

Essentials 102923

Article 8: Christian Living - Rom. 6-8

Christ Community Church

Serve Pastor, Wayne Stewart

Outline:

Christian living is a process of growing into and pursuing God's heart and God's plans.

"... by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code." Rom. 7:6

1. A Beautiful Convergence of grace and growth
2. Comprehensive - Life with and for God | Life with and for others
3. Compelling - We are freed. We are alive. We are adopted.
4. Commission - Common Good and Uncommon News

Shameless Serve Plug:

1. The Greenhouse
2. Local Matters - RFKC

Transcript:

Good morning, Church.

We are at Week 8 of our Essentials Series, taking a look at the EFCA Statement of Faith. We've noted its "major on the majors" ethos. We've walked through the nature of God, The Bible, the Human Condition, Jesus, Salvation, The Holy Spirit, the Church. Today we'll take on Article 8: *Christian Living*.

If we haven't met, my name is Wayne Stewart. I get to work within our Serve ministry here at Christ Community Church and have the absolute privilege of spending some time with you in God's Word this morning.

The Fall of 1983 I headed off to Western Washington University to study music education. At the time, becoming a high school band director seemed the obvious path, and honestly, if that had been the storyline, I would have loved it. Spiritually, I was a believer, having prayed a salvation prayer at camp the summer of 6th grade. I'd mostly stayed away from the big don'ts and loved God's Word, even if I didn't spend that much time in it. I went to church sometimes, about equal parts hanging out with friends and thinking I should be there, but didn't really get much out of it.

I don't remember the specifics of how or whom, but I ended up at a Friday night gathering of Campus Christian Fellowship. The Chi Alpha group filled the largest lecture hall Western had at the time. On a Friday. At a secular university. That was interesting. They sang. A lot. But it wasn't like camp or the church singing I'd known. More like each person in the room was engaged in an unseen interaction, sometimes a celebration and other times reverent, often saying things I believed but in ways far more personal and passionate than I'd ever experienced. There was Bible teaching and

some humor along the way. And there was a palpable sense that those in the room were looking at each other. Not in a weird way. Except for the time they tried to make us sing “I love you with the love of the Lord” while turning to face those around us. Nope. Maybe it’s better to say they saw everyone else, were aware and connected in some different way than I’d seen—to that point— at church.

Alright, so I’ve got a couple choices: cult, or something amazing. I learned the warts of the leaders. There were faults and missteps like you’d expect among any group of humans. And yes, the intensity and proximity of a college ministry experience is not replicated easily nor often in other seasons of life. But there was no mistaking what was going on. I saw a kind of faith to which I had no prior reference points. And I wanted it to be mine. I was awakened to the truth that God wanted to do far more in and through me than I imagined.

I didn’t have the categories or language at the time but I think my paradigm for being a Christian was largely summed up in **two E words: ethics and eternity**. And while being or doing good and having the security of heaven were my faith lenses (and not unbiblical at that), neither was especially sharp or expansive. Some very gracious and kind people helped me see and begin to live differently. My faith was being challenged. Positively disrupted. Re-arranged along a two-laned path: **God’s heart and God’s plan**.

While we’ll generally spend time in Romans 6-8 today, Romans 7:6 serves as a bit of a summary for this truth:

“... by dying to what once bound us, we have been released from the law so that we serve in the new way of the Spirit, and not in the old way of the written code.” Rom. 7:6

My campus ministry experience largely mirrors the call and promise of this text and Article 8 in our statement of faith. Let’s read it together.

We believe that God’s justifying grace must not be separated from His sanctifying power and purpose. God commands us to love Him supremely and others sacrificially, and to live out our faith with care for one another, compassion toward the poor and justice for the oppressed. With God’s Word, the Spirit’s power and fervent prayer in Christ’s name, we are to combat the spiritual forces of evil. In obedience to Christ’s commission, we are to make disciples among all people, always bearing witness to the gospel in word and deed.

Let’s pray. And then we’ll unpack these assertions.

Declaration #1 -

We believe that God’s justifying grace must not be separated from His sanctifying power and purpose.

