

All Saints Presbyterian Church
Austin, Texas
Guiding Principles

Mission Principles

MP 1.0 Comprehensive Mission Statement

All Saints exists as a community of God's people called to live as the Body of Christ in Austin for the world.

MP 1.1 Primary Means for Mission

Worship, Spiritual Formation, Service

MP 1.1.1 We are a living community

- Every community shares 4 realities – a Story, Symbols, Beliefs, Behavior; these 4 realities for All Saints are:
 - Story: the gospel of Jesus Christ, described in Romans 1:1-4: “the gospel of God, which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord.”
 - Symbols: primarily, the two Sacraments of the Church as instituted by Jesus for all Christians: Holy Baptism and Holy Eucharist; secondarily, the countless ways by which God uses material things to reach out to us; and ultimately, men and women created as image bearers of the invisible God and renewed as such in Christ and by the Spirit.
 - Belief: the truth about God, mankind, heaven, earth, and all things as (1) revealed in the Holy Scriptures, (2) expressed in the ancient Creeds of the Church, especially the Creeds used in worship: the Apostles and Nicene Creeds, (3) and outlined by many Reformed confessions of faith, particularly the *Westminster Confession of Faith* and its *Larger and Shorter Catechisms*.
 - Behavior: the life revealed in both the Old and New Testaments, but ultimately lived by Jesus and enabled by the Holy Spirit who writes the law of God upon the hearts of all Christians.
- In the scriptures, life is a gift of God (Gen 1:1-3; John 1:1-5, 9-14), a grace, flowing from His own prodigious character and received as undeserved favor. Those who “live” in the fullest Christian sense of the word do so only by God’s grace, sharing in the ultimate Gift, which is God himself.

- Because All Saints is a community of grace, we are committed to exuding and embodying the grace of Jesus within our church to all members and visitors, as well as to all neighbors.
- Warmth and kindness in relationships, gentleness in conversations, winsomeness in teaching, eagerness in welcoming strangers, and devotion in meeting others' needs, are all apart of what it means for All Saints to exude and embody grace.
- Because we have been undeservedly and sovereignly called into this new life of grace, we are committed to cultivating a culture that respects all people, pursues people, encourages questions, and always possess an outward-facing posture while seeking to develop intimacy with those already inside the ark of our church.
- Owning our own church facility in which to worship, utilizing that facility for creative and strategic ministry endeavors, planting new local congregations, giving generous financial support to local ministries and international missions, and participating with a wide array of local ministry partnerships are all apart of what it means for All Saints to possess an outward-facing posture to Austin and the world.

MP 1.1.2 We are a community in union

- Vertical union: All Saints is a church that believes that “all religion stands essentially in the communion of man with God.”¹ Therefore, we are committed to seeking God and his grace through every means given to the Church, both corporately within worship and individually outside of it. The goal we seek is to “become partakers of the divine nature” (2 Peter 1:4), grown “up in every way into him who is our head, into Jesus Christ” (Eph 4:15), or “conformed to the image of (God’s) Son” (Rom 8:29). This goal is our promised future because all Christians, with the Apostle Paul, “have been crucified with Christ” and can say: “It is no longer I who live but Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself up for me.” (Gal 2:20) Therefore the foundational theological reality from which we live as Christians is union with Jesus, giving us a share in the life and love of God. (Rom 5:5)
- Horizontal union: This “vertical” union with God also has an inseparable “horizontal” reality. Those who are united to

¹ *Mystical Presence* by John Williamson Nevin

Christ by faith are also spiritually joined to all other Christians, especially those members of their local church. (1st Cor 12; Eph 4) Therefore, All Saints will be a church whose leaders and members are passionate about caring for one another and meeting each other's spiritual, physical, emotional, financial, practical, and relational needs.

- Within our church: Honesty, transparency, weakness, forgiveness, reconciliation, accountability, and gentleness are some of the innumerable characteristics that are necessary for a church community to be able to meet the needs of its members; these and other characteristics like them will be cultivated and encouraged within All Saints.
- Beyond our church: All Saints and our denomination *The Presbyterian Church in America*, is apart of the holy, catholic, apostolic Church, found throughout the world in different theological traditions, including Roman Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy, Anglicanism, and the countless Protestant denominations. All Saints will joyfully recognize these churches and their members as Christ's Body and will seek to demonstrate that unity in tangible ways, especially by partnering with other churches, denominations, and para-church organizations in ministries of word and deed.

MP 1.1.3 We are a participating community

- As a church and member of Christ's Body, All Saints has the privilege and duty to continue Jesus' mission on earth until he returns. That mission, according to the Apostle Paul, is especially for believing communities to be created and endure in faithfulness to their Lord (Rom 15:23). In these worshipping communities the presence of God's kingdom exists on earth and "the presence of the kingdom in the Church is the presence of its foretaste, its firstfruit, its pledge in the Spirit."² In other words, the Church is a partial taste of the kingdom of God and witness to what it will be like when it comes in full at the end of history. This means that All Saints' mission is the same basic mission of all churches: through faithfulness to Jesus we are to become "a place where the Spirit speaks and acts."³
- Therefore, at All Saints we are committed to preaching and teaching, but not alone. We are also committed to learning. For just as when Jesus sent out his disciples on their mission telling them that there is much yet to learn (John 16), so too

² *The Gospel in a Pluralistic Society* by Lesslie Newbigin

³ *Ibid.*

is there much for us, individually and corporately, yet to learn about God, the gospel of Jesus, the Scriptures, God's world, and our role within it.

