

The Vision of University Presbyterian Church (PCA) Las Cruces, New Mexico

Presentation: **Transcendence**
 Heirarchy/Economy/Priorities (Mandate, Mission)
 Ethic (Motivation, Means, Method)
 Oath of Joint Committment
 Summary statement of Vision as a Covenant
 Continuity, Corporate Action

Transcendence:

The relationship to God Almighty!

Our Calling

Our calling is that God who gives endurance and encouragement will give us a spirit of unity and love, as we follow Christ Jesus, so that with one heart and mouth we may glorify and enjoy the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Romans 15.5-6

Above all, we desire to bring glory to God and to be obedient to our Lord Jesus Christ as we fulfill our part in Christ's Kingdom. We long to be one with our Father, our Redeemer and with each other bound by love, giving and receiving in fellowship as Christ has loved us and given his live for us.

Our Authority and Head

Jesus Christ is our Lord and King. His written word is our final authority. All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Christ whom God appointed to be head over everything for the church, which is his body.

Isaiah 9.6-7, Psalm 2.6, Matthew 21.5, 28.18, Isaiah 52.13-15, Acts 7.55-56, Ephesians 1.22-23.

We do not carry out our mandate on our own authority or in our own power. This comes only from Jesus Christ himself. We function as his body under his headship in the power of his Spirit and in obedience to him. It is our great desire to see him lifted up and exalted as Lord and King.

Our Identity

We are the family of God, his dearly loved children. We are the kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ, his body and his bride.

Ephesians 3.15, 5.1, Matthew 13.47, Ephesians 1.22-23, 5.23, 27, 32

God has given us our identity. We are his dearly loved children, chosen members of his family and co-heirs with his Son Jesus Christ. We are fully united to Christ as his body. We are the bride of Christ who loves us so much that he gave himself up for us to make us holy, cleansing us to present us to himself as a radiant church. We are the kingdom of Christ who has been entrusted to take the gospel to all nations expanding his kingdom. This identity transforms us into people who have a purpose, a future, a hope and profound security in his love.

Hierarchy:

The economy or priority of our mission

Our Mandate

Under the gospel of Christ, our mandate is to go and make disciples of all nations, teaching them to obey everything Christ has commanded us in the context of unity with God and each other. We are to gather, protect, and perfect (bring to maturity) the saints. Matthew 28.19-20, Ephesians 4.4-6, Ephesians 4.11-13

God has called the church to fulfill the great commission which sends us out into the world to make disciples and build up the body of Christ into his fullness. We will gather his people, protect them, and bring them to spiritual maturity. All of this is accomplished through the gospel which is the power of God for the salvation of everyone who believes and is also the means that accomplishes our righteousness and sanctification from first to last.

Our Mission

The mission of University Presbyterian Church is **upward** in its focus on celebration in worship of our God and obedience to our Lord and King, Jesus Christ; **outward** in its focus on the expansion and impact in the world for the kingdom of Christ; and **inward** in its focus on protecting and nurturing the disciples of Christ. **Therefore our mission is to exalt our God and our King, Jesus Christ in worship, to expand Christ's kingdom in Las Cruces, the border area and the world, and to edify (nurture) his people in fellowship with one another.**

In response to the fullness of God's character and his goodness to us, our mission is to worship God our Creator from love and gratitude, glorifying him by offering our whole lives and our whole selves as living sacrifices to him. We worship Christ as our King and Redeemer, who is due every service and obedience he asks of us. We seek to worship wholeheartedly, reflecting the joy we have in being God's people. We also take up the mandate to make Christ known to the world, including our family, friends, co-workers, neighbors in Las Cruces and the border area and to all parts of the world gathering them into the church. We commit to building one another up in the Lord, nourishing, protecting, and calling them to a pure life before God in unity and love.

The Ethic:

The virtue and the standard of our community

Our Motivation for Ministry

Because of Christ's love for us, we will pursue him above all things and seek to please him who tests our hearts. Therefore, we will carry out our mission by obedient faith expressing itself through love so that the world will know that we are Christ's disciples.

1 Timothy 1.5, 2 Corinthians 5.14, 1 Thessalonians 2.1-11, Galatians 3.11, 5.6, Hebrews 11.6, Matthew 22.36-40, John 13.35

We believe that our mission cannot be accomplished without hearts motivated by faith in our God and Love for him and each other. We know that without faith it is impossible to please God and that his Law can be summed up in the command to Love God and each other. Therefore, faith and love should cause us to act as well as be an end in themselves. We pray that God will continually increase our faith and give us a testimony to the world bathed in devoted love for our God and Savior Jesus Christ and for each other. It is our hope that this congregation would be a living demonstration of the high priority that love is given in God's word.

