

***Introducing the Journey*¹**
Exploring Membership at Christ Our Redeemer Church
Lesson 1

1) What is the purpose of this course?

- a) Introducing you to the journey
 - i) This course is designed to introduce you to Christ Our Redeemer Church. We've chosen the metaphor of a journey for this course, because the Christian life itself is a journey: it has a purpose and direction, and it involves a process—one which will not be complete until we are in the presence of the Lord.
 - ii) Well, we begin a "journey" today: this weekend, we invite you to join us for what we hope will be a clear and informative overview of this church in order to answer such important questions as "What does it look like to follow Christ at Christ Our Redeemer Church?" and "What can I hope to experience by being a member of this church?"

- b) Informing you about the journey
 - i) Discovering what church God would have us in is a very important matter. There is certain necessary information that a person should know prior to making the decision to join a particular church. Along this journey, we hope to serve you by providing such information, which will span the following areas:
 - (1) **Our Doctrine:** "What do we believe?" "What Biblical values inform our practices as a church?" Nothing is more important in the Christian life than what one believes, and so this course will inform you as to our core beliefs and commitments as a church.
 - (2) **Our Church Life:** "What does participation in Christ Our Redeemer Church look like?" "What avenues exist for

¹The content of these six lectures has been slightly modified to suit the needs of COR. They were originally put together by Jeff Purswell (Dean of the Sovereign Grace Ministries Pastor's College) for the new member's class at Covenant Life Church in Gaithersburg MD.

worship, growth, and service?" Simply professing certain beliefs is not enough. Our beliefs must find expression in Biblical practice. This course seeks to acquaint you with what life in this church looks like, and what your participation here would involve.

- (3) **Our Organization:** "How is this church structured?" "Who are its pastors?" "How does membership function in this church?" Scripture is clear that God Himself joins people together in the body of Christ, and that God establishes leadership for the care and equipping of His people. Important issues concerning organization, pastoral ministry, and membership will also be covered in this course.

c) Inspiring you for the journey

(1) For those who desire to be part of this church, we hope that you will be not only informed, but also inspired as to the role that God would have you play. Participation in a local church is not merely an obligation of Christians, but is a joyful privilege in which we glorify God through fruitful service in the context of meaningful relationships with other believers.

(2) In short, we want to provide you with all the information necessary for you to make an intelligent decision about membership here at Christ Our Redeemer Church. It is our desire and privilege to help you determine if God is leading you to become a part of this local church. Ultimately, we desire to do all we can to encourage you in your relationship with Jesus Christ, and critical to that relationship is finding your place of participation and service within His body, the church. We are excited to see what God will teach you and how He will lead you through this "journey."

2) How will the course work?

a) Format of the course

- i) What will we cover in this course?
- (1) Introduction to the course
 - (2) The importance of the church
 - (3) The nature of the gospel
 - (4) Our response to the gospel
 - (5) The importance of relationships in this church

(6) The importance of stewardship in this church

b) Participation in the course-

Reading: We will not be able to cover all of the addenda and other printed materials during the class. Please read the notebook, especially the documents at the end. You will be asked in your new member's interview if you read these documents.

c) We hope to make this weekend as informative and enjoyable as possible. Our prayer is that this journey will bring you a deeper love for the Savior and greater clarity as to His will for your life.

d) Over the six sessions, we will be examining many different facets of the church's beliefs and practices. At this point, we'd like to provide an overview of the overall structure and leadership of the church.

3) Introducing the purpose of Christ Our Redeemer Church

“Christ Our Redeemer Church exists to proclaim the glory of God in the risen Savior!”

Glorify God (all of life is worship)-	1 Cor. 10:31
Forming Christ (Discipleship)-	Gal. 4:19
A Growing church (Evangelism)-	Matt. 28:18-20

5) Introducing the ministries of Christ Our Redeemer Church that help us fulfill our purpose!

We believe God has called every church to be involved in three specific ministries. These three ministries (worship, discipleship, and evangelism) must be functioning for a New Testament church to fulfill her God given mission of glorifying the Father.

i) **Worship - “COR exists to Glorify God” (ministry to God in corporate worship) -**

(1) All of life is to be one giant act of worship for the glory of God! In this sense everything the church does (worship, discipleship, and evangelism) should Glorify God.

- (2) Sunday morning worship- This is our one opportunity each week to gather as an entire community and be built together through worship, the teaching of God's word, and fellowship.
- (3) Worship team

ii) **Discipleship - "By Forming Christ" (ministry to believers in discipleship)-**

- (1) Care groups- (groups for Families, Teens, and Singles) care groups that regularly meet in homes are a primary context for members of the church to apply God's word, build relationships, and serve each other.
- (2) Christian Education
- (3) Nursery ministry
- (4) Men's ministry
- (5) Women's ministry
- (6) Hospitality ministry
- (7) Children's ministry

iii) **Evangelism - "In a growing church" (ministry to the lost in evangelism)-**

- (1) Hospitality ministry
- (2) Corporate and individual outreach
- (3) ETC...

Our wide variety of ministry allows members to participate in the fulfillment of our church's mission by serving and utilizing their individual gifts.

6) The core values of COR that help us fulfill our purpose are defined for us in Scripture! We are committed to the gospel as that which is of 'first importance'.

1 Corinthians 15:3-4 For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, ⁴ that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures,

7) Leadership at Christ Our Redeemer Church

- a. Leadership and direction for the church is provided by a team of elders led by the Senior Pastor. Over the course of our time together, you will be meeting the elders who serve in this church.
 - i. Senior Pastor/ Ruling/Teaching Elder: Dan Morse
 - ii. Interim advisory team: Gordy Young, David Butz, Kevin Epp, Jason Wakefield

8) How may I become a member of Christ Our Redeemer Church?

While it does require a process, becoming a member of COR involves just a few straightforward requirements:

- a. A clear testimony of personal faith in Jesus Christ.
- b. Successful completion of the New Member's Class.
- c. General support of the church's statement of faith.
- d. You are in agreement with the church covenant and statement on church discipline which is expressed with your signature.
- e. Regular attendance of the Sunday morning services.
- f. Baptism.
- g. Active exploration of home groups until you find one in which you can fully participate.
- h. A meeting with the pastor to discuss church membership.

Upon completion of these requirements, you will be welcomed into membership with other new members during the Sunday morning meeting. These "welcomes" are joyous opportunities to introduce new members to the church, and the church to new members, and are always highlights for us as a church!

9) Our Primary Desire

Again, thank you for your interest in exploring Christ Our Redeemer. We are truly honored that you would take the time to learn more about us as a church. Although we do hope that you will find in this church a home where you can thrive, our primary concern is not that you become a part of *this* church, but that you become a part of *some* church. It is our desire that you develop a Biblical, enthusiastic conviction about the importance of active involvement in the local

church, and with this conviction find a church home where you can worship God, grow in your relationship with Him, and serve in ways that glorify Him. If that church home proves to be Christ Our Redeemer Church, then it will be our joy to serve with you. In any event, we count your presence here a privilege, and look forward to serving you as you embark upon this journey.