



Manhattan **Presbyterian** Church
Membership Class

In Progress
Last Update July 2014

Why Church Membership?

This was taken and edited from a document Kevin DeYoung wrote on Church Membership.

Often membership sounds stuffy and a little too authoritarian, it can make some feel uncomfortable wishing simply to come when they can. Nowhere in Scripture do we see Christianity apart from commitment to community, we need community and we need to know what the expectations of that community are. Here are a few reasons why Church Membership is important for you, your family and the rest of the church.

1. Just like marriage is a bigger commitment than dating so church membership is a bigger commitment than attending. When you join in membership you are making a visible commitment to Christ and His Church. It's you saying this is my covenant family, these are my people, I am committed to Christ and I am committed to them.

We often speak of how much we desire community in our lives, this is a step towards that commitment and that blessing. You won't do it perfect, neither will anyone else, but it is a statement of being apart of this community.

2. It's counter cultural, we live in a world that is afraid to commit to anything, we wish to be a church that doesn't just reflect the culture, but challenges it. Committing to a local church will help you understand what commitment is both to you and from you to others.

3. Church membership keeps us accountable to each other. When we join a church we are offering ourselves to one another to be encouraged, rebuked, corrected, and served. We are placing ourselves under leaders and submitting to their authority (Heb. 13:7). We are saying, "I am here to stay. I want to help you grow in godliness. Will you help me to do the same?"

In this we let the elders know that we are committed to attend worship, to giving, to prayer for the covenant community, to serving the church body, to sanctification. In membership we say I want you to be responsible for me, call me out, ask how I am, help me work through sin, through shame, through depression through whatever I might face in this life and don't let me walk away. It means if it comes to it, you want Church discipline because the goal of discipline isn't punishment, it's restoration.

4. Similarly, joining the church in membership will help your pastor and elders be more faithful shepherds. Hebrews 13:7 says "Obey your leaders and submit to their authority." That's your part. Here's ours: "They keep watch over you as men who must give an account." We take seriously our responsibility before God to watch over your souls. I'll say when people simply show up it's hard to know what my place in their life

is, the lack of commitment often communicates "my life is none of your business," but when they are committed it lets me know that you want the church in your life and so it shall be.

5. Joining the church gives you an opportunity to make promises. When you become a member at Manhattan Presbyterian Church, you make promises to pray, give, serve, attend worship, seek the spiritual guidance of the church, obey its teachings, and seek the things that make for unity, purity, and peace. We ought not to make these promises lightly. They are solemn vows. And we must hold each other to them. If you don't join the church, you may miss an opportunity to publicly make these promises, and in so doing, invite the elders and the rest of the body to hold you to these promises—which would be missing out on great spiritual benefit, for you and for us.

What is required for membership?

Faith in Jesus Christ alone for the forgiveness of your sin.

In a sense it means you must be able to tell God that you are a sinner and deserve eternal punishment.

You must be able to tell God that you believe Jesus Christ paid the penalty by his atoning death on the cross.

You must be able to tell God that you are willing to give your life to Christ by trusting in him as your Savior and Lord.

You must have been baptised either as a child or as an adult in the name of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. (if you haven't been we can talk about you getting baptized)

Our doctrinal statement is the Westminster Confession, we believe it, we think it does a great job summarizing what the Bible teaches. However we also know that not all whose faith is in Christ agree with every aspect of it. You can become a member of Manhattan Presbyterian Church without conforming to every aspect.

For example, you can disagree on covenantal (infant) baptism and still join in membership, though it would prevent you from serving as an Elder or Deacon in the Church. If there are issues you're concerned about with this please ask about it.

Worship & Ministry

We must work together for Manhattan Presbyterian Church to be rightly established for the glory of God, the good of his people, the good of Manhattan, Fort Riley and Kansas State University.

Worship

We meet every Sunday morning at 9am for worship together.

We are always looking for people to serve and use their gifts.

Setup, ushers, musicians, singers, nursery, clean up at the end of the service, setting up the Lord's Supper, baking bread, helping with occasional meals, inviting people and just welcoming and showing hospitality to new people. So far everyone has done an amazing job of this.