This initial thought of Article 8 - addresses a challenge uniquely connected to a doctrine of salvation through grace by faith. If God's work alone is what guarantees my eternity and place in His family, we could call it good. Done. Checked that off the list. We could be tempted to think: I am saved. There's nothing more to be done in me. There's nothing more for me to do. To which we answer: yes, no, and no. Instead we have **a beautiful convergence** of streams we are to be wary of diverting. Do not separate God's justifying grace (what He's done) from His sanctifying power (what He's doing in us) and purpose (what He wants to do through us).¹

This first sentence carries a bit of a "you shall not pass." In this case, insisting on non-separation is really insisting on integration. Alignment. Unity. An unreduced or unredacted state. The idea of wholeness in various expressions: whole-hog, whole nine yards, whole enchilada. And then my personal favorite: whole kit and caboodle.² But why the insistence? Well, imagine a holy calling without grace. Or, grace with no holy calling. An impassable mountain or no mountain at all.

This is the beautiful convergence of Christian living. I am saved. There's more to be done in me. There's more for me to do.

So, Christian living is a beautiful convergence. It is also completely and utterly comprehensive.

Here's how this emphasis reads:

God commands us to love Him supremely and others sacrificially, and to live out our faith with care for one another, compassion toward the poor and justice for the oppressed.

With God's Word, the Spirit's power and fervent prayer in Christ's name, we are to combat the spiritual forces of evil.

Sometimes in social studies or health classes, high school students are given a "baby" to care for over a weekend or so. Some students likely take it seriously. Others not so much. I don't recall having a baby for the weekend, but I do know that having children for real changed everything. Lots of change in me, and in general just lots of changing.

Our firstborn, Lauren, had some breathing difficulties and stayed at the hospital a few more days than the norm. When we did get her home, I vividly remember staring at the ceiling as she lay in a bassinet at the foot of our bed, thinking: "Who in the world said this was ok? I mean, shouldn't there be some kind of exam or certification before they just let you walk away from the hospital with a tiny human?" Sure, I was excited. I was also very mindful of the immense responsibility. My life was re-ordered in every way from that day forward.

Scripture gives us a similar view of life on the other side of faith. The "Hear, O Israel..." that gave substance and focus to Jews throughout the ages covers the entire waterfront of human experience. It's a *comprehensive* statement of faith. Mind, emotion, commitments, actions. In the NT, Jesus'

¹ This is not to imply that God only works through us. He acts all the time without us. But the parts of His heart and plans He includes us in are a key aspect of Christian living.

² <https://tinyurl.com/44bydtbe>

teaching and that of other writers³ similarly addresses all that it is to be human in both the original and now-redeemed sense.

Our statement frames this as **life with and for God** and **life with and for others**. I've pulled four phrases under these two headings and we'll give each a quick look.

Life with and for God #1 -

“God commands us to love Him supremely...”

Wow. *Commanding* love? And a love that puts the One *commanding it* above and before all other loves? How does that work? Face value, this feels like “Because I said so” paired with some very strange divine pathology. But that’s the problem. We think of this “love command” emotionally when it’s covenantal. We see this as imperious and forget it’s sacrificial.

Exodus 20:3 (NIV) “You shall have no other gods before me” is set up by verse 2: “I am the LORD your God, *who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.*”

Jesus says, “If you love me, keep my commands” (John 14:15) while His disciple John notes that “We love because he *first* loved us.” 1 John 4:19 (NIV)

God commands us to love Him above and before anything else, anyone else. But it’s a command that presupposes a love that would give up His only Son for the sake of all.

Life with and for God #2 -

“With God’s Word, the Spirit’s power and fervent prayer in Christ’s name, we are to combat the spiritual forces of evil.”

Life with and for God entails “seeing” the unseen as well as seeing with whom you are in conflict properly. Paul’s admonition to the church in Ephesus sums this up perfectly.

Ephesians 6:12-18 (NIV) “... *our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. ... 17 Take the helmet of salvation and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God. 18 And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests.*”

Getting that you’re in a battle is one thing. Seeing clearly who you’re fighting is another.

Our statement continues.

Life with and for Others #1 -

“God commands us to love... others sacrificially... “ and

³ Colossians Chapter One’s grand proclamation states: “... all things have been created through him and *for him*” (Col. 1:16). Hebrews speaks of a living sacrifice, which is pretty much the image of undiluted, complete giving of ourselves for Christ. And Jesus’ invitation was to life that is full and abundant - again, complete and flourishing.

