

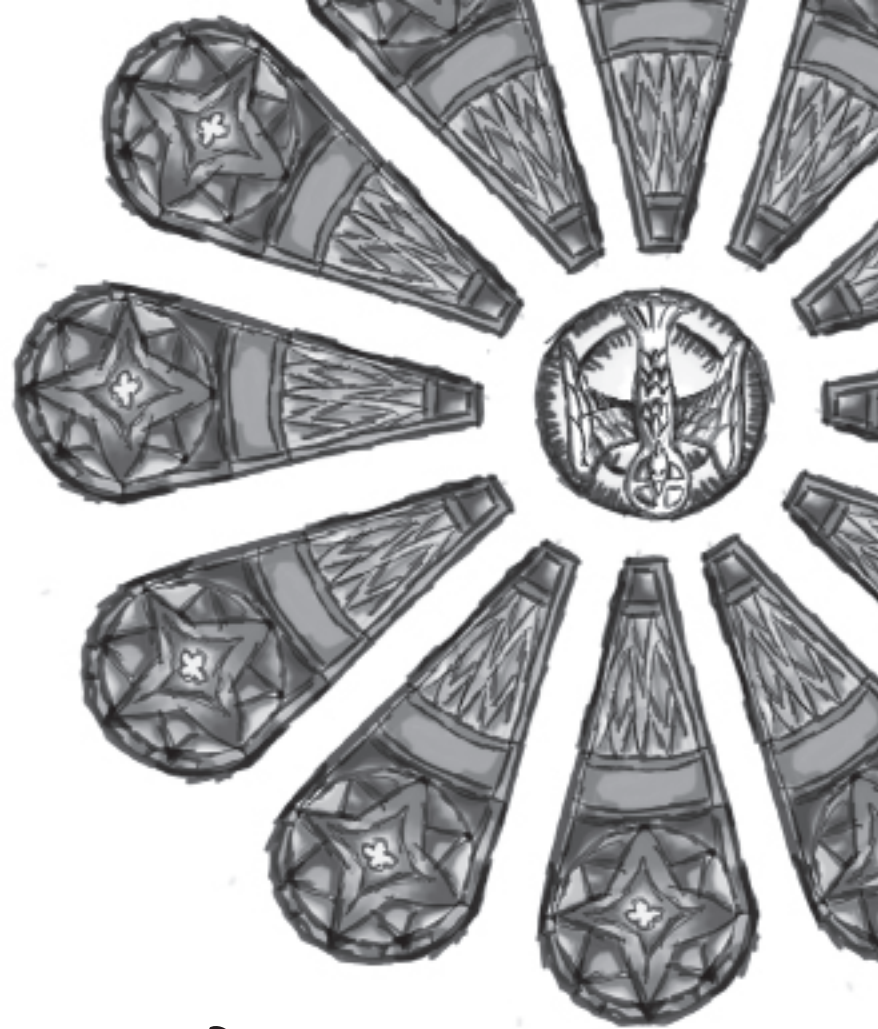


**epikos**  
*COVENANT MEMBERSHIP*



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*COVENANT MEMBERSHIP*





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*COVENANT MEMBERSHIP*

*epikos church*  
*2308 E Belleview Pl.*  
*Milwaukee, WI 53211*  
*Designed by Andrew Hermann*  
*2009*

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**the story of  
EPIKOS**

# epic

- 1 noting or pertaining to a long poetic composition, usually centered upon a hero, in which a series of great achievements or events is narrated in elevated style;
- 2 resembling or suggesting such poetry;
- 3 heroic; majestic; impressively great;
- 4 of unusually great size or extent.



EPIKOS  
IS THE GREEK WORD  
FOR EPIC

Most people who walk through our doors wonder what the name epikos means. Simply put, epikos is the Greek word for epic.

There are a few reasons why this name is fitting for our church. The primary reason is that an epic, by definition is based upon a central character or hero...in this case, JESUS! The second reason is that an epic is a longer poetic composition. Everyone's walk with Christ truly is poetry ("For we are

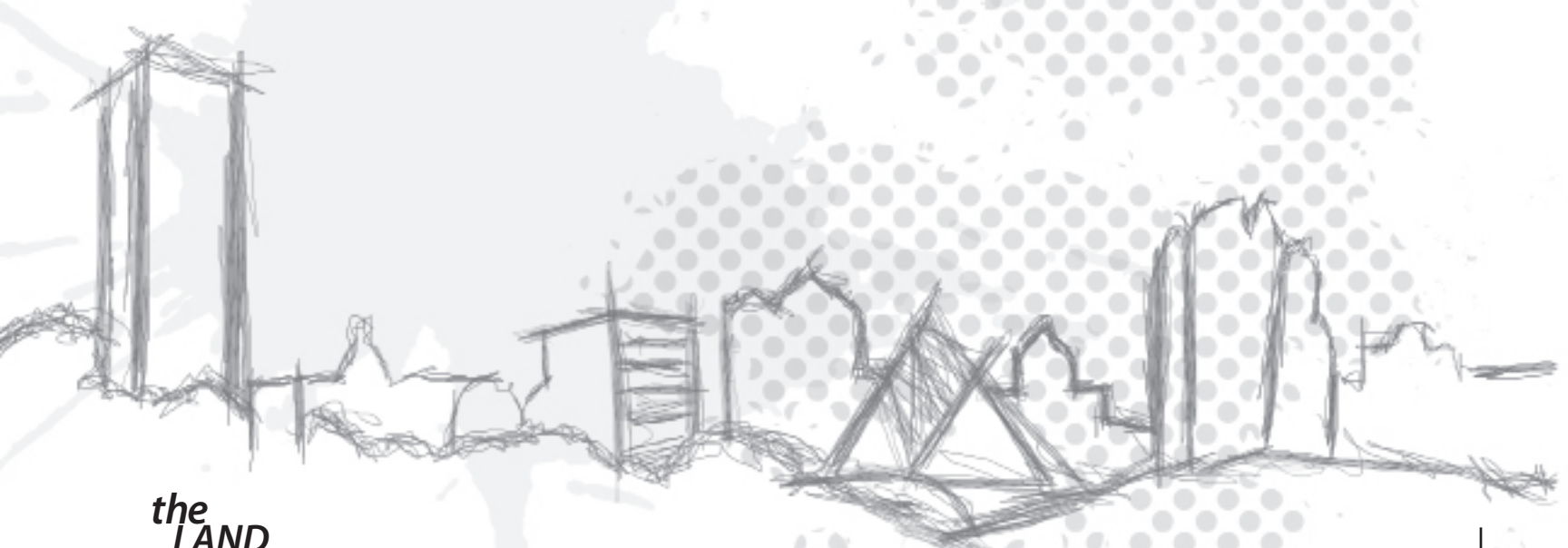
God's masterpiece." Eph 2:10, NLT). It's our hope and prayer that God will be the composer of this transformational community. The final reason is that "epic" is often used to refer to something significant or big. We are trusting God to do something big in us and through us. We pray that Milwaukee will be impacted in a HUGE way.



## the CALL

12 | Danny Parmelee, the founder and Lead Pastor of epikos, made a faith commitment to Christ while a freshman at the University of WI-Oshkosh. Rescued from a life of self-indulgence and destruction, he sought God's will for his life. While part of a campus ministry, he saw many people like himself come to faith and become transformed by the power of the gospel. While he was encouraged by God's movement on campus, he quickly realized that by contrast, many churches in America were failing to reach his generation. His passion to see people reached for Christ in conjunction with his awareness of the dire need for relevant churches sparked a call to full time ministry and specifically church

leadership. He switched his major to Religious Studies and prayed for God's direction in his life. God stirred in him a dream to launch a church that would transform lives, neighborhoods, even a city. He met his wife Emili during this time and the summer after graduating from college they got married and moved to St. Paul, MN where Danny earned his Masters of Divinity from Bethel Theological Seminary. Their shared vision of a church that would transform lives started to take form. Through time and prayer, they began to see who they needed to reach and even how it might happen. The only question was where?



## the **LAND**

While looking at opportunistic cities in the Midwest, Milwaukee caught Danny and Emili's attention almost immediately. Danny's parents, grandparents, even great grandparents all grew up on the eastside of Milwaukee, so he was familiar with the area because of summers and holidays spent with family there. They also had friends who had attended or were attending UWM. But more important than a personal connection to the area, a survey of the land uncovered the enormous need for a new church. Research by Dave Olson revealed that in Milwaukee County alone over 722,000 people, or approximately 80%, didn't go to church on a weekly basis. In addition to this, the population density of

the area in contrast with the number of churches was sadly disproportional. While many cities across the country needed new churches, the Parmelee's sensed God's nudge to move to Milwaukee's eastside to begin the process of launching a church.

IT'S PRONOUNCED  
mill-e-wah-que  
WHICH IS ALGONQUIN FOR  
the good land.  
*wayne's world*

## *the* **FUNDING**

To make the Parmelee's vision for a new church in Milwaukee a reality meant a need for financial resources. Without a church body established to accept a weekly offering, they knew that support would need to come from outside sources. Before leaving St. Paul, Danny began the process of fundraising. Danny learned from experienced church planters that he would need to raise roughly \$120,000 – an overwhelming amount of money! He knew though, that no matter how impossible it seemed, God would be able to provide it. Raising these funds largely involved asking friends, relatives, co-workers, fellow students and even strangers for monthly donations of \$20 - \$100 for a three to four

year period of time. Danny was humbled to see God provide all of the needed funds (and more!) to sustain the church for its first three years of ministry. Without these faithful people giving so generously, the epikos church founders wouldn't have been able to see God work the way He did.

## *the* **HELP**

One of the early confirmations of their decision to move to Milwaukee was a relationship established with another local church. Prior to their move to Milwaukee, Danny and Emili recieved a call from Shoreland Community Church in Brown Deer, WI, whose congregation recognized the same need Danny had: the need for the local church to reach the next generation. However, SCC acknowledged that they weren't equipped or positioned to accomplish this task themselves. Through discussions with SCC and their overseer board, they ultimately decided to help launch epikos. This partnership meant that SCC would help financially when they could, and also encourage families that felt prompted by God

to leave SCC to help launch epikos. They blessed the church with \$3,000 and one family. This may not seem like a lot on the surface, but after starting with nothing, it was huge boost!

Since the call and dream of planting the church went back to Danny's and Emili's college days, it was only natural that they would invite some people from the past to help in the endeavor. Slowly but surely, a handful of friends (4) moved to Milwaukee and committed to helping get this church off the ground.



## *the* **BEGINNINGS**

Danny and Emili settled into Milwaukee in January 2004. They found a perfect two- bedroom flat just off of Brady Street with a big living room. Danny camped out at coffee shops, bookshops ... anywhere people were, so that he could strike up conversations and cast the vision for a new church in the area. It wasn't long before he had enough guys to hold a small bible study in the Parmelee living room. By spring, word began to spread and another small group was started. By Fall 2004, about 40 people were interested in taking this gathering of people to the next level. They began looking for places to gather together for corporate worship. This was a difficult task and most people were not interested in leasing the space, and those who were interested

wanted a substantial amount of money. Then, one day, while biking through the neighborhoods of the eastside, Danny spotted a beautiful church building, Westminster Presbyterian Church, on the corner of Farwell and Belleview. After some inquiry and discussions with the church staff, they agreed to let epikos use their building to meet on Saturday nights.