Men's and Women's Book Studies

We'll continue to have these book studies. They serve for learning, for encouraging sanctification, for fellowship and community building.

Men's and Women's Book Studies

We meet monthly at a local coffee shop for focused prayer. Everyone is welcome at these including college students and children. Last about 30 minutes, we have a sheet and go around the table taking turns praying.

Adult Christian Education

We plan to have occasional classes during the week that focus on topics of need and interest. (I'll explain more in person) Classes include Parenting, Marriage, Dating, Sanctification, Reformed Theology, A Book of Scripture, Church History.

Children's Christian Education

We want to do this well, to involve parents well, to show them God is real and loving and mighty. What we've found works well is having two Children's Sunday School sessions a year. 8 weeks in the Fall and 8 weeks in the Spring. There are three groups, 5 to 7; 8 to 12 and teens. We do this so that there is something specific to their age, they are taught Scripture from other adults they know outside of their parents. Yet we intentionally don't do this 52 weeks a year as a reminder that parents are the primary disciplers of their children and church programs ought to serve as tools not replacements for that God given responsibility.

Overview of Worship Service (Church on Sunday)

Here is what we desire. For Worship to be a warm & welcoming liturgical service that is not high church yet gives a sense of awe and reverence for God. Not a stuffy sense of distance from God, but an intimate display of God's holiness with outstretched hands of grace ready to embrace the broken and contrite. A service where we can comfortably, even casually, explain aspects of worship as we worship. Where we can laugh when appropriate, where we can gather around the table for the Sacrament and look each other in the eyes as brothers and sisters who love each other because of the love our Heavenly Father has shown us. That we would seek to dig deep into the Scriptures in a way that is easily understood and applicable to our actual lives. We long to find joy in worship as we gather together.

Overview of Covenant Community (Church during the week)

Daily real life interaction between members is needed. I need you to contact me and see how I'm doing, to pray for me, to encourage me, to help me love my neighbors and the city we share. I want to do the same for you and all for each other. We wish to see people in Manhattan Pres connected with each other, serving each other, serving the community, being a blessing to Manhattan. This means including each other, inviting a college student or a few to dinner and seeing how they are. It means we live not only for ourselves, but each other as well. May 1 Thessalonians 5:17 be true in our lives, "Therefore encourage one another and build each other up."

Parish Groups

What is a Parish Group?

Parish is a very old word, it's been used in church history for a variety of purposes. At the most basic level the word parish derives from the Greek word, pároikos. It literally means to "dwell next to" as in, Neighbor.

With Parish Groups our desire is to create smaller loosely geographically structured groups to help fulfill these three Scriptural directives.

1. For the Elders to know the sheep well for the sake of care.

"Pay careful attention to yourselves and *to all the flock*, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, *to care for the church of God*, which he obtained with his own blood." - Acts 20:28

2. To build up, equip for work of ministry and encourage the body of Christ.

"And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes." - Ephesians 4:11-14

3. Be ministers of mercy to all and especially our brothers and sisters in Christ.

"And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. 10 So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith." - Galatians 6:9-10

We are establishing for ManhattanPres two Parish Groups with plans to divide into more groups as opportunity allows in the future.

Relationships and interaction is not limited to these groups, but they are fostered within the Parish groups through shared meals, prayer, and discussion in the Word of God as we seek to apply it to life here and now.

We do not have this all figured out yet, we just desire to see care for the Church done in a very close, relational manner. To care for each other we need to actually know each other, we need to learn to walk out the Word in our daily lives if we are to be a healthy covenant community, smaller settings will help foster that.

Two Parish Groups (Small Groups)

1. The North Manhattan Parish (Noma) lead by Elder Travis Shanahan.
2. The South Manhattan Parish (Soma) lead by Elder Brian Hough & Tim Durrett.

Location and Time typically determines which group you plug into. The North Group is just north of town and meets every other Sunday after the worship service. The South Group meets on every other Thursday evening at 6pm at the Durrett's which is near Target.

