

You are members of God's family. Together, we are His house, built on the foundation of the apostles and the prophets. And the cornerstone is Christ Jesus Himself. Ephesians 29:11

1853 - 2018 History is HIS-Story

College Hill Presbyterian Church began as a 'mission' church with 33 people meeting in a college chapel. The continuing health and growth of the Church is a dramatic witness of God's faithfulness to His people and His people's joyful obedience to Jesus Christ, God's Word, and God's visions.

Settled in the early 1800's, College Hill then known as Pleasant Hill was a small, unincorporated community north of the city of Cincinnati. Since the life of the village centered on its two colleges — Farmer's College (located near the present site of Aiken High School) and the Ohio Female College (on the site of Emerson North, now Childrens' Hospital) — in time the area became known as College Hill.

A number of families from Mt Pleasant Presbyterian Church, in the area now known as Mt Healthy, began to worship in the Farmer's College Chapel. Rev. J. S. Edwards of Mt Pleasant PC preached part time. On April 23, 1853, 33 people met with an authorized committee from the Hamilton Presbytery to form a new church. The founding families presented their letters of dismissal to Mt Pleasant Presbyterian Church and covenanted to "organize and walk according to the rules of the Presbyterian Church."

The First Presbyterian Church of College Hill continued to meet in the Farmer's College Chapel, but within a month began to solicit subscriptions for the present church building site. One half of the \$12,000 cost was given by William and Samuel Cary, major landowners

in the area. Brick for the new building was purchased from Pleasant Hill Kiln, located directly across Hamilton 'Turnpike' from the church's property. On January 1, 1857, an 800 seat church Sanctuary was dedicated [200 seats more than the present Sanctuary].



1857: 800-SEAT CHURCH & POUNDSFORD HOUSE

That's faith—faith in a faithful God who gives and empowers the visions He entrusts to His people.

Soon the building was filled with believers worshiping the Lord with a joyful noise. The church spire and bell, financed by a 'grand concert' given by city musicians, added to the melody in 1859. The bell was cracked in 1865 by exuberant ringing announcing the end of the Civil War. It was later melted down and recast into the one that now calls the church family to worship. In 1862, the melodeon that had assisted worshipers for many years was sold. An organ was installed and functioned well until replaced in 1886.

While the Sanctuary developed rapidly, Sunday School continued to be held in the Farmer's College Chapel. Teachers and pupils traveled between the two locations for nearly twenty years until 1877 when the village school on the church grounds was purchased and dedicated.

What might be referred to as divine remodeling occurred in August, 1888. An hour



1888: TORNADO DESTROYED THE BRICK CHURCH

after the close of the Sunday worship service, a sudden storm completely destroyed the church building, but left the two-year-old organ undamaged.

Services were held in the College Hill Town Hall on Larch Avenue until the new stone structure, with three new memorial windows, was dedicated on October 5, 1890. The 'chapel area' and east end of today's Sanctuary were part of the 1890 building.

The chronicle of God's faithfulness and blessings for His people continued as the church grew. The Parish House was built in 1926 to provide additional Sunday School facilities and a center for community activities. In 1935, the original Manse was built.

On June 17, 1951 ground was broken for



1952: STONE SANCTUARY ENLARGEMENT

an enlarged Sanctuary. During construction, worship services were held in the Hollywood Movie Theater [now the House of Joy]. Finally, Sunday, Jan 4th, 1953, almost 100 years after the Church was formed, the new Sanctuary was dedicated to the service of God.

In 1953, the Pounsford family donated the Chatfield property, including the 100-year-old white frame house east of the Sanctuary. The building, which served as the residence of head custodians and the birthplace of CHPC's Teleios counseling ministry, was razed during the 1981 building program. The Fellowship Hall, dedicated in January 1961, provided expanded nursery, kitchen, lounge and auditorium facilities. In 1967, the Lewis property, just north of Fellowship Hall, was purchased to provide a much-needed area for additional parking. In 1971, the 50 rank, 4 manual Schantz pipe organ was installed and dedicated. The chancel area was also modified to provide seating space for the 100-member choir and orchestra during special musical worship services and community concerts.

