that God has designed for you.

The leaders and staff of Cross Sound also want to challenge you to become actively involved in our church, in the needs of our community and in the whole world. The best fit is something that blends your affinity (desire), ability (gifts), and opportunity (need).



## “Expectations” of Active Membership

How do you grow into active membership at Cross Sound, fleshing out your promise to “support the Church”? What does God intend for his people to do as a part of his Church? We encourage all of our members to live out their membership in the context of Scripture’s expectation for their life as a Christian. There is a proper balance between active involvement and over commitment. Our ministry activity should not become a barrier to living a God-honoring life. Your Christian walk ought to, therefore, be lived out in the following specific, practical ways:

### **Daily walk with God**

Regular, daily use of the “means of grace” - Bible reading and prayer - methodically for your own spiritual growth. See Mark 1:35

### **Weekly worship with the people of God**

See Hebrews 10:24-25.



### **Participation in a Community Group .**

Community groups are the main way that pastoral care occurs at Cross sound. For your own spiritual growth as well as others, you need to belong to a group. See Eph 4:15-16.

### **Ministry involvement**

Besides attending worship and a fellowship group each member should find one way to minister to others. Use your gifts! See I Peter 4:10-11.

### **Giving of finances through tithes and gifts**

See Malachi 3:8-10; I Corinthians 16:1-2.

### **Welcoming and including new people**

Let the gospel overflow from your life into the lives of those around you - at home, at work, in your circle of friends. Help those whom you bring to Cross sound to be able to connect into the life of the church. See Acts 2:41-47.

## **The Membership Process: How Do I Become a Member?**

### **1. The Membership Seminar**

Your first step is to attend the Discovering membership seminar. We hope to offer this several times throughout the year. Attendance at the seminar obligates you in no way — you may simply find out more about Cross sound's vision, goals and what position we take on certain Christian doctrines.

### **2. The Membership Interview**

When you have decided you want to belong to the Cross sound family and have completed the above seminar, call the church office and schedule your membership interview: (842-6898) Generally, these meeting last about 45 minutes. The interviews are designed for several purposes: First, it gives leadership a chance to get to know you better, to hear your experience in coming to know God in Christ and what is happening presently in your spiritual life. Second, you have an opportunity to ask any questions you might have — about the church, its position on certain issues and how the church operates. This is your opportunity to interact with some offers, to make sure you are comfortable with you decision to join Cross Sound.

### **3. Session Approval**

After the interviews, the elders will meet at their monthly Session to officially enter the new members into our body. This technically is the official point of member reception — after that date you may be considered a full voting member. All that remains is your acknowledgment before the congregation in the public ceremony.

### **4. Public Reception**

### **5. Baptism**

If you have never been baptized, and are making your first public profession of faith we would be honored to baptize you during the worship service.



### **What if I chose not to become a formal member?**

If you decide to stay involved with Cross Sound without membership, there will be no effort to pressure you into joining. Do not join unless you are ready to be committed! A broken promise is worse than no promise at all.

We believe that membership in Cross sound is a privilege! It is not required for full participation in church activities. We encourage you to join our covenant family, but we do not intend to exclude anyone from family activities if they have chosen not to pursue formal membership. Non-members may worship with us, attend meetings on the church's future, be active in a home group or other ministry, go on the church retreats, etc.

## **Cross Sound's Purpose**

Taking these three core convictions together, we can now define Cross Sound's particular purpose as a church. We urge you to carefully study, understand, and maybe even memorize the following purpose statement:

- The Gospel Changes Everything: *Overflowing His Grace into the lives of others*
- Multi-generational Community: *Growing together as a family of believers.*
- Pursuing the Peace and Prosperity of our Cities: *Making a positive and noticeable difference on Bainbridge Island, Poulsbo, Silverdale, Seattle and beyond.*

### Some questions to ask yourself if you're considering membership at Cross Sound:

1. Do I have a heart to reach my friends and community with the gospel? Am I committed to being part of a church with an “outward face?”
2. Am I committed to being in community with a diverse group of people (both in age and Christian experience)?
3. Many of our ministries and groups are lay-led. Am I willing to be trained and shepherded by other lay people?
4. Am I willing to stretch with growth, change and experimentation?

Remember - not every church is for everyone. It takes all kinds of churches to reach all kinds of people.