



Who we have been, who we are and who we are becoming.

Purpose of this Document ...

We're often asked, "What kind of church is C4?" It's a hard question to answer because there isn't one single plan or blueprint for doing church that is the "right one", so we're learning and growing together. But unclear communication of how we'll follow Jesus at C4 can result in hurt feelings and ineffective ministry. So it's important for us to be on the same page, to be open and honest about why we exist, where we're going, and how we're going to get there. Our hope is that this document will serve as a conversational rallying point for all who want to commit to doing church together here at C4.

The purpose of this summary document is to describe the mission, vision and values here at C4. After reading further we hope you'll understand a bit more about the atmosphere we're trying to foster at C4 Church. Please read on and join the conversation as we seek to follow Jesus together.

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1. OUR STORY

Our history as a congregation began in the Fall of 1985. A small group of Christians with a vision for a new church transplanted Bethel Bible Church from Toronto to the growing suburb of Pickering. Under the pastoral leadership and ministry of David Collins, this committed group of 40 individuals initially met in a school where they grew to a congregation of 200.

In 1987 the congregation then moved into a new facility on Kingston Road, and Steeple Hill Community Bible Church was born! Growth and change continued to be a part of our journey.

By 1994, it became evident that these facilities were no longer adequate for a growing congregation. This led to a temporary move to Ajax High School while the current facility on Bayly Street in Ajax was built. At this point the church was renamed “Carruthers Creek Community Church” in order to identify better with the new community being built around it. C4—as we affectionately call ourselves—continued to grow during our time at Ajax High School. By the grace of God the congregation grew from about 400 to just over 600 people in that season of ministry.

In June of 1999 we moved into our current 42,000 square foot facility. At that time, people wondered if they would ever see the day when God would increase our numbers and influence to fill this building. He did and the church continued to grow under Dave Collins.

In 2005, Jon Thompson became Senior Pastor. By 2010, along with a growing ministry and support staff, over 1500 people now identify C4 as their home church. With an average weekend worship attendance of over 900, our congregation continues to grow under God’s leading and enablement. We continue to look forward to the future, and are eager to fulfill the vision God has given to us in Durham and around the world.

2. OUR PURPOSE—THE REASON WE EXIST

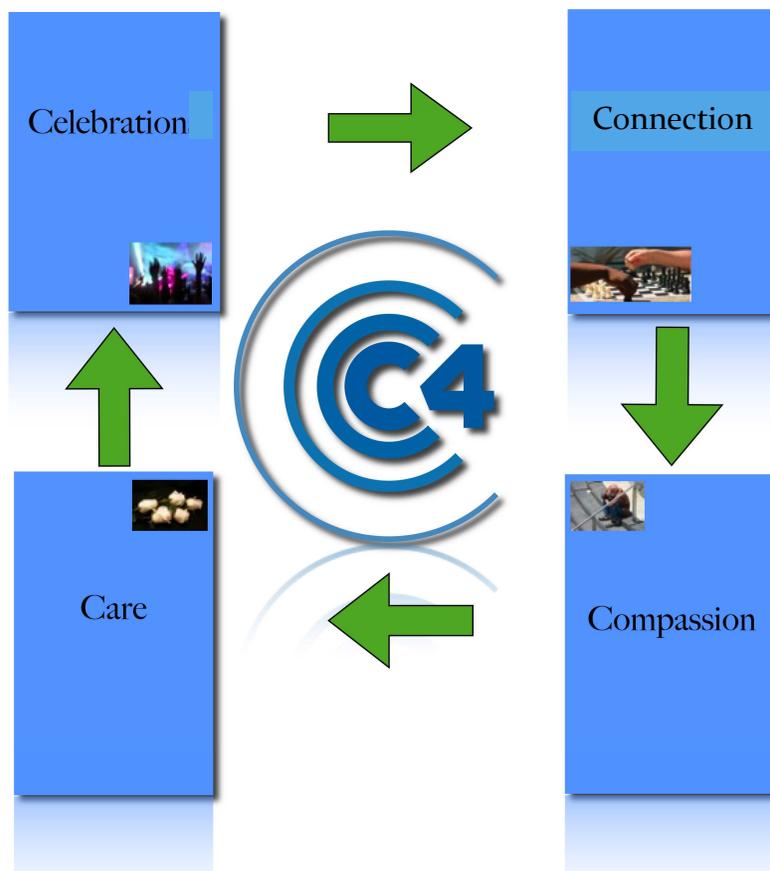
Our mission statement is our reason for being. It summarizes what we are about, why we exist, and why we do the things we do.

