

Who We Are Vision and Mission of Eastbridge

I. The Big Picture

The bridges of Charleston link the various islands and peninsulas of our beautiful low country making us one community in our geography. Likewise, we have been called to build spiritual and personal bridges of understanding and relationship with each other, within our church, and with others throughout our region and the world. We are Eastbridge. We exist to build connections and heal brokenness. As we do so, our Triune God becomes better known and honored. HIS bridge building passions were supremely demonstrated in sending his Son, our Savior, to cross the great divide between himself and us that was created by our sin. Therefore, in reliance upon his Holy Spirit, may our God, who unites us to himself, and to one another, be glorified by establishing these sturdy, durable connections we call, "Gospel bridges," to each other.

New Vision Statement shifts from **BRIDGE** to **CONNECTING** ...

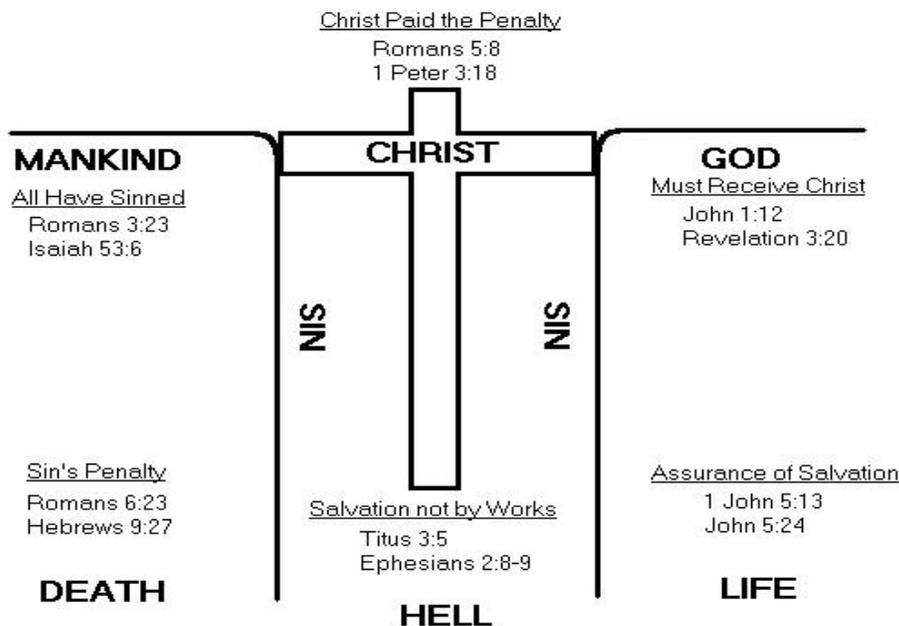
Eastbridge ...

A people glorifying God by CONNECTING to ...

- _____
- **His** _____
- **Our** _____ ... and the world.

Scripture on "CONNECTING to CHRIST"

"For there is one God, and there is one MEDIATOR between God and men, the man Christ Jesus." **1 Tim. 2:5** ... **BRIDGE** ...



“For Christ also suffered once for sins, the righteous for the unrighteous, **to bring you to God**. He was put to death in the body but made alive in the Spirit.” **1 Peter 3:18**

“Remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus **you who once were far off have been brought near** by the blood of Christ.” **Eph. 2:12-13**

“Jesus said to him, “**I am the WAY**, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.” **John 14:6**

Scripture on “CONNECTING to HIS CHURCH”

“So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints & members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom **the whole structure, being joined together**, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him **you also are being built together** into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.” **Eph. 2:19-22**

“And let us consider how to **stir up one another to love and good works, not neglecting to meet together**, as is the habit of some, but **encouraging one another**, and all the more as you see the Day drawing near.” **Heb. 10:24-25 (Acts 2:42ff.)**

“Behold, how good and pleasant it is when **brothers dwell in unity!**” **Psa. 133:1**

“For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, **so we, though many, are one body in Christ**, and individually members of one another.” **Rom. 12:4-5**

Scripture on “CONNECTING to OUR COMMUNITY AND WORLD”

Go ... make disciples of **all nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age. **Matt. 28:19-20**

God ... through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, **in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself**, not counting their trespasses against them, and **entrusting to us the message of reconciliation**. Therefore, **we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal through us**. We implore you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. **2 Cor. 5:18-20**

Jesus ... said to them, “Those who are well have no need of a physician, but those who are sick. **I came not to call the righteous, but sinners.**” **Mark 2:17**

Walk in wisdom toward outsiders ... let your speech always be gracious, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how you ought to answer each person. **Col. 4:5-6**

Contribute to the needs of the saints and **seek to show hospitality.** *Rom. 12:13*

Notice ... our faithfulness in each of these dimensions of our lives expresses itself in _____ with persons: Triune God, Family of God & world around us.

Our purpose in life is centered in learning how to RELATE WELL in all of these directions ... virtually all practical Christianity is taken up with these things.