Late 20th CENTURY VISION

January 1975: the congregation asked, "Where is CHPC going? What would Christ have us do as a Family of Faith? What are our needs?" The Session responded, "We need to plan for and facilitate wholeness in the Lord." How? By nurture and growth of the Body and by providing resources to support such nurture and growth (leadership, buildings, and finances).

October 1978: the People asked, "What is God's unique calling for CHPC? What are His priorities?"

The response, after extensive prayer and study, was the First Call of CHPC — to "equip the Saints for the work of the ministry" (Ephesians 4:12).

The full text reads: The primary Call is to glorify God and minister to our own people in order to bring about 'wholeness

in the Lord' in obedience to Jesus Christ through Scripture. Our Staff, Elders, and other leaders are called:

- To minister to our people (through worship, teaching, nurture, family enrichment, pastoring, evangelism, missions, etc.);
- To equip our people for ministry to each other;
- To equip our people and involve them in the work of Christ in the world.

The secondary calling of CHPC is renewal in the Spirit (individual, congregational, and theological) of the Body of Christ by serving as an equipping center for Christian leadership.

April 1979: the Session acted by stating, "As we are to grow up in every way into Him who is the head, into Christ (Ephesians. 4:15), we believe buildings should be supportive of the diversity of growth inspired by the Spirit in the life of members of the Body. We should not be limited by insufficient resources, including buildings, in our growth toward wholeness, and in our equipping for the work of Christ in the world."

March, 1981: the People acted by authorizing a two-part building program that met the double-faceted need for facilities and additional funds for ministry. The first phase of the \$4 million (1981 costs) building expansion and renovation portion, named the Barnabas Center for Spiritual Growth, was dedicated September 11, 1983. Changes to the Teleios Center (the former Manse), the Sanctuary, and the full renovation of the Ministry Center (formerly the Parish House) followed.

1994-1997 VISIONS of GOD'S CALL

The Call below was adopted July 1994 and served as the basis for the church's ministry into the next century. It reflected an added emphasis on reaching out to those who do not know Jesus Christ as their personal Savior.

THE CALL: College Hill Presbyterian Church is called to be a community of spiritually maturing Christians knowing, believing, praying, and living the Word of God. We are called to give ourselves away in unconditional love to God, one another, and others so that we and all those we touch may know God personally

and intimately through Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Spirit. All to the glory of God."

During this time, three actions of Session further defined the distinctive beliefs of CHPC on issues before the denomination — a Resolution: "Witness for Biblical Morality (adopted 3/5/90); a Declaration that CHPC was a 'Transforming Congregation' (5/4/92); and a Declaration of Faith and Life (6/11/95; revised 8/12/96).

From 1993 to 1995, the Session prayerfully considered whether College Hill Presbyterian Church's life and ministry would continue within the Presbyterian Church (USA). No congregational vote was ever taken. However, in October 1995, CHPC's Session reaffirmed the covenant of the church to organize and walk according to the rules of the Presbyterian Church, and to be salt and light in the PC(USA).

During worship, Sunday December 31, a portion of the congregation that chose to birth a non-PCUSA church was commissioned and 'sent out.' The new church was later called the Evangelical Community Church of the EPC.

January 1997: the Session further refined The Call of God for CHPC: "We seek to be a redemptive community in which God is worshiped, the Gospel is proclaimed, and members are transformed, equipped, and empowered to give themselves away in service to Jesus Christ."

By February 1997, the Session had adopted 'Five Operating Emphases' to highlight specific aspects of the Call. A dynamic balance of the five is desired: (1) Worship and prayer; (2) Proclaiming the Gospel of Jesus Christ; (3) Healing and therapeutic community; (4) Spiritual maturity; and (5) Every member a minister.

