

The Covenant of Peace Church

What Visitors Can Expect

"This Church exists solely for the Glory of God. We set our sights on this wonderful end in all that we do together."

To help visitors understand how we gather as a Church, we have provided descriptions of each of our weekly services. Generally, our Church services are characterized by three main aspects:

1. Serious contemplation of the Holy Bible and its eternal Truths
2. Passionate corporate celebration designed to bring Honor and Glory to God for Who He is in gratitude for all that He has done for us, in us, and through us by Jesus Christ
3. Friendly interaction with one another and our guests.

After you get a taste for our Church by the words in this handout- please come see us live them out in person as we gather together to praise our God.

The Lord's Day

The Apostle's of Jesus Christ took the first day of the week (Sunday) to gather together and celebrate the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. They called that day, *"The Lord's Day"*. The Apostle John said that he was, **"in the Spirit"** on the Lord's Day (**The Revelation 1:10**). We seek to be "in the Spirit" on the Lord's Day also.

During the Reformation of the 16th Century, the people of God were encouraged to remember that when Christianity began, it wasn't just about "going to Church" on Sunday morning, but it was about setting aside an entire day for Reflection, Meditation, Bible Study, Prayer, Fellowship and of hearing the authoritative and public proclamation of the Word of God in a way that the people could understand it and apply it to their daily lives. We continue in that long history by endeavoring to set aside the entire day for our "rest" in Jesus Christ.

Much of the day is spent assembled together in our Sanctuary- which is a public place that is set aside for worship. But we also gather in individual homes and we minister in other locations all during the Lord's Day

in order to glean as much as possible. Here is what a typical Lord's Day Worship looks like at The Covenant of Peace Church.

Sunday Morning

Profile

Age-wise, we are young. Dress trends toward business-casual. People are friendly, and come from a mixed racial, educational, and economic background. This Church is a good representation of the people who live and work on the Mississippi Gulf Coast.

The Worship of Preparation

Early Sunday Morning- the leadership of the Church comes together for a time of serious examination, reflection, meditation, and final preparation before Service. At 10:00 a.m., the Elders and Deacons gather to pray for God's rich blessing on the Service. As the people filter in, soft music is played which will encourage our hearts to meet with God.

Our Ministers have gone to great lengths to prepare themselves for this Service. They have studied to show themselves approved unto God as a workman that needs not to be ashamed- and are able to rightly interpret the Word of Truth (**2Timothy 2:15**).

"Everything that we do on the Lord's Day is geared towards the Worship of God the Father in Jesus Christ the Son through the power of the Holy Spirit "

Those who will minister have also guarded their souls and examined their hearts and are held accountable to God and Man for their actions; their lives; and their words. This means that they have entered into this preparation with humility and earnestness (**1Timothy 4:16**).

The Worship of Reading and Study

Along with loving the Lord with all our heart, soul, and strength- Jesus commanded us to love God with all our mind (**Mark 12:30**). To that end- we seek to provide tools that will help believers develop a godly and spiritual mind. We also realize that Christianity is not new- it is 2,000 years old- and we who make up the Church in the 21st Century are blessed with a long history of godly men and women who still speak to us today through the testimony of their lives and through their teachings.

Each Lord's Day- a copy of a teaching or a sermon or a biography is made available which is designed to encourage and equip the believer in his daily walk with God. We make special emphasis on the writings of the Puritans and early Reformers in this effort.

Also a daily Bible Reading Plan is made available along with guides from the various Bible Studies conducted during the week.

The Worship of Prayer

We are not so foolish to think that we can enter right into singing our praises to God without *first* confessing our sins and seeking God's Forgiveness, Mercy, and Blessing. To that end, earnest and fervent prayer is offered to begin our service.

The Worship of Reading Scripture

We believe that both the Old and New Testaments should be read aloud in our services, so after our opening prayer, a passage that is appropriate for that service is read aloud in its entirety.

The Worship of Music

The music we sing at Covenant of Peace is a blend of the three types of music that the Scriptures commend: Psalms; Hymns; and Spiritual Songs (**Colossians 3:6**). We highly value the doctrinally rich hymns of years gone by while we also find blessing in many of the choruses of the twenty-first century. Most of us who are comfortable with one particular style have discovered, while at Covenant of Peace, that we have come to enjoy other genres of music we had not previously encountered. We strongly prefer congregational singing, which emphasizes the gathered body singing praises to God with one voice, over performed music, which tends to spotlight the abilities of some while encouraging passivity in the rest.

We also encourage each person to sing whole heartedly to the Lord because He is great and He has done great things and we have gathered to praise and worship Him.

The Worship of Giving

Immediately after the song service is ended, we are allowed to worship God with our financial gifts to Him- given out of a free and loving heart.

"God deserves and is entitled to our best. When we give Him anything less- we dishonor Him"

The Worship of the Lord's Supper

On the first Lord's Day of each month, we partake together in the Lord's Supper. This is done in remembrance of Jesus' great Sacrifice for us and is open to all baptized believers.

The Worship of the Great Commission

We are a Missions minded Church but we do not want the support of this effort to simply be an impersonal "line item" in the Church budget. So every day as we conclude our usual activities- we take the change that we have accumulated that day and place them in a container at our individual homes set aside for this purpose. We then bring that change to the Church on the second Lord's Day of each month to present that gift to the Lord. We then pray over the Missionaries and their Labor of Love in preaching the Gospel overseas.

The Worship of Learning Truth

We want to learn what God has revealed in Holy Scripture so we know how to live our lives in such a way that will honor the Lord. To this end- the people of our Church engages in Family Devotions during the week as the fathers and husbands lead their family in the Ways of God. As we gather together on the Lord's Day- we stand and go over one Question from one of the Catechisms that were developed during the Reformation.