Our Means

The means for carrying out our mission are the ministry of the word, prayer, the sacraments, worship and the fellowship of the body of Christ in small groups and large groups, in the family and in the corporate body. The Bible, as the authoritative word of God by which we know him and his will for us, is to be believed and obeyed. We are commanded to pray on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests and not to give up. **We are to use our gifts to nourish and edify one another for our mutual good as those who are united in Christ from whom the whole body, joined and held together, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.** All these means are made effective by the Holy Spirit who gives us understanding of Scripture and empowers us for service.

Acts 2.42-47, 2 Timothy 3.16-17, 2 Peter 1.19-21, Matthew 7.7, Luke 18.1, Ephesians 6.18, Isaiah 62.6-7, Ephesians 4.16, 1 Corinthians 12.7, 1 Peter 4.10-11, 1 Corinthians 2.9-12

Scripture gives us the means for carrying out the functions of the church and we will use these means in small groups as well as corporately. We commit to obeying the Bible as containing the whole purpose of God pertaining to his own glory and to our salvation, faith, and life. because we acknowledge our complete dependence on God and his inexhaustible resources, we also commit to calling on the Lord in prayer, giving ourselves no rest, until he establishes us. Our desire is that every member would add to the whole body his or her spiritual gifts and abilities to build up one another, loving the body of Christ and valuing the gifts God has given each one. We

believe that it is through the Holy Spirit that our ministry is effective and so we seek his presence, empowering and strength in all things.

Our Method

First, our method is to establish a specific plan for each ministry according to our current and future needs. Second, we will periodically evaluate each ministry and ministry plan as it relates to our stated purpose, mandate, mission and means. Also, the needs of the congregation will be periodically evaluated in various ways to determine if new ministries should be established and if existing ministries are still relevant and effective. As much as possible, we want to ensure that our ministry, a living organism, is flexible, sensitive, and able to allow freedom for different ministries to spring up from within the congregation.

The Oath:

The joint commitment of our community

Our Prayer

"We kneel before the Father, from whom his whole family in heaven and on earth derives its name. **We pray** that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen us with power through his Spirit in our inner being, **so that Christ may dwell in our hearts through faith.** And we pray that we, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the saints, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that we may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God."

"Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to the power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen."
Ephesians 3.14-21

The Covenant:

The summary of our vision

Our **calling** is that God who gives endurance and encouragement will give us a spirit of unity and love, as we follow Christ Jesus, so that with one heart and mouth we may glorify and enjoy the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Romans 15.5-6

Therefore our **mission** is to *exalt* our God and our King, Jesus Christ in worship, to *expand* Christ's kingdom in Las Cruces, the border area and the world, and to *edify* (nurture) his people in fellowship with one another.

We are to use our gifts to nourish and edify one another for our mutual good as those who are united in Christ from whom the whole body, joined and held together, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

We pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen us with power through his Spirit in our inner being, so that Christ may dwell in our hearts through faith.

The Continuity: Our corporate action

Goal 1: Love

The mark of the Holy Spirit in us and filling us (Galatians 5.22, John 13.35), the greatest command of all (Matthew 22.36-37), and the new command of Jesus Christ to us (John 13.34), is that we grow together in our love for God and each other. We believe that we should passionately pursue Love and keep it before us at all times (Romans 12.9-21). We yearn to have the love for each other that Christ intended for his Church (Ephesians 4.1-3, 1 Corinthians 13); to care and communicate caring for each other; to experience unity with diversity; for our love to be a testimony to those outside of our congregation, that we are Christ's disciples (John 13.34-35); and that our love and unity would provide the framework for working together to serve and glorify God.

To achieve this goal we promise to

1. Fervently pray both privately and corporately that God would enable us to love him and each other.

2. Pursue restoration of broken or damaged relationships and seek both God's and our brother's or sister's forgiveness for past wrongs.

3. Teach the truths of God's Word so that in knowledge of the truth and God's will we may grow in love and relationships.

4. Be teachable; listening, humbly accepting and applying God's truths concerning justice and mercy in the area of love and relationships.

5. Provide and take advantage of opportunities for confession, restitution, reconciliation and restoration.

6. Strive to always give a good report about each other (James 4.11-12, Ephesians 4.29-32).

7. Work together without complaining or arguing (Philippians 2.14-15).

8. Speak the truth in love as we patiently admonish the unruly, encourage the timid and help the weak (Galatians 6.1-10, 1 Thessalonians 5.14-15).

9. Love God with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength and our neighbors as ourselves (Mark 12.29f.).

