

WHAT IS NEXT STEPS?

Thanks for deciding to take part in our Next Steps Class! We hope that this class and packet will help you as you consider whether or not Gospelway is the place for you. Somewhere that you can participate in the proclamation of the gospel and be cared for as you find rest in Christ.

Getting connected at a local church can be difficult, intimidating, and frustrating, and we want to try to make things a little easier for you. We like to use the term Next Steps so that you know the way forward.

If you have any questions at all, please don't hesitate to ask!



ABOUT GOSPELWAY

OUR HISTORY

Church planting is about getting a church started where there is a need for one. We did this with the help of Pastor Benjamin Workman of Mercy Baptist Church. Benjamin is originally from the Salisbury/Lexington area and expressed the need for a gospel-centered church in Rowan County.

In addition to Pastor Workman, we obtained further guidance and accountability from Pastor Jeff's former pastor, Richie Honeycutt of Faith Baptist Church in Iron Station, NC

Gospelway Baptist Church began meeting together on April 14th, 2019 and was constituted on September 13th, 2019.

WHY THE NAME GOSPELWAY?

Many of the Puritan and early Baptist writers would use the term "the gospel-way" to explain the proclamation of the gospel that brings us to faith. (Rom. 10:17)

Thomas Boston stated that one can never find rest from their laboring "until they come to embrace the **gospel-way** of salvation; taking up its everlasting rest in Christ, for wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and redemption."

Spreading the rest of Christ found in the gospel is our mission, and our desire was to convey this, even in the name that we chose to identify our assembly.

WHY THE LOGO?

In everything we do as a church, we want to point to our focus (even our logo).

The Letter G

The Letter G, which makes up our logo, represents the gospel. Biblically speaking, the gospel has nothing to do with us whatsoever. The gospel is completely about the person and work of Jesus Christ.

The Arrow

The gospel is the declaration of good news. This good news is not demands from God but the declaration of the finished work of God. The arrow represents our desire and mission to go proclaim this good news.



WHAT IS MEMBERSHIP IN A LOCAL CHURCH?

WHAT IS THE CHURCH?

The Church is the true community of all believers for all time. The church is made up of all the men and women who have been, are, or ever will be believers in Jesus. That means the Church is not a place or a building. It's not an event. It's not a service club or loose affiliation of people who hold roughly the same beliefs. Paul makes this clear when he writes, "Christ loved the church and gave himself for her" (Eph. 5:25). The church that Paul refers to isn't just the church in Ephesus. It's everyone that Jesus died to redeem.

Universal & Local

Gospelway isn't the only true church in the history of the church. Gospelway isn't even the only true church in Rowan County.

All true believers, no matter when or where they lived, make up the true church. However, we also have local churches.

This isn't anything new. When Jesus left earth for heaven, he gave the apostles one mission: Take the good news of the gospel to the ends of the earth. The book of Acts tells us the apostles carried out that mission by starting local churches everywhere they went. The universal church is the community of all believers for all time. The local church is a particular group of Christians who gather together. **Gospelway is a local church.**

- The invisible church is the church as God sees it.
- The visible church is the church as people see it.

When you come to corporate worship, you see the people who make up Gospelway, a local church. It is the local, visible expressions of what has always been a universal, invisible reality.



WHAT IS A CHURCH CULTURE?

Every church in the world has a culture that has been influenced by the context and culture of the people assembled together. This happens by default. However, at Gospelway, it is our desire that we are intentionally building and maintain a **gospel culture.**

HOW DO WE STRIVE TO BUILD A GOSPEL CULTURE AT GOSPELWAY?

BY SETTING A PERVASIVE TONE OF OUR NEED FOR GRACE

What do we mean by this? James puts it this way: "God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble" (James 4:8).

When we see ourselves as all in the same need of the grace of God, as wounded, broken, and exhausted people, we won't have the energy for selfish agendas.

None of us have it together, so there is no reason to act otherwise.

We take the Gospel of Christ seriously, but we don't take ourselves too serious. We know that everything we have is from Christ. While our service is structured, the atmosphere is relaxed.

