

THE 95 THESES OF GREAT RIVERS PRESBYTERY

On November 14, 2017, as part of our recognition of the 500th Anniversary of the Protestant Reformation, those gathered at our presbytery assembly were given the chance to reflect together on “What are your hopes for the Church for the next 500 years?” Participants were invited to write down these hopes for the church. Here they are presented, slightly reorganized around common themes. Subcategories are repeated and overlapping comments.

~Rev. Ryan Landino, Lead Presbyter for Transformation

MISSION

1. That there is vibrant witness to the life, death, and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.
2. That we be church of Jesus Christ (formerly Presbyterian) committed to mission (Gospel), peacemaking and justice with an underlying compassion in God’s grace.
3. That we reach the unchurched of our small village.
4. That all unchurched people will become saved Christians.
5. That there is more outreach to community members.
6. That we go out to people instead of employing “come to church.”
7. That we take the gospel to the stars.
8. That we move towards God’s word through our deeds and thoughts.
9. That humankind can truly understand how deep God’s love for us is.
10. That we help outward NOT inward.
11. That we make compassion our core shared mission to change the world.
12. That we lead the world in benevolent ministry.
13. That we continue proclaiming the truth of Jesus Christ through the voice of Scripture.
14. That we are open as a church to serve our community and let them see God through us.
15. That we fill the churches with believers.
16. That there is excitement in the teachings of Christ.
17. That there is increased recognition of the “priesthood of all believers” and the individual gifts that we bring.
18. That we become more effective in evangelism.

19. That we are more mission minded and hearted, reaching out to the least of these.
20. That we reach more people and influence more lives.
21. That we are still viable and present in the world to reach out to everyone and encourage all to speak and lead.
22. That there is continued growth of the Christian religion throughout the world.

INSTITUTIONAL CHANGE

23. That we be uncomfortable.
 - a. That we sacrifice our comfort.
24. That we have a willingness to let go of our agenda, and let the holy spirit change us and our world.
25. That we fulfill church outside of church buildings.
 - a. That we see a church that isn't hiding behind brick walls but instead out doing ministry, working alongside the leadership.
 - b. That we return to having house churches where cells of believers are growing in faith and go out into the world to love the people.
 - c. That we worship in places other than current church building.
 - d. That we are going out of buildings to be the 'church scattered.'
 - e. That we will figure out how to move outside the church walls to serve our community and present Christ's message of hope and love.
 - f. That we will build programs and tear down our buildings.
26. That we will be gone—maybe having left a path—for our children and grandchildren.
 - a. That we give away our reserves to young members, neighbors in need with no strings attached.
 - b. I hope the church will spend 90% of its time and money serving others.
27. That there are more visionaries in churches.
28. That we be less formal more inviting.
29. I hope the church is still here in 500 years.
 - a. That we keep the doors open.
30. We hope for a more proper & appropriate image of the name Christian.
31. That denominations combine to serve God.
32. That relationships are still the key.

33. That we would be less self-centered.
34. I hope we reach the point where numbers and “growing” is thought of in terms of spiritual growth instead of attendance.

INCLUSIVE LOVE

35. That our congregations become multicultural and the table is open to all.
 - a. That all congregations are truly open and representative of God’s people on Sunday morning.
 - b. That we have respect of human life and welcoming individuals in all our journeys.
 - c. I hope for an ongoing celebration of diversity.
36. That the church will be representing God’s love and not condemnation.
37. That we are non-judgmental.
 - a. That there is more love than judgement.
 - b. That forgiveness is non-judgement.
38. That we are all inclusive with love for everyone.
 - a. That we have radical inclusivity.
 - b. That we have radical inclusivity.
 - c. That we are more inclusive.
39. That there is more equality in churches.
 - a. That we have total equality and growth of all nations to get God back into people’s lives.
 - b. That we have equality for all.
 - c. That we have total equality.
 - d. I hope for greater equality for all people in opportunity, wealth and income.
40. That we can gather in peace to worship one God without fear of retribution.

SOCIAL JUSTICE

41. That we help eliminate social injustice.
42. That we are reaching out to the folks who are the neediest and oppressed.
43. That we become a united witness calling of political leaders to work for justice on behalf of the oppressed.

44. That we all practice what we preach.
 - a. That we do as Jesus asked – support the needy, widows and orphans.
45. I hope there are more ways to be the hands of our Lord.
46. That we embrace peace – revival – recommitted.
 - a. That there is peace in churches and country and world.
 - b. That Christians are known as workers for peace and conversation and promoting unity.
 - c. That the world would know us as healers and those who provide gracious hospitably to those in need.

UNITY

47. That the church may be the one, even in separate paths, without claiming to be the true church.
48. That we unite humanity in love