“... live out our faith with care for one another... “

Two quick points should suffice here. But that's not to imply they are quickly attained. Both can be summarized as “life in Christ looks like Christ.” We take on, imitate, copy. Like teacher; like student. Simon says... and does.

Philippians 2:3-7 paints a picture of *others before myself*.

“Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, 4 not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others. 5 In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: 6 Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; 7 rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant...”

Care for one another - echoes in the words of the letter to the Ephesians and 1 Peter:

Ephesians 4:32 (NIV) *“Be kind and compassionate to one another, forgiving each other, just as in Christ God forgave you.”*

1 Peter 3:8-9 (NIV) *“... all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble.*

How we treat fellow Christ followers ranks really high in actually following Jesus.

It's also the ministry strategy Jesus gives us:

John 17:21-23 (NIV) *“Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me... so that they may be brought to complete unity. **Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.**”*

Love our brothers and sisters the way God loved us first. Prioritize care for one another. Strive for oneness as it exists between the Father and the Son. But that love does not end at the closed doors of the church narthex. Yes, I said narthex. Let's read on.

*God commands us to love Him supremely and others sacrificially, and to live out our faith with care for one another, **compassion toward the poor and justice for the oppressed.***

I am so glad to see compassion for the poor and justice for the oppressed called out as primary means of living out our faith, which God commands. It's somewhat implied, but *defense of the vulnerable* is a third strand often accompanying the other two. On this matter, Scripture is equally honest and insistent.

Deuteronomy 15:11 (NIV) *“There will always be poor people in the land. Therefore I command you to be openhanded toward your fellow Israelites who are poor and needy in your land.”*

Proverbs 14:31 (NIV) *"Whoever oppresses the poor shows contempt for their Maker, but whoever is kind to the needy honors God."*

Psalms 82:3-4 (NIV) *"Defend the weak and the fatherless; uphold the cause of the poor and the oppressed. 4 Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked."*

Leviticus 19:15 (NIV) *"Do not pervert justice; do not show partiality to the poor or favoritism to the great, but judge your neighbor fairly."*

Ephesians 2:10 (NIV) *"... we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do."*

Coming to Christ changes everything. It's a complete shift in the very fabric of our being and doing. It entails a beautiful convergence. It's comprehensive while also being completely God- and other-focused.

It is also so very compelling - beyond any philosophy, system, worldview or religion offered previously, nor any to come in the future. It moves us from mere obedience (which is not undue to the King of all) to joy-filled following. Fear to love. Authoritarianism to awe. The motivation energizing Christian Living is this:

You and I were **bound**. We were **dead**. And we were **orphans**. Three very good reasons to live for God and others, while leaving a life of self behind.

You and I were bound -

Romans 6:6-7 (NIV) *"... our old self was crucified with him (Jesus) so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin — 7 because anyone who has died has been set free from sin."*

Romans 7:4 (NIV) *"... my brothers and sisters, you also died to the law through the body of Christ, that you might belong to another, to him who was raised from the dead, in order that we might bear fruit for God."*

In Romans 6-8, Paul references two primary relationships to illustrate our formerly bound state: slavery and marriage. Each carries unbelievable weight both personally and historically. But Paul's usage of these human realities here is neither to ignore, imply, nor dig as deep as we'd like to go. It's simply to say, "Slavery binds you to a master. Marriage (especially in its ancient cultural and economic sense) binds you to a spouse." Release from either is a picture that helps us understand what God has really done for us in Christ."

You and I were dead -

Colossians 2:13 - *"When you were dead in your sins... God made you alive with Christ."*

The wages of sin is death. But for the Christian, the grave does not have the final word. Either spiritually or physically. Incredible. We were bound. We were dead. Now we're free and alive. Or alive and free. Whichever is most helpful for you. But that, again, is not where the story ends.

You and I were orphans -

Galatians 4:4-7 (NIV) "... when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, 5 to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship. 6 Because you are his sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, 'Abba, Father.' 7 So you are no longer a slave, but God's child; and since you are his child, God has made you also an heir."

A comprehensive Christian life, motivated by our release from bondage and then placement, breathing and 6 feet *above* ground (well, at least for some...), is met with nothing less than an invitation to family. The family of God and the fellowship of Believers.

Christian living is a beautiful convergence. It's comprehensive. So very compelling.