The mission to which we are called is:

To glorify God by enabling people of all ages to become fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ.

Jesus calls us to make and to be His disciples. In fact, “Go and make disciples of all nations” is one of the last things Jesus said to the first leaders of the church. This same commission is embedded in our DNA as a church, in our very reason for existence; but what does “fully devoted followers” mean? So much has been written on the subject of discipleship but for simplicity sake we’ve defined it this way for us at C4.

Fully devoted followers who choose to call C4 their home church are those who engage in celebration, intentionally commit to community, have compassion on those far from Jesus, and give and receive care within the congregation.



3. OUR UNIQUE VISION

Under this overarching mission, our sincere belief is that God has also given our leaders a compelling and specific vision. Our vision statement is the big idea of what kind of church community we want to become. It is our best attempt to express what we believe God is calling us to become as we seek to follow Him faithfully. Our vision statement embodies our picture of the preferred future we believe God is calling C4 to embrace.

Our unique vision for C4 is:

To become a regional church of 10,000 meeting the physical, emotional and spiritual needs of people in Jesus' name.

A regional church ...

We have recognized that people from all over Durham Region attend C4. Rather than limiting our influence to a specific neighbourhood or municipality, it seems that God is drawing people into the life of this church from all around the area. We are very excited by this development, and are becoming more intentional about extending our influence into many neighbourhoods and throughout the region. Further, we realize that God wants to use us to help reach the world. As a result, we are becoming more and more actively involved in national and international ministry endeavours to people of every nation and tribe.

A church of 10,000 ...

Few of us have ever experienced Christian community on this size or scale. To be a church of 10,000 is certainly a sizeable vision; some might even call it audacious. Is "*bigger*" better? Are all churches called to be large churches? Are small churches less important to God? Our answer to these questions is a straightforward "*No!*". The calling of each church is unique.

Our sincere understanding is that our congregation has been called by God to grow to this scale. By human standards, audacious perhaps. By God's standards, what an opportunity to be involved in a community with such great potential for influence! And what a testimony to the power and glory of God!

Naturally, as the congregation stretches to reach this vision, we understand that we never want to limit or confine the growth God gives us by land or buildings. We know our current facility will eventually prove inadequate, and new lands and buildings will have to be sought.

Meeting physical, emotional & spiritual needs in Jesus' name

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C4 firmly believes we are responsible both to proclaim the Good News of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ and also to meet the needs of people in the name of Jesus. Our approach to ministry is clearly holistic.

Under the pastoral leadership of Jon Thompson, C4 was challenged with launching the City of Hope ministry. City of Hope is the ministry that allows our people to serve the poor, the widow and the orphan outside of C4 in Durham region in Jesus' name. What began as a dream has developed into reality with several initiatives through Feet on the Street, an online tool called TheCommon.org, and our association with a Counselling Centre (Life Care Centres). As we continue to pioneer new ministries and extend partnerships with a growing list of existing agencies, our desire continues to be sharing the message of salvation and showing the love of Jesus in practical ways.

4. OUR CORE VALUES

Core values serve to unify our efforts and define our distinctive characteristics as a congregation. Every church has shared core values, these values communicate what's important, influence overall behaviour, inspire people to action and shape the vision of the church. While there could be a lengthy list of values we have chosen to agree on the following and allow them to guide us in our ministry together.

We value God's Word - 2 Tim 3:16

We believe in an honest engagement with the Biblical text, understanding and applying it in order to find our place in God's unfolding story, becoming more like Jesus in character and conduct.

We value shared responsibility - Matt 28:19, Acts 4:12

We believe that all followers of Jesus are called to be responsible witnesses in our speech & actions, together making a difference in the church and community.

We value welcoming everyone - Eph 4:12

We believe that in the church we are constantly addressing two audiences - those who have already crossed the line of faith and those who have not, we recognize the need to minister to both.

We value authentic relationships - Eph 4:29-32

We believe that every Christ follower is called to love, accept and forgive one another, seeking to maintain unity and purity in our relationships.

We value Christian community - Acts 2:42-47

We believe that every Christ follower is called to participate in Christian community through large and small expressions where worship, teaching and fellowship are promoted.

We value shared ministry - 1 Cor 12:7-14

We believe every Christ follower is called to impact those around them through loving, joyful, gift based, service.