PROBLEM: endless list of commitments / busyness take us away from relationships.

Contrast our attitudes in this regard with persecuted Christians all over the world ...

Notice - - these verses in **HEBREWS 10** are sandwiched between call to perseverance (v. 22) and warning – apostasy (v. 26)

If we are to BE a community that takes CONNECTION with God TO the people of Mount Pleasant this “FRIENDSHIP DEFICIT” must be addressed.

We will be effective in connecting with those OUTSIDE the church when our connection to THE LORD and to EACH OTHER is deep, real and true.

Then we'll be equipped to convey true community to pre-Christians / unchurched.

. ‘ . “ _____ ” prevents apostasy / promotes fidelity

The Christian faith ... not an “individual sport” ... “**TEAM SPORT**”

John Wesley: “The Bible knows nothing of solitary religion.”

**If we have little appetite for being with God's people
do we have an appetite for being with God?**

Keller (*Gospel in Life* series) said we CANNOT ...

- ❖ Know God without community,
- ❖ Grow in likeness to God without community or
- ❖ Impact the world healthily except through community.

People become like God by “ _____ ” Him ...

IF God exists as a community of connected persons ... TRINITY! ... the only way He can be fully experienced is ... in a community of connected persons!

Paraphrase of John 17 “Father, build a quality of community among my disciples that will be like the relationship that you and I have always enjoyed. When this happens ... the world will see it and say, ‘God does exist and Jesus must be His Son.’”

Jesus’ high priestly prayer in John 17 highlights ...

1. His Intimacy with the _____ (1-5), **Upreach**
2. His intimacy with his _____ (6-19), **Inreach**
3. His initiative toward the _____ (20-24), **Outreach**

SUMMARY: [SEE DIAGRAM]

Upreach ... CONNECTING WITH **GOD** ... worship and prayer

Inreach ... CONNECTING WITH the **CHURCH** ... one another in the body of Christ

Outreach ... CONNECTING WITH our **COMMUNITY** ... the lost here & around the world

Strategy: SMALL GROUPS! A major piece in the Gospel friendship puzzle.

Question: Why are we here and not in heaven? _____!

William Temple: “The church is the only organization that exists for the benefit of the non-member.”

II. The Close Picture: How do we express these core values?

TEAM APPROACH to shepherding ...

- Past & Present elders over “parishes”
- Deacons assigned to and assisting the elders in caring for the flock
- Small Group leaders assisting in people caring
- Men’s and women’s ministries especially for one on one mentoring
- Family, children and youth ministries
- Global and local outreach

Local Outreach (not list all things)

1. **Small Groups** deployed for Outreach

Sometimes people are willing to enjoy our homes/hospitality before they are willing to enter our church ... “**BELONG BEFORE THEY BELIEVE**”

2. **DIACONAL** Outreach (mercy & service)

Luke 5:31-32 Who are “the sick”?

WHY WAS THIS HIS APPROACH? If we do not feel our need ... not open to help.

Our strategy: **find human pain** ... move toward it with Gospel compassion / content.

Areas of pain are obvious ... marital breakup, addictions, grief, loneliness, concerns over errant children, job/career trauma, financial pressure, etc.

3. Event Outreach

4. Outreach Training ... largely through periodic Sunday School classes.
“School of Evangelism”

“Next Steps?”

Now that you are better acquainted with what we believe, what we value, and what we believe God is calling us to be and to do together as a church -- “What’s next?”

At this point, you can do one of three things:

- Run screaming into the parking lot, get into your car drive away as fast as you can. (not recommended);
- Worship and participate with us here at Eastbridge as you continue to consider whether God is leading you to join us (you’re welcome to do just this);
- Begin to take steps toward formal membership at Eastbridge.

Membership at Eastbridge

If you decide to pursue membership, the next step will be an interview a few elders:

- To hear the story of how you came to put your trust in Jesus as Savior and Lord
- To ensure that you can whole-heartedly affirm each of the 5 membership questions that we’ve studied during this course.

- ❶ I acknowledge myself to be a sinner in the sight of God, justly deserving His displeasure, and without hope except in His sovereign mercy.
- ❷ I believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and Savior of sinners, and I receive and rest upon Him alone for salvation as He is offered in the Gospel.
- ❸ I now resolve and promise, in humble reliance upon the grace of the Holy Spirit, that I will endeavor to live as becomes a follower of Christ.
- ❹ I promise to support the church in its worship & work to the best of my ability.
- ❺ I submit myself to the government and discipline of the church, and promise to further its purity and peace.