- We are also committed to helping heal the world's wounds – those spiritual and physical, those personal and cultural, those local, national, and international – because Jesus' promise is that the presence of his kingdom will make “all things new” (Rev 21:5). Our healing efforts will be by worship and prayer, through acts of word and deed, done individually and corporately, both locally and beyond Austin.
- We are also committed as a church to significant financial giving to “missions,” differentiating it from the all-encompassing word “mission” and defining it as “those specific activities which are undertaken by human decision to bring the gospel to places or situations where it is not heard, to create a Christian presence in a place or situation where there is no such presence or no effective presence.”⁴
- We are also committed to helping heal the particular wounds present in our neighborhoods and city, because Austin is where the Lord has placed All Saints to embody and express his kingdom.

MP 1.1.4 We are a placed community

- Austin was fastest growing city in the United States in 2013 and is now its 11th largest. The University of Texas now has over 51,000 students, making it the 6th largest among all U.S. universities. The median age in Austin is 31 (compared to 41 Texas-wide). Austin is known as the “live music capital of the world,” while also being the capital of state government and regularly listed in major business and financial periodicals as among the top entrepreneurial cities in which to start a business. Austin is now 35% Hispanic and 49% Anglo. As in all places, the gospel of Jesus, along with the worship and missional efforts of his Church, must be wisely contextualized in Austin in order to minister effectively in this unique place.
- Because Austin is a comparatively young city with fewer established, mature institutions and churches, All Saints is committed to becoming a multi-generational church, both in its congregational makeup and history, that we might be a blessing and influence to our city for many years to come.
- Because Austin is growing rapidly, making our city increasingly younger (1/3 of Austin is between the ages of 20

⁴ Ibid.

and 34) and more culturally diverse, All Saints is committed to being a catalyst in local church planting, recognizing that new churches often best reach “new generations, new residents, and new people groups.”⁵

MP 1.1.5 We are a worshipping community

- We are a “community whose existence is visibly defined by the regular rehearsing and reenactment of the story which has given (us) birth, the story of the self-emptying god in the ministry, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus.”⁶
- According to our Reformed theological tradition, “Man’s chief end is to glorify God and enjoy him forever,” teaching that all people were created by God to worship him. At All Saints we are convinced that the pathway to this chief end begins in corporate worship – that our life of faith begins and consists especially in the weekly ministry of Word and Sacrament.
- Words that describe our worship services are: liturgical, covenantal, ancient (in form), contextualized (in expression), joyful, reverent, participatory, dialogical, embodied, welcoming, and winsome.
- Because All Saints believes in doxological evangelism⁷ (Ps 96), we are committed to inviting and bringing non-Christians with us to worship, trusting that the service will be comprehensible, sympathetic, and gracious in every aspect.

MP 1.1.6 We are community in formation

- In Galatians 4 the Apostle Paul speaks of “Christ being formed” in the Church. This process of re-shaping souls into those that reflect Jesus’ character is the role of the Holy Spirit and occurs throughout the life of a believer.
- Therefore at All Saints we desire to encourage an environment where patience is essential and a long-term approach to ministry is maintained. All Saints will also have a culture in which people are free to struggle and fail in their lives of faith, leaders are eager to pray for one another and those they lead, and repentance, along with reconciliation, is anticipated and sought.
- We are convinced that the Holy Spirit accomplishes this formation through “the means of grace,” namely the Word of God, the Sacraments of the Church, and prayer.

⁵ “Why Plant Churches” by Tim Keller, 2002

⁶ *The Gospel in a Pluralistic Society* by Lesslie Newbigin

⁷ “Doxological Evangelism” by Tim Keller

- Therefore at All Saints we recognize the Church's historical emphasis on certain ancient spiritual disciplines and encourage their practice, as these disciplines facilitate greater exposure in daily life to two of the three means of grace: Scripture and prayer. Christian disciplines, such as meditating on God's word, the Church calendar, praying an office, Sabbath observance, fasting, tithing and alms giving, solitude, silence, spiritual direction, service, and the like are important tools that help people listen to God and then answer him in prayer.
- Because Christian spiritual formation is not an individualistic endeavor, we are committed to "organizing smaller" at All Saints and emphasizing participation in our (1) demographic ministries, (2) small groups, (3) Bible studies & formation classes, (4) neighborhood events, and (5) service opportunities as pathways to formation in our church.

MP 1.1.7 We are a serving community

- The God of the Bible is first and foremost a God who gives and serves; he is a God of grace and love. And those who have come to know him, experience his grace, and share in the fellowship of his Triune life will be a giving and serving people, a people of grace and love.
- Therefore at All Saints we are committed to serving Christ in others (Mt 25) through acts of word and deed, inside and outside our church, locally in Austin and internationally around the world. We will do this through a number of different ways, including giving money, time, and labor. We will do this daily through our individual vocations and regularly through corporate initiatives, as well as by making food and by making art, serving in nursery and serving the poor.
- Because "there is not a square inch in the whole domain of our human existence over which Christ, who is Sovereign over all, does not cry, Mine!"⁸ All Saints is also committed to sending out our members to engage in every aspect of our culture as agents of Christ's presence in the world. We believe the biblical paradigm for this is found in Jeremiah, during Israel's Babylonian captivity: "But seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will find your welfare." Therefore All Saints' ministry and service includes the arts, government, the military, business, agriculture, food,

⁸ Abraham Kuyper

education, academics, athletics, home-making, medicine, music, recreation, entertainment, journalism, and all other human endeavors that cover “every square inch of life” in Austin and our world.

- We are also committed to seeking justice for all people, helping give them what they deserve because they exist as image bearers of God. We will do this through the sacrificial giving of our money to local organizations like *Side by Side Kids* and global organizations like *International Justice Mission*. We will also do this do through the sacrificial giving of our time and energy to local organizations like *Mobile Loaves and Fishes*.