We value holistic ministry - Matt 5:14-16, James 1:27

We believe in ministry that addresses the needs of the whole person - spiritual, emotional and physical.

5. OUR SHARED BELIEFS

At C4 we are serious about some of our theological distinctives yet we always want to make sure that we are clear on the major issues and allow for diversity in lesser matters. We try hard to resist labels because of the dangers inherent in that, however we know that the core beliefs of our church are very important. So without using traditional labels we would say that at C4 we encourage each other to live a prayer-filled, Spirit-empowered, virtuous, compassionate, Word-centered, life. As a church body we specifically hold to the following core doctrines.

We believe...

- the Bible to be the inspired Word of God and that it is our standard for faith and conduct.
- that there is one God, eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
- that human nature is sinful and deserving of the punishment of God.
- that Jesus Christ was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary, and is true God and true man.
- that the death of Jesus Christ was for our sins and that all who trust in Him and His death for us are forgiven their sins and granted eternal life.
- in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, His ascension into Heaven, and His ministry there as our High Priest.
- in the work of the Holy Spirit in convicting people of sin, the regeneration of those turning to Christ from sin, and His work of sanctification in the believer. As empowered evangelicals we believe in all the gifts and work of the Holy Spirit.
- in the personal return of Jesus Christ.
- in the bodily resurrection of the just and the unjust, the everlasting joy of the saved and the everlasting punishment of the unsaved.
- in the baptism, by immersion, of believers.

For an expanded version of our beliefs and our specific theological distinctives, please consult the Articles of Faith and Doctrine section located on our church website at www.c4church.com

6. WHAT DOES C4 FEEL LIKE?

We live in a world that reflects the creativity of the God who made all things. No two people are identical, no two countries are exactly alike and no two churches are exactly the same. Every church has the privilege and responsibility to think carefully about its various forms, that is, how the church will do the things we are called to do as a local gathering of Christ followers. At C4 we are very intentional about what we do and how we do it.

Preaching

One of the things that C4 is known for is preaching. That's because we take it very seriously. As a church we hold a high view of Scripture and go to great lengths to ensure that the weekly sermon is Biblically sound and the application is culturally relevant. The type of preaching you experience at C4 is best described as exegetical and expository. Occasionally we do topical sermon series but the majority of the time an entire book from the Bible is the text for the Sunday sermon series.

Worship/Music Style

Our Sunday worship gatherings are a vital part of our life as a church community. It is our time to come together and celebrate the highs and be encouraged in the lows of the Christian life. We aim to inspire people into a lifestyle of Christ-centered living through prayer, personal stories, singing, scripture reading and teaching in a multimedia environment.

Stylistically, we recognize that no one church can accommodate everyone's tastes. The music we sing doesn't sound all that different from the music you'd hear on your local pop radio station. We enjoy fresh new songs right alongside great hymns of the faith in a way that is culturally relevant and artistically genuine, and we believe that the worship experience can be shared whether you've been around church for awhile or find yourself here for the very first time.

Unity and Diversity

At C4 we are very serious about maintaining the unity that we have been given because we are children of God however we celebrate and make room for the diversity that each person brings to the family. As a regional church C4 attracts people from all ages and stages, different ethnicities, diverse church backgrounds, different socio-economic statuses, etc. As a church we seek to maintain the unity of the Spirit and allow each other to express diversity all for the common good. Our unity and diversity is constantly held in healthy tension from Sunday morning worship gatherings to picnics and everything in-between.

Dress Code

Our desire is for people to feel comfortable “as they are” when they come to C4. We have people who attend in every style of clothing, from business attire to completely casual. We appreciate those who dress up and those who like being casual and relaxed. We have made a choice as a church to not make this an area of focus as long as the person is dressed modestly we’re not going to make a big deal about it.

7. OUR BASIC STRUCTURE

How C4 is organized is important especially as people get connected and want to get involved. If you have come from another church background, there may be some differences that you'll notice. Those differences have come about for a number of reasons rooted in the idea that the structure of the church should not be determined by culture, business practices, or even denominational traditions. We believe that the nature of the Church determines its structure. In other words, what the church is should determine how we're organized.