BY OUR MISSION

Above all else, as a church, we are seeking to find rest in Christ.

We believe that Jesus meant it, when He said, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest", and we have made it our mission to take Him at His word.

For this reason, the outward call of Gospelway is that those in the community "Come find rest" with us. Inwardly, we believe that this mission is played out in three main ways:





If we are going to understand the rest that we have in Christ, we must first fix our focus in the correct direction.

The scripture tells us that God has reconciled His enemies to Himself through Jesus. It is this reconciliation (the gospel) that is the focus of everything else that we preach and teach. This understanding of scripture has been called by many the Redemptive-Historical Hermeneutics, which means that as a whole, the scripture points us to the gospel.

Therefore, we daily spread this good news to those around us, so that they may find peace (rest) with God as well.



The gospel is not only what centers our focus, but it is the center of everything that we do and are.

Continuing His words, Jesus said that His, "yoke is easy".

We believe that He has, not only done the work to reconcile us to God, but He has accomplished our righteousness as well. This means that we never have to do "church stuff" to gain a better standing with our Father. This allows us to rest in our acceptance with God, through Christ.



Gospel means "good news". When we say we are "gospel-driven" we mean that the central truth of our church is the good news of who Jesus is and what he has done to save the world. This is what drives everything that we do! We want everyone to know the rest that we have found in the gospel!



BY GOSPELWAY GROUPS

Gospelway Groups meet during the week to do life together. They are the avenue through which discipleship, fellowship, leadership development, and mission happen.

Groups are how we grow smaller as we continue to grow larger. Sound paradoxical? It's not. It's the model we see in the New Testament.

The Church gathered together for worship and then scattered during the week for community, fellowship, discipleship, and to fulfill the Great Commission. (Acts 2 & Acts 4) We hope that everyone who calls Gospelway home will be a part of a Group.



GROWTH GROUPS

Some Growth groups meet weekly, and others bi-weekly. but are based around growing in the knowledge of the scriptures together.

COMMUNITY GROUPS

Community groups meet at least monthly. and are based around growing in community with one another. Typically, these groups will meet at someone's home for a meal, fellowship, and gospel conversations.

MEN'S AND WOMEN'S GROUPS

Men's and women's groups typically meet every other month. Sometimes for breakfast and thought, other times getting together for an event or activity.

FELLOWSHIP MEALS

On the last Sunday of every other month, the church as a whole meets after the AM service for a meal together.

Find a group that works for you at www.gospelway.church/gospelway-groups Most Growth Groups are available via Google Meeting for those that can't make it in person



BY MAKING THE GOSPEL PIVITAL

Biblically robust unity rallies around the "of first importance" gospel itself (1 Cor. 15:3), exalting Jesus in his death, burial, and resurrection as the center of our message and the focus of our emotions.

We don't assume the gospel while we give attention to lesser, secondary things; we lift high the gospel, celebrate the gospel, and feed on the gospel, as we gently hold to valid but secondary doctrines below the Christ-centered gospel.

You may not align with us or the leadership of the church exactly, but our intention is that, at Gospelway, it is okay. We want to strive to have a culture where various beliefs and backgrounds can join, be equally honored, serve, and rejoice over one another, for the Lord's sake.

WHAT ARE OUR BELIEFS?

Our church is rooted in this Baptistic tradition and faith: Scripture Alone, Grace Alone, Faith Alone, Christ Alone, and the Glory of God Alone.

These doctrines & distinctive are not original to us; our Baptist forefathers viewed themselves as the logical outcome of the Reformation principle of sola Scriptura.[1] (the idea that the Bible alone is the sole authority for faith and practice)

That being said, all of our beliefs and convictions are derived from the Bible and the Bible is our final and ultimate authority.