Some Practical Implications of Parish Groups

Your Parish Elder will be checking on you, praying for you, seeking to care for you. We also desire to see this happening naturally between everyone in the community. Do you have a need? Call anyone in the church you want. Not sure who to call? Call your elder or his wife and we'll help figure out what to do next, yes, we really want you to.

Parish groups follow a rhythm of life. We take breaks in the summer and at Christmas time. Use these breaks to invite others over for meals and fellowship or just take a break. Last thing we want to do is make everyone overly busy. If you can't make it, that's ok. If time is short in your life for a season, make Sunday Worship the priority.

Please don't be too independent to ask for help from your brothers and sisters in ManhattanPres. You know the joy you get when you get to help someone? Give others opportunities for that. Are you sick? Ask for help. Something broken? See if anyone can help fix it. Life crazy? Ask for help.

Core Values

Travis Shanahan, Jon Dunning and I initially met at Panera Bread in Olathe, Kansas to discuss what would be important for a Church Plant in Manhattan, Kansas. We prayed, we thought, we read and we wrote. We had specifics and we worked to put them into larger categories. These we've called our Core Values.

Everything that is important is not in here, for instance I think there is great reason for Christians to be involved in the foster care system, that is not said specifically in our Core Values, but is a reasonable outworking of the value of **Engaged in Serving the Community**. This doesn't mean everyone needs to be involved in foster care, but that is one way we can be serving the community we live and minister in.

Many of these specifics will find their place in the life of the church as God leads us to opportunity and ability to serve in these areas. A big aspect of understanding what is important to Manhattan Presbyterian as Church is to understand these Core Values below.

Dependent upon Ordinary Means of Grace

We believe that God has provided His Church with both a message and a means for effective gospel ministry. Just as God has ordained that a plant will grow by water and sunlight, so Christians grow through simple, God-ordained means. These means are called ordinary, not because they are without power and glory, but because they are ordinarily used by God to transform His people.

The means of grace are **God's Word** (1 Peter 1:23-25; 2 Timothy 3:16-17), **the sacraments** of Baptism (Colossians 2:11-12) & the Lord's supper (I Corinthians 11:23-34;) and **Prayer** (Matthew 6:5-13). For this reason we will seek to be a Church that is Scripture saturated, sacrament serving and prayer soaked.

Living in Covenant Community

When we say we seek to be a covenant community or covenant family, we are saying we desire to be a community that is committed to the growth, provision, and care of all its members.

The Scriptures tell us there are things that we should do for each other as joint members in God's Covenant of Grace. The first and foundational one is love. In John 13:35, Jesus says, "By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another." We desire to be a church that is known for our love for one another (Galatians 6:10) in response to God's love for us (1 John 4:19) and that love shows up as a distinguishable fruit of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22).

We are committed to being a community who has a true understanding of what it means to be in the family of God as we meet to worship on Sunday and as we look for opportunities to serve each other and with each other with compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness and patience (Colossians 3:12-13).

Participating in Worship & Sabbath

We absolutely believe that worship is expressed in all of life and everyday of the week, yet we see that God in His Word has called the Church to set apart one day in seven for Christians to worship Him and enjoy sabbath rest.

To help facilitate this, we desire to have a simple liturgy, saturated by Scripture, accompanied by instruments played by gifted saints whom God provides and filled with lyrics aimed toward drawing our thoughts and hearts towards God as we corporately sing praise to our King.

Elements in the worship service include prayer, testimonies of God's grace, responsive readings, music and singing, corporate and individual confession, assurance of forgiveness, tithes & offering, preaching of God's Word and weekly participation in the Lord's Supper.

Eagerly Making Disciples of Christ

One of the last instructions Jesus left his disciples with is found in Matthew 28. Jesus tells them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and 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."

We believe the Church is God's means for accomplishing the task of making disciples. Not as a program, but as His chosen people who are engaged in the lives of others, all who are at varying stages of sanctification (Colossians 1:28).