## *the* **LAUNCH**

Time was spent in the fall and winter of 2004 to prepare to “open the doors” to the public. Teams were formed and tasks and responsibilities divided to prepare for this big event. With a limited budget they photocopied some invitations and passed them out to people in the neighborhood. Saturday evening, January 8th, 2004, marked the first corporate worship service at Westminster. Since relationships and fellowship were at the heart of this ministry, a free full nacho bar was set up following the service. This began an epikos tradition of offering free food and great fellowship the second Sunday of each month following service, now affectionately called “2nd Sunday”.

## *the* **STORY CONTINUES**

Epikos continued to grow. There seemed to be a constant stream of new faces coming through the doors each week. Some people experienced significant life transformation, while others faded off, never to be heard from again. Babies were born and marriages commenced while at the same time, relationships were broken and tragedy took lives. Through all of it, small groups remained a central focus of the vision, “To make more and better disciples.” Epikos has been blessed by God with many amazing people. God continues to weave our individual stories into His magnificent story. Twists and turns, triumphs and disappointments are expected; but we eagerly await the next chapters to be written.



The image features a hand-drawn illustration of a church roof with a shingled texture. The roof is rendered in a sketchy, black-and-white style. In the background, there is a large, faint, halftone pattern of dots, which appears to be a stylized representation of a church or a similar architectural structure. The overall composition is simple and artistic.

**what is covenant  
MEMBERSHIP?**

Becoming a covenant member of epikos church is a very exciting decision, and we're glad that you've taken the step to investigate what that means. epikos church is an open community, and people are always welcome to attend our worship services and experience God with us. Covenant membership is going beyond just attending (and even participating) to a level of commitment that says "epikos church is my church body, I'm on board with the mission, and I commit to serving."

## *why* **MEMBERSHIP**

While the term "church member" is never used in the Bible, the concept is implicit throughout the New Testament. Believers in the early church clearly identified themselves with a specific local body and were challenged to become devoted participants.

## what is MEMBERSHIP

The Bible infers two levels of “membership” in the body of Christ (or the Church). There are numerous references to the once-and-for-all union with Christ and His body. This happens when a person believes that, through God’s grace, Jesus Christ died for their sins as their Savior and makes Him the Lord of their life (1 Cor. 12:12-13; Eph. 2:13-22, 4:3-6; Col. 1:13-22). At this moment, you become a “positional member” in the worldwide Church of Jesus Christ, based solely on the grace of God through the death of Jesus Christ. In other words, all those that become followers of Jesus Christ make up this Church.

We become a member of a local church by committing ourselves to other believers. And that family of believers becomes our church home, where we are able to give and be given to; where we are able to serve and be served; where we are able to love and be loved. The Bible gives us a beautiful picture of the early church and a model for us to follow:

*“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved...All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had. With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all. There were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles’ feet, and it was distributed to anyone as he had need” (Acts 2:42-47 & 4:32-35, NIV).*

## *benefits of* **MEMBERSHIP**

- 1 You are identified as a genuine believer (Ephesians 2:19; Romans 12:5).
- 2 You are provided with a spiritual family to support and encourage you in your walk with Jesus Christ (Galatians 6:1-2; Hebrews 10:23-25), and you have the accountability that you will need to grow (Ephesians 4:11-16; 5:21).
- 3 You have a place to discover and use your gifts in ministry (1 Corinthians 12:4-27).
- 4 You are placed under the spiritual protection of Godly leaders (Hebrews 13:17; Acts 20:28-29).
- 5 You get a vote at annual meetings to help the church make decisions on issues like the budget, oversee confirmations, property and building accusations, etc.

## *membership* **REQUIREMENTS**

Covenant membership at epikos church is open to all who have made a personal confession of faith in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior, and who desire to serve Him with us. However, being a member is more than just attending services; it is the commitment to belong to one another and become an active, vital organ in the body (1 Cor. 12). Early Christians knew nothing of having non-resident or inactive members. And because covenant membership is such a serious matter, we have these requirements:

- 1 Belief and profession that Jesus Christ is your Savior
- 2 Baptism by immersion as a believer
- 3 Understanding of and agreement with the epikos church “Statement of Faith”
- 4 Understanding of and agreement with the mission/vision of epikos church
- 5 Active involvement in an epikos church small group or ministry team
- 6 Lifestyle that represents that you are a follower of Jesus Christ
- 7 Regular praying, fasting, and reading/studying of the Bible
- 8 Tithing to God, with the majority of your tithe going to epikos church
- 9 Use of your abilities, gifts, and talents to serve at epikos church
- 10 Attending weekly worship services at epikos church is a priority





**the mission  
OF EPIKOS**

Our mission and purpose is not new or creative. Jesus commanded his dedicated followers to “Therefore, go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey all I have commanded.” The twelve disciples followed his command and revolutionized the world. We want to continue Jesus’ command by “making more and better disciples.” A disciple is one who has accepted Jesus’ sacrificial death on the cross, and who is committed to living out what Jesus taught and exemplified. As Christ’s followers come together, three “cultures” integrate and are evident in the community: Transformational, Relational, and Missional.

#### **TRANSFORMATIONAL**

*(The Relationship between God and Humanity)*

We desire to be a community grounded in God’s Word and led by the Holy Spirit. We believe that all those who have committed their lives to Christ have been made new and will continue to be conformed to the image of Christ. We believe that God’s word and the work of the Holy Spirit guide our daily lives. We believe that through Christ we can have a personal relationship with God and that He relates with us. Through prayer, worship, reading the bible, and other spiritual disciplines, God will continue to transform our lives individually and corporately. 2 Corinthians 5:15, Romans 12:2, 2 Corinthians 3:18, Romans 8:29, Deuteronomy 6, Psalm 150

**MAKING MORE  
AND BETTER DISCIPLES**

**RELATIONAL**

*(The Relationship of the Believer and the Christian Community)*

We believe that God created his followers to be united in a special relationship with each other. The local body of believers should be dedicated to the well-being and spiritual growth of each other. Likewise the church should uphold practices to assist individuals in their personal journey. It should only be expected that lifelong friendships develop among the group. It's really about doing life together. Acts 2:42ff, Galatians 6:10, Ephesians 4:12-13

**MISSIONAL**

*(The Relationship of the Christian Community to the Unbelieving World)*

Jesus Christ called His followers to live a different life, but He didn't tell us to separate from the rest of the world. As His mission states, we are commanded to make disciples. Part of this process is allowing God to work through the relationships we have with people who currently aren't followers of Christ. As we are transformed by God, and experience life together, it's our mission to invite others into the Community and into a relationship with God through Jesus Christ. Along with simply inviting people into community, it was Christ's command to "go." We want to tangibly share the love of Christ by meeting social, emotional, physical, and spiritual needs of those around the world. We are sincere in His mission, and graciously invite all to become a follower of Jesus Christ. Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 1:8, James 2

## ***CORE VALUES***

We value worship of God that is celebrative, reflective, and effective. We value using the arts to worship, understand, and portray God.

We value staying true to scripture. We desire to not only interpret it with integrity, but also to apply it to our lives. We value talking about even the hard issues that are taught in scripture.

We value spending time with those who don't know Christ. Even if that means being in areas, places, and groups where offensive behavior takes place.

We value being authentic. Admitting that none of us have it all together. Admitting that we don't always have the answer. Admitting that though we are being restored, we are all broken individuals.

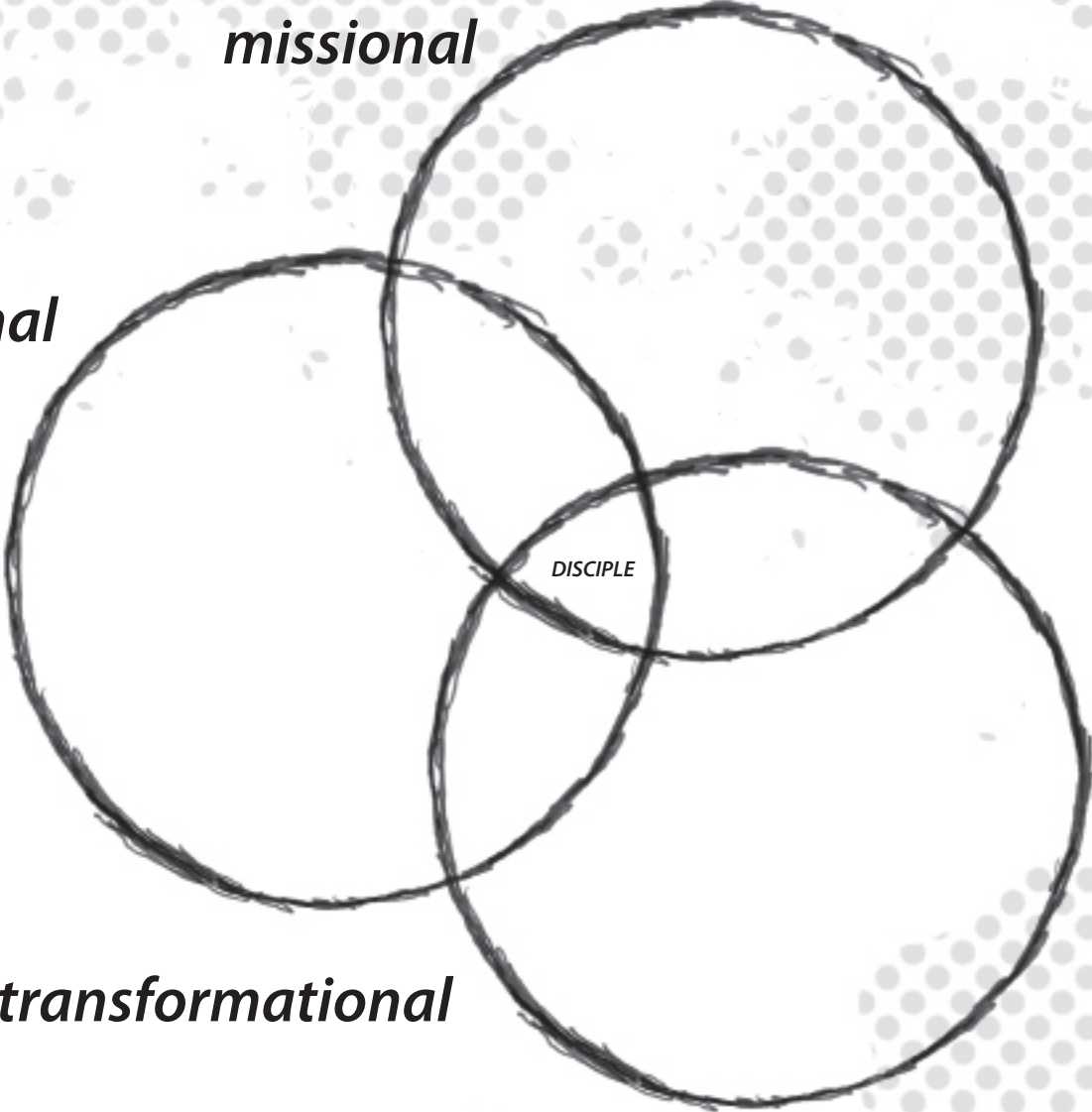
We value FUN! Being a follower of Christ should be the most satisfying commitment of one's life.

We value sacrificing for the Kingdom of God. While being a follower is the most satisfying, we know that scripture also teaches that its hard and requires sacrifice.