[1] R. Stanton Norman, The Baptist Way: Distinctives of a Baptist Church, (B&H Publishing Group, 2005) p. 18



A CONFESSION OF FAITH

A man may accept as the rule of his faith the same inspired books as yourself, while he rejects every important article of the faith you find in these books. If, therefore, we are to know who believes as we do, and who dissent from our faith, we must state our creed in language explicitly rejecting such interpretations of Scripture as we deem to be false (James Bannerman, The Church of Christ [1868], 1:298)

The Bible is the inspired, inerrant, and infallible word of God and is the supreme authority in all matters of belief and practice and is therefore the basis for any Confession of Faith.

A Confession of Faith is a statement of belief. It is a summation of interpretation of the Scriptures. Confession range from broad to very detailed. The ecumenical creeds are broad confessions. Many denominations who differ on many points of theology can affirm the creeds. Other confessions, such as the Westminster, Savoy, and the 1689 are much more detailed. No confession covers every particular of theology.

• 1689 Second London Baptist Confession of Faith

We believe it is both prudent and useful to adhere to certain biblical statements and confessions in order that the doctrinal beliefs of this church may be clearly known.

Gospelway holds as a reliable summary of scriptural teaching the 1689 Second London Baptist Confession of Faith. We consider this document to be an excellent expression of that which we believe is clearly taught in the Word of God and embraced by us as faithful statements of our beliefs. We find it to be a confirmation of faith, a means of edification, an aid in controversy, and a basis for church unity

Overview and History

The 1689 2LBCF was first published in 1677 by a number of churches from London and the surrounding area. It was based on the First London Baptist Confession of 1644, the Westminster Confession of Faith, and the Savoy Declaration. The authors took great pains to remain as consistent with the earlier confessions as possible in order to demonstrate the similarity of their theology with the other well-regarded reformed confessions.

At the same time, they set out to describe the Baptist theology with precision and to address accusations of heresy that had arisen. At the time of its initial authoring, it bore no signatures because is was illegal to have a church that was not a part of the Church of England. In 1689, the English Parliament passed the Act of Toleration allowing Protestant church that were not a part of the Church of England. Quickly after that, the Baptist churches gathered to formally adopt and sign the confession. Therefore, it bears the year of 1689.



Full Subscription (for Elders and Teachers)

The elders of Gospelway and anyone who regularly teaches on behalf of the church must fully subscribe to the the 1689 Second London Baptist Confession. Full subscription requires the person to subscribe to the entire confession because it is biblical, while allowing the subscriber to take exception to words or phrases, but not to any doctrines.

- At Gospelway, the leadership hold two exceptions to the wording of the confession:
 - 1. While we are Sabbatarian, we are not as strictly Sabbatarian as the confession reads. We take some exception to the word recreations. (22.8)
 - 2. We take some exception to the wording concerning the pope being the antichrist. We hold that the pope is an antichrist, but not necessarily the antichrist. (26.4)

Because the elders and teachers all subscribe to the 1689 Second London Baptist Confession, you can be sure that the leadership is in agreement on the doctrinal position of the church and that you will be taught in a consistent manner. It will help to confirm your faith and will be a basis for unity in the body, a means of edification, and an aid in controversy.

Subscription of Unity for Members

We do not require members of Gospelway to fully subscribe to the 1689 Second London Baptist Confession. We recognize that the confession is extensive in its content and do not want to place any undue burdens on membership. In our own lives, we know that it has taken us much study before we were able to fully subscribe to the confession.

However, we do ask for a subscription of unity from members. A subscription of unity allows the member to be unsure of their agreement with the all of the confession. But it does require that members agree not to publicly contradict the confession and to be teachable and open to being persuaded to what is contained in the confession.

In other words, be willing to submit to being taught what the confession teaches.



WHAT ARE OUR DISTINCTIVES?

The way that we operate together as a church can find its roots in these distinctions. They are what would set Gospelway apart from some of the other assemblies with the Baptist Denomination.

WE ARE CONFESSIONAL

When we look back to the confessions of faith that were produced during the era of the Reformation, we understand that these confessions arose, as confessions typically do, because theological clarity was required.

The Reformation was a response to the rampant moralism and works-based system of the medieval church. Therefore, the confessions that were produced out of it push back against moralism.