We will be an evangelistic witness in the city of Manhattan, discipling those who God calls to our care. Lord willing, in response to the grace they've experienced, they in turn will become disciple-makers. Our hope and vision is to see enemies of God drawn to His grace as He conforms them to become His beloved children through faith in the gospel. This happens as we teach the doctrines of grace in various settings and as we interact with each other throughout the week learning how to encourage one another daily (Hebrews 3:13) with the Word of God and prayer.

As a church in partnership with **RUF** we seek to foster in the congregation a love for college students that draws them into our lives and homes, giving them a tangible understanding of covenant community and church membership. Our hope is that they will go from college with such a love for Christ's Church that they are actively involved in the local church wherever God may lead them.

Small Group Plan - Still thinking & praying through this.

Christian Education is important for our right knowledge of God and growing more like Christ.

Equipping parents to disciple their children well is important.

Engaged in Serving the Community

There are many opportunities in Manhattan to serve the community and we see this as an important part of our being a blessing to the city. Rather than starting new ministries for serving, we see great value in encouraging the congregation to serve in local ministries that already minister to the needs of the community. We will serve together seeking to meet the needs for food, housing, counseling, crisis pregnancy, community improvement and all sorts of other needs. In this way we can be salt and light to both those we are serving and those we are serving alongside.

We hope to be a presence in the community that conforms to what Jesus taught in Matthew 5:14-16 when He encourages them saying, "You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father who is in heaven."

Active in Church Planting & Mission Sending

As we begin this church plant we have a long term vision to be a church planting church and missionary-sending people of God. Our goal is to grow, to make disciples and to be established in Manhattan. If God should bless these efforts with growth, we will seek quickly to assist in planting sister churches across Kansas and the surrounding region. We wish to resist Small Kingdom sentiments and instead develop a vision for Big Kingdom ministry that is a benefit beyond ourselves. While we don't wish to commit to a congregational size, we do envision planting sooner rather than later.

As we move to be obedient to the Great Commission, not only will we seek to be a church planting church, but also a missionary-sending church. Our desire is to identify, train, and send disciples who will help to establish and serve the local church wherever God leads them. Our hope and prayer is to foster a biblical view of and love for the Kingdom of God well beyond Manhattan.

Theological Distinctives

Evangelical

To say that we are evangelical means that we take our stand with all those who believe in what used to be called “the fundamentals”: the existence of the triune God, the deity of Jesus, the virgin birth, and substitutionary and vicarious atonement of Christ, the physical resurrection of Christ, the sure return of Christ, and the infallibility and divine authority of the Bible which is a faithful and true guide to what we are to believe and how we are to live. We joyfully affirm our unity with those from every tradition and denomination who hold to these fundamentals including those true believers in Christ who, for whatever reasons, find themselves members of denominations or churches with which we might have certain disagreements.

Evangelistic

This means we take seriously the Great Commission, “Go and make disciples of all nations.” Without compromising the sovereignty of God, we affirm the responsibility of each person to repent and believe in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord and our responsibility to extend the Gospel invitation as a call to salvation to everyone who hears its message. We invite all, without distinction, to drink freely of the Water of Life and to live eternally. In this way, we seek to “extend the transforming presence of the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Reformed

The word “reformed” can be defined simply in two ways:

- 1) It is a reference to our historical link to the Reformation of the 16th century and intends to describe us as the heirs of that tradition which comes from Luther, Calvin, Knox and other reformers. This reformed church tradition has produced the Westminster Standards and Three Forms of Unity confessional statements that have been handed down to us through the ages.
- 2) The word “reformed” is used most commonly to refer to certain theological distinctives which have marked reformation believers, particularly those in the Calvinist tradition.

These distinctives can be summarized by our glad affirmation of the responsibility of every person to repent and believe, and that it is God who, by His sovereign electing grace, draws men and women, otherwise dead in sin, to faith in His Son. By this faith

alone are God's people justified.

Reformed distinctives include the sovereignty of God in His creation, providence and election of believers apart from any merit of their own; the irresistible grace of God provided for and preceding the faith of the individual; the sufficiency of God's grace apart from which man is dead in sin and wholly defiled in all his faculties of soul and body; the efficacy of Christ's death for all those who believe in Him by grace; the safe-guarding of all those for whom Christ died for eternal life.