1 Corinthians 14:33,40 *“For God is not a God of disorder, but of peace. Everything should be done in a fitting and orderly way.”*

Building on that idea, the Bible makes several claims regarding what the church is.

a. The Bible says the Church is a fellowship

Acts 2:42 says *“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching, and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.”*

Because the Bible says the church is a fellowship, a top priority in fellowship is harmony and unity. You can have unity without having uniformity. God loves diversity, yet we are called to unity and harmony! So however we go about organizing the church, a good structure should promote unity and downplay differences. We should organize in a way that accepts our differences but first and foremost channels the energies that come from recognizing and celebrating our common ground in Christ.

b. The Bible says the Church is a family

1 Peter 3:8 encourages us with the message that *“You should be like one big happy family full of sympathy toward each other, loving one another with tender hearts and humble minds”* (Living Bible). Because of this familial understanding of the church, we operate on the basis of relationships, not rules. Why? Because the greater the trust and deeper the relational bonds, the fewer rules you need. At C4 we work very hard to develop trust throughout all of our relationships, which allows us to reject a structure that is dominated by rules and regulations.

c. The Bible says the Church is a body

There are many verses in Scripture that talk about the church as the Body of Christ. It is important to remember that we are a body, not a business. We are an organism, not an organization. Therefore at C4 we function on the basis of spiritual gifts, abilities and talents. In other words, whatever you're good at you ought to be able to do in this church.

As a member of the larger C4 body, and even larger body of Christ to which C4 belongs, each of us has a particular role to play. Just like the hand executes different functions than the eye and the feet operate in a very different fashion than the throat, each of us is gifted and called to use our gifts and talents to the betterment and health of the body.

d. The Bible says the Church is a flock

This was Jesus' favourite description of the church. He called it "My little flock." Because the Church is a flock, it is cared for and led by shepherds. There are three different terms that are used in the New Testament to refer to the same church leader. They are Poimen, Presbuteros, and Episcopos.

"Poimen" is the Greek word for shepherd or pastor. To Pastor means to take care of a flock.

"Presbuteros" means "elder" in Greek. Our word "Presbyterian" comes from this word, and that is why Presbyterians call their leaders elders. It is important to realize that an elder does not refer to age, but is meant to indicate spiritual maturity in Christ.

"Episcopos" is the Greek word for "overseer" or "bishop".

"Episcopalian" comes from this word, and they call their leaders bishops. Today, we call them managers. To be a bishop is to be a manager, supervisor, overseer. It refers to the managing aspects of church leadership.

In many ways the terms overlap and mean much the same thing. For instance, in 1 Peter 5:1-2, we read: "To the elders [presbuteros] I say, be shepherds [Poimen] of God's flock," So he says an elder is a shepherd is a pastor. Then he says, "...serving as overseers [episcopos]". So we see that the terms are used interchangeably to refer to the same kind of work

Having looked at the Biblical motifs for the Church, how does C4 structure itself?

1. We have Elders.

The character qualifications for an Elder are found primarily in 1 Timothy 3 and Titus 1. Elders are responsible for the spiritual well being of our church. They concentrate on people and the purpose of the church. 1 Timothy 5:17 tells us that the elders direct the affairs of the church. At C4, the elders are responsible to oversee all of the affairs (ministry) of the church. This doesn't mean they do all the ministry but they ensure that people are equipped and empowered to do the ministry. Because C4 is a corporation our elders also act as the Directors of the corporation.

2. We have a Pastoral Leadership Team

The primary role of the Teaching and Vision Pastor are the teaching ministry at C4 and vision casting. The Lead Pastor works with the Teaching and Vision Pastor and is charged with the responsibility of efficiently using the resources of the church to ensure that we achieve our vision.

3. We have Ministry Staff

.These are the people who give day-to-day leadership to the ministry of the whole church on a vocational basis. Each of these people are "specialists" in a particular area and are therefore hired to be a resource to that ministry area and the church as a whole. The primary role of the ministry staff is to equip people to do the work of the ministry (Eph 4:11-13) The expectation is not that ministry staff are to do everything at C4, rather they are to concentrate their time and energy on helping people fully engage in discipleship and ministry. All of our ministry staff have the title "Pastor" at C4.

4. We have Support Staff

These men and women primarily provide administrative support to the ministry staff and the church as a whole by making sure that all our systems run smoothly. They can be found serving as facility managers, accountants, receptionists, admin assistants, etc.

6. We have MTL

Our Ministry Team Leaders are the frontline leaders at C4 who give leadership to the specific ministries that the church carries out internally and in the community.

8. FAQ'S ABOUT C4

a. Baptism

The Associated Gospel Churches affirms that water baptism is for all believers as a sign of their identification with salvation in Christ. We teach and practise baptism by immersion but fellowship with believers baptized by other modes. Our church membership is open to believers regardless of the fact or mode of their baptism

b. What is the AGC and why are we part of it?