*missional*

*relational*

*transformational*





## ***statement of FAITH***

### ***THE BIBLE***

We believe that the Bible is the Word of God, fully inspired and without error in the original manuscripts, written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and that it has supreme authority in all matters of faith and conduct. (John 17:17, Romans 15:4, II Timothy 3:16-17, II Peter 1:19-21)

### ***THE TRINITY***

We believe that there is one living and true God, eternally existing in three persons, that these are equal in every divine perfection, and that they execute distinct yet harmonious offices in the work of creation, providence, and redemption. (Matthew 28:19, John 1:1-4, I John 5:7)

### ***GOD THE FATHER***

We believe in God the Father, an infinite, personal spirit, perfect in holiness, wisdom, power, and love. We believe that He concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of each person, that He hears and answers prayer, and that He saves from sin and death all who come to Him through Jesus Christ. (John 3:16-17, John 4:24, John 17:5)

### ***JESUS CHRIST***

We believe in Jesus Christ, God's only begotten Son, conceived by the Holy Spirit. We believe in His substitutionary atoning death, bodily resurrection, ascension into heaven, perpetual intercession for His people, and personal, visible return to earth. (Isaiah 7:14, John 1:14, Philippians 2:5-11, Hebrews 1:2-3, I John 1:7)

***THE HOLY SPIRIT***

We believe in the Holy Spirit who came forth from the Father and the Son to convict the world of sin, righteousness, and judgment, and to regenerate, sanctify, and empower all who believe in Jesus Christ. We believe that the Holy Spirit indwells every believer in Christ, and that He is an abiding helper, teacher and guide. (John 14:26, John 16:7-15, Romans 8:14-17, Ephesians 1:13-14)

***REGENERATION***

We believe that all people are sinners by nature and by choice and are, therefore, under condemnation. We believe that those who repent of their sins and trust in Jesus Christ as Savior are regenerated by the Holy Spirit. (John 1:12-13, John 3:3, 16-17, Acts 20:21, Ephesians 2:1-9, Titus 3:5)

***THE CHURCH***

We believe in the universal church, a living spiritual body of which Christ is the head and all regenerated persons are members. We believe in the local church, consisting of a company of believers in Jesus Christ, baptized on a credible confession of faith, and associated for worship, work and fellowship. We believe that God has laid upon the members of the local church the primary task of giving the gospel of Jesus Christ to a lost world, and making fully devoted followers of Christ. (Matthew 16:16-18, Acts 2:38-41, Ephesians 2:19-22, Ephesians 5:25-27)

***CHRISTIAN CONDUCT***

We believe that Christians should live for the glory of God and the well-being of others, that their conduct should be blameless before the world, that they should be faithful stewards of their possessions, and that they should seek to realize for themselves and others the full stature of maturity in Christ. We believe that the Bible is the primary instructor of Christian conduct. (II Corinthians 9:6-8, Ephesians 4:11-16, Philippians 2:14-16, Colossians 3:17-23, I Thessalonians 5:17-18)

### ***THE ORDINANCES***

We believe that the Lord Jesus Christ has committed two ordinances to the local church: baptism and the Lord's Supper. We believe that Christian baptism is immersion of a believer in water into the name of the triune God. We believe that the Lord's Supper was instituted by Christ for commemoration of His death. We believe that these two ordinances should be observed and administered until the return of the Lord Jesus Christ. (Matthew 28:18-20, Acts 2:41-42, Romans 6:3-5, I Corinthians 11:23-32)

### ***RELIGIOUS LIBERTY***

We believe that every human being has direct relations with God, and is responsible to God alone in all matters of faith; that each church is independent and must be free from interference by any ecclesiastical or political authority; that therefore Church and State must be kept separate as having different functions, each fulfilling its duties free from dictation or patronage of the other.

### ***CHURCH COOPERATION***

We believe that the local church can best promote the cause of Jesus Christ by cooperating with one another in a denominational organization. Such an organization, whether a regional or district conference, exists and functions by the will of the churches. Cooperation in a conference is voluntary and may be terminated at any time. Churches may likewise cooperate with inter-denominational fellowships on a voluntary basis.

### ***THE LAST THINGS***

We believe in the personal and visible return of the Lord Jesus Christ to earth and the establishment of His kingdom. We believe in the resurrection of the body, the final judgment, the eternal felicity of the righteous, and the endless suffering of the wicked. (John 5:28-29, Revelation 20:1-15, II Corinthians 5:10, Matthew 25:31-46)





**small  
GROUPS**

## *the big idea of* **SMALL GROUPS**

### **DISCIPLESHIP**

A disciple is one who follows and lives out the life of Christ. Though the process of becoming more like Christ takes many forms, we often see this done best in a small group. This allows someone to have a community of believers to help answer their questions and take steps of faith in this journey. When needed, a small group leader or leader in the church may also come along side someone individually to help them in their faith journey. We've learned that discipleship is so much more than just being able to answer questions about Christianity. Certainly, knowledge is part of our faith walk, but not the only part. In small groups, we try to get people to think and talk about discipleship as a combination of the "head, heart, and hand." This holistic approach to discipleship attempts to integrate what we know, who we are at our core, and how we act. All three of these should be fostered and developed in the context of a small group. As relationships grow in the small group, so does the environment to increase these qualities.



THIS HOLISTIC APPROACH  
TO DISCIPLESHIP ATTEMPTS TO  
INTEGRATE  
WHAT WE KNOW,  
WHO WE ARE AT OUR CORE,  
AND HOW WE ACT.

Small groups are a vital part of the vision of epikos. We greatly value gathering together on the weekends for musical worship, teaching from God's Word, and fellowship, but we also greatly value people growing in their faith walk through a smaller midweek gathering. We were created by God to have fellowship with one another, and small groups create an environment where this is possible. People are given the opportunity to go deeper with each other and deeper in their walk with Christ. Being connected in authentic relationships allows us to accomplish Christ's mission better. Small groups provide a safe place where people can be real with one another and share life together a place where you can ask questions, learn from the Bible, pray, and be prayed for.

Small groups also allow for unlimited potential growth of the church without losing the intimacy of real connection with people. We would even go as far to say that small groups ARE the church. Without them, we would be far less capable of fulfilling all the functions of the church. Imagine the significant impact we could have as a church if hundreds of people were meeting weekly for worship and growing in their faith through small groups!

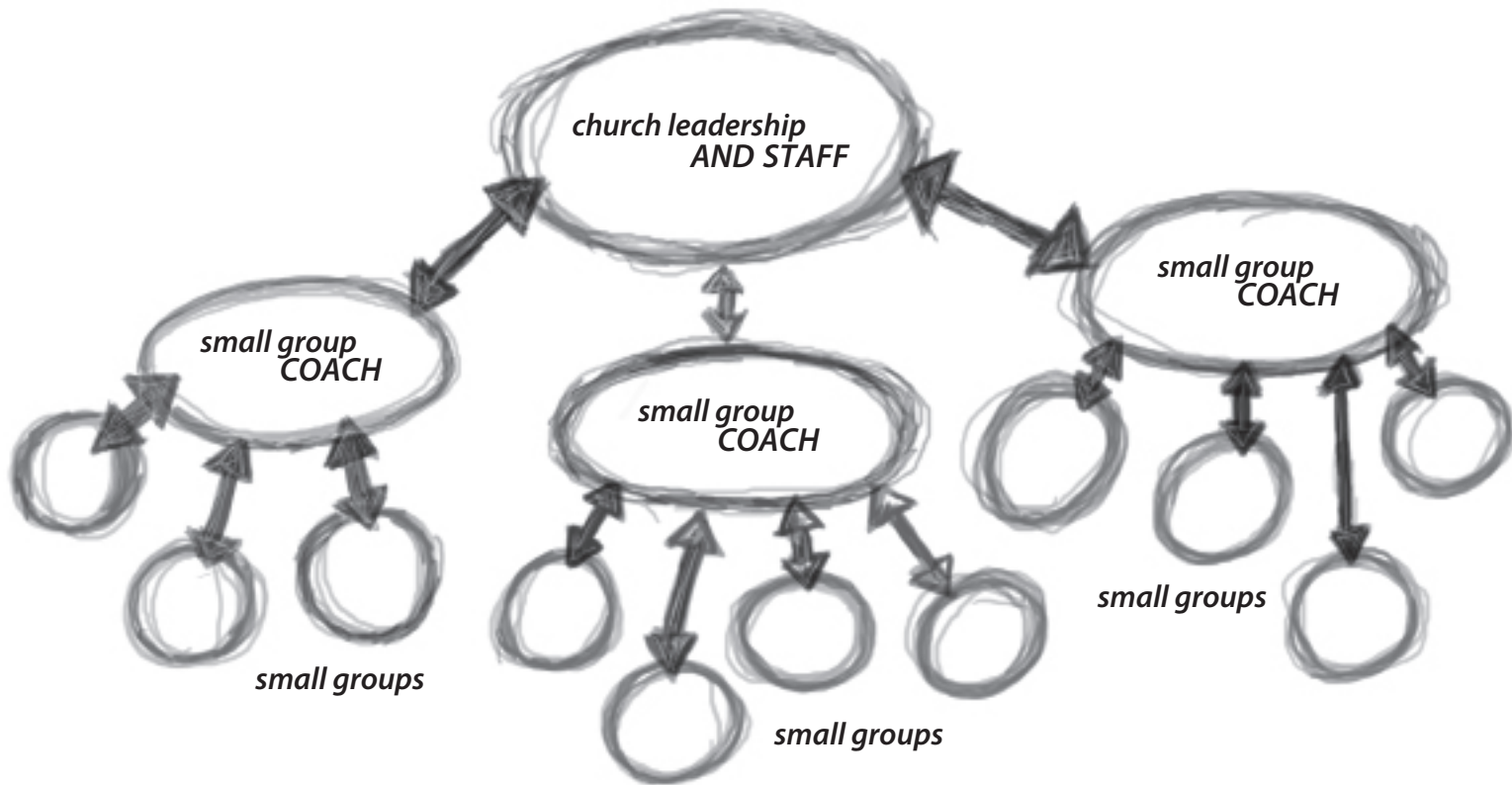
### STRATEGY AND CARE

As our church grows small groups become a strategic way to keep people connected and unified in the vision. It is impossible for a single pastor or even an entire church staff to do an adequate job of helping people with their struggles, encouraging people to utilize their gifts and abilities, and mentoring people as they grow in their faith. This is similar to the situation that Moses had as he was leading his growing group of Hebrews into the Promise Land.

*At that time I said to you, "You are too heavy a burden for me to carry alone. The LORD your God has increased your numbers so that today you are as many as the stars in the sky. May the LORD, the God of your fathers, increase you a thousand times and bless you as he has promised! But how can I bear your problems and your burdens and your disputes all by myself? Choose some wise, understanding and respected men from each of your tribes, and I will set them over you." You answered me, "What you propose to do is good." So I took the leading men of your tribes, wise and respected men, and appointed them to have authority over you—as commanders of thousands, of hundreds, of fifties and of tens and as tribal officials. (Deuteronomy 1:9-15)*

Through Godly wisdom, Moses delegated his responsibility and authority to others who, in turn, did the same. Our small group structure is designed to work in the same fashion. We talk about our small groups often as the "leadership & communication pipeline." When there are volunteer needs, leadership opportunities, celebrations, crises, and major prayer requests within the church, we let our small group leaders know. The small group leaders serve as a vital link and relay that information to people in the small groups. It also works in the reverse--if there are issues going on in the church of which the staff and leadership are unaware, we often hear about it from small group leaders who have heard about it from people in their groups.

So much of what happens at epikos happens through teams which are composed of epikos volunteers. Small groups become a great place for us to hear about what gifts and abilities people have and how we can help them find their fit. Small group leaders are trained to help people in their groups find their niche in the body of Christ.