We seek to hold to our reformed convictions humbly, recognizing the sincerity and earnestness of Godly men and women who have other positions.

Confessional

This means that we have a written confession of faith which we believe to be a good and accurate summary of the Bible's teaching. Our confession consists of the **Westminster Confession of Faith** and the **Larger Catechism** and **Shorter Catechism**. These documents are not without flaw; yet we believe they do contain carefully worded summaries of the Bible's content. All ruling and teaching elders in the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) must vow that they hold to these standards and are required to indicate to their presbyteries or sessions where they take exceptions. It is important to note that every church has a confession, formal or informal, even though some claim they have "no confession but Christ" or "no creed but the Bible." Every church summarizes its convictions in some form in order to distinguish its members from those who are not believers or those who do not believe in their church's distinctives.

Covenantal

To say we are covenantal means we believe that the unifying principle of the Scriptures is the one covenant of grace that God made with Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, David and finally, and most importantly, in Jesus Christ. The covenant is a pledge or bond of loyalty which God made to His people through each of the above named persons. The covenant is a relationship of loving loyalty that God has initiated with us as His people throughout human history. To speak of the unity of the covenants means that there is one way and one way only to salvation in both Old and New Testaments-that is, by faith alone in Jesus Christ. This covenantal understanding of the Bible is in distinction from any system of organizing the Scriptures which would attribute differing ways of salvation to a succession of historical Biblical eras.

Presbyterian

This word refers to our form of governance. We believe that the most clear biblical pattern is for churches to be governed by presbyters (elders) who rule jointly in what are called “church courts”: sessions, presbyteries and the General Assembly.

It is important to know that these distinctives are good ones; that is to say, it is profitable and health-producing for Christians to believe these things. We believe that as we come to appreciate them, we will grow to love and honor the Lord Jesus more fully and understand more richly what it means to live by grace.

Nevertheless, acceptance of all these distinctives is not required for membership in our church. One can join and be a participating member of our church without holding to any but the evangelical distinctive. Ruling and teaching elders and deacons, however, must hold to all these distinctives; and while there is room for exceptions to be taken, to be ordained as an elder or deacon in the PCA means that one can affirm that these descriptive terms apply to him.

Leadership Structure

Being Presbyterian means we are lead by a plurality of Elders and Deacons. The pastor is not the CEO, he is one of many men who have an equal responsibility in the leadership. This provides checks and balances and models what the Bible lays out for Church leadership in 1 Tim. 3:1-13 and Titus 1:5-9.

The elders are collectively called "The Session." and you can learn more about how that works by reading chapters 8 (Elders) and Chapter 12 (The Session) in the Book of Church Order found at <http://www.pcaac.org/resources/bco/>

Church Offices

Elders: The elders oversee the preaching and teaching of the Word of God, administration of the sacraments, and general spiritual care of the membership. We have both Lay Elders (Ruling Elders) and Pastors (Teaching Elders), collectively they provide leadership for Manhattan Presbyterian Church.

Deacons: Deacon literally means servant. The deacons, as seen in Acts 6, oversee the physical needs of the church. The deacons work diligently to be sure the elders have no material hindrances to ministering the Word of God to the flock. The deacons take care of the property, identify ways to serve and are ministers of mercy to those who have special material needs within the body.

Temporary Session (our current session)

TE Brian Hough (Manhattan)

TE Rick Franks (Wichita)

TE Dale Thiele (Lenexa)

TE Jim Baxter (Olathe)

RE Scott Creecy (Overland Park)

RE Travis Shanahan (Manhattan)

RE Steve Baker (Overland Park)

RE Marlon Johnston (Wichita)

MPC's Commitment

Shepherding, Church Discipline (Accountability), Help you use your gifts, Assist parents in discipleship, Means of grace (Preaching, Prayer, Lord's Supper and Baptism), Covenant Community

Word about Church Discipline:

Most discipline is positive in the form of teaching and preaching similar to parents teaching their children, teachers their pupils, etc). However, some is negative.