Goal 2: Seek God for Revival

We will pursue revival in our body that will overflow to our community and as far beyond as God is pleased to bless. We understand that only God can work to revive our hearts, but we will seek God's work among us. This objective should be before us at all times as we seek to glorify him in our individual lives and in our corporate fellowship. We passionately long to seek the Lord who made us, loves us, gave his precious life for us, and continually gives us all we need in this life and the next. Our individual and corporate lives must be lives of thirsting for and seeking God (Psalms 27.4, 7-9, 42.1-2, 63.1-5 and 73.25, James 4.6-10), desiring an intimate relationship with him as we can have with no other (Psalm 42), growing in our faith and trust in God, and obediently and actively serving him (Ephesians 2.10, Romans 12.1,2).

To achieve this goal we promise to

1. Fervently pray both privately and corporately that God would work mightily to revive our hearts and minds as individuals, families, and as a body.
2. Make it the pursuit of our lives to seek to know God and delight in his presence.
3. Teach the truths of God's Word so that in knowledge of the truth and God's will we may grow as Christ's body in love and obedience to him.
4. Be teachable, humbly listening, accepting, and applying God's truths so that we may be revived.
5. Acknowledge, repent, and mourn for our sin both privately and corporately (James 4.7-10).

(Refer to "The Coming UPC Revival," 25 July 1993 sermon text.)

Goal 3: Holiness

We long to be holy, both as individual believers in our daily lives and as a part of the body of Christ (Hebrews 10.24-25). God created us to be holy (Ephesians 2.8-10), and our obedience to God's commands flows from and demonstrates our love for Christ (John 14.21). God's demands for holiness and obedience are not fulfilled in reducing his

commands to man-made lists of rules that we can externally obey (John 23.23,24), or in a cold, determined obedience that does not address the character and attitude that God's people are to develop, or in a man-made righteousness from our own strength that results in pride. Holiness comes when we seek to know God's character and will as he has expressed it in his Word, grieving of and turning from our sin, and as we seek by faith to live holy lives through the power of the Holy Spirit (Philippians 2.12-15, 4.8,9, Titus 2.11-14, Galatians 5.22-26).

In order to please God, our hunger for holiness must be in response to God's love and deliverance from our sin (Romans 12.1-2). We must long to love God as he so richly deserves, and our fellow believers as his creation and co-heirs with us in his kingdom. We recognize our need to know, love, and obey God's Word, and look biblically at our sin and need of righteousness (Psalms 119.9-16, 19.7-14). We also recognize that our standard of righteousness must be different from and higher than that of the culture that surrounds us (1 Peter 1.13-17).

*We confess as a congregation of the Lord Jesus
that our pride often clouds our vision of who God is
and keeps us from grieving and repenting of our sin,
and that our righteousness is often external for others to see
while our hearts are far from God.
Our lack of commitment to our Lord and his standards of righteousness
has too often resulted in our lives being little different
from those who have no hope.
James 4.4*

To achieve this goal we promise to

1. Fervently and sincerely pray, both as Christ's body and privately, for God to work in us to convict us of sin, create a desire to please him with a righteous life, give us the grace to walk humbly with him, and learn to enjoy him and his good gifts in their fulness (Psalm 16).
2. Cultivate holiness together in love, not as religious policemen checking up on each other, but as loving brothers and sisters who carry each other's burdens (Hebrews 10.24, Galatians 6.1-2).
3. Seek by faith, trusting in God's strength alone to work in us, to come to the measure of the fulness of Christ (Ephesians 4.11-13). Only in relationship to him do we find that fulness:
*the riches of life
grace
truth
wisdom
knowledge
goodness*

mercy
righteousness
power
and all virtue.

Christ is the model of our sanctification, but also the fountain of our sanctification, so that all the strength and glory lie in him. "I am Yahweh your God; sanctify yourselves and be holy, because I am holy" (Leviticus 11.44).

4. Teach and be teachable; speaking God's truth as the very oracles of God (1 Peter 4.11), and listening as servants to their Master (Psalm 123.1-2), humbly accepting and applying to our lives God's truth in his character and commands so that we may be holy.

5. Turn from the idols of our generation and culture, because they mock our God and only bring bondage and despair. We will set aside the Lord's Day as a day of joy in his presence with his people, one day unique in seven for him alone (Leviticus 19.30).

6. Delight ourselves in the whole Law as the mirror of God's beauty (Psalm 119), pray to him and listen for his sweet voice, drink deeply of his grace and mercy—of our Jesus himself—in his sacraments (1 Corinthians 10.16-17).