The AGC (Associated Gospel Churches) is an association of churches that shares many of our values. While no denomination is perfect, we feel that accountability and a sense of belonging to a larger Christian community is important – and so we've chosen to affiliate with the AGC. For more specific information on the AGC please visit www.agcofcanada.com.

c. What is your position on Women in Ministry?

We are thankful that the C4 community has not allowed the role of women in the church to be a contentious issue. Our culture is fighting around us for power, rights and prominence. Unfortunately, the evangelical community is also fighting over the gender issue. Sometimes, both sides seem to be angry and power hungry to win the argument.

Two main views have emerged among evangelicals. Egalitarians believe that women can qualify for any position in the church. Complementarians (formerly, hierarchialists or traditionalists) believe that men and women are equal in worth, but that God has created role differences that limit women from some ministry positions. Neutrality is impossible since every practice reflects one or the other of the two views.

We are convinced that:

- (1) The issue of women in ministry is significant and must be addressed.
- (2) We will not allow this issue to degenerate into divisive behavior or speech.
- (3) Both viewpoints have Biblical and reasonable arguments.
- (4) This issue is one of the debatable issues (Rom. 14) where believers must accept each other with their differing viewpoints. Since this is a debatable issue, our church welcomes believers of both persuasions. We will not condemn either side. We are committed to respectful discussions that edify and oppose angry arguments that divide.

Our Position

We believe that both men and women are equally made in the image of God (**Gen. 1:27**) and equal partners in Christ (**Gal. 3:28**). As in the Trinity, there is equality of persons, but diversity in function. There is a relationship between the equal persons of the Trinity that includes leadership and submission. God the Father sends the Son and the Spirit (**Isa. 48:16; John 5:23-36; 14:26; 15:26**). The Son and the Spirit submit to the Father, but each is equally God. All believers must joyfully submit to the triune God. C4's position could best be described as "*soft complementarian*."

History has clearly shown that men often use their leadership to oppress. Many Christian men have not sacrificially loved their wives. Great harm has been done to women in the name of church leadership. Our example is Christ who used His authority to lead with love and empower the Church. In each age God has designated men to fulfill the primary role of spiritual leadership: Old Testament priests, the twelve apostles and elders/overseers in the church. **1 Timothy 2:12** can be understood as combining the two ideas of teaching and authority. Thus, Paul limited women only from the position of "*authoritative teacher*," that is, the role of elder/overseer. The scattered Biblical examples of women teaching or leading men are appropriate since they were not fulfilling the role of Old Testament priests, apostles or elders/overseers. Paul's appeal to creation (**1 Tim. 2:12-15; 1 Cor. 11:2-4**) and God's pattern of choosing men (priest, apostle, and elder), point to male leadership as trans-cultural. Christ's gifts are equally given to men and women to build up His Body (**Eph. 4:12**). A woman with the gift of pastoring will find many expressions of that available to them at C4, but the role of elder is limited to men. Christ's leadership of the Church models and prescribes the role of loving leadership for the husband. Wives are to submit voluntarily to their own husbands (**Eph. 5:22-24; Col. 3:18; 1 Peter 3:1-6**). Because of the fall, the husband's loving leadership has often been perverted into domination and the wife's willing submission into improper servitude or a power struggle. Women in general are not required to submit to men in general (**1 Cor. 11:2-4**)

Our Commitment

Those who hold our position have often overlooked or undervalued the wisdom and gifts of women. So we will seek to empower women in ministry and actively listen to their wisdom. We will admonish husbands to lead their families with Godliness and love their wives sacrificially. We will seek to protect our women from abusive husbands. We will seek to honor, value and respect our women as equal heirs of God's grace and gifted partners in the church's ministry. We will seek to use gender language that reflects the equal value of women and men.

Our Unity

To those convinced of a different view, we value our relationship with you. We welcome continuing dialogue within the C4 community asking only that no one cause division but rather love those who differ. We desire to be a church where believers of both views work in harmony. We expect everyone to keep our bond of unity in peace and love. If anyone finds that they cannot do so, we request that another fellowship be sought where those views can better serve the community of Christ. We must all hold our viewpoints humbly and appreciate the Biblical arguments of both egalitarians and complementarians. This issue gives us the opportunity to show the power of living in love while holding differing viewpoints.

** This is version 1.1 of the DNA document. Future updates and more FAQs will be added later as we update, revise and improve this document.*