Further, the early Baptists wrote faith statements to make clear how they differed from or agreed with other traditions. They desired to be known by what they "confessed" about scripture.

So then, when we say that we are confessional, what we mean is that we hold to a specific confession of faith because we believe that it is a reliable collection of biblical doctrine. Yes, we believe the scriptures are the final authority for all faith and practice, but we want concise about what it is that we confess as true.

Many of the reformers and protestant denominations produced confessions detailing their beliefs. These confessions were significantly more exhaustive than the earlier creeds in expositing the doctrines of Christianity. They set the theological boundaries of a specific church or group of churches. Therefore, while they generally are in agreement, there are differences specific to each denomination.

WE ARE COVENANTAL

The scope of redemptive history is best understood through 3 covenants.

- The Covenant of Redemption is the portion of the decree of God that purposed to redeem a particular people from condemnation with the Father sending the Son to accomplish this redemption.
- The Covenant of Works is the covenant God made with Adam in which he gave Adam moral laws and positive commands to keep with the promise of life if he was faithful and a threat of death if he was not.
- The Covenant of Grace is the outworking and application of the Covenant of Redemption where the merits of Christ's work are graciously applied to the elect.



WE ARE PROTESTANT

We are protestant and are grateful for the work of the reformers in their contention for the Christian faith and for their work in restoring a gospel-centered approach to the church.

We affirm the Five Solas of the Protestant Reformation for their usefulness as a framework for understanding the Gospel.

The Five Solas

- **Sola Scriptura**: Scripture Alone: God's people have universally affirmed that there is only one thing that can legitimately function as the supreme standard: God's Word. There can be no higher authority than God Himself.
- **Sola Fide:** Faith Alone: What is justification? Justification is an act of God's free grace, wherein he pardons all our sins, and accepts us as righteous in his sight, only for the righteousness of Christ imputed to us, and received by faith alone.
- **Sola Gratia:** Grace Alone: The Reformers understood the importance of the grace of God to the Bible's teaching on salvation. In fact, one of the slogans that came to define Reformation teaching was sola gratia, which is Latin for "by grace alone." Christians are saved by the grace of God alone.
- Solus Christus: Christ Alone: Reformed theology affirms that Scripture and its
 teaching on grace and faith emphasize that salvation is solus Christus, "by Christ
 alone"—that is, Christ is the only Savior (Acts 4:12). B.B. Warfield wrote, "The saving
 power of faith resides thus not in itself, but in the Almighty Savior on whom it rests."
- **Soli Deo Gloria:** To the Glory of God Alone: We use the phrase glory of God so often that it tends to lose its biblical force. But this glory, like the sun, is no less blazing—and no less beneficial—because people ignore it. Yet, God hates to be ignored. So let's focus again on the glory of God. What is God's glory, and how important is it?

WE BELIEVE A REDEMPTIVE-HISTORICAL HERMENEUTIC

An approach to scriptural interpretation that begins with grammar and historical context of the passage being interpreted that then places the passage within the unfolding plan of redemption through Christ that this the meta-narrative of all Scripture. We believe that the scriptures give historical account of one redemptive story.



WE BELIEVE LAW/GOSPEL DISTINCTION

Law and Gospel are categories by which we can categorize scripture, with Law being those things that God requires of his creatures and Gospel being those things that Christ has done on our behalf and applied to us.

There are 3 uses for law passages in light of the fact that the Gospel passages declare Christ has accomplished on our behalf everything required by Law passages.

• What happens if we don't make this distinction?

- Without this distinction, one is left with his own efforts in trying to earn God's favor by obeying God's commands, and all the while being kept from knowing and embracing the free, joyful, and glorious promise found in the message of the gospel.
- Without this distinction, we risk collapsing the law into the gospel and misunderstanding both. We will see the gospel turned into command, rather than an announcement of the good news of what God has done for the sinner.

WE PREACH EXPOSITIONALLY

The Scriptures are the only sufficient, certain, and infallible rule of saving knowledge, faith, and obedience. So we exposit the scriptures every week, generally using consecutive exposition and orienting the passage within flow of redemptive history.

