



*And God blessed Noah and his sons
and said to them,
“Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth”*

GENESIS 9:1

Annual Focus

September 2016 - June 2017

Williamsburg Community Chapel

ANNUAL FOCUS RESOURCES

Deacons, Elders, Staff: ***Serving a Movement***, Timothy Keller

Small Groups: ***Gospel in Life***, Timothy Keller

RATIONALE FOR FOCUS

*“...and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and
in all Judea, and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”*

– Jesus Christ **ACTS 1:8**

The fall of 2016 marks 40 years of ministry at the Chapel. This great mile marker brings us to a crossroads in our history. Will we attempt to self-secure our heritage and ministry methods and institutionalize our church? Or, will we embrace the pioneering spirit in which we were founded, and rigorously discern Jesus’ call to continue building a Kingdom movement at the Chapel?

A quick contrast between institutions and movements reveals key differences: Institutions seek their own security and preservation, while movements seek to fulfill a common mission. Institutions avoid risk, whereas movements embrace risk as a path to innovation. Institutions are bound together by rules and procedures, while movements are united by shared vision and goals. While God has ordained a certain amount of institutional character to aid in the organization of His church (deacons, elders, pastors, structures that enable different parts of the body to work in concert together), God has always called His people to lean in the direction of movement.

Movement is a concept that defies simple definitions and categories. The following questions are helpful to begin framing a discussion about the church and movement. What does Scripture teach about movement? What are the common characteristics of movement in the Bible? Are there important vehicles for movement to which God calls us to engage? What are some common obstacles or catalysts to movement? What would our lives and our church look like if God was building a movement among us? How would we even know if it was happening? We trust that wrestling with these questions as we study movement from different angles in Scripture will yield clarity on how Jesus is moving in our midst.

In honor of the Chapel’s 40th anniversary, we will begin the year studying the 40 day or 40 year journeys we find in Scripture. These stories will help us process our own spiritual journeys. They will shed light on our collective journey as a family of faith. They will

provide examples of the movement of God's people. They will help us see how God moves His people, how God's people can participate in God's movement. Finally, they will help us mine for "movement dynamics" as we continue to embrace the movement God began at the Chapel 40 years ago.

After our initial study on the movement of God's people, we will continue examining movement as we look at the church as the primary vehicle of God's movement in the world today. During Advent we will examine the incarnation as a picture of God's movement toward us. We will start the new year dealing with obstacles to movement that people face on their discipleship journey. During Lent we will consider prayer as a catalyst to all spiritual movements by studying Jesus' prayers in the Gospels. Finally, we will finish our study on movement with a look at the book of Acts. We will consider how we might continue the movement of the Gospel that is clearly seen in the activity of the early church.

In summary, our prayer is that from September 2016 to June 2017 we will refresh our embrace of the movement Jesus launched when the Chapel began in 1976 and discern how we might continue to serve Jesus' movement in the world today.

ORIGINS OF THE FOCUS

In the fall of 2015 the elders came out of their annual retreat with a phrase that seemed to summarize everything Jesus had been teaching that weekend: "Mobilize the Body to fulfill the mission of making disciples." This focus on movement emerged after some time spent considering mobility, a trait which if harnessed properly, allows for movement in the right direction. Mobility, at its best in our circumstance, would be moving in a Jesus-directed direction. As we explore the contrast between movements and institutions and the implications for our ministry, it should be noted that there are additional important contrasts beyond the contrast between movements and institutions that need to be explored to understand the full implications of, "Mobilize the body to fulfill the mission of making disciples." The following contrasts are meant to help us engage on a deeper level with the concepts of *the body*, *the mission*, and *making disciples*:

1. **Golfing Buddies vs. Football Team-** We must embrace that we all have specialized roles to play. In the same way that few members of a football team play an interchangeable roles, each part of the body of Christ has a unique gift that

if left unused diminishes the overall work of the body. Our work is interdependent. Each person's task is dependent on someone else accomplishing their task.