The Worship of Preaching

At the Covenant of Peace Church- we are totally committed to verse by verse (expository) preaching of the Word of God which seeks to answer three questions about the Scriptures:

1. What did God the Holy Spirit author in that verse or passage?
2. What did God *mean* by what He said?
3. How can I apply this Eternal Divine Truth to my life in the 21st Century?

The Sermons usually last between 50-65 minutes and are packed with material for reflection. Each Lord's Day Morning sermons are but one piece of a much larger "journey" through an entire Book of the Holy Bible. This "journey" is an expositional examination of every Word, every line, every verse, and every precept of that particular inspired Book. All preaching is Christ centered and Gospel-driven.

"The Church in the Bible had four things that made what they had to be 'common'. They continued steadfastly in the Apostle's Doctrine; and in times of godly Fellowship; and in keeping the Lord's Supper (the Breaking of Bread) and in

fervent and earnest prayer. (The Acts 2:42) We seek to be faithful to this Biblical pattern"

The Worship of Reflection

A typical service is finished around noon. At the conclusion of the Sermon- a prayer is offered and we stand to sing a hymn that helps us reflect on the Word we just heard. We conclude the Service with a Benediction of reading an appropriate Passage from Scripture that ties in everything we have done together that morning. Fellowship usually follows as members take yet another time to talk and enjoy each other's company over events of the past week and in the life of the believer and the Church. It is common to find folks still gathered- talking over the Sermon even an hour later.

Anyone needing prayer or counseling after the morning Service is welcomed to contact a Staff Elder.

The Worship of Fellowship

Since the devastation of Hurricane Katrina in August 2005, we are not able to conduct fellowship dinners at the Church. Until additional facilities can be built, we adjourn after the Morning Service and gather at various individual homes during the afternoon to reflect on the morning Message.

However we do have Church Dinners at various times on the Grounds of the Church or at a member's home immediately after that Service.

Sunday Evening

The Worship of Bible Study

We re-assemble on Sunday Evenings at 6:00 p.m. for a Family Bible Study. We begin this time by lifting up our prayer that God the Holy Ghost will illuminate our hearts and minds so that we may properly and fully understand His precious Word.

Once we've prayed together, we engage in a serious and deep examination of either a Book of the Bible or a topic of Theology. The Bible Study lasts approximately 75 - 90 minutes. A handout is offered at the beginning of the Study and it is conducted in an informal, interactive format where questions are encouraged. The goal of this Study is to learn. The Bible Study is then concluded with prayer.

On the first Sunday Evening each month- we have a Question and Answer Session with a Pastor or Elder or a Panel so that each person has an opportunity to find Biblical answers to the issues that we all face.

Lord, Teach Me to Pray

Family Prayer Meeting

Prayer is the lifeblood of this Church. In addition to several prayer meetings which are ongoing during the week, the Corporate Body gathers back together as a Body on Tuesday Nights to seek God's Face and cry out to Him. The Prayer Meeting starts about 7:00pm. A staff Elder will usually teach for about fifteen minutes on some aspect of prayer from God's Word and then prayer requests are made. At that time, Prayer is offered concerning these needs and then we all go to the altar and begin to pray. Usually the prayers are spontaneous and unprepared and as one individual finishes- another begins.

"Prayer is the aroma of the Christian Church. It is what distinguishes us from every man-made institution on earth. When God's people gather together to pray- God moves."

The Prayer Meetings are concluded with uplifting songs and praises offered in gratefulness to God for hearing and answering our prayers. Once each month, special prayer is offered for the Missionaries that we support with highlights of the countries that they are in given so that we all know how to pray for them.

Prayer Meetings usually last about 90 minutes, with opportunities for fellowship afterward.

Beginning January 3, 2012- our Prayer Meeting will be moved to Wednesday Evenings at 7pm.

Help My Unbelief

The Covenant of Peace School of the Holy Bible

We provide several opportunities during the week for those who seek to become more knowledgeable about the Scriptures and the historic orthodox doctrines that made the Church to be the shining "city on the hill" as there are informal gatherings at various Member's homes at different times during the week.

All CPSHB Studies are entirely Biblical and aided with videotaped lectures from the leading theologians of our day complete with a workbook and homework. These studies usually last about 90- 120 minutes.

"The absence of Bible knowledge in the life of the average Church member

is the single greatest reason why error, heresy, and unfaithfulness abounds in our day. Teaching and learning Sound Doctrine is essential if we are to earnestly contend for the Faith that was once and for all delivered to the saints"

How Can They Hear Without a Preacher?

Evangelistic Opportunities

Jesus died to save people and He commanded His disciples to go forth from the comfort of their own homes and to be inconvenienced by the radical demands of the Gospel of Love to preach to every creature. With that in mind- we encourage everyone to be busy in the Work of the Lord by ministering in local jails, nursing homes, schools, hospitals, and individual homes at various times during the week.

The Covenant of Peace Radio Broadcast

Currently Pastor Blair's teaching can be heard on two local radio stations- WOSM (103.1 FM) 10:10 am- Monday – Friday and WBUV (104.9 FM) 8:00 am Sunday.

In addition the audio of Pastor Blair's teachings can be heard or downloaded at www.sermonaudio.com/covenantofpeace, and the text can be read or downloaded from www.covenantofpeace.net. Future plans include broadcasting video at www.youtube.com.

Future Plans

- Fully staffed Day Care Center
- Accredited School for children K-8th grade
- Theological Seminary for those entering the ministry
- 24/7 Prayer Room
- Store with trustworthy and reliable books, tapes, and videos