We further believe that the point of the text should point us to Christ and His work for us. Jesus promised that His sheep would hear His voice, and if this is true, we must be sure that we are speaking the voice of the Shepherd, and not our own.

At Gospelway, we will take weeks and months at a time exploring one book or section of scripture, and our sermons are typically planned no less than 6 months in advance.

WE STRIVE TO BE GUIDED BY THE REGULATIVE PRINCIPLE

The regulative principle of worship, in its broader sense, states that Scripture alone must regulate not only our theology but our methodology as well.

In other words, we should desire to do only that which is warranted in Scripture. Again, put negatively, unless there is a command or principle in scripture that warrants a specific practice, the church should not do such a thing.



WE STRIVE TO CULTIVATE A MEANINGFUL LITURGY

In concert with the historical church, we use a robust liturgy with many corporate elements such as signing, reciting scripture, and corporate prayer. Our liturgy is designed so that the entire service is a Gospel presentation.

From the opening to the closing of service, we strive to make the work of Christ for us the center of every step of our gathering.

If you would like to see a full explanation of our order of service, just let us know

WE EMPHASIS THE ORDINARY MEANS OF GRACE

We acknowledge the importance and primacy of the ordinary means of grace in the local gathering of the church, so we emphasize the preaching of the Word of God, praying together, and the celebration of the Lord's Supper.

WE STRIVE TO CULTIVATE RICH CONGREGATIONAL SINGING

When John views God's throne room in Revelation 5-7, the whole gathered congregation joins their voices together to praise the Lamb. Our goal is for singing to be a participatory experience, not an observational experience. Paul tells the Ephesians to address "one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs" (Eph. 5:19), which reminds us that although our worship through song is primarily God-oriented, it also has a secondary purpose of encouraging and teaching one another.

This is the reason, we print the music for many of our songs to make the melodies (and harmonies) easier to learn, we have plain, rather than overwhelming musical instrumentation, and we avoid performances and extravagant "special music" in our services.

WE PROCLAIM REST IN THE SUFFICIENCY OF CHRIST

Christ has accomplished our salvation and given us all we need for life and godliness. In our service, we maintain a clear law/gospel distinction, highlighting all that Christ had done for us and that we should rest in the sufficiency of his gracious work.

WE PRIORITIZE CHURCH PLANTING

We believe that obedience to the Great Commission (Matt. 28:18-20) involves a commitment to planting and establishing new churches, both locally and globally.

We want to partner with others to plant churches all over the world as we seek to spread the rest found in Jesus in Rowan County, North Carolina, and to the ends of the earth. Roughly 10% of the budget at Gospelway goes towards this end.



WHAT IS OUR LEADERSHIP STRUCTURE?

JESUS IS THE HEAD OF THE CHURCH

- Jesus Christ is the head of the church. (Col. 2:19)
- Jesus Christ grows and builds the church. (Matt. 16:18)

WE ARE ELDER LED, DEACON SERVED, & CONGREGATIONALLY RULED

How Elders Lead

The church has a body of pastors/elders who teach and shepherd the flock. In accordance with Hebrews 13:17, they keep watch over the congregation as men who must give an account to God. They oversee the different ministries of the church.

Our pastors/elders must meet the qualifications set forth in I Timothy 3:1-7, and they exercise authority over the church only to the degree that they teach and lead according to the Scriptures.

The duties of elders are many, according to Scripture, and include the following:

- Prayer and Scripture study (Acts 6:4)
- Leading the church (1 Tim. 5:17)
- Managing the church (1 Tim. 3:4-5)
- Caring for people in the church (1 Pet. 5:2-3)
- · Giving account to God for the church (Heb. 13:17)
- Rightly using the authority God has given them (2 Cor. 10:8, 13:10, Titus 2:5)
- Preaching (1 Tim. 5:17)
- Teaching sound doctrine and refuting false teachings (Eph. 4:11, 1 Tim. 3:2)
- Working hard (1 Thess. 5:12)
- Rightly using money (1 Pet. 5:1-3)
- Spiritual Discipline (Matt. 18:15-20)

How Deacons Serve

The word "deacon" simply means servant. While the elders focus on ensuring that we hear the gospel in word, deacons serve to reveal the gospel in action. It is through their service that they display Jesus, the perfect servant.