Next up - **commission**.

In obedience to Christ's commission, we are to make disciples among all people, always bearing witness to the gospel in word and deed.

The Risen Christ has commissioned us.⁴

... to make disciples among all people - I'll just simply agree with the usual emphases. Discipling is an intentional relational and spiritual partnership. It's life on life. It's a process of sharpening and growing. It's a receiving and stepping into the gifts and purposes the Spirit has placed in the Church. It's fostering in another the life of Christ in you. Everywhere. In your own home. Across the street. All across the world.

... always bearing witness to the Gospel in word and deed - again, I need only say Amen. Jesus preached in synagogues and healed lepers. Stephen, a man full of the Spirit and power, arranged for the daily needs of widows and preached a complete summary of redemptive history before he was martyred. Paul taught of Messiah Jesus everywhere he was welcomed, and a few places he wasn't, while reminding the church to care for the very weakest among them. James calls out deedless faith as dead faith. And the earliest followers befuddled their Roman neighbors and rulers by feeding the hungry and burying the dead, regardless of faith or family connection.

God's heart. God's plans. Flourishing in and through us. Convergence of grace and growth. Comprehensively focused on God and others. Compelling invitation to freedom, life, family. A grand and holy commission.

⁴ I'm going to go into word-nerd mode for a second. And I really hope it comes off as helpful. A commission is something that happens to you, not something you do. You *are* commissioned. You *fulfill* a commission. Semantics? Sure. But that's the point: words matter. You can do police work. Or, you can get up every day, strap on the gear, knowing the dangers that lay out there, for the good of others, and live out the commissioning of your community's civic authorities to that end.

Christian living.

There's so much to like about Article 8 of our faith statement, wouldn't you say? I mean, kinda feels like: yeah, let's get at it. I'm with you. But I'd also like to take a few minutes this morning to dig just a bit more, offer some focused language, and then point us toward a contextual factor that might be helpful as we *get at it*.

First, let's pull a little at the idea of words and deeds.

Strictly speaking, I do not believe we can *show* the Gospel in a manner that by itself leads to salvation. Neither can we *do* the Gospel and anticipate the same eternal result.⁵ No input of ours can change this equation, for us, or anyone else. Not even, or especially, good works.

So, while word and deed (or *works*) are symbiotic, with respect to salvation, they are not the same.

Let's say there's a hospital in your town. Hypothetically, let's also say you may have some vague idea of what a hospital does but to this point have never needed its services nor considered a visit, so much so you actually don't know its location.

Good deeds are a street sign, pointing to the hospital. Which is really quite helpful. But that's not the only way people find out about and locate the hospital, right? It's a cold day and you're just spending a little extra time on the bus when you pass a very large building with lots of rooms and it's not a hotel. *Ah, that must be that hospital.* Or, you cut the dickens out of your finger while making a dinner salad for your friend. *Ooh, that looks bad, I think you might need to go to the hospital.*

The sign can get you there. The random bus ride or your sad finger and the insistence of your friend can get you there. But none of them provide what *happens* at the hospital.⁶ Because what happens inside makes all the difference, for you, and now for others you know need healing.⁷

Best case scenario of word and deed is definitely **both/and/all the time**. That's why article 8 says what it says. But maybe we can offer a slight variation on theme and introduce some language to help frame it as such.

Common Good and Uncommon News -

As people who are commissioned, we could actually talk about *two* commissionings in Scripture. Mostly we assume the first in the second, or what we often call the Great Commission. But the very first commission in the Bible is at the very beginning. God creates the world and everything in it. Then He places humans in a position of regency, that is, a caretaker developer on authority of the King. But the responsibility and position is not just for the garden, because at this point the plan is for the garden to expand, filling every corner of the new creation with godly purpose, ingenuity,

⁵ Grammatical torture aside, the potential of unnecessary tension among fellow believers is far more dangerous.

⁶ Yes, your friend does not know how to suture your wound.

⁷ Yes, like a hospital. Maybe a Gospital?

discovery - a never-ending flourishing of humanity and all we had been placed over. This is **the commission of common good**. Then comes the Fall. But curiously, *not* this commission's rescinding. Granted, it will be harder and more limited in a broken, sin-sick world. But never pulled back.