**MULTIPLICATION**

So where do new small groups and new small group leaders come from? Small groups are designed to grow and multiply. Most people first get involved with epikos through the Sunday worship gatherings. As they learn about small groups, they eventually get plugged into one that fits them. In order for this to work, a majority of our groups are considered “open groups.” That means that groups are always willing AND intentional about adding new people to their group. We realize that having a group which is open to new members has the potential to reduce the level of intimacy. You may have experienced something similar to this. People rarely open

up until they feel a certain level of comfort with the people around them. This is normal. However, by not allowing new people to join, a group can become very inward focused and stagnant. Therefore, we work hard to find that balance of maintaining intimacy and safety while at the same time welcoming to new people. It’s amazing how God orchestrates this when we have our hearts aligned with His will.

Every epikos small group has a point leader and an apprentice. The point leader helps guide small group discussion and ultimately is responsible for



INSTEAD, MULTIPLICATION IS THE INTENTIONAL  
AND GOD-GLORIFYING ACT  
OF REPRODUCING DISCIPLES.

creating that environment for discipleship, growing the head, heart, and hand. The apprentice is there to learn the ropes and prepare to lead a small group in the future. When the group has a healthy number of people, about 7-8, the group begins to prepare for multiplication. Our joke, admittedly not a very funny one, is that small groups never split; they only multiply. No one likes to split, right? Splitting has the connotation that you break up and never talk again. Instead, multiplication is the intentional and God-glorifying act of reproducing disciples. The new group with the new leader (formerly the apprentice) usually does not divide in half. Instead,

the new leader will take one or two people from the original group and add a few people to their group who are not currently part of a small group but have expressed interest. The original small group may also add a few new people at that time. Both groups can celebrate this amazing event. Many times these small groups will reconvene for special events or to do outreach projects together since they have established relationships with one another. We've found that when small groups multiply they are motivated and encouraged as they see God bless their sacrificial intentions to multiply.



## *frequently asked* **QUESTIONS**

### ***WHERE DO SMALL GROUPS MEET? HOW LONG?***

Most small groups meet in someone's house or apartment. A few small groups will meet at a coffee shop or public place. Groups generally meet for 1½ hours. Groups tend to meet on week nights, but because of different schedules and shifts, we've had groups meet all times of the week.

### ***DO I HAVE TO GO TO SMALL GROUP EVERY WEEK?***

While it's not "required" to attend small group weekly, it is highly encouraged. The Sunday worship service and the weekly small group meetings are designed to complement each other; the spiritual and personal benefits of each are multiplied by consistent participation in both.

### ***HOW MANY PEOPLE ARE IN SMALL GROUPS TYPICALLY?***

We like to keep the groups roughly 4-8 people. This is large enough so that there is good group dynamic and small enough to keep it a genuine place to ask questions and share life together.

### ***WHAT DO YOU DO AT A SMALL GROUP?***

There are three main things that happen at small group. First, it's a time to connect with others and hear how each other's week and life is going. Second, the groups go through questions that relate to the sermon that was given the previous Sunday. Fall through spring, epikos typically goes through a book of the Bible so that it's easy to jump in at anytime. Third, there is time to pray together. There is never pressure to participate in any of the three, so don't get freaked out if the thought of these makes you uncomfortable. Just observe in the group until you are ready to share.

***IS THERE HOMEWORK?***

Not really. However, your attendance at weekly worship and small group should inspire you to investigate God's Word and reflect upon your life. It may also motivate you to study deeper into the things being discussed. By the time you get to small group, you will most likely have things that you will want to share with the group. Like the ol' saying goes, "what you put in is what you will get out!"

If you missed that Sunday's sermon, you can always download it at [www.epikos.org](http://www.epikos.org).

***WHAT TYPES OF SMALL GROUPS ARE THERE?***

A lot of times, groups are formed around affinity so we have men's, women's, co-ed, student, grad student, moms, married, etc. There are all sorts of groups. Though sometimes groups are composed of a smorgasbord of different types of people, the important thing is that you find a group that YOU mesh well with.

***WHAT IF I'M A NEW TO THE WHOLE CHURCH THING?***

Your best bet is to join a group with some people you know and feel you jive with. The group will help you and answer your questions no matter where you are on your spiritual journey. Sometimes there will be groups specifically formed for newer believers. This is another great option. Don't be scared though; none of us have everything figured out, and we can all learn from one another.

***DO YOU MEET DURING THE SUMMER?***

Groups tend to meet less frequently during the summer due to the craziness of schedules. As a church, we like to have small groups use this time to be in the community. This is a chance for your group to do activities outside that are fun and also engage the community. It also provides a time of rest for small group leaders.

***HOW AND WHEN DO I JOIN A SMALL GROUP?***

The easiest way to join a small group is to indicate your interest on the connection card in the bulletin or email [smallgroups@epikos.org](mailto:smallgroups@epikos.org). You can also ask people you've met (and liked) and inquire about the small group they are in. You can jump into a small group at anytime! What are you waiting for? Joining a small group can be an awesome experience!

***WHY DO I NEED TO BE PART OF A SMALL GROUP TO BE A COVENANT MEMBER?***

We firmly believe that the way to really go deep and get to know each other is to engage one another in smaller settings in addition to weekly corporate worship. Sunday service doesn't always provide a forum where people can ask questions, be held accountable, share prayer requests and be prayed for. In a nutshell, to really be a relational community, we all need to be active in each other's lives, which happens best in small groups and/or ministry teams.

***WHAT IF THERE IS A TIME IN MY LIFE WHERE I NEED A BREAK FROM SMALL GROUP?***

There are times in all of our lives where we feel like it doesn't seem possible to add one more thing to our schedule. Small groups aren't intended to be a burden. When things in life become chaotic, a small group can be a safe refuge from the busy day-to-day where one can recharge and leave feeling rejuvenated, ready to take on the rest of the week. However, if there are extraordinary circumstances which warrant your taking a break from the group, we want to be understanding. We simply ask that you communicate your intentions with your small group leader prior to taking a break. We don't want anybody worrying about you, and your group will still want to pray for you!

***WHAT IF INSTEAD OF A SMALL GROUP, I'M INVOLVED IN A MINISTRY TEAM?***

We find that some of our ministry teams function much like a small group (the musical worship team, for example). If you are involved with a team that meets regularly and is intentional about connecting relationally, praying, and going deeper into God's word, then you are essentially in a small group. That being said, given the frequency of most ministry team meetings relative to the more regular schedule that small groups provide, you might find it beneficial to be involved in both.

***WHAT IF I'M INVOLVED WITH A SMALL GROUP THAT IS NOT AFFILIATED WITH EPIKOS?***

It would seem logical that if you are committing to be a covenant member of epikos that you are involved and invested with a group of people that you also worship with weekly. But, we understand that, for a variety of reasons and circumstances, you might be involved with another group (friends from another church, para-church ministry groups like Campus Crusade, etc.). There is nothing wrong with this, but we do encourage you to consider how you can maximize your investment in the faith community you call your church home.

***WHAT IF I LIKE SMALL GROUP BUT DON'T WANT TO COME ON SUNDAYS FOR CORPORATE WORSHIP?***

We encourage you to ask yourself why. Half of the mission of epikos involves corporate worship. We ask that our covenant members commit to making Sunday worship a priority, not just something to do if you have nothing else going on. In the context of small groups, this is important because small groups follow the weekly sermons. You will find that your conversation is richer and deeper if you hear the sermon first hand rather than relying on others in the group to share the message. In a more global context, think about how God may use you in someone else's life at corporate worship. Every time you are there (even if you don't talk to anyone), you are making the statement that God is real and worthy to be worshipped.

***DOES SOMEONE TRACK MY ATTENDANCE?***

We do not formally track attendance at epikos once you indicate that epikos is your church home, but again, ask that our covenant members commit to making Sunday worship a priority at epikos. The purpose behind this is to foster personal discipleship in your life and to maximize the overall effectiveness of the church. If you opt to visit other churches once in awhile, that's great. In fact, we value our partnerships with other churches. But ultimately, we feel we can be most effective in that capacity by focusing and investing in our own church body. As a church, we will look for ways in which we can partner with other churches and display the unity of the body of Christ in Milwaukee.



The image features a stylized, hand-drawn illustration of a roof with a brick or shingle pattern. The roof is rendered in shades of gray and black, with a dotted pattern filling the background. The word "SERVING" is written in a bold, black, sans-serif font, slanted slightly to the right, and positioned in the lower-middle part of the image.

**SERVING**

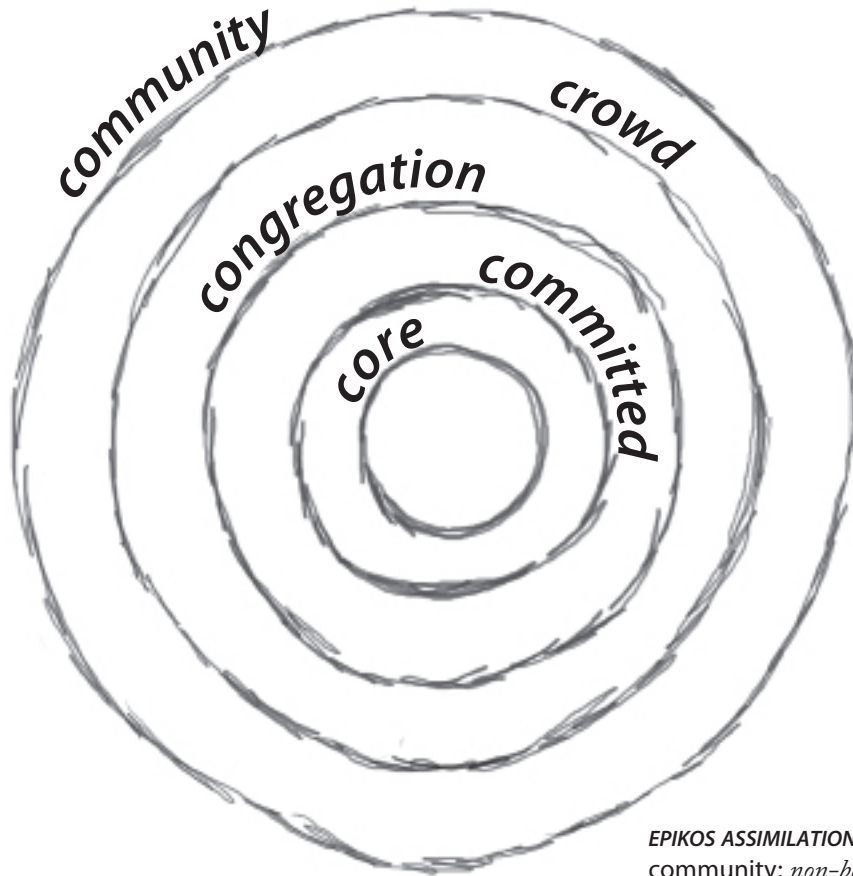


CHURCH IS NOT  
A SPECTATOR SPORT

***ASSIMILATION AND TEAMS***

We often say at epikos that “church is not a spectator sport?” By that we mean that the church is not an event that people show up at and watch a religious presentation for an hour or so and then go back to their daily lives. The church is also not just the physical building we meet in. Instead, the church is a group of people who are unified in the mission and vision of God. It’s not a few people who invite non-participating guests, but a collective effort of God-worshippers who seek to know Him more fully and make Him known. While there are full-and part-time paid staff, God designed every Christ follower to actively join in His mission.

