

## **Colonial Presbyterian Church**

### **Church Information Form Questions/Answers**

#### **Part 3: Question 15. In what ways does your church participate in ecumenical activities?**

Colonial engages in a myriad of local, national & international ministries. These ministries cross denominational boundaries without losing biblical integrity. A comprehensive list is available upon request. Here is a representative sample:

##### **Local & National** ecumenical ventures:

- Unite KC/Elevate KC
- Racial Reconciliation
- Foster Care support (*w/ foster adopt coordinator on staff*)
- Supporting single moms
- Gracious Promise (*care of those impacted by incarceration*)
- Mission SouthSide, Freedom Fire, Hope Center, Center IMPACT (*help under-resourced communities*)
- Veronica's Voice (*Empowering women emancipated from sex trafficking*)
- Healing House (*Assisting those escaping an addiction lifestyle*)

- Interchurch Worship & Prayer
- Pulpit Exchange

##### **International** ecumenical ventures:

- Global Orphan Project
- India Gospel League
- Elam Ministries
- CRU Partners
- Frontier Fellowship
- Wycliffe JAARS
- SAT-7
- Navigators
- Young Life
- Youth With A Mission

#### **Part 3: Question 16. Describe the strengths of your congregation.**

**The membership of Colonial Presbyterian Church has a strong Biblical knowledge and continually demonstrates a desire to learn from the Bible and to follow the truths contained therein.**

- Our membership believes the Bible to be the inerrant Word of God and is necessary and sufficient to understand God's plan for mankind.
- Our church contains a legacy of believers that have seen the goodness of the Lord and His provision. The Colonial family includes a number of people who have served as pastors and have theological degrees.
- The membership is hungry for weekly strong Biblical teaching. The congregation is encouraged to apply Biblical principles to daily living.

- While our membership believes strongly in engaging the world with love, we believe equally strongly that Biblical instruction cannot be compromised to appease our culture.

**Our membership is composed of generous givers. The generosity extends beyond finances and is equally apparent in the giving of our time and talents.**

- Generous giving results in a strong operations budget and fairly compensated staff, with financial stewardship resulting in Colonial owning our facilities debt free.
- In addition to our ongoing ministry tithing, Colonial pursues above and beyond giving through offerings which are 100% distributed to ministries outside of the church. These offerings are directed to ministries to meaningfully advance their mission, vision and strategy. Examples of recent recipients can be provided.
- A significant number of our membership diligently seek places to serve, both within our church and in external charitable outreach efforts.
- There is a strong interest in our membership to become better equipped for community evangelism and our staff has devoted a sermon series this summer on providing training and encouragement in such.

**We have placed a strong emphasis on the development of our youth/student population. Our church has a long & strong reputation for promoting student growth and evangelism.**

- One of our documented core values is to be “Student Strong” and our efforts at Colonial reflect that desire.
- In Fall 2019, we upgraded our Overland Park student facilities with a dedicated building and outdoor game and gathering facilities for student education and engagement.
- Colonial “Summer Staff” draws college-age ministry interns to a summer-long discipleship, leadership and teaching program. Our Summer Staff effort runs through the summer months and is a high energy, intense interaction between our high school, junior high and elementary students and the Summer Staff. The intent is to promote the faith growth of our students and to provide continued development opportunities for the college-age Summer Staff.
- Our worship leaders routinely involve high school musicians and singers on the worship team and our worship services are led by our youth every six weeks.

**While some may consider us a big church, by Midwest standards, Colonial is still a place where one may quickly become family and belong.**

- We have many efforts designed to engage our membership in ‘small group’ settings to promote the spiritual family and support systems that we understand our Lord to desire of us.
  - We have over 90 small group efforts which are led by lay membership and overseen by pastoral staff.

- Our membership serves in marriage mentoring and marriage strengthening efforts to promote and maintain strong marriages.
- We are currently developing a “parish format” which is designed to ensure that our membership is frequently engaged with an elder or staff member to ensure that there is constant awareness of prayer needs and hardships for which the church can provide support.

**Part 3: Question 17. List specific problems with which your congregation struggles**

Aging Congregation

A longer term issue has been the aging of our congregation. Colonial has a rich history in the KC metropolitan area of engagement and involvement. There is a substantial portion of the church that is 50+ in age. Our church tends to draw mature and engaged Christians that desire deeply engaging sermons and Biblical truth. An opportunity for Colonial is to be more effective in engaging young adults and young families.

Self-Sufficiency

Our church congregants are busy and prosperous which can lead to self-sufficiency instead of fully leaning into God-sufficiency. This can lead to comfort, complacency, and self-dependency. It is easier to give money than to give time.

Engaging Our Community

Our church desires to reach our neighbors and the unchurched in our city. Our preaching style, worship style, and overall setup may make it difficult for newer Christians to engage or check out our church. Our sermon series does not have easy on ramps and are not topical. This makes it harder for new attendees that are newer Christians to join our church. We want to be more welcoming to our community.