So, when resources are lacking for anyone, is there general human flourishing? What about when someone stronger takes advantage of the weak? If a center of power in society maintains its position by the subjugation of others? What about when words and ideas are twisted to conform not to the truth but a particular political, social, or economic narrative? Is this common good as designed and desired by God? Of course not. On all counts.

But what about culture, the arts, science and technology, the academy and the boardroom?

Compassion for the poor and justice for the oppressed covers the **corrective** side of common good. These other engagements speak to its **potential**.

Called to engage in the real-world challenges of personal, familial, and societal ills we would err greatly by abdicating the voice and heart of godly people in these other human arenas. But, as always, our engagement in a present, broken world needs to be contextualized by the world to come.

A pastor-friend who has deeply engaged works of common good in very challenging socio-economic conditions in the Chicago area offers a good word of reflection here:

"As Christ-followers... we are not asked to walk a path between pessimism and utopianism. Nor may we fall for either one. Indeed, as Christians we are to be both more pessimistic than the pessimist and more utopian than the utopian – pessimistic because we recognize that our sin cannot be expunged by education, social reform or medical intervention. And utopian because we believe that the transformation of our human heart that is begun in this life will be completed in the next. The cross teaches us two things: We are so valuable that God sent his Son to die for us; and we are so broken that the Son of God had to die for us."⁸⁹

So “word and deed” should be understood in the context of eternity and **common good** | **uncommon news** might be a way to maintain that focus. Lastly, there is a key question we can ask to help navigate this world full of need, seeing and hearing its cries across our feeds, phones, and tvs.

The question of proximity

⁸ Friday Update, Mike Woodruff - 021723

⁹ This same pastor-friend of mine uses the phrase *Share the Good News and Engage in Good Works* and remarks that while both are critical, one is temporal and the other eternal. I like that alot. But I couldn't just steal his thing, right? Our EFCA article lands on “always bearing witness to the Gospel in word and deed.” I like that alot, as well. But as we were praying about some language we could land on here, we fell upon Common Good and Uncommon News. I hope it's a reasonably cohesive and memorable way to think about this aspect of Christian Living.

Jesus told a well-known story about a man who comes upon a nearly-dead stranger, cares for his needs, and checks in on him later. Parables like this have a major lesson, presented as a twist to the audience's expectations. Extrapolating details into other major lessons is not a great way to understand or apply them. So, I won't do that. But I can't escape the fact that the dilemma (which by the way two other regulars also saw up close and personal) has a high degree of proximity¹⁰. Help is needed where the traveler is. His help is applied directly and has a direct effect.

Pastor Kyle has helped us a number of times in presenting a view from the original hearers as where we start when asking, "What does this mean for me?" And while each of the apostolic letters was intended to be distributed and read among the growing number of churches, as well as remaining true for those who would follow in whatever next generations the Lord tarried, they were written to address real challenges in particular locales and groups of people.

So, would the multitudes on a Galilean hillside, after recovering from the ethnic and religious shock of the story's hero, move in conviction to a region-wide campaign? What would have been the takeaway that informed their next journey on a road somewhere, or a walk down the street of their village or town? Would the believers in Corinth have said, "Wow, Paul's right. Things are messed up in Galatia"?

Our "road" is bigger in the 21st Century, or at least appears so, providing previously unimagined exposure to things happening in far away places or at a macro level across humanity. It's good that we want to do something about big, bad things. We have the ability to leverage resources, sometimes instantly, toward the distant and what we might think of as systemic. It's a gift we have the opportunity to do something about big, bad things. But the story wasn't about a road. It was about a "neighbor." And the story wasn't presented as a lecture, but as a piercing rebuttal.¹¹

Jesus could have told a story about far away places with dramatic and pressing needs. He didn't. He could have painted a picture of critically needed help for Jews displaced or living as converts throughout the Roman Empire. He didn't. Instead he brought it home, literally, and then dug deeper to the real issue: the question of whether *all* people bear the image *and* burden the heart of His father, especially those around us all the time who may not rank as especially worthy of either.

¹⁰ It's not specifically called out, but we get the sense this man is on a regular, known route (he tells the innkeeper he'll be back, suggestive of a planned return by the same road) and the choice to act or not is literally right in front of him.