We also understand that becoming involved and serving in the church is a process. The pace and form of this process will be different for every person. We have found that Rick Warren’s Assimilation diagram, from his book “Purpose Driven Church,” is a good illustration to understand this process. We have personalized this diagram to try and quantify some of the steps to serving in the church.



**EPIKOS ASSIMILATION DIAGRAM**

*community: non-believers that don't know about Christ or epikos*

*crowd: have heard about epikos and have come to outreaches or events*

*congregation: attend worship services on somewhat of a regular basis*

*committed: weekly attend worship and small group and other events.*

*Continually growing spiritually.*

*core: committed and serving in the church actively, growing in Christ and multiplying themselves.*

# EVERYONE *WELCOMED* EVERYONE *CONNECTED* EVERYONE *DISCIPLINED*

Being part of a small group is the best place to start. As you learn more about yourself and how God has gifted you, we suggest trying out some of the teams. Everything from helping in leading the musical worship, greeting people as they come in, helping with children and nursery, to helping organize global mission trips. You may not know what is best for you. We encourage you to try a few different things. By connecting up with a team doesn't mean that you are committing to that team for a lifetime. We would rather find out what's the best fit for you than have you serve in a place that just bogs you and the rest of the team down. And if God has placed something on your heart that isn't being offered by a team, then let us know. As pastoral staff and leadership of the church, our purpose is to equip you to be a better servant of Christ!

*"It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ." Ephesians 4:11-14*





A hand-drawn illustration of a church roof with a halftone pattern in the sky. The roof is drawn with simple lines and shading, showing a series of overlapping shingles. The sky above is filled with a halftone dot pattern, which is denser in some areas and sparser in others, creating a sense of depth and light. The overall style is minimalist and artistic.

# spiritual GIFTS

When we become followers of Christ, we are indwelt with the Holy Spirit. “Having believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God’s possession—to the praise of his glory.” (Ephesians 1:13-14) Besides being our promise to unite with Christ, the Spirit was given to us to equip us to do good works. We often refer to these good works as part of Advancing God’s Kingdom. God’s word refers to spiritual gifts as it relates to specific and unique supernatural gifts to advance God’s King-

dom. Spiritual gifts are often controversial even within a church. Christians tend to debate about what the total number of spiritual gifts are and what their functions are, how they are to be used, etc. We take a balanced approach and try to avoid the divisiveness that often flares in this debate. We accomplish this by holding strongly onto what is clear and holding loosely what is not fully described or explained, always asking that God would continue to teach us all more about the power and mystery of his Holy Spirit. Here are some things to consider as you explore spiritual gifts in the Bible.

***THE FOUR MAJOR LISTS OF SPIRITUAL GIFTS IN THE BIBLE:***

*1 Corinthians 12:8-10:* Faith, Word of Wisdom, Word of Knowledge, Gifts of Healing, Miracles, Prophecy, Discerning of Spirits, Tongues, Interpretation of Tongues.

*1 Corinthians 12:29-30:* Gifts of Healing, Miracles, Prophecy, Discerning of Spirits, Tongues, Apostles, Teachers, Helps, Administration.

*Romans 12:6-8:* Prophecy, Teaching, Ministry, Encouraging, Giving, Leadership, Showing Mercy.

*Ephesians 4:11 Position:* Prophet, Apostle, Evangelist, Pastor/Teacher

## **SPIRITUAL GIFTS**

By God's grace the supernatural ability to...

### **LEADERS**

*1 Timothy 3*

Lead others in the mission of God.

### **EVANGELISTS**

*Philip- Acts 21:8*

Present the gospel with passion and clarity and have people respond.

### **TEACHERS**

*Apollos- Acts 18:24-26*

Teach God's word and the things of God so that they are easily understandable.

### **PASTORS**

*Acts- 20:28-31*

Are for a gathering of God's people

### **APOSTLESHIP**

*Paul, Peter, James, John*

Advance the Gospel to new areas in new ways. (1st apostles wrote the scripture.)

### **GIVING**

*Joseph-Acts 4:36*

Give generously

### **DISCERNMENT**

*Acts 5:3*

Discern spiritual and emotional surroundings.

### **FAITH**

*Barnabas Acts 11:24*

Trust God for big things, and move others towards action.

### **MERCY**

*Dorcas- Acts 9:36*

Help undeserving people and marginalized people.

### **WISDOM**

*Stephen-Acts 6:10*

Speak words of truth to someone who needs Godly direction.



**KNOWLEDGE***Apollos-Acts 18:24*

Speak words of truth about God's and word character

**ADMINISTRATION***Titus 1:5*

Organize and mobilize God's people

**SERVICE***Acts 6:1-7 (7 men)*

Help often "behind the scenes"

**HEALING***Peter and John-Acts 3:1-10*

Heal a person physically or emotionally.

**MIRACLES***Phillip Acts 8:4*

Perform miracles or works of power.

**TONGUES***A) Acts 2:1-12 B) 1 Cor 13:1*

A) Present the gospel in a known language (Spanish, Chinese, Swahili) that you didn't know.

B) Pray (or speak) in an unknown language.

**PROPHECY***Acts 13:1-Paul and Barnabas*

Speak a message that is from God to someone.

Encouragement, rebuke. Not just fortune telling!

**INTERPRETATION OF TONGUES***1 Cor 14:26-28*

Interpret the known or an unknown language so that others know what is being said.

**HOSPITALITY***1 Peter 4:9-10, Romans 12:9-13**Acts 16:14-15 Lydia*

Sharing and caring for others. Gracefully welcoming people into the family of God.

**CELIBACY***1 Cor 7:1-9, Matthew 19:10-12*

To remain single to devote life and service to God

Are there other gifts not found in these lists?  
Some people suggest some spiritual gifts such as  
Craftsmanship, Musical Worship? Others?

*Some guidelines in considering gifts not listed in scrip-  
ture or specifically the New Testament:*

Are they from the same Spirit, i.e. are they in union  
with the nature and character of God?  
Are they for the common good? (1 Corinthians  
12:1-11)

Do they prepare God's people for works of service,  
so that the body of Christ may be built? (Eph. 4:7-  
13)

Does the gift contradict anything in Scripture? If  
so, then it's probably not a spiritual gift!

Are there examples of it in the Old or New Testa-  
ment? For Example: Craftsmanship and Musical  
Worship.

#### **REMINDERS AND CONSIDERATIONS**

All believers receive the Holy Spirit when they put  
their faith in Christ.

We are to use our spiritual gifts to advance Christ's  
Kingdom!

You may have one spiritual gift or multiple spiritual  
gifts.

Spiritual gifts may operate differently in different  
people with differing outcomes.

You don't need to speak in tongues to be saved.

We must be careful about claiming, giving, or re-  
ceiving a "word from God." If we do give or receive,  
it must be tested.

There is no biblical evidence to say that spiritual  
gifts WILL cease (except for when Christ returns)  
Yet, there is no biblical evidence that they MAY  
NOT cease or lessen in frequency. However it  
wouldn't make much sense that they would cease,  
until Christ returns and the "perfect comes".



A hand-drawn illustration of a church roof with a halftone pattern in the background. The roof is composed of several rows of rectangular tiles, drawn with simple lines and shading. The background is a light gray color with a pattern of small, dark circles, creating a halftone effect. The word "BAPTISM" is written in a bold, black, sans-serif font, slanted upwards from left to right, positioned in the lower-middle part of the image.

**BAPTISM**

**WHAT IS BAPTISM?**

In the New Testament the Greek word *baptizo* is used to describe the practice of people who were turning their life around and committing it to God. The first group of people were being baptized by John the Baptist (Matthew 3) in anticipation of Jesus Christ, and after that Jesus (Matthew 3:13-16), his disciples, and the early church continued this practice (Acts 8:36). And it was more than just a practice; it was an ordinance (a command) by Jesus Christ himself.

"Then Jesus came to them and said, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.'"

**HOW WAS BAPTISM PERFORMED?**

The Greek word *baptizo* means "to plunge, dip, immerse" something into water. Before the word was used in direct association to the practice of baptism, ancient Greeks used it to describe a ship being totally sunk. With this understanding of the Greek, the most obvious way baptism was performed was by full immersion, i.e. that a person would be completely immersed under water and come up again. When Jesus was baptized, it says that he "came up out of the water." There is not a manual on how to baptize, but in all instances in the Bible suggest that people were completely immersed.

**DOES SOMEONE NEED TO BE BAPTIZED BY WATER TO BE "SAVED" OR GO TO HEAVEN?**

The quick answer is No. The prime example would be the person who is hanging on the cross next to Jesus. The man confessed his sin and turned his life to Christ just moments before his death. Jesus says to him, "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise." (Luke 23:43) Obviously, this man did not get off the cross and get baptized.

With that said, baptism is an outward symbol of something that has already inwardly taken place. Baptism doesn't save someone from their sin; it is an act of profession that the salvation has already occurred.

**WHAT IS THE SYMBOLISM BEHIND BAPTISM?**

One of the major symbolisms of baptism is that of dying and rising with Christ. In other words, when a person goes under the water, it symbolizes their old life being buried, just as Christ's body was buried. When a person comes out of the water it symbolizes their new life in Christ because Christ was raised from the dead. Therefore they also look forward to their resurrection with Christ. This symbolism is talked about by Paul in his letter to the Romans:

*"Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life..." (Romans 6:3)*

Another symbolism of baptism is that of being washed. When we commit our lives to Christ and accept his forgiveness, we are forgiven of our sins. Many times this is expressed as being washed clean. (1 Corinthians 6:11, Ephesians 5:26)

***WHY DO SOME CHURCHES BAPTIZE INFANTS?***

The Roman Catholic tradition holds to the idea that water baptism actually saves a person or washes away sin as a means of grace. The Roman Catholic Church believes that the sacraments (like baptism and the Lord's Supper) actually cause grace to happen. So, years after the early church Roman Catholics started baptizing babies in fear that if the babies weren't baptized before they died, they would go to hell. Now, certain denominations don't hold that same theology that is "saves" babies (like Lutherans, Presbyterians, Methodist), but some have carried on Roman Catholic tradition of infant baptism. Luther, Wesley, Calvin, and other leaders of the Reformation would refuse to believe that apart from faith, one could be saved.

***DOES EPIKOS DO BABY OR CHILD DEDICATIONS?***

Absolutely! While we don't practice infant baptism, we think that a great way to celebrate the birth of a child is through a baby dedication. This also serves as the parent's commitment to do what they can to raise the child in the ways of the Lord. Plus, it's a way for the epikos church family to stand behind the parents and new little one/s. Sometimes parents also choose to have "sponsors" who may take an extra role to support the child and parents. At a dedication service, the child, parents, and sponsor's usually come up to the front of the church (sometimes with other families) and a pastor will say a few words and pray a blessing on the child. This much like what Jesus did as he laid hands and prayed for the children in Matthew 19:13 "Then little children were brought to Jesus for him to place his hands on them and pray for them...Jesus said, 'Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these.' Some parents choose to do this when the child is very young and others wait until the children are older. It's really whatever you are comfortable with.

### ***WHEN SHOULD SOMEONE BE BAPTIZED?***

In all the instances in the Bible, Christians got baptized after they had put their faith in Jesus Christ. For some, like the Ethiopian eunuch, this took place immediately after their faith commitment. When a person makes a sincere commitment, there isn't a "waiting period" or time that they need to prove they really are following Christ. So our take is after you make a faith commitment, take the step of showing it publicly through baptism. If you committed your life to Christ a while ago and just have never proclaimed it publicly through baptism, it's never too late!