7. Pursue God's holiness with such passion that when we find ourselves falling short of the fulness of Christ we will turn away from our sin to the living God (James 4.7-10, 1 John 1.9).

Goal 4: Leadership

We will seek the direction and authority of our risen King. He gives to his church leaders who are to be developed, encouraged, respected, and obeyed. We want to develop the future leaders for our church in order to provide godly and biblically qualified men and women for this holy service, and see our current leaders grow in maturity, compassion, boldness, service, faith, and vision (John 13.1-17, 1 Timothy 3.1-13, 2 Timothy 2.1-2, Titus 1.6-9, 1 Peter 5.1-4).

We will encourage our leaders so they will not grow weary in well doing (Romans 1.11-12). We will recognize the headship and authority of Jesus Christ in his Church and follow, respect, and obey our leaders as those whom Christ has called to watch over our very souls (Hebrews 13.7, Romans 13.1-5). We want our church to be characterized by godly leadership that is loved and followed with an attitude of openness, harmony, and trust.

We want the relationship among the leaders and between the leaders and the congregation to be that of a loving, honest, and open family that works together without competition, distrust, or unresolved conflict.

To achieve this goal we, as a congregation and as leaders, promise to

1. Fervently pray, both privately and corporately, for our leaders and their families, and that God would raise up future leaders.
2. Fervently and sincerely pray for the congregation, for each family and member, and that God would raise up from our ranks those who would lead by example.
3. Follow Biblical mandates diligently for cultivating, training and selecting men to be Elders and Deacons.
4. Seek out, cultivate and train new leaders (1 Timothy 2.2).
5. Be teachable, listening, humbly accepting, and applying God's truths concerning authority, servant-leadership and submission.
6. Teach the truth of God's Word so that the knowledge of the will of God and of his grace is evident to everyone in the congregation.
7. Be humble and trust that God will work through the authority structure and through the men he has raised up to lead us.
8. Be responsive to the needs, concerns, and views of the congregation on matters of our corporate life.
9. Develop mutual submission and respect between congregation and the leaders.

Goal 5: Teaching

We want to be a church that never stops growing in its love, knowledge, and application of the whole will of God in his Word (Psalm 119, Acts 20.27). The words from God's lips will be our delight, our joy and strength. We will sound out the depths of the wisdom of God, which is in Christ (Colossians 2.2-3). And growing in our knowledge of the vastness of our infinite God, coming to see him more and more as he is, we will be humbled; we will be led to fall before him in awe and worship (Isaiah 55.8-9).

We want those who preach and teach in our congregation to be discerning and faithful, so that they bring the fullness of God's will in his revelation to bear on every aspect of our lives (2 Timothy 3.16-17). Our teaching will be done in love that leads to love (1 Timothy 1.5). It will center on Christ, his grace in the gospel as it flows from the fullness of his character (Romans 1.16-17). We will teach and preach Christ's love and redemption, his reconciling life and work on earth, his powerful sacrifice for all who believe in his name—we will preach Christ, and him crucified (1 Corinthians 1.23)! We will stress that the power to respond to the gospel and grow in Christ is only from God himself in his Holy

Spirit (Philippians 2.13), so we will charge everyone to live by faith in the Son of God (Galatians 2.20).

As shepherds of God's flock (Acts 20.28 in context, 1 Peter 5.2), our elders will with love and compassion oversee the teaching and preaching, including all sermons, Sunday School and education programs, small groups, and discipling. They will ensure that our teaching remains biblical and biblically balanced, relevant to our specific struggles as believers at the end of the second millennium living in the Southwestern United States. The congregation will uphold our elders with the arms of prayer and love during their own times of dryness and weakness.

To accomplish this we promise to

1. Fervently pray, both alone and as a body, for God to fill us with a love and hunger for his Word; for the Spirit to speak clearly to us through our pastors and teachers; and for the grace to apply God's truth to our lives and live it in the power of the Holy Spirit.
2. Immerse ourselves in the gospel so that we live it and teach and preach it to others.
3. In humility teach, preach, listen to, and apply biblical truths as the very Word of God, seeking not knowledge alone but repentance and growth that leads to godly lives (Acts 2.42 and 17.11, James 1.22-25); and teach biblical methods of study and application.
4. Take advantage of God's gifts to his Church in extraordinary teachers, by inviting to our congregation men like Richard Pratt, Rob Rayburn, and Henry Krabbendaum.

The session promises to direct and oversee the teaching and preaching to ensure that it is biblical, balanced from the whole of Scripture, and fitting for our own struggles, maturity level, and cultural context. The session promises to coordinate our preaching and teaching with an overall plan for each ministry in our church. And the session promises to cultivate, encourage, and train teachers for this work.

