

**We are rescued by Jesus, formed into family, for the renewal of others and all things.**

We are in that contentious time of the calendar. Warring parties have taken their stance and those opposite their position are evil and curmudgeonly people. And it all comes down to this - to tinsel or not. Is it too soon to decorate for Christmas?!

The liturgical calendar faces some of the same pressure. And if we do Advent correctly, with the longing and the desperation, it is too soon to begin! So I have decided to break the routine up a bit and talk about us.

This year our broader leadership team helped define some key values for us as a church. And while these things have certainly been sprinkled throughout our teaching and communication, we want to share and highlight them as we ramp into a new season.

To this end we are going to anchor ourselves in the description of the church in 2 Corinthians.

**2 Corinthians 5:16-21** CSB “From now on, then, we do not know anyone from a worldly perspective. Even if we have known Christ from a worldly perspective, yet now we no longer know him in this way. [17] Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, and see, the new has come! [18] Everything is from God, who has reconciled us to himself through Christ and has given us the ministry of reconciliation. [19] That is, in Christ, God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and he has committed the message of reconciliation to us. [20] Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us. We plead on Christ's behalf: "Be reconciled to God." [21] He made the one who did not know sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”

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As we progress this morning, describing and buying into the values of Reservoir Church, I want you to know I am assuming the importance of the church

throughout. Assuming that you also believe the church, warts and all, is vital for discipleship and the mission Jesus gave to his followers.

All the things we set before us in May during our Body Life series (Led, Formed, Different, Honest, and Gathered). Some of us may need more convincing given our experience, but bear with me and at least for this morning, see the value of the church.

“Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have boldness to enter the sanctuary through the blood of Jesus — 20 he has inaugurated for us a new and living way through the curtain (that is, through his flesh ) — 21 and since we have a great high priest over the house of God, 22 let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed in pure water. 23 Let us hold on to the confession of our hope without wavering, since he who promised is faithful. 24 And let us consider one another in order to provoke love and good works, 25 not neglecting to gather together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging each other, and all the more as you see the day approaching.” -- **Hebrews 10:19-25** (CSB)

To lay the foundation for our values, we begin with history. Reservoir is a 25-year-old church despite appearances! Planted in 1996 as Grace Church out of a mother church in Pasadena, over the years we have had 3.5 lead pastors (the half being a short switch between two staff members that was weird). We have been a sending church - launching a number of young pastors to the furthest reaches - that are faithful in ministry today. And we “planted” Grace La Mesa in 2012.

Shortly thereafter though, after separating from a church network, there was an increasing sense of uncertainty of the core and direction of the church. Essentially we had our quarterlife crisis early... Doctrinal distinctives remained, embracing the doctrines of grace and the continuing work of the Holy Spirit in our day, yet leaders torn over direction eventually all left.

In 2014 the body, bruised and weary, called a new pastor - we will actually celebrate 7 years of being in California this week! Those who remained set out to right the ship best we could, calling new elders, adopting a new book of church order, and eventually claiming a new identity. Becoming Reservoir Church.

Desiring to be a body that is used by the Lord to quench the thirst of our city. To be filled and flowing bringing life as we have found it in Christ.

Along the way many of you have joined in, bringing your own bruises from church experience, and together we have endeavored to keep the grace of Jesus ever before us and live from his finished work for us come what may.

What's in the water? What are we about as a body of believers and what are our priorities?

There are three things that we want to rally around, use to shape how we do ministry and what we give attention to, they are not exhaustive or restrictive as values but formational. Jesus, Family, Renewal.

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## **Jesus**

We are rescued by Jesus.

As a church we are determined to be gospel-centered, or Jesus-centered in all that we do. We know who our King is and we won't budge. This is our non-negotiable value.

Bringing the gospel to bear in the life of the church - without ceasing.

Creation, fall, redemption and renewal. "God created the world and declared it good. It brought God pleasure; The world was broken through the Fall. We became flawed and sinful people; Jesus came to save us and make us right with God. He enlists us for God's work; God is actively working to make all things new again. His work will culminate in the arrival of the New Heavens and New Earth as described in Revelation."

The creative voice, the redeeming Savior, the reigning Lord. Jesus. Having him as our rule of life - everything flows from here.

The most important thing about us being our salvation, our rescue.

“He made the one who did not know sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” -- **2 Corinthians 5:21** (CSB)

Without rescue (conversion), there is no church to be part of. If Jesus has not died for our sins and been raised on the third day, there is no more hope to be found inside the church than outside.

“Apart from faith in Jesus, we stand condemned in our sin, alienated from God. But through Jesus’s sacrificial death on the cross, we can receive forgiveness for our sins when we repent or turn away from them. Because Jesus has been raised from the dead, we can enjoy peace and fellowship forever with the God who is three in one: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.” Collin Hansen, Rediscover Church

A rescue that changes everything. Forgiveness and fuel for life. And it produces something.

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, and see, the new has come!” -- **2 Corinthians 5:17** (CSB)

Made new, with new purpose, new passions, new people.

“What is a church? It’s a group of people who know they’ve been loved by Christ and have begun to love one another like that.” Jonathan Leeman, Rediscover Church

This rescue doesn’t leave us as we are, it forms us.

## **Family**

Formed into family.

This represents our embrace of the kingdom reality of community.

“From now on, then, we do not know anyone from a worldly perspective. Even if we have known Christ from a worldly perspective, yet now we no longer know him in this way.” -- **2 Corinthians 5:16** (CSB)

We are no longer defined by old ways of differentiating.