2. **Autonomy vs. Partnership-** Mobilizing the body will require collaborative partnerships. Inside our church we will need partnership between congregants, deacons, elders, ministries, pastors, and staff. We will also need to begin exploring partnerships outside our church and thinking through what our "Gospel Ecosystem" looks like. The mission is simply too big and too important to hold on to it too tightly, deluding ourselves into thinking that we must control things ourselves.
3. **Building the Church vs. Building the Kingdom-** Too often, when we think about serving, we think about serving within the walls of the church. While serving within the local Body of Christ should always be a hallmark of believers, we must also begin to think about training people to engage in lay ministry outside the walls of the church in ways that build the broader Kingdom Jesus is establishing on earth. Let us lead the Chapel in such a way that people serving the church also gain the skills they need to serve Jesus wherever they find themselves on Monday morning.
4. **Slavery vs. Sabbath-** In Deuteronomy 5:6 God gives us some important context for the Ten Commandments, "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery." With this as the backdrop for the commands that follow, God instructs the Israelites and us how to live outside the oppressive reign of Pharaoh, or in our case, the darkness of sin that Pharaoh represents. God gives the command for Sabbath rest as a direct counter punch to the never ending toil the Israelites endured in Egypt. As we consider how our church might embrace Jesus' movement, we must remember to embrace the gift of Sabbath. We must engage in ministry in a way that honors the rhythms and seasons God has instilled in His creation. When we embrace Sabbath and seasonality, we learn that Jesus, not ministry, is our master. We must never allow ministry to become an alternative Pharaoh that keeps us from hearing Jesus' call in Matthew 11:29 to, "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

5. **Converts vs. Disciples-** In Matthew 28:18 Jesus commanded us to “make disciples.” This was a radical command because in Jesus’ time, teachers *had* disciples, but they *made* rabbis. In other words, being a disciple was a temporary assignment until one graduated to the real task at hand. When Jesus called us to make disciples he called us to bring people into a perpetual state of apprenticeship to Him. While conversion is an important step in the process, we must recognize that it signals the beginning of a much larger process called discipleship. We must not be satisfied making converts, but rather heed Jesus’ call to go into all the world and *make disciples*.
6. **Behavioral Modification vs. Jesus’ Transformation-** The movement of the Gospel starts with God’s movement toward us in Jesus. Our teaching should reflect this order of events. If the Gospel starts with Jesus, so should our teaching. When our teaching starts with the behavioral change we hope to see in people’s lives, we inadvertently mask the source and power for all human transformation, Jesus Himself. Let us teach in such a way that reflects our deep conviction that only Jesus transforms lives. Let us teach people about Jesus’ character, His Grace and His mission and allow changes in behavior come as a result of our understanding of Him. For any change that is not accompanied by His power is ultimately short lived, but changes that come through an encounter with Jesus will take a lifetime to unfold.
7. **Division vs. Unity-** As we seek to lean in the direction of movement this year there will be many opportunities for division in the Chapel Family. When anyone who calls the Chapel their church home senses division, may they be quick to bring up Jesus’ prayer for us recorded in John 17:21: “that they may all be one, just as you, Father, are in me, and I in you, that they also may be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me.” It has been said that division in the church breeds atheism in the world. Therefore unity is both an important way to express God’s triune nature and a strategic necessity in our increasingly post-Christian culture.

For the Chapel's Committed Core

8. **Consumers vs. Creators-** In Genesis 1:28 we read, “And God blessed them. And God said to them, ‘Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth’” (this is the primary corollary verse to our Annual Focus key verse). God gave humankind the unique ability to work alongside Him in the continued creation of the world. Our desire and ability to create is part of what it means to be created in the image of God (Genesis 1:26). When we are creating, we are embracing one of God’s greatest gifts and fulfilling His first command. In contrast, our current culture is obsessed with consumption. This obsession has crept into the life of the church. Terms like “church shopping” have entered our lexicon. The statement, “I did not get anything out of that” following Sunday services has become acceptable. What would happen if the core of the Chapel family was committed to creating ministry rather than consuming it? What would happen if we all imagined the seats on Sunday were a little hotter, signaling to us to get up and get moving to create the church God intends? May we experience what would happen as we create alongside the Creator in the midst of a culture of consumers.

For the Chapel's Staff Team

9. **Doers of Tasks vs. Leaders of Leaders-** The ability to get things done has its place in every organization. However, in light of the current season in which Jesus is calling us to lean away from institutionalization and toward movement, as well as the current size of our church, our staff team must transition away from being primarily doers of tasks and become leaders of leaders. Of course, this transition will take place on a sliding scale depending on the job. Some jobs will need to embrace leadership of leaders a lot, and some will only need to a little. All of us, however, must be willing to ask ourselves hard questions about how we work and where there is opportunity to embrace a change in our approach. This paradigm shift will force us to flex new muscles that may currently be weak. It will push us to trust Jesus more because we won’t be in control of every decision. It will certainly require some new training. As uncomfortable as

some of this might be, we must begin making this transition as a staff team. This will be a major emphasis for our team in 2016-17.

September 18 - October 30 (7 weeks)

The Movement of God's People

PASTORAL PERSPECTIVE ON THE FOCUS

As we study movement together, it will be important that we keep in mind two concepts embodied in the following quotes and allow these ideas to push us toward prayer and confession. It is in confessional prayer that we truly begin to understand why we must depend completely on Jesus for movement in our community.