### ***WHY SHOULD I BE BAPTIZED?***

Jesus was baptized.

Jesus commanded to be baptized.

The disciples and early followers were baptized.

It is a public profession of your faith.

You get the support and accountability of the Christian community.

It can be a momentous and special time in your life.

### ***WHO HAS THE AUTHORITY TO BAPTIZE?***

In the New Testament, there wasn't necessarily official titles, degrees, or certifications for people performing baptisms, so really any believer has the authority to baptize another person. Most often a baptism is performed by the pastor, or by someone who had a spiritual influence in the person's life. We always keep in mind that the important part of the baptism is what Jesus has accomplished in our life. I think it is important to do baptism in the context of community whenever possible, which usually is through the local church. It doesn't make much sense to hold some sort of "private baptism" since the point of it is public declaration of what Christ has done in your life.

***IF I WAS BAPTIZED AS AN INFANT SHOULD I BE BAPTIZED BY IMMERSION?***

After looking at all the information above and Biblical precedence, epikos believes that a person should be baptized by immersion after they make a faith commitment to Jesus Christ. Since that would be impossible to do as a baby, the answer is Yes.

***DO I HAVE TO BE BAPTIZED AS A BELIEVER TO BE A COVENANT MEMBER OF EPIKOS?***

Yes. It is part of our constitution and bylaws that all those wanting to be covenant members must be baptized as believers. All people are welcomed to participate as much as they want in epikos, but to have covenant membership status you must meet that qualification.

***SO WHY AM I STILL HESITANT TO GET BAPTIZED?***

Only you can answer that question...but what I've found that most hesitations have to do with being embarrassed. And it's true, baptism is an awkward humbling experience. So I challenge people to ask, "what is really holding me back from taking this faith step?" If you have more questions, let's talk about it!

***WHERE DOES EPIKOS DO THEIR BAPTISM SERVICES & WHAT IS THE PROCESS?***

Most of the time we do our baptism services in the summer, somewhere on the shores of Lake Michigan. We schedule 2-3 services every summer but are willing to schedule as many as we need to in order to celebrate this important step of faith. Usually there are about 5-10 people who get baptized at every service. Each person who is interested in baptism will go through this FAQ with a pastor or church leader. If you are fully understand what baptism is and is not, then you added to the schedule of one of the services. You are then required to write a short testimony that you will share at the service.

### *WRITING A SHORT TESTIMONY FOR EPIKOS BAPTISM SERVICE*

Please write down what you are going to share at the baptism service. Since others will be sharing too, we don't need you to share every detail of your life. You basically want to share with people who you were before Christ was in your life and who you are now. Every person's story is different and God works in different ways in people. We're so excited for this step of faith you are taking. Important things to include or to consider.

- 1 Who were you or what you were like Before Christ? (behaviors, attitudes, feelings)
- 2 When did you start to realize your need for Jesus?
- 3 When did you commit your life to Christ or how did this happen (through a friend, at church service, by yourself)? For some people, they know the exact day and time. For others it has been a process, but there may still be a time period explained.
- 4 What are you like now (behaviors, attitudes, feelings)?

Example: My name is Danny Parmelee and I had the privilege of growing up in a loving family in the small town of Waupaca, WI. My parents took me to church and worked hard to raise me as a "good boy." By the time I was in high school though, I strayed from their guidance and looked for fulfillment in partying, drinking, drugs, relationships, success ... anything but God. As I did, many of these things I was left with such an empty feeling. When I was in college, I started going to a small group Bible study. Even though I was doing that, I was still living an empty life because I was still trying to fill it with those other things. On Dec 5, 1997, (which was my birthday) I went out partying. I came home that night feeling so empty again and understood that the only real fulfillment would come through a relationship with God through Jesus. That night, I committed my life to Christ. He has filled me with so much joy, peace, and freedom. Everyday, I desire to grow more in my relationship with God.



The image features a hand-drawn illustration of a church roof with a halftone pattern in the sky. The roof is composed of several rows of rectangular tiles, drawn with simple black lines. The sky above is filled with a halftone pattern of small, dark circles, creating a textured, dotted effect. The overall style is minimalist and artistic.

**tithing and  
GIVING**

First of all, you must know that epikos is extremely grateful for your involvement in the ministry. We are a small church, but God continues to provide for all of our needs. Talking about money and the church can often be a sensitive subject. Partly because people have been wronged in the past with how a church dealt with money, or maybe even manipulated them into doing things they were uncomfortable with. As you read through this, understand that epikos is not concerned just about money. At the same time we know that money, stewardship, and giving are spiritual issues that affect our walk with Christ. Hopefully this will help you understand one part of stewardship—the act of tithing.

#### **WHAT IS TITHING?**

The word *tithe* is translated from the Hebrew word *Ma`aser*. Its basic meaning is tenth, tenth part, or payment of tenth part. Tithing is the practice of giving to the Lord at least 10% of your income. This is done to honor God for all of his provisions for us and to remind us that he is the ultimate giver.

*“Honor the LORD with your wealth, with the first-fruits of all your crops.” (Proverbs 3:9)*

#### **WHEN DID TITHING START?**

On Mount Saini, God commanded Moses to tell the Israelites that the tithe was sacred unto the Lord. (The first example of it happened in the book of Genesis 14:18-20 when Abram gave a tithe to Melchizedek the Priest.)

*“A tithe of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the trees, belongs to the LORD ; it is holy to the LORD.” (Leviticus 27:30)*

### **HOW WAS THE TITHE USED?**

When the Israelites entered the Promised Land, the priests (family of Levi) lived off a portion of the tithes and offerings that came in. This allowed the priests to dedicate full time service to ministry.

*“I give to the Levites all the tithes in Israel as their inheritance in return for the work they do while serving at the Tent of Meeting.” (Numbers 18:21)*

The tithe was also used to meet the needs of widows, orphans, and other disadvantaged people.

*“..bring all the tithes of that year’s produce and store it in your towns, so that the Levites (who have no allotment or inheritance of their own) and the aliens, the fatherless and the widows who live in your towns may come and eat and be satisfied, and so that the LORD your God may bless you in all the work of your hands.” (Deuteronomy 14:28)*

### **DOES THAT APPLY IN THE NEW TESTAMENT?**

Yes. Paul continued the tradition and made the same case that the tithe would be used for the ministry and advancement of the gospel.

*“Don’t you know that those who work in the temple get their food from the temple, and those who serve at the altar share in what is offered on the altar? In the same way, the Lord has commanded that those who preach the gospel should receive their living from the gospel.” (1 Corinthians 9:13–14)*



***DID JESUS ENDORSE TITHING?***

Yes. In his warning to the Pharisees about legalism (they were tithing, but ignoring mercy and justice) he tells them that they should not neglect tithing, but also that their hearts should not neglect mercy and justice and other attributes of the law.

*“You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cummin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former.”*  
(Matthew 23:23)

***WHAT ABOUT THE EARLY CHURCH IN JERUSALEM?***

The early church showed an example of extreme giving. Some of those first Christ followers sometimes gave everything that they had. 100% instead of just 10%! Those offerings were presented to the church leaders and then distributed as needed to people and the ministry.

*“For from time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles’ feet, and it was distributed to anyone as he had need.”* (Acts 4:34–35)

### **IS TITHING AN ACT OF WORSHIP?**

That's exactly what it is! It's not just so the church can operate, but tithing is commanded by God as an act of worship.

### **ARE THERE BENEFITS TO TITHING?**

God promises blessing for those who are obedient to tithing. While it may not always be a material/physical blessing, God's word teaches the benefits. In addition, your heart will be changed as you learn to tithe. You also get to be part of God's work here on earth. Ask those that tithe their stories of how God has blessed their generosity.

*One man gives freely, yet gains even more; another withholds unduly, but comes to poverty. A generous man will prosper; he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed. (Proverbs 11:24-25)*

### **SHOULD A PERSON'S TITHE GO TO THEIR LOCAL CHURCH OR JUST ANYWHERE?**

I think that the precedent that has been set in Scripture shows the importance of tithing to the church (Temple in the Old Testament) to provide for the ministry and its mission. A very in depth study of giving and tithing actually shows that the Israelites gave 10% directly to the Temple and gave above that for the needs of the poor. We highly encourage people to consider giving 10% of their income to the church, i.e. epikos.

***WHAT ABOUT MY FRIENDS WHO RAISE SUPPORT OR OTHER CHARITIES?***

Give by all means! Remember that tithing 10% is where you start, not the maximum a believer gives. So in light of the previous question, I think it is appropriate to tithe at least 10% to the local church and then feel free to give above and beyond that to anywhere else God leads. All stewardship and giving requires us to go before God and ask for wisdom on such matters. As with any discernment matter, we encourage you to search Scripture, pray, seek counsel from Godly people, and discuss it with the leaders of the church.

***WHY IS TITHING REQUIRED FOR EPIKOS MEMBERSHIP?***

Membership is simply our way of organizing a local body of Christ. There is freedom for churches to set up criteria however they want. With that said, there is a good reason to use tithing as one way to gauge someone's commitment to God, and to the mission and vision of the church. I've heard it said and agree that, "Where your heart goes your money will follow, and where your money goes your heart will follow." I think tithing naturally increases commitment to that ministry and commitment to that ministry would naturally cause someone to tithe to it. The important thing is to begin consideration of it and dialog with the church leadership about it.

**WHAT IF I DON'T TITHE, BUT STILL WANT TO BE VERY ACTIVE IN EPIKOS?**

People are welcomed to participate and be part of epikos as much as they want, but you will not be eligible for covenant membership status. For some people, tithing is a huge step and we understand that.

**WHAT IF I'M NOT USED TO GIVING MONEY TO THE CHURCH? AND NOT USED TO GIVING THAT MUCH?**

Well, I think that you will find that tithing is a very rewarding step of faith. Of course there are times when it's hard and seems like a huge sacrifice... but that's the point! I think you will be amazed by being obedient to tithing. There's no better time to start than now.

**WHAT IF I DON'T HAVE VERY MUCH MONEY?**

That's not really the point. Remember that tithing is 10% of your income. If you learn to give the "firstfruits" or first 10% to God it doesn't matter if that equals \$10 or \$10,000. I will say though, if you wait to tithe with what is left over at the end of the month, you will probably find you never have enough to tithe. Tithing may require to you change some of your spending habits and even cut back on things you don't really need. If we are all honest, we can find lots of things that we spend money on that we don't need. Here's something interesting to consider: I often here people who don't tithe say, "I don't have any money" and those that do tithe say, "God always provides for all my needs and more!"

*But a poor widow came and put in two very small copper coins, worth only a fraction of a penny. Calling his disciples to him, Jesus said, "I tell you the truth, this poor widow has put more into the treasury than all the others. They all gave out of their wealth; but she, out of her poverty, put in everything—all she had to live on." (Mark 12:42-44)*

***CAN I TITHE MY TIME INSTEAD OF MONEY?***

There is no biblical precedent for tithing your time instead of money. As a matter of fact, we are expected to give God our time and our money, not one or the other. The idea of tithing time is often an excuse people give because they don't want to part with their money. By the way, to actually tithe your time would mean that you give 73 hours per month to ministry service...that's a part time job.