CHPC's CORE VALUES

Early 1998: Session invited the whole church to participate in a lengthy process to codify CHPC's Core Values—the constant, passionate, Biblically-consistent values that undergird and guide the life of College Hill Presbyterian Church. Core Values define the church's distinctive essence and are foundational in effecting God's CALL for this community of believers to give themselves away.

May the God of peace...equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ... Hebrews 13:20-21

The Core Values adopted Nov 2, 1998: "By the power of the Holy Spirit, we dedicate ourselves to continually seek God's leading in how to live out these values. As we move into the future, we aspire to be consistently intentional, to be constantly creative, and to serve with excellence in all things."

- **Worshiping God** — We glorify and enjoy God as both the source and focus of all we are and do.
- **Yielding to Christ's Lordship** — We believe Jesus Christ is the only Savior and Lord, submitting our will, time and resources to Him for the building of his Kingdom.
- **Embracing the Bible** — We commit ourselves to the authority of God's Word, seeking to be reformed, guided and shaped by its truth.
- **Growing Spiritually** — We desire to know God, equipping, discipling and encouraging all ages toward wholeness in the Lord.
- **Building Healthy Relationships** — We devote ourselves to nurturing healthy and healing relationships in the church and in the world.
- **Living the Gospel** — We share God's passion for the lost, declaring and demonstrating the Gospel of Jesus Christ by our words and actions.

REFLECTING ON THE 20th CENTURY

College Hill Presbyterian Church (CHPC) celebrated its 150th anniversary in 2003. Throughout its rich and diverse history it has had an impact on Cincinnati and the world. The 1970's and 80's were particularly exciting under the leadership of Dr Jerry Kirk, Dr Ron Rand and a gifted Pastoral Team. Worship services were packed. People showed up 15 to 30 minutes early to get a seat.

The church developed into a 'Worldwide Equipping Center.' People came from all over to take courses like *Apples of Gold*, *Rational Christian Thinking* and *HELPER Evangelism Training*. The fruit and gifts of the Holy Spirit

were embraced. CHPC's impact included worship and education, evangelism and mission and a significant number of members who were called as worship leaders, missionaries and pastors.

WHY CHANGE?

By 2000, the world around CHPC and the North American Church were rapidly changing from Christian to non-Christian as the secularizing process unfolded around us. American life in the late 90's was very different than in the 70's, particularly in the understanding of the centrality of God. Ministry could not merely be a duplication of the past.

For centuries, Churches had operated in a 'Christian culture' — the speaker and the listener have a common understanding of God, Sin, and the ultimate fate of humanity beyond death. The listener is convicted of Sin and 'hears' a call to believe what the speaker and listener both know to be true. Even those who didn't believe that the Gospel was true understood what it was saying.

Today, there is no commonly shared understanding of 'truth.' The Church must 'intentionally translate' the Gospel in ways to which secularized and unchurched people can relate. The process of constructing CHPC's Missional Vision was a miracle in itself. By God's grace, church leaders were led to the book by Darrell L. Guder — *The Missional Church: A Vision for the Sending of the Church in North America*. It sparked the foundational thinking and theology that guided our revisioning and redevelopment.

The Body of Christ at CHPC began re-discovering that the Kingdom of God is the comprehensive realm of God's rule that encompasses all of life. The Church is not merely a place where one goes, but an instrument of witness that displays for all the world what God's kingdom is like. As the Missional Church book

I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, your young men will see visions. Joel 2:28

put it, "The church is an intentional and disciplined community witness to the power and the presence of God's reign."

Instead of being "a place where religious goods and services were provided for the Christian public," the Church is called to cultivate a body of people with a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, whose lives are also interwoven into life-transforming relationships. The Church is not one place among many visited by attendees, but the hub of a each person's life in which all other activities find their meaning.

VISION EMPOWERS CHANGE

Build slowly and build solidly is CHPC heritage, but what does this mean in a time of change and transition?

April 2, 2001: after nearly a year of prayer and reflection, Session committed resources for leadership, finances and buildings to facilitate CHPC's 21st Century Vision within and beyond the walls.