I. "The resurgence will not be directed." –Tim Keller

We must seek Jesus' direction alone for how we engage in His movement as a church body. We cannot manufacture movement. We cannot program movement. We must embrace Jesus' agenda for movement.

II. "You won't get into Narnia again by *that* route...don't go trying to use the same route twice. Indeed, don't *try* to get there at all. It'll happen when you're not looking for it."
–C.S. Lewis, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*

Jesus has us on a unique journey. While we can learn from our past and other churches' experience, we must be open to whatever new method Jesus wants to use to continue the movement He began at the Chapel.

In the fall of 1976, God moved in the lives of two couples from the local college community to launch Williamsburg Community Fellowship. The church met in a small home, the children's ministry in a neighboring house. Each Sunday morning, folding chairs replaced furniture. Each Sunday afternoon, as the furniture replaced the folding chairs, it was clear that all who attended were to bring the shape of the Gospel wherever they found themselves in the coming week. They sought to focus on the essentials of the historic Christian faith irrespective of denominational differences. Williamsburg Community Fellowship was renamed Williamsburg Community Chapel when the church was formally organized. All who call the Chapel home today are part of this living room legacy and now face a decision: will we institutionalize our heritage and ministry methods, or will we refresh our embrace of the movement Jesus began in a living room 40 years ago?

In honor of the Chapel's 40th anniversary, we will begin the year studying the 40 day or 40 year journeys we find in Scripture. They will provide examples of the movement of God's people. They will help us see how God moves His people and how God's people can participate in God's movement. They will help us mine for "movement dynamics" at a time when we could begin moving toward institutionalization.

While studying these "40 passages" will help us process our spiritual journeys and the Chapel's collective journey as a family of faith, the number "40" in Scripture contains a great depth of meaning. It often signals a time of preparation for a specific future task.

These 40 day or 40 year journeys will help us remember our past preparation and consider our future task.

September 18: *40 Days and Noah*, Genesis 8:6-9:1

September 25: *40 Days and the Spies*, Numbers 13:1-31

October 2: *40 Years and Rueben and Gad*, Numbers 32:1-23

October 9: *40 Days and David*, 1 Samuel 17:1-23

October 16: 40 Days and Elijah, 1 Kings 19:1-13

October 23: 40 Days and Jonah, Jonah 3:1-4:1

October 30: 40 Days and Jesus, Acts 1:1-11

November 6–20 (3 weeks)

The Vehicle for Movement

In Matthew 16:18 Jesus declares, "...I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." Jesus chose to start just one organization, the church. What is the nature and character of the church Jesus founded? The New Testament offers three pictures of the church in order to grasp the depth of what Jesus intended to build when He stated, "I will build my church..." The pictures are the bride, the household and the body. Seeking clarity on these pictures will help us better understand what the church is, what a church does and how a church functions as the primary vehicle for the movement of God's people. In addition, these word pictures will teach us about our Discipleship Program Priorities: connecting to Jesus' bride through membership, growing in Jesus' household through groups, and serving the church and the world as an expression of Jesus' body. If we gain clarity on the nature of the church, we will gain clarity regarding how Jesus is using the church as the vehicle for His movement in the world today.

Celebration of Chapel's 40th Anniversary

November 6, Commitment Sunday: *Commitment to the Bride*, Ephesians 5:18-32

November 13: *Growing in the Household*, Ephesians 2:11-22

November 20: *Serving as a Body*, Corinthians 12:12-27

November 27 – December 25 (5 weeks)

The Movement of God

In Colossians 1:15 we read that Jesus "is the image of the invisible God..." In Jesus Christ, God, as the evangelist John wrote, "became flesh." The season of Advent celebrates God's unmatched pursuit of reconciliation with man by becoming man. Theologians refer to this event as "the incarnation." While this may not be a word we use often, the process by which the incarnation occurred included both the miraculous and the mundane, the appearance of angels and the shepherding of sheep. In light of this, the doctrine of the incarnation must be understood on both a spiritual and practical level. The Christmas story reveals both *that* God became flesh in real time, space and history as well as *how* God became flesh in real time, space, and history. This Christmas as we study both of these aspects of the incarnation, we hope to embrace the full implications of believing in and serving the God who first moved toward us as a baby in Bethlehem.