***SHOULDN'T I JUST GIVE WHATEVER AMOUNT IS ON MY HEART?***

God's word says "The heart is deceitful above all things" (Jeremiah 17:9). I think we have to be very careful about relying on what we feel especially when it comes to money. Again, I often find this question or statement to be an excuse for those who don't tithe. Isn't it interesting that when we rely on our "hearts" to determine an amount we often short change what God desires? What is ironic though is that as we tithe our hearts do change and we do become more generous! This does not mean that we don't pray and ask for discernment in giving issues. Giving IS a heart matter. We just need to be careful not to fall into the trap of making excuses for our disobedience. And on the flip side that we would slip into legalism by approaching tithing as a 10% tax and ignore the heart issues of giving.



## GIVING IS AN ACT OF WORSHIP

### ***SHOULD I GIVE EVERY WEEK, BI-WEEKLY, OR MONTHLY?***

That really depends on the person/couple. Some people only get paid bi-weekly so it's easier to do that. Some people find it easier to give every week... just so they don't spend it all before they get paid. Those who are on salary often find it easy to calculate a monthly tithe. You should ask others how they find it to work best. The important part is that you tithe not as much if its each week or month.

### ***IS MY GIVING KEPT PRIVATE?***

Yes. There are only a few people in addition to the pastor that see your giving. As a church, we record it because be are required to by IRS law. Your giving will never be posted or discussed publically. Note: If you give cash, please put your money in an envelope and write your name on it.

### ***IS MY DONATION TAX DEDUCTIBLE?***

Yes. At the end of the year you will receive a receipt from the epikos financial administrators who count and record the money throughout the year. Because we are a 501c3 non-profit organization you can count your donation for a tax deduction. Note: If you give cash, please put your money on an envelope and write your name on it.

### ***DO THE PASTORS AND THEIR WIVES TITHE?***

Of course! Modeling is the best way to lead others and we wouldn't ask people to do things we weren't willing to do. We continue to stretch ourselves to give above and beyond 10% of our income. God has always been so faithful to provide for all of our needs and much, much more.

**SO WHY IS THIS STILL SO HARD FOR ME TO COMMIT TO?**

Well, only you can answer that question. I think for most of us, we love our money a whole lot more than we like to admit. God knows this and that is why money and stewardship is talked about so much in the Bible. God desires for us to trust Him and worship Him alone. One of the most encouraging verses about tithing is Malachi 3:10 where God promises to bless us if we simply trust Him in this area. God even says about tithing, “test me!” That’s a significant challenge from God and I invite you to experience God fully by trusting Him through tithing.

*“Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,” says the LORD Almighty, “and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it.” (Malachi 3:10)*





The image features a hand-drawn illustration. In the foreground, there is a brick wall with a perspective view, showing several rows of bricks. The background is a light, textured area with a pattern of small, dark dots, resembling a halftone or stippled effect. The overall style is sketchy and artistic.

**personal  
GROWTH**



The mission of our church is to make more and better disciples. As a church, we put structures in place to aid in that process. Our weekend worship services and small groups are the major way in which we can build into people's relationship with God. One of the big things that we also want to teach people is to become self learners. There can sometimes be an unhealthy expectation that people put on churches to supply them with every bit of information and opportunity to grow. Instead, we desire to use our structures at epikos to equip and mobilize people to grow themselves. This avoids the concept of the church being like a gas station where you fill up when needed and that when you run low you come back for another fill up.

As was already mentioned in a previous chapter, we look at discipleship as an integration of the head, heart, and hand. Personal, spiritual growth will require you to continually sharpen those areas of your walk with Christ. We don't want you to just wait for the sermon every week to read God's word, and it would be a shame if you only prayed during small group. It's our prayer and desire that your daily walk with Christ would include prayer, reading and meditating on God's word, confession and repentance of sins, weekly rest, giving, and worshipping God in all you do.



## **HEAD**

Here are some books that you might consider adding to your library. Some of them are large reference books that you don't just read in a sitting but are used to help dig in as you study God's word in depth.

How to Read the Bible for all its Worth by Gordon Fee  
(ISBN: 0310246040 )

Systematic Theology by Wayne Grudem  
(ISBN:0310286700 )

New Bible Dictionary  
(ISBN:0830814396 )

Evidence that Demands a Verdict by Josh McDowell  
(ISBN:0785242198 )

Building a Church of Small Groups by Bill Donahue  
(ISBN: 0310240352)

Unstoppable Force: Daring to Become the Church God  
had in Mind by Erwin McManus  
(ISBN: 0764423061)

The Story of Christianity by Justo Gonzalez  
(ISBN: 1565635221 )

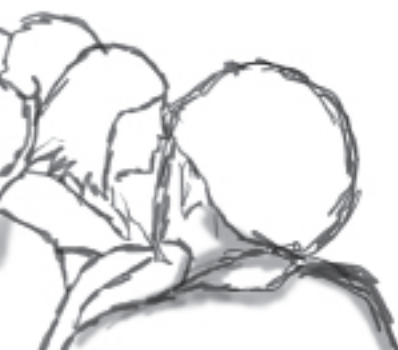


### **HEART**

Pray and ask God to reveal what areas of your heart you need to work on  
Confess your sins to God. Confess your sins to others (1 John 1:9, James 5:16)  
Consider writing in a journal. Write prayers and praises to God.  
Turn away from pride, lust, greed, selfishness, anger, hate, etc. (Gal 5:19-21)  
Seek love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness (Gal 5:22-25)  
Ask for forgiveness to those you have wronged (Matthew 6:12-15)  
Forgive those that have wronged you (Colossians 3:13)

### **HAND**

Commit to the local church!  
Commit to weekly Worship and Small Group  
Invite your friends to church  
Be generous with your time and money  
Consider the needs of those around you  
Consider going on a mission trip  
Get to know your neighbors and do something nice for them  
Write a note of encouragement to someone  
Use your gifts and talents to honor God  
Work at your job as if Jesus was your boss (Eph 6:5-8)  
Do something special for your spouse or family  
Volunteer at a shelter, school, or elderly home  
Visit someone in the hospital or prison







**our  
APPROACH**


### **EVANGELISM**

At epikos, we believe that Jesus Christ's command to "Go! Make disciples of all nations" in Matthew 28:18-21 starts with evangelism. Evangelism is the proclamation of the Good News of Jesus Christ. This Good News at its core is that while we were sinners and separated from God, Christ died for us. Therefore, putting faith in Him reconciles us to God. People are introduced to this Good News in numerous ways: preaching, radio, media, personal relationships, service, etc. We are careful not to say that there is only one correct way or even one better way. Instead, if we are sensitive to God's Spirit and act out of His promptings, we will see evangelism happen in many ways. Every follower of Christ is called to be actively involved in spreading the Gospel message in one way or another. In other words, evangelism is not an event at epikos; rather, it is a lifestyle. It is not reserved for the pastors or for a select few because all Christ followers are to be His aroma, His light to the world.

A theme verse at epikos to understand the dynamic of evangelism is 2 Corinthians 2:14-17:

*"But thanks be to God, Who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of Him. For we are to God the aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing. To the one we are the smell of death; to the other, the fragrance of life. And who is equal to such a task? Unlike so many, we do not peddle the Word of God for profit. On the contrary, in Christ we speak before God with sincerity, like men sent from God"*

OUR EFFECTIVENESS OF EVANGELISM  
IS NOT RATED STRICTLY ON  
HOW WARMLY IT IS ACCEPTED  
BUT INSTEAD ON OUR FAITHFULNESS TO  
PROCLAIMING IT.



We recognize that evangelism is not about persuasion—it is our responsibility to proclaim and God’s to save. As stated above, we might expect that people will respond in different ways. Some people are literally dying to hear the gospel message and receive it exuberantly. Others are completely offended by the gospel and it is a stench to them. Our effectiveness of evangelism is not rated strictly on how warmly it is accepted but instead, on our faithfulness to proclaiming it. Now of course, if no one is coming to know Christ and we are only offending people, we might want to re-evaluate our method. On the other hand, if every person is accepting of the message, we also might want to re-evaluate if we have the correct message. We might be “selling” something other than the true gospel. As the verse above says, we’re not in this for our own personal gain, but rather to see lives legitimately changed through who Jesus is.

Through evangelism, the Holy Spirit ministers saving grace to those who do not know God’s love in and through Jesus Christ. And while there are numerous opportunities at epikos to participate in direct evangelism (helping to organize or participating in various outreach events) and indirect evangelism (being the aroma of Christ in our daily lives, serving anonymously in the community, or attending community events as Christ-following participants, for example), it is our heart to see the lost come to a full knowledge of salvation through Jesus. We never want to lose sight of the fact that it is God who does the work—it is not about us but about Him!



**WORLD MISSIONS**

Our call to “go and make disciples of all nations” is not just a call to spread the gospel in our local context. As this passage of Scripture states, God’s desire is for everyone from every tribe, tongue, and nation to know and worship Him. We see world missions as an extension of our theology of evangelism. Just as we would do what we can to proclaim the Good News to our neighbor across the street, we will make the same effort to reach the little boy in Brazil, the single mother in Africa, the student in Czech Republic. Our church has already had the privilege of sending people to over 20 countries to fulfill this call. Many of these mission trips to other countries happen on a short term scale. People have been using a couple weeks of vacation or summer break from school to bring the message to other parts of the world.

We have a few missionaries that are now placing themselves long term in these countries. We desire to be a church that goes to wherever God calls. We will continue to send people where God calls. Our desire is to develop some long term partnerships with strategic cities. This would allow us to deepen our relationships with people in these cities and allow our church to have a stronger relational and spiritual impact. Furthermore, this would allow us to send people not only on short term trips, but also to have a person or people based in these cities long term. Eventually, we could invite people from these cities to spend time with epikos so continue to build that relationship. As we continue to serve, our desire is that the believers from that city would perpetuate this cycle and begin to reach another strategic city.

### ***SOCIAL ACTION***

Intricately woven into our theology of evangelism and world missions is social action. This is the call to not only bring the Good News of Christ in word, but also in deed. When Jesus came to earth, he didn't just teach, but also met the physical, emotional, and relational needs of the people around him. He called his disciples to do the same. Teaching them in a parable in Matthew 25, Jesus says, "Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me." Jesus taught us that these acts of service and care are worship unto him. As a church, we look for ways that we can use our time, energy, and financial resources to minister to those in need. There are unlimited opportunities for this in our broken city. We tangibly do our small part in a couple different ways. Most importantly, we have created some strategic alliances

with organizations in our city already doing a great job. We connect with them by volunteering time and resources, and a certain amount of our general budget goes to help fund some of these organizations. For example, yearly we've been partnering with Here's Life Inner City to deliver "Boxes of Love," a full Thanksgiving dinner to less fortunate families. We contribute financially to the Milwaukee Rescue Mission and CareNet. We also try to equip our small groups to go out into the community in tangible ways. This allows people to expand our connections to other organizations or to follow a call or idea that God has place on their hearts. Our church is limited and so we can't make every person's passion the passion of the whole church. We will do what we can to offer that cold drink of water that Jesus referred to in Matthew 25.

### **CHURCH GOVERNANCE**

Every church and organization must have some way to operate to make decisions and move forward with their mission. Our constitution and structure is leadership driven with congregational accountability. This means that every covenant member has input and responsibility to the mission of the church. An overseer board governs the major decisions of the church, but that overseer board is approved by votes of covenant members. This somewhat resembles our American representative democracy in that Americans don't vote on every single issue, but they still have a voice through their representative. Some issues are voted on directly such as yearly budgets, hiring and firing of the senior pastor, and certain building and land acquisitions and sales. These types of issues are voted on at annual meetings of the church or special meetings that are called due to the nature of their urgency. The overseer board serves to keep the Lead Pastor accountable to the vision of the church in addition to guiding the general spiritual care of God's beloved. The overseer board is led by the Lead Pastor who is an overseer amongst them.