¹¹ A teacher of the Law, we're told in Luke 10, approached Jesus to test Him, to debunk His claims and ministry publicly. He presents a largely rhetorical question. Jesus answers literally. The Law teacher, unsurprisingly, quotes the Law, but then adds an addendum from the Law but not regularly quoted alongside the first text, and recently elevated as a common point of Jesus' preaching. Jews regularly breathed out the Shema "Hear, O Israel... ", binding themselves to loving God with heart, soul, and mind. They did not tag it with Leviticus 19:8, from where Jesus was drawing "love your neighbor as yourself." *See, Jesus? I'm up to speed. And now I've got you.* This learned man's core belief was that God's love could or should not extend beyond God's people. So much so that he held it out as the line to cross, illustrating that this upstart prophet could not be from God. *Heretic. False teacher. Are we finished here, now?* But as happened so many times in these encounters, Jesus preached and challenged with divine depth and clarity, never nullifying the good and righteous law of God, but instead fulfilling while also personalizing it. God's heart and plan are seen ever so richly as Jesus living out and unfolding the Kingdom to those willing to hear with open ears and see with unmasked vision.

God's heart and plan is lived and *lived out* in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria (of all places), and to the ends of the earth. Turn my heart and treasures toward national, regional, and global compassion for the poor and justice for the oppressed? Absolutely. We live in unique times and should make the most of every opportunity (Col. 4:5). But think it through. Any trustworthy global effort is going to be implemented locally. Same thing, at least from a strategy perspective.

But I do think the more difficult, yet likely more direct expression of God's love and crucial ingredient to the shaping He wants to do in me, is right here. Our community. Our county. Right here in Central Iowa, where God has placed us. I heard a speaker once say that your address is no accident. I like that a lot.

So, what might it look like as we continue to grow in God's heart and God's plan, pursuing common good while sharing uncommon news, and majoring on the personal and local while not dismissing the global and systemic?

Lots of things. Many of them, life-defining ministry endeavors of this local body for more than 60 years now. Gather. Connect. Serve. Radical generosity and purposeful responsiveness. And many, many more ways that no one even knows about as the faithful brothers and sisters around you do what is in front of them and within reach of their spheres of relationships and influence every day. But since Kyle has given me time and the mic...

I'd like to close by highlighting three new-ish areas for you to consider as potential advancements of the Christian life you've been given. As I'm starting, I'd also like to invite up some special guests to help me set up the third.

So, I said three areas to consider but I can also highly recommend Pastor Brent's discipleship conversations, his 101, 201, 301, and 401 courses, as a key first stop.

Okay, in quick succession -

Royal Family Kids Camp - Lord willing, June 2024 we will be hosting a five-day overnight camp for 30 kids who've suffered significant family-induced trauma in our very own community. Many of these kids will come from Story and Boone County foster care or other care settings. Moments matter and we're planning for some amazing moments of fun, love, and hope to push back against the surge of hard things they've experienced. A 60-70 person team of program staff, professionals, and counselors is what will pull it off. For now, please start praying. For the team. For the kids. For any part you may play in it as well as favor with guardians, social workers, and the community.

The Greenhouse is a staff/member collaboration seeking to draw out and release the multitude of visions, gifts, and callings God has placed in the people of Christ Community Church. True - we have a large professional staff that initiates much of our ministry approaches but this initiative is designed to push a little harder on Ephesians 4:

Ephesians 4:11-13 (NIV) "... *Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, 12 to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of*

Christ may be built up 13 until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ."

Have a new ministry idea, passion, or dare we say - vision? Let's get it into the Greenhouse and see what God does with it. We're trying to minimize speed bumps but keep us all on the same road. I didn't have another Ag metaphor for that one. I grew up in suburbia. The current semester is open for submissions with ministry launch dates of January-June 2024. Very excited to see what the Spirit may bring to the surface.

Local Matters - A Common Good Campaign - is a four week series of conversations we'll be hosting in G2 at the 10:45 hour beginning next week. These talks will be on current, local issues that are a part of the corrective side of our common good commission. We'll offer a brief Biblical context and then have our guest speakers present, with follow-up Q&A and next steps. Please come for one of particular interest or all.

- Human Trafficking (Nov. 5th)
- Unplanned or Crisis Pregnancy and Foster Care (Nov. 12th)
- Housing Insecurity and Rent Assistance (Nov. 19th)
- Resource Insecurity and RFKC (Nov. 26th)