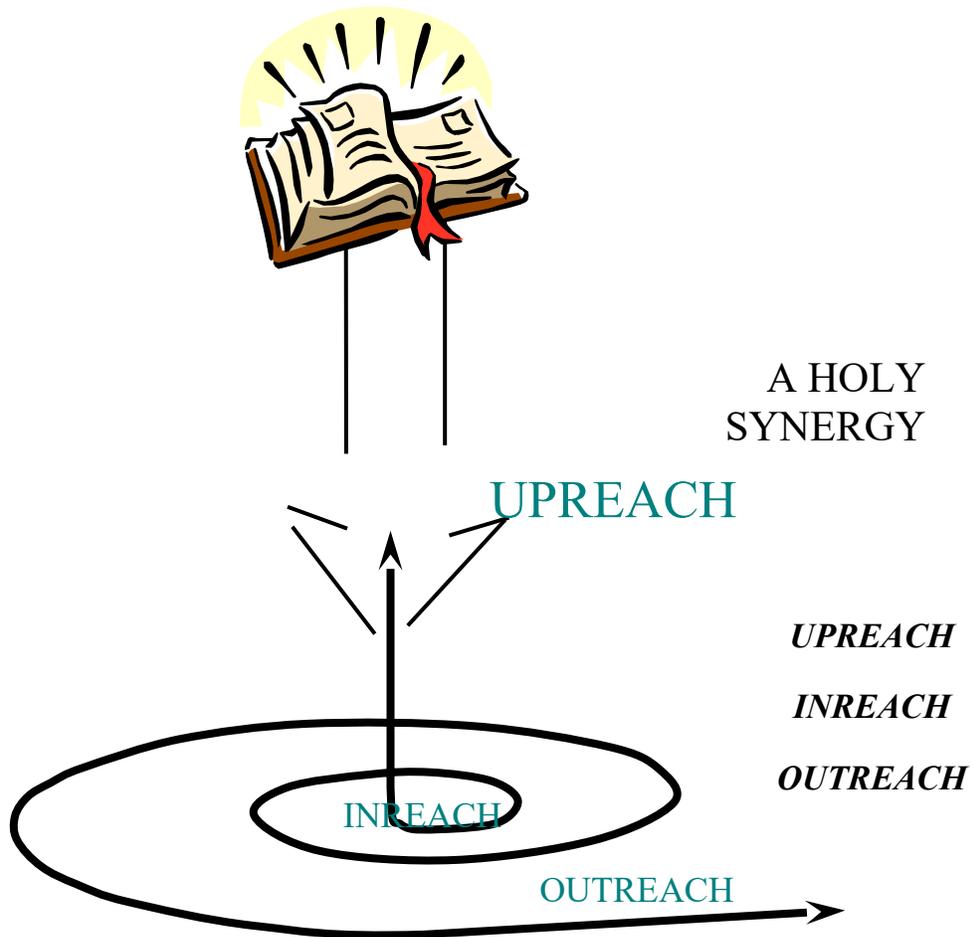
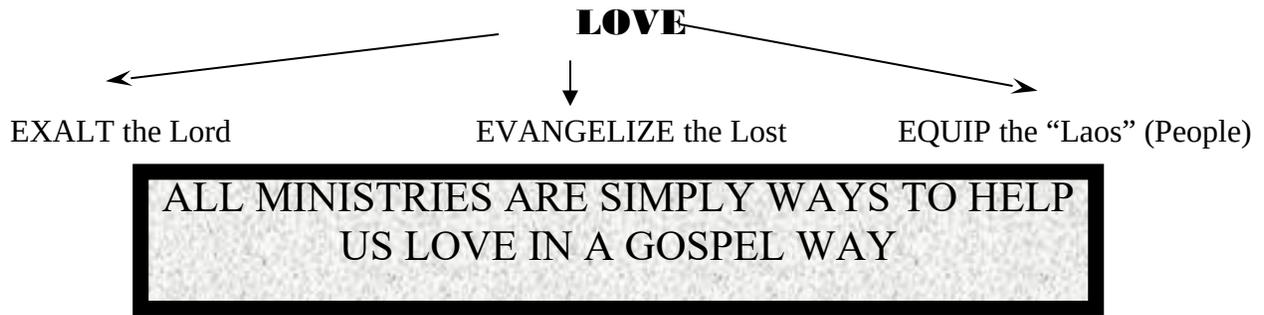
Are you ready? If you are, then:

1. Indicate to me or the church office that you would like an interview with our elders.
2. Fill out the online membership application: <http://www.eastbridge.org/steps-to-becoming-a-member>, click the **membership application** words, that will take you to the membership form. Fill it out and hit “send” button at bottom of the page to submit your application.
3. You will be contacted for an interview with a couple of our elders in an informal setting.

Once the interview is successfully completed, the Session will approve your application for membership. Once approved for membership, new members will be presented to the congregation during a regular morning worship service as soon as can be scheduled.

CONCLUSION

Our prayer is that God will bless you richly in your time here at Eastbridge, and that He will make you a blessing to others as we serve Him together!



The Spirit of God gives birth to the Church by means of the Word of God. The Church responds in love to God and Man by means of Upreach, Inreach & Outreach.