The primary task of a deacon is to help meet the physical & material needs of individual believers and of the congregation as a whole.



• How the Congregation Rules

The duly appointed pastors/elders use patience and wisdom in decision-making for unity's sake. Affirmation from the congregation is sought as God's confirmation on the matter.

Therefore we are not an elder rule church, rather we are an elder-led church (Matt. 18:15-17, Acts 6:2-5, I Cor. 5:4-5, II Cor. 2:6).

Even though our pastors/elders lead and make many decisions for the church, this does not mean that they have a rubber stamp to rule, but they are to lead by appealing to the congregation's affirmation within the capacity of their leadership position as pastors/elders.

The membership is responsible for the regularly voting on the confirmation of Elders, Deacons, the entrance and exit of the membership, and on all other matters submitted to them (i.e. budget, etc.)

The Current Leadership at Gospelway

- Elders:
 - **Jeff Perry**, Pastor / Elder 704-245-3419 pastorjeff@gospelway.church
 - Ricky Beaver, Elder 704-795-8876 rbeaver1956@yahoo.com
 - **Jeffrey Perry**, Elder / Assoc. 980-439-1070 jeffrey.perry09@gmail.com
- Deacons:
 - Charles Nagy, Deacon 704-603-7552 nagycatman@aol.com



HOW ARE WE AFFILIATED?

AFFILIATIONS

Grace Reformed Network

www.gracereformednetwork.org GRN is a network that trains and supports the planting of confessional churches united around the sufficiency of Christ.

Rowan Southern Baptist Association

www.rowansba.squarespace.com

Renew Rowan

www.renewrowan.com

The mission of Renew Rowan is to see 10 churches planted or revitalized in Rowan County over the next 20 years.



HOW DO I JOIN WITH GOSPELWAY?

BY APPLICATION; CONSISTING OF ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:

We put together a membership process that attempts to balance simplicity with opportunities for the applicants to learn everything needed and for the congregation to provide input on new members.

Attend a membership class.

Classes are help quarterly, but anyone interested should let an elder know of their interest. Once registered, you will be provided with the membership materials to read prior to the class.

These materials include:

- The Second London Confession of 1689,
- The Church Constitution & Bylaws
- The Church Covenant.

Since you are here, you have this step well in hand.

• Complete a membership application.

After completing the membership class, anyone interesting in becoming a member will complete a membership application. The application collects contact information of the member. On the application, the applicant must indicate their agreement with the church constitution, covenant, and confession.

*Application is available on the final pages of this booklet

· Interview with elders.

Upon receiving a completed membership application, the applicant will be scheduled for a short interview with two elders. (Married couples are interviewed together.)

This interview is an opportunity for the elders to:

- get to know you further,
- hear an affirmation of your salvation in the Lord Jesus Christ,
- confirm your understanding of and agreement with the church constitution, covenant, and confession,
- personally discuss what is expected of church members
- answer any questions you may have.
- · Applicants are affirmed by the congregation



QUALIFICATIONS FOR MEMBERSHIP

The bulk of the qualifications for membership were covered in the membership process above, but to reiterate concisely, here are the requirements to become a member of Gospelway:

- A member must have a profession of faith in Jesus Christ as their only hope for forgiveness of sins and salvation with God.
- A member must have affirmed the Second London Baptist Confession of 1689 or Subscription of Unity.
- A member must complete a reading of the constitution and covenant of Gospelway and affirm willingness to submit said constitution and covenant.
- A member must follow the Ordinance of Baptism (or have a stated intention to undergo such at the first possible opportunity).
 - We would not require an individual to be baptized again who was previously baptized, even if the baptism occurred as an infant. We also generally would not stop someone from being baptized again if he or she so desired. We would discuss each case with the applicant individually.

QUESTIONS?