Goal 6: Ministry and Outreach

Though always grateful for God's work in us, we will never rest content with our growth and progress. We accept the challenge of the higher calling that Christ has set for us as a congregation. Faithfully following him and living in the power of the Spirit, we will press the claims of the gospel on the world around us, laboring in the fields that Jesus said were white for harvest, training others to follow Christ for his glory (Ephesians 5.14-21, John 9.35-38, Matthew 28.18-20).

We want the same passion and heart for lost souls that was and is in Jesus (Luke 19.10). We believe that the Word and work of God is powerful and will accomplish God's purposes in people's lives (Isaiah 55.9-11). We will always care for our own family, our own congregation, but press ourselves to reach out to bring others into the fold. We want

to be a gentle, caring, nurturing family who love each other deeply, from the heart. We will work together to grow up into Christ, spurring one another on to love and good deeds with our very best encouragement (Hebrews 10.24-25).

Schism, elitism, racism, sexism, favoritism—anything that divides the Body of Christ—is utterly opposed to the gospel of Jesus, and we *hate* it (1 Corinthians 3, Galatians 3.26-29). Our fellowship will be a place of open arms for all who come to Jesus (James 2.1-13). We want everyone in our congregation to have this same mind, opening the arms of Jesus to those he works or studies with, to neighbors, friends, and family. In our personal ministries we will reflect the love and sweetness of Christ (2 Corinthians 2.15-16). And our gospel is to the whole man, neglecting neither the body nor the spirit, helping the needy in every human need (Matthew 25.40).

We will minister wherever our God leads us—to Mexico, Europe, Africa, and the ends of the world. To remain faithful to this commitment we hope and pray that God will continually refresh and renew us by his Spirit, so that we will stretch ourselves beyond our comfortable spheres of friends and ministries.

To achieve this goal we promise to

1. Earnestly and fervently pray, both alone and with the body, for God to expand our faith and vision and love for his work; that he would give us boldness and an urgency and passion that grow out of a sense of the reality of eternity; that he will stir our hearts to love and compassion for the lost, hurting, and needy.
2. Teach, preach, listen to, and apply God's will in his Word about the ministry of Christ and his Church to a lost and dying world.
3. Work with and through our deacons in mercy ministries to those in need, giving "a cup of cold water" in the name of Jesus.
4. Spread the good news of the kingdom by praying for the lost, living godly lives in front of them, teaching and learning the gospel and how to proclaim it, and sharing our faith as a way of life.
5. Disciple each other and learn the art of discipling.

Goal 7: Worship

The highest purpose and the highest joy we know is to gladly reflect back to God the radiance of his worth (Psalm 95.1-7, 1 Peter 2.9-10). It is the fullness of God's character that stirs us to declare and celebrate his worth. And it is his truth in Scripture that unfolds to us his character, as well as how we are to adore him (John 4.23-24).

Our corporate worship both grows out of and feeds our personal love for Christ and worship of God; that is, holy worship in the congregation happens only to the degree that each of us is devoting himself to God (Romans 12.1-2), and our personal devotion to God cannot thrive without our corporate celebration (Hebrews 10.25, Psalm 42.1-6). We will purify our hearts and turn from our sin daily so that our worship is pleasing to him (Psalms 51.10-17 and 66.18).

Corporate worship was never intended to be the act of only a few leaders, with the congregation passively watching a performance for them. Biblical worship requires full participation by everyone with their hearts and mouths, many participating as they are led by the Spirit to offer their gifts to God's honor (1 Corinthians 14.26). But because this performance is for God and not man, we should sing and pray and preach and give to him in ways that attract attention to him and his glory, not our own (Matthew 6.5).

We also realize that true, biblical worship can find many different cultural expressions (John 4.19-24). Within biblical boundaries, we need to allow and enjoy the freedoms that God has given us. We want to grow in our acceptance and appreciation of various styles of liturgy, music, prayer, interaction with each other, and preaching.

To do this we promise to

1. Fervently pray, both together and alone, for God to give us the longing, humility, and holiness to please him in our worship.
2. Teach, listen to, and apply biblical truths to understand what worship is and how we are to worship.
3. Be open in reconsidering our understanding of worship, and to grow in our acceptance and appreciation of other styles of worship.
4. Provide and take advantage of opportunities for response such as praise, songs, confession of sins, prayer, commitment, and support of brothers and sisters who are struggling.
5. Prepare for worship with self-examination, confession, prayer, quietness before God, arriving early to prepare our hearts before God and resolving broken or damaged relationships with in the body (Matthew 5.23-24).