The overseer board structure and terms are laid out clearly in our constitution which is available upon request. The overseer board is comprised of a specific amount of men who meet the qualifications listed in 1 Timothy 3. We have chosen to limit overseer positions to males only because of the biblical precedents, biblical directives, and biblical/theological reasonings explained in the New Testament. This does not diminish the leadership input or ministry opportunity for women in the church. We know that God has gifted not only men, but also women for ministry, and we completely encourage that. We don't deny that this is a complex issue which is certain to bring about objections by some, so we encourage dialog and discussion to understand this theological position referred to as "Moderate Complementarian." A quick survey of our church will show that both men and women have equal opportunity to serve God with their gifts.

## CHURCH GROWTH

There are churches of all different sizes. Some as small as two and some as large as 800,000+ (like that of Yoido Full Gospel Church, in Seoul, South Korea). Both sides seem to criticize the other. And many seem to think that the size of their church is the size that God likes most. At epikos, we believe that God loves all sizes of churches. But we do want to make it clear that God loves a growing church. It's not in God's character to say, "Okay, that's good enough. Let's stop here." We recognize that the issue really isn't about size, but about relationships and intimacy. In other words, as the size of a church changes, it requires people to change along with it. People generally don't like change, so it's no wonder that a growing church will bring about complaints. A mantra since the beginning of epikos has been, "Grow as big as possible, while staying small as possible at the same time."

That means that we will always look at how we can reach more people with the gospel and raise them up to be fully devoted disciples, while at the same time, we will do everything we can to prevent people from slipping through the cracks or simply becoming a face in the crowd. A church can continue to grow large and remain small if it intentionally gathers people into smaller settings. For us, this is why small groups are so important. Because we are in the city, it will also require us to have a vision beyond a single gathering place. This may mean the planting of more churches or the launching of extension sites. Whatever the method may be, we will always guard against complacency of growth when we feel we've reached a comfortable number. It's not about our comfort; it's about our call to make more and better disciples, a job that's never done.



GROW AS **BIG** AS POSSIBLE,  
WHILE STAYING *SMALL* AS POSSIBLE  
AT THE SAME TIME.

## SEX

At epikos, we take the stance that “sex is a good thing!” Sexual intercourse was designed by God for people for the purposes of procreation (having babies) and enjoyment. It is a gift from God, a gift that has some very clear boundaries. The Bible teaches that sex is reserved for marriage between a man and a woman.

Keep in mind that sex is more than the physical act. It’s also emotional AND spiritual. Even though God is clear that sin is sin, sex certainly carries with it elevated consequences when it is abused or used outside of the boundaries set by him.

1 Corinthians 6:18 says that we ought to “flee from sexual immorality. All other sins a man commits are outside his body, but he who sins sexually sins against his own body” (NIV).

Our culture has, with the full support and prompting of the devil, more than twisted God’s gift of sex. It’s obvious to note that we live in an overly (and overtly) sexualized culture. After all, sex is everywhere- on television, at strip clubs down the street, only a mouse click away.

God’s Word is so clear that we ought to avoid sexual immorality and pursue holiness. “Keep yourself from sexual promiscuity. Learn to appreciate and give dignity to your body, not abusing it, as is so common among those who know nothing of God” (1 Thess. 4:3-5, *The Message*).

And given God's mandate to reserve sex for marriage and avoid sexual immorality (1 Cor. 7), we take a strong stance towards sexual purity for those who aren't married/are pursuing marriage as well as for those who are married.

Sex is a good thing when experienced the way God designed it to be. Unfortunately, more often than not, it isn't used in such a manner. And yet, there is hope. For those of us who haven't kicked the addiction (whether it's masturbation, pornography, or lusting at the man or woman walking down the street), there is hope of a fresh start. And who of us have not fallen short of sexual purity? We look toward Jesus Christ, because through Him we are

forgiven and restored. Repentance is the first step toward a new heart and healing of any inappropriate sexual past. Change your ways and call out for help. Don't let guilt, shame, and secrecy keep you in the vicious cycle of sexual immorality. Turn toward God and start new right now!

*"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation." (2 Corinthians 5:17-18)*



WE LOOK TOWARD JESUS CHRIST  
BECAUSE THROUGH HIM  
WE ARE FORGIVEN AND RESTORED.

### **ALCOHOL**

The use of alcohol by Christians is an interesting conversation because it often is considered a “grey area.” By that, people mean that the Bible isn’t as black and white on the issue as we may want. Even though it is deemed a grey area, it doesn’t mean it shouldn’t be talked about or that there aren’t concrete theological principals to be applied. Avoiding the issue of alcohol creates confusion, frustration, and even division within the church. While the mere consumption of alcohol is not forbidden, it’s important to remember that getting drunk is clearly forbidden. Ephesians 5:18 states “Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit.” Application of this verse means that getting drunk on alcohol or any intoxicating substance (including drugs) is disobedience to God. Anytime your mind is altered, you are putting yourself in a posture of disobeying God, whether that’s just getting a “little buzzed” or

“totally wasted.” But more importantly, this verse gives us the alternative “be filled with the Spirit.” I think this is key to understanding God’s intention on the forbiddance of intoxication. He desires for us to be filled (intoxicated if you will) by Him alone. If we are truly filled with God’s Spirit there will be no reason to seek any satisfaction from other substances. This brings Glory to God and true satisfaction to our lives as well.

Most Christians don’t have a problem seeing the truth in this. Questions arise however about consumption of even responsible amounts of alcohol. People often wrongly take two extreme positions: Position A) Any consumption of alcohol is a sin or Position B) As long as I don’t get drunk, consumption of alcohol is my own business and I can do it whenever and where ever I want.

Position A is clearly wrong because even Jesus consumed alcohol (Matthew 11:19) and we know that he was without sin. We might also assume that alcohol was used in the Last Supper and Jesus' first miracle in the Gospel of John was turning water into wine. Nowhere in the NT is consumption of alcohol in and of itself condemned.

BUT, this doesn't mean that as Christians alcohol consumption is a non-issue. For a number of reasons Christians ought to consider how their use of alcohol affects other people. First of all, many people who have come to Christ in our church have come out of a partying lifestyle. Some of those people consider themselves recovering alcoholics. For them, they need to abstain completely from alcohol in order to resist the temptation of falling back into that addiction. Consuming alcohol around

these people puts them in a position of temptation. Others are still struggling with the addiction on a daily basis. This is exactly the type of situation that Paul encouraged the young Corinthian church to consider. "Be careful, however, that the exercise of your freedom does not become a stumbling block to the weak" (1 Corinthians 8:9). Paul was referring to the Christians "freedom or permission" to eat or drink whatever they wanted, but that the use of this freedom does affect others' walk with Christ. Furthermore, that if their use of this freedom has the potential to lead others astray than it should not be used. Paul states that when it does lead others astray, then it does become a sin. "When you sin against your brothers in this way and wound their weak conscience, you sin against Christ" (1 Corinthians 8:12).

Secondly, how the world sees Christians is important. Being an ambassador of Christ means that we get the opportunity and responsibility to reflect God's Glory. Part of that reflection is offering the world hope that they don't need to fill their lives with such things. Jesus says, "If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world" (John 15:19). Take a moment to think about what alcohol represents in our culture. A quick observation of a beer or liquor commercial will expose that in our culture alcohol is associated with sexual promiscuity, indulgence, male chauvinism, and other un-Christlike behavior. As Christians we can unintentionally be associated with these things if we are not careful with the "if", "when", and "where" we consume alcohol.

Trying to apply this without being legalistic is always a challenge. It is unproductive and legalistic to make a rule that all Christians are forbidden to drink alcohol. Some people may make the personal choice to never consume alcohol while others are careful how they exercise their freedom to drink.

For epikos sponsored events, we choose not to have alcohol for the reasons stated above. In addition, as a church we highly encourage staff and overseers to consider how, when, and where they consume alcohol and to be extra sensitive with the matter as they represent the church as a whole (1 Timothy 3:2). As a Christ follower, we want to encourage you to consider the same. Maybe you set up specific boundaries for yourself such as: not drinking in places that your actions could be perceived wrongly (bars, festivals, raucous parties, and alcohol focused events), not drinking around those you know have a drinking problem, not drinking around new believers who are turning their lives around, only drinking a beer or wine with dinner, etc. All of these are just ways to help guide the principals laid out above. Maybe instead of specific boundaries you just decide to pray for God's wisdom and discernment each time you are faced with a choice to drink or not. God is greatly honored when we take a posture of seeking Him for guidance on how our actions might affect others!







**covenant membership  
PROCESS**

***READ THIS COVENANT MEMBERSHIP BOOK.***

The purpose of this book is to give you a greater understanding of the mission and vision of epikos. It will also layout in more detail some of the values and expectations that we have as a church. It may not answer all your questions but we hope that you find this book helpful.

***ATTEND A COVENANT MEMBERSHIP CLASS.***

The class is only a couple hours and much of it will review contents from this book. The class will allow you to ask questions and get clarification about the church.

***FILL OUT COVENANT MEMBERSHIP ESSAY APPLICATION AND TURN IN.******COMPLETE 1:1 INTERVIEW/CHAT SESSION.***

You will meet with Pastor Danny or one of the overseer groups assigned to meet with prospective new members. At that meeting we are available to answer any final questions that you have. We also will use your application as a guide to get to know more about you. If you meet all of the qualifications to become a member and are recommended by Danny or the overseer group, you will be presented to the congregation, usually along with other new members. If there are requirements that you don't meet, we will work with you and put together a plan to help you meet those.

Not all of these steps need to happen in order. For instance you may fill out the application at any time or take the class at anytime or read the book at anytime. Even as you fill out the application, you may see that you don't meet some of the requirements (baptism, tithing, small groups), but still complete the application. When you meet for your 1:1, you will be able to talk about how and when you will fulfill those.

## **covenant MEMBERSHIP ESSAY**

To receive a Microsoft Word Document of the following questions, please email [membership@epikos.org](mailto:membership@epikos.org).

- 1 When did you put your faith in Jesus Christ? What does that mean to you?
- 2 How has this changed your life?
- 3 When were you water baptized by immersion as a believer?
- 4 Why is it important for you to become a member of epikos?
- 5 Have you been regularly involved in an epikos small group? Please describe how it has benefited you.
- 6 Do you tithe (give 10% of your income). Do you tithe to the church? When did this start as a regular practice in your life?
- 7 In your own words, describe the vision of epikos?
- 8 What spiritual gifts are you using at epikos to advance God's Kingdom? Give specific examples.
- 9 Why do you feel it's important to make weekly corporate worship a priority in your life?
- 10 Besides weekly worship and small group, how do you connect with God on a regular basis?
- 11 Have you read the epikos statement of faith and do you agree with it? Is there anything you don't understand or need more clarification on? (This will be clarified to you during our 1:1 meeting or the class. Not knowing everything right now will not disqualify you from membership eligibility.)
- 12 Do you understand that by becoming a covenant member you will have the privilege and responsibility of guiding the church? This will happen in the form of voting, giving, and exercising church discipline.
- 13 Explain the connection of evangelism and discipleship.
- 14 Do you trust the leadership of the church to guide the vision and help everyone carry it out?
- 15 Anything else you would like us to know?