November 27, 1st Sunday of Advent: *The Movement of God*, Colossians 1:15-20

December 4, 2nd Sunday of Advent: *Doubting God's Movement*, Luke 1:1-25

December 11, 3rd Sunday of Advent: *Embracing God's Movement*, Luke 1:26-38

December 18, 4th Sunday of Advent: *Announcing God's Movement*, Luke 3:1-6

December 24, Christmas Eve: *Seeing God's Movement*, Luke 2:1-18

December 25, Christmas Day: *Confirming God's Movement*, Luke 2:28-32

In-Between Series

January 1: *What place do you need to call roll?*, Joshua 5:9-6:1

January 8 – February 19 (7 weeks)

Obstacles to Movement

It often seems that something is just not working when it comes to our discipleship journey. When our desire to continue moving toward Jesus is strong, but our actual movement is stunted, we may have hit an obstacle on our discipleship journey. When obstacles lie in our path we can feel stuck, frustrated and without joy. This is a universal experience. Every follower of Jesus encounters obstacles to movement. In addition, there are some obstacles that prevent people from even beginning a discipleship journey. Everyone knows what it feels like to hit an obstacle and everyone can benefit from contemplating how to move through them with trust in God's providence and an experience of His provision. As we start a new year, we will focus on common obstacles to movement for both disciples and skeptics. We will examine what the Bible teaches about moving over, around or sometimes alongside seven of our most familiar and frustrating obstacles.

January 8: *Circumstances*, Mark 4:35-41

January 15: *Schedule*, Deuteronomy 5:1-22

January 22: *Doubt*, John 20:19-31

January 29: *Guilt*, Colossians 3:1-17

February 5: *Money*, Proverbs 13:4-8

February 12: *Culture*, Jeremiah 29:1-14

February 19: *Evil*, Ephesians 6:10-20

February 26 – April 16 (8 weeks)

A Catalyst for Movement

Prayer is a virtually universal human behavior. Prayer fulfills a desire within us all to connect with something larger than ourselves. Prayer gives us access to the wisdom of the Almighty. Prayer offers a place to whisper what we dare not tell another soul, or, in frustration, to cry out before God. Prayer is the starting point for every great spiritual movement. Yet, few people actually know how to pray. Most people know how important prayer is, but few people report having a vital prayer life. From Ash Wednesday to Easter we will examine the prayers of Jesus. We will learn how Jesus approached prayer, what he prayed and how he instructs us to pray. If we are going to discern Jesus' movement in our midst, deep and abiding prayer is essential. This Lenten season, let us look to the prayer life of our risen Savior as we embrace the resurrected life He offers each day through prayer.

February 26: *Jesus Teaches us to Pray Part 1*, Matthew 6:5-15

March 1, Ash Wednesday: *Reflection*, Matthew 4:1-11

March 5, 1st Sunday of Lent: *Jesus Teaches Us To Pray Part 2*, Matthew 6:5-15

March 12, 2nd Sunday of Lent: *Jesus' Prayer of Thanksgiving*, Matthew 11:25-30

March 19, 3rd Sunday of Lent: *Jesus' Prayer for the Father's Glory*, John 12:20-36

March 26, 4th Sunday of Lent: *Jesus' Prayer for Us Part 1*, John 17:1-19

April 2, 5th Sunday of Lent: *Jesus' Prayer for Us Part 2*, John 17:20-18:1

April 9, 6th Sunday of Lent, Palm Sunday: *Jesus' Prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane*, Matthew 26:36-50

April 14, Good Friday: *Jesus' Prayers from the Cross*, Matthew 27:45-56

April 16, Easter: *Easter Reflection*, Matthew 27:57-28:10

April 23 – June 4 (7 weeks)

Serving a Movement

This series will examine Jesus' movement through the church in the book of Acts. It will offer us an opportunity to discern the role He is asking us, both as individuals and as a church family, to play in His movement today. In Acts 1:8 Luke records Jesus' final words to his followers just before his ascension. Rather than give a command, Jesus gives a promise, "...you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth." From the birth of the church on the day of Pentecost (Acts 2) to its expansion throughout the Roman Empire (Acts 28), we see Jesus fulfilling this promise. Just as the Holy Spirit led and directed the movement of God's people, the church, to fulfill Jesus' promise in Acts 1:8, the Holy Spirit is leading and directing the movement of the church today. Jesus' promise that His followers will become witnesses for Him to the "ends of the earth" extends to us today so we must ask "What does Jesus' movement look like? How does Jesus move? How can we serve this movement?" What part of His movement is He asking the Chapel to be active in (locally, nationally and internationally)? We will answer these questions as we look at the movement of the early church in the book of Acts.

April 23: Movement and Its Beginning, Acts 2:1-24

April 30: Movement and Its Unity, Acts 2:41-47

May 7: Movement and Its Problems, Acts 6:1-7

May 14: Movement and Its Expansion, Acts 9:31-10:8

May 21: Movement and Its Message Part 1, Acts 13:13-42

May 28: The Movement and Its Message Part 2, Acts 17:16-33

June 4, Pentecost Sunday: The Movement and its Promise, Acts 28:1-16, 30-31



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