And like saying, now, in our sane moment, is that if I go insane, either theologically (heresy) or morally, that I want the church to love me enough enough to come hunt me down and throw its arm around me and walk me back home. Don't let me just go on walking away from Jesus. Rebuke me. Correct me. Teach me. Shepherd me.

Membership Commitment

This gives an idea of what we strive to be true of the people of ManhattanPres.

LOVE GOD: Matthew 22:37, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind."

May we make worshipping together on a regular basis a priority of our lives. May we often tell of God's mighty works. May we thank Him for grace and underserved blessing. May we be a people who seek obedience to the Scriptures together in response to grace. Let us sing praise to God and offer prayer to God thanking Him for providing, for hope and for the forgiveness of our sin. May we seek God's help in all areas of life, displaying our daily dependence upon Him. May we come to His table each week to be nourished by the Gospel once again. May we seek God in His Word and speak it into each other's lives, may we preach and teach it with with humble confidence. May we give of our time, abilities, finances and skills to serve Christ's bride, the Church. May we love God well, because we have been loved well by God.

LOVE PEOPLE: Matthew 22:39, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

May we be a people who care for each other by checking on each other during the week. Let us share meals, play games, watch sports, celebrate life, gather children together and mourn together. May we pray with each other for those living in the city of Manhattan, serving through Fort Riley and gaining an education on the campus of K-State. May it never be odd for us to call or text each other to ask how to pray for each other. May we be a winsome and welcoming people who love to invite the people God brings into our lives to Worship and Church fellowship opportunities. May we kindly welcome anyone God brings into our midst so that the light of Christ is clearly reflected. May we supply support to local ministries as we seek to make Christ known to both those giving and receiving mercy. May we love people well because we have been loved by God well.

Membership Vows

These are the questions you will be asked regarding membership. They are taken directly from the Book of Church Order of the PCA (Presbyterian Church in America).

1. Do you acknowledge yourself to be a sinner in the sight of God, justly deserving His displeasure, and without hope save in His sovereign mercy?
2. Do you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as the Son of God, and Savior of sinners, and do you receive and rest upon Him alone for salvation as He is offered in the Gospel?
3. Do you now resolve and promise, in humble reliance upon the grace of the Holy Spirit, that you will endeavor to live as becomes the followers of Christ?
4. Do you promise to support the Church in its worship and work to the best of your ability?
5. Do you submit yourself to the government and discipline of the Church, and promise to study its purity and peace?

WHAT NEXT?

If you desire membership, we'll set up a time for you and/or your family to meet with the session. It's a short meeting, they'll ask you something along the following.

1. Tell us about your faith in Christ. We love to hear the various ways God has brought people into faith.
2. Do you understand what Church membership means?
3. Tell us how we as a Church can best encourage your faith and support you?
4. How do plan to use your gifts for serving at and with Manhattan Pres?

Ideas for Serving

Consider serving in some of the following ways...

1. Nursery: It's a huge help for parents to know their young children are being well cared for while they focus on worshiping and hearing the Word preached, consider signing up to serve there for Bible Study or Worship.

2. Music: If you have any musical abilities let us know, we are looking for God to provide musicians and singers who can serve in that capacity.

3. Bread: We share responsibility baking the communion bread, it's a simple recipe available on the website under resources. If you would like to serve that way let us know.

4. Children's Sunday School: If you'd be willing to help teach or lead singing with the littles let us know.

5. Sound Equipment: If you are willing we can train you. David usually does it, but is not always available. If this interest you let Brian know.

6. Setup: Before each service we set up sound, clean up room, fill the communion cups, sign out front put up, etc. All help is very welcome.

7. Cleanup: After Worship (especially when we have meals) there are a number of things that need to be cleaned up. Sound equipment, vacuuming, communion trays, dishes, tables where we found them, signs out front taken down.

8. Organizing: Someone to gather information or people for events, etc. If you have organizational skills we need that for all sorts of projects.