In late summer of 2001, a 'Think Tank' of motivated and capable strategic thinkers within the congregation began studying Alan Roxburgh's book on missional challenge — *Crossing the Bridge: Church Leadership in Time of Change*. Roxburgh, who then served as our consultant, not only talked about missional, he addressed actions necessary to move a church from traditional to missional.

MISSIONAL ACTION TEAMS

Involvement of inter-generational groups of committed laypeople was a key element. Missional Action Teams (MATs) engaged the congregation in an extensive creative listening process. What emerged through their "Jubilee Journey" report was...

- (1) A clear and compelling Vision — CHPC is called to be a biblical 'Jubilee Community'...
CONNECTING people to God and each other, freeing us to understand, live and tell God's Story;

SERVING side-by-side, growing generations, empowered by Servant Leaders; and
CELEBRATING continually the finished work of Jesus Christ.

- (2) A fresh approach to engaging the different generations of the church.
- (3) A leadership development process that educated all church officers with a missional perspective and skills.
- (4) A new way to think about our whole Sunday Morning experience which could nurture those who hunger for traditional Christian worship yet be comprehensible to 21st Century Seekers with no Christian background or lingo.

BUILDINGS: A VISUAL REMINDER

February 2005, the skylighted Atrium joined existing buildings, providing a common space and a welcoming north entry. This physical construction was a visual metaphor of bridging and connecting within and outside the church...to



facilitate "kissing the world with the grace of God." It was an outward sign of the Missional Vision of being a Jubilee Community:

Connecting, Serving and Celebrating. The very first use of the space was for a College Hill Community event.



CHPC has moved into a fresh new future.

People are engaging in mission and ministries with emerging enthusiasm and understanding. At times, the church has experienced anger, mistrust, suspicion and accusations. For a time more people left the church than become new members. Yet, in the turmoil, we are rediscovering what it means to be called by God and sent into His Mission. The *missio dei* (mission of God) not only involves the conversion of others, but the people of God need to be converted as well — to raise our vision and seek after God’s will as a church and as individuals.

SPIRITUAL JOURNEY OF DISCOVERY



“What denomination do we believe is best for us to fulfill God’s mission for CHPC?”

This was the question that Session posed to the congregation in February 2012. On June 17th, members voted to ‘enter into a discernment process’ with the Cincinnati Presbytery of the PC(USA). Four representatives from CHPC (the D-Team) regularly met with their four counterparts from the Presbytery. By January 2013: the D-Team provided each member a packet outlining progress, opportunities for congregational input, and next steps to prepare members to make a wise decision.

Many of CHPC’s historic beliefs were clearly at odds with PC(USA)’s beliefs in these areas:

- *Authority* – Authority of Christ, the authority of Scripture, and the authority of the *Book of Confessions* and the *Book of Order*.
- *Divinity & Lordship of Christ* – Jesus is the *only way* to salvation. Christ exclusively claims our lives, and the Church, His Body.
- *Accountability & Discipline* especially when we disagree. How does the community of faith maintain its unity when people intentionally act in ways in opposition to recognized authorities?
- *Ordination Standards* — The right of our Congregation to maintain standards for our own leaders that are consistent with the Bible and the historic confessions of the Christian Church.

- *The Mission of the Church* — Active involvement in spreading the Gospel of Christ and in social justice issues.

The differences were irreconcilable. The next step was to identify to which ‘approved Reformed body’ CHPC would be dismissed. The viable candidates were the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA), the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (EPC) and the newly birthed Covenant Order of Evangelical Presbyterians (ECO). The latter was chosen. Its ‘DNA’ was the most like CHPC’s.

“...BUILD FLOURISHING CHURCHES THAT MAKE DISCIPLES OF JESUS CHRIST”

This was the captivating mission of the ECO birthed in January of 2012. The ECO committed to cultivating a healthy, diverse, resource-rich eco-system where pastors and congregations could flourish. The ECO Core Values resonated with CHPC members:

Jesus-shaped Identity: We believe Jesus Christ must be at the center of our lives and making disciples of Jesus at the core of our ministry.