“As you come to him, a living stone — rejected by people but chosen and honored by God — 5 you yourselves, as living stones, a spiritual house, are being built to be a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.” -- **1 Peter 2:4-5** (CSB)

“But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his possession, so that you may proclaim the praises of the one who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. 10 Once you were not a people, but now you are God’s people; you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.” -- **1 Peter 2:9-10** (CSB)

Made a people. Citizens of his kingdom.

We use “family” to describe this reality because we want to set it apart from trite membership in a club where mere interest or similarity bring people together.

We are in Christ, formed into the strongest relational unit for a group of people, solely because we belong to Jesus.

“He replied to the one who was speaking to him, “Who is my mother and who are my brothers?” 49 Stretching out his hand toward his disciples, he said, “Here are my mother and my brothers! 50 For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.” -- **Matthew 12:48-50** (CSB)

Not as rejection of our biological/adoptive families but prioritized as a witness before the watching world.

Jesus brings together people who wouldn’t have been natural friends and allies.

A group of differentials serving, encouraging one another in love. (Dave H being with us more than family in town).

And it is the plan of Christ for his people.

“The body is a fellowship of differentials. We are not alike, and we need each other. We have not been gifted the same way, and that’s how God intended it for our

good. We confess the same belief in Jesus Christ, but we enjoy a diversity of experiences.” JL, Rediscover Church

Its not always comfortable, but centered on Jesus, it is always good. A place and people to call home.

“God does not invite us to church because it’s a comfortable place to find a bit of spiritual encouragement. No, He invites us into a spiritual family of misfits and outcasts. He welcomes us into a home that’s rarely what we want yet just what we need.” JL, Rediscover Church

In a family you are known. As Reservoir - we are small, hopefully relatable, and accessible - we can know each other and serve each other. We will strive to maintain these things even if we grow.

Rescued by Jesus, formed into family... a family with purpose.

“...so that you may proclaim the praises of the one who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light.” - **1 Peter 2:9b** (CSB)

“That is, in Christ, God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and he has committed the message of reconciliation to us.” -- **2 Corinthians 5:19** (CSB)

## **Renewal**

For the renewal of others and all things.

As those rescued - as family - we long for others to experience reconciliation to God in Christ.

“Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us. We plead on Christ’s behalf, “Be reconciled to God.” -- **2 Corinthians 5:20** (CSB)

God, making his appeal through us. What a privileged role we have to invite people to meet Jesus and experience real life, renewal in him!

We value others finding rescue in Jesus, motivated by it, to share our rescue with our neighbors. To be a new creation... But we also want to be a light.

“You are the light of the world. A city situated on a hill cannot be hidden. 15 No one lights a lamp and puts it under a basket, but rather on a lampstand, and it gives light for all who are in the house. 16 In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven”. -- **Matthew 5:14-16** (CSB)

And being a light is often bigger than we once thought. His cosmic plan...

Ephesians 3:8-12 CSB “This grace was given to me-the least of all the saints-to proclaim to the Gentiles the incalculable riches of Christ, [9] and to shed light for all about the administration of the mystery hidden for ages in God who created all things. [10] This is so that God's multi-faceted wisdom may now be made known through the church to the rulers and authorities in the heavens. [11] This is according to his eternal purpose accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. [12] In him we have boldness and confident access through faith in him.”

“Then I heard a loud voice from the throne: Look, God’s dwelling is with humanity, and he will live with them. They will be his peoples, and God himself will be with them and will be their God. 4 He will wipe away every tear from their eyes. Death will be no more; grief, crying, and pain will be no more, because the previous things have passed away.5 Then the one seated on the throne said, “Look, **I am making everything new.**” He also said, “Write, because these words are faithful and true.” -- **Revelation 21:3-5** (CSB)

Our rescue, our new family, all point here.

“...in Christ, God was reconciling the world to himself,” -- **2 Corinthians 5:19a** (CSB)

As kingdom ambassadors we want to be in on this. The church family becoming a Creative Minority - bringing the peace of Christ to our neighborhoods.

“A Creative Minority is a Christian community in a web of stubbornly loyal relationships, knotted together in a living network of persons who are committed

to practicing the way of Jesus together for the renewal of the world...seeking neither to control nor abandon the world, but to love it to new life through redemptive participation.” – Jon Tyson, A Creative Minority: Influencing Culture Through Redemptive Participation

Living for the renewal of others and all things inclines us to not accept the status quo – and instead, through tangible actions, step into the brokenness of the world and begin to release a prophetic imagination about what life can be like.

How this is expressed among us is with an emphasis on ministry for the invisible or forgotten people in our community. Beginning with those with disabilities and their families.

Giving exhausted families rest and encouragement. Caring for the least for the glory of Christ and the good of our neighbors. And oh that we would do more of it!

It also means we desire to equip each of you to see your vocation and location as the place you are to be a redemptive influence. That we would bring the peace we have in Christ into our workplaces, our hobbies, our streets, our schools and cohorts.

All that others would find rescue in Jesus, be formed into family and live for the renewal of others and all things.

A reservoir is only valuable when it is filled and flowing... May we receive from the Lord so we can be poured out for others and his glory!

If this is your family... the application is simple.

**Show up and serve** - Maybe in new ways... invest energy and time in your small group, attend a prayer meeting, disciple a teen, bring a meal to another family, host a station for the Buddy Break Christmas event, give, become a member, start a Bible study, be an influence for renewal that is only found in Jesus.



We are Reservoir. **We are rescued by Jesus, formed into family, for the renewal of others and all things.**

This is what's in the water. Drink up.

Because we have been rescued by Jesus, our future is incredibly bright - and all the more glorious when we join his ministry of reconciliation. Let's go!