**Part 3: Question 18. List major goals that the congregation has set for itself.**

- Development of a “Shepherd” model that ensures enduring care and connections for every member and attendee
- Prioritize reaching our immediate neighbors (e.g., homes, families, schools, community organizations, etc.) within a radius of two miles from our location
- To be a church committed to church multiplication in the KC metro area.
- Adding resources across our church to reach new young adults and families
- Increase visibility of our Marriage Ministry resources and programs in our church and throughout Kansas City, so that we may equip more couples to pursue Christ-centered marriages
- Create a racial healing ministry that is both (a) a visible fiber in the faith DNA that holds our church together, and is (b) a part of engaging our congregation and community to seek the voice of Christ in racial reconciliation.

**Part 5: Question 1. What do you consider to be the three most important events in the history of your church?**

- The fundamental decision to pursue youth. Colonial instituted a “Summer Staff” program designed to intensely disciple college students over the course of 10 weeks each summer. This program is a significant part of Colonial’s ministry. Through the youth program (which is currently celebrating its 47<sup>th</sup> year), over 450 professional ministry Christian leaders have been produced and Colonial’s influence has been felt all over the world in pulpits, churches, para-church ministries, etc. The recent decision to build a youth oriented space called The Lighthouse is a continuation of our quest to pursue youth.
- The decision to become a multi-site congregation. Colonial made the decision to become one church in two locations in the mid 90’s, long before multi-site became a normative practice in the U.S. In many respects Colonial pioneered the multi-site paradigm.
- Courage and obedience to:
  - Leave the PCUSA. Denominational affiliation is never the highest priority in any church member’s mind, but Colonial’s decision to leave the PCUSA was not simply about denominational affiliation. Colonial’s move into the EPC was a statement of faith in the Lordship of Christ and the infallible nature of God’s Word. The decision defined our congregation as “evangelical” as opposed to “mainline.” The decision to risk losing \$30-40 million in property and assets demonstrated a level of conviction that has shaped the way we think of ourselves and our call as a body of believers in Kansas City.
  - Pay off the remaining church debt of \$9 million at the same time as the church’s ownership of property was in dispute during our exit from the PCUSA. Colonial’s session was significantly moved in this direction during a retreat. Although it may have seemed unwise to summon the financial resources of the church to pay off property that might well be seized through court action, the session was unanimous, feeling the leading of the Holy Spirit to trust God’s direction, much like the Israelites crossing of the Jordan River in Joshua 3 and 4. God’s providence vindicated this decision as the courts found Colonial to be in sole possession of its properties which were debt free.

**Part 6: Question 2. Describe any significant factors about the church not covered in previous questions.**

Note from the Lead Pastor:

Colonial loves Jesus...a lot. The worship at Colonial often reveals the heart of the congregation, and when the Gospel is proclaimed and Jesus is high and lifted up, you can feel the movement of the Spirit working powerfully through the hearts and expressions of the people.

Colonial loves the Word of God, and we tend to serve “meat” more than “milk” as our standard fare. That’s not a bragging point...in fact it can be an issue when it comes to the way we communicate with seekers and those new to the faith. Nevertheless, we are a church known for a

“meaty” presentation of the Gospel, not only in corporate worship, but in all the places where Colonial has leadership in the city.

Colonial is generous, particularly when it comes to the plight of the orphan, the poor, the persecuted church, people in crisis, and reaching the unreached. If you were to ask random believers from across the metro to identify a church that was generous, Colonial would likely make the top three on most of their lists because that has been a quality of Colonial in the KC area for many years. Generosity is not just dollars given, but also the willing use of our facility, time given to serve in unseen ways, and the tendency to go above and beyond in so many expressions of love and care.

Colonial is modest. That may seem ironic given the list above, but it’s true. We do not promote ourselves, nor do we “market” ourselves well. Our congregation is almost allergic to “superstar” leaders who have even a hint of self-glorification. Those who are the most generous are also those who are most insistent that they remain “anonymous” in their generosity. Colonial is modest, and our modesty is driven by our desire that God is glorified, and not us.

These are the intangibles that inform our culture. It goes without saying that all leaders are expected to honor, perpetuate, and embody the culture at Colonial as we engage the watching world with our message and our actions.

On the self-critiquing side, Colonial can suffer from theological hubris on occasion, and we can be a bit apathetic at times. We can come across as a church where everyone is married and stays married, sometimes making those who are divorced or single feel out of place. Compared to a lot of the younger, newer churches, Colonial hosts a higher percentage of seniors, so we may come across as “older” than those other churches. We like our seniors...a lot, so we won’t apologize for their presence or their amazing contribution and leadership over the past 60 years, but we do have to constantly be working to reach the next generation, and we are committed to that end.