Biblical Integrity: We believe the Bible is the unique and authoritative Word of God, which teaches all that is necessary for faith and life. The prominence of God’s Word over our lives shapes our priorities, and the unrivaled authority of the Bible directs our actions to be in concert with Christ’s very best for our lives.

Thoughtful Theology: We believe in theological education, constant learning, and the life of the mind, and celebrate this as one of the treasures of our Reformed heritage.

Accountable Community: We believe guidance is a corporate spiritual experience. We want to connect leaders to one another in healthy relationships of accountability, synergy, and care. [continued]



ECO Core Values [continue]

Egalitarian Ministry: We believe in unleashing the ministry gifts of women, men, and every ethnic group.

Missional Centrality: We believe in living out the whole of the Great Commission – including evangelism, spiritual formation, compassion, and redemptive justice – in our communities and around the world.

Center-focused Spirituality: We believe in calling people to the core of what it means to be followers of Jesus – what “mere Christianity” is and does – and not fixate on the boundaries.

Leadership Velocity: We believe identifying and developing gospel-centered leaders is critical for the church, and a great leadership culture is risk-taking, innovative, and organic.

Kingdom Vitality: We believe congregations should vigorously reproduce new missional communities to expand the Kingdom of God.

SESSION CALLS FOR A VOTE

The Session said, “We believe that this recommendation [to be dismissed to the ECO] and the unity behind it are evidence of the Holy Spirit’s powerful movement among us over the last many months. Session is excited to step out in faith and continue the unique, transformative work that God has begun here.” On June 2nd, 2013, a quorum of Active Members voted 92% for the new denominational affiliation.



Many churches who leave their denomination feel like *refugees* fleeing *from* something. CHPC’s orderly departure was more like an *immigration*, intentionally going *to* a destination. The Presbytery of Cincinnati dismissed the church and pastor Andrew W Smith on Sept 10, 2013 and the ECO received them.

GOD’S DREAMS AND VISIONS FOR CHPC

The prayer and preparation of the discernment and dismissal processes, did indeed released the transformative work of the Holy Spirit. As part of a new *ECO-system*, God’s specific vision for CHPC emerged:

“To be a multi-cultural community of people helping one another to obey Jesus.Christ. We invite all to follow Christ and challenge one another to be His disciples so that we influence our homes, workplaces, and neighborhoods according to God’s love, justice, and mercy...to the Glory of God.”



Since its founding in 1853, believers at CHPC have cheerfully sacrificed to support Christ’s mission around the world and for the buildings ‘at home’ that enable it. The church campus is used as a tool for evangelism, nurturing new generations and making disciples. Facilities speak to people inside and outside the walls and must be fully functional, safe, relevant and complimentary to God’s ministries therein.

In the Fall of 2016, *re-Generation*, a Capital Stewardship Campaign was undertaken to provide for *critical and necessary* short-term and longer-term needs. Over \$2.2 million was pledged: 65% for major facilities and grounds; 25% for various facility upgrades on campus and off; and 10% for missions at CHPC and ‘beyond the walls’ locally, nationally and internationally.

Signs of re-Generation are everywhere: this Directory and the logo on the cover, the website chpc.org, exterior refreshing, interior HVAC/ audio-video systems, stained glass window renewal, and room/ space changes... plus ministry growth and global worker support.