History of Manhattan Presbyterian Church

We have this here so that we step back and remember the growth God has given up to this point even as we look forward prayerfully for what God will yet do. "I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth," - 1 Corinthians 3:6-7

2007 to 2012

The Mission to North America Committee spoke often of the need for a PCA Church & RUF in Lawrence and Manhattan and there was much conversation of where the priority would be.

The more we learned the more we began to pray that God would provide a Church Planter and RUF Campus pastor for Manhattan and Kansas State University.

During this time Brian and Laura Hough fell in love with Manhattan, the project, the leap of faith that it would require and decided to pursue being the Church Planter Family.

January 2012

Rod Mays (then National Coordinator of RUF) spoke in Kansas City sharing ideas for get this project started. In that meeting we learned about a generous donor who has a vision for seeing dual RUF/Church Plants in college towns.

Brian met with Rod Mays and committed to he and Laura going to Church Plant Assessment in Atlanta that May. Also that summer Jon & Tricia Dunning attended RUF Assessment as they considered serving with RUF. They were approved and began to pray if this was where God was leading their family in ministry.

August 2012

Presbytery approves Brian as Church Planter.

November 2012

Presbytery approves Jon Dunning as RUF Campus Pastor at K-State University.

January 2013

We called the work, The Manhattan Project and received our first support from a generous man in our presbytery.

March 2013

After a year of trying to arrange a meeting with a substantial donor Brian and Jon drove to Dallas, Texas for the meeting. We were nervous, but soaked the whole situation in prayer.

We left with no idea what would happen, if he declined support it would make the project nearly impossible, but we were prepared to do whatever it took to gather funding if that was needed.

About a week later we received a call from the donor and he had committed three years support to both the Church Plant and RUF. Not all of it, which left a large chunk to raise from others, but enough to get this rolling.

We did more fundraising, more planning, more prayer.

April 2013

During the whole process Redeemer required us to keep this information private.

After the main funding was established a letter was sent out making the project public. We quickly heard from Tim & Christine Durrett who had lived in Manhattan for a few years and were excited about this project. Their call was a great encouragement as it reassured us of the need to do this. They also volunteered their home for Bible Studies and meals. Their home essentially served as the church location for this early period.

July/August 2013

Move to Manhattan.

September 2013

First Bible Study was on September 15th at the Durrett's (picture shown).



October 2013

We had our first Worship Service on October 6th. It was a sweet time of worship together. We met in the Manhattan Mennonite Building that was built in 1906 by the United Presbyterian Church at 10th & Fremont.

Everyone chipped in to make this happen. Nicola Lippert played piano, Andria Merrill the acoustic guitar, Christine Durrett the Viola, later Nicole a Grad student from Florida helped with piano. Many lead singing. David Maas ran sound.

Matt Wilson from Alabama was a huge help setting up and the last out the door after cleaning up. Many ladies provided food, tons of it, just endless amount of food, good food. Just about everyone helped with childcare and Jake McGuire was the greeter.

Fall 2013

We had a Fall Party in the Hough's backyard. We also had a Grown Up Game Night lead by Joe Catudal. We further saw God growing us together as he brought others into the community.

Spring 2014

We began worshipping twice a month and started the small groups ministry which we call Parish Groups.

September 7th 2014

We began meeting weekly for corporate worship and split the Parish Groups into two separate groups, one meeting at the Durrett's lead by Pastor Brian and one meeting at The Shanahan's lead by Elder Travis Shanahan.

March 29th 2015

We moved from the Mennonite Building to First Christian Church downtown. It's a larger, nicer facility which we hoped to purchase eventually.

Spring 2015

Alexia Machina helped begin Children's Sunday School which ran for 5 weeks. Each Fall and Spring after it has run for 8 weeks.

March 2016

Tim Durrett was nominated for Elder with hopes of having a local session of elders by the end of 2016.

Future

We're in the middle of this so timeline kinda gets fuzzy like when you're too close to the TV to see the picture, but God is uniting us for the sake of worship and evangelism and blessing the community and we can't wait to see what the future holds.

Please join us as we continue to pray about how we'll handle the following areas. Adult Christian Education, Permanent meeting place, etc. Continuing to worshipping God and Proclaiming the Gospel in the community.