Out of His Holiness and Love, God the Father continues to challenge CHPC to be faithful stewards. By His grace, we are being transformed by the power of the Holy Spirit, and built into the Body of Jesus Christ, We will stand on God’s promise in His Word to guide our future ‘HIS-story’ as faithfully as He has our past. □

But how are people to call upon [Jesus] in whom they have not believed? ...And how are they to hear without a preacher?...So faith comes from what is heard, and what is heard comes by the preaching of Christ. Romans 10:14, 17

PASTORAL LEADERS

The Word of God was preached to the first church members by Supply Pastors, many of whom were also professors at the local colleges on the hill: Lorenzo Cary (1853-55), N P Jimison (1856), C N Matton (1858), and W H van Dorm (1858-59). A permanent pastor, Reverend C E Babb, came to shepherd the flock in 1859 six years after the church was formed. Since then, a combination of pulpit supply and full-time pastors have served and nurtured the congregation: Prof L Evans (Pulpit Supply 1865-66); Rev E L Davis (P S 1866-69), Rev William Bosworth (P S 1870, pastor 1871-74), Rev Charles H Little (1875-77), Rev Lafayette 'Fay' Walker (1877-84) who was the first to occupy the manse, Dr Wm Dickinson (1884-88), Rev John H Walker (1888 -99), Rev George H Lee (1899-1905), Pulpit Supply Pastors (1905-1906), Rev Charles H Austin (1906-26), Rev Dale Le Count (1926-46), Dr John H Lamy (1946-61), and Dr Ernie J Lewis (1962-67).

Dr Jerry Ross Kirk answered the call to serve as senior pastor in 1967. 1985 to 1989, Drs Kirk and Ronald R Rand were Co-Pastors and served until 1989. The Rev James Guyer served as Interim Pastor from September 1989 to February 1991. The Rev Dr C Patrick Hartsock was installed as the Senior Pastor as of September 1, 1991.

The Pastoral Leadership Team in the period from 1967 to 1995 included: • Rev Paul Suzuki, Dr Bill Allen, Rev Robert Strain, Rev Robert 'Buzz' Richter, and theologian Drs. R C Sproul;

• Mr Otto Bufe, Rev C Harry Causey, Rev Harold 'Chappie' Chapman, Mr John W Craig, Dr Robert A Hauck, Rev William Koontz, Dr William O Lowrey, Rev Alice Petersen, Dr Melvin Steinbron, Rev Dr Gary R Sweeten, Dr Richard J Towner & Mrs Sibyl P Towner, and Rev. Robert H Wade;

• Rev David Bliss, Mr Timothy A Dommer, Rev Gary R Hartoin, Rev Dr William O Lowrey, Rev Dr Alice Petersen, Mrs Georgetta Stambaugh, Dick & Sibyl Towner, Rev Donald Crank and Dr Robert H Wade;

• Rev Jody Burgin, Rev Donald Crank, Mr Timothy Dommer, Rev Glen Francis, Rev Mark Harris, Rev John Nesbitt, Rev Dr Robert Wade, and Mr Gary Sallquist.

Rev Dr C Patrick Hartsock served as Senior Pastor from September 1, 1991 to January 31, 2004. Serving with him were Rev Wayne Darbonne (Care & Outreach), Rev Stephen Eyre Christian Discipleship & Ministry Support), Mrs Norma Gehner (Children's Ministry), Rev Peter Reed (Youth & Young Adults), Mr Mark Squire (Worship & the Arts), and Parish Associate Rev Gordon Jewett (Minister of Visitation).

August 1, 2004: Rev William A 'Bill' Enns became Interim Pastor/Head of Staff. Revs Eyre Darbonne and Jewett continued to serve. They were joined by Parish Associate retired Rev Harold 'Chappie' Chapman, Mrs Maggie Smith, Mr Mitch Teemley, Jan Osborn, Tony Buxsel, Linda Crank and Chris Miller.

January 1, 2007: Rev Andrew 'Drew' Smith was called as Senior Pastor. The Pastoral Team has included Asst Pastors Rev Dr Karen D Johnson and Rev Dennis L Hall. Rev Michael Jorgensen was ordained Jan 7, 2017.

The Pastors do not serve alone...The current Leadership Team and Staff are listed with their photographs on the next pages. Together they are committed to upbuilding each person in this Body of Christ so that they mature in their personal relationship with Christ, are supported in the mission God has entrusted to them and are equipped to glorify God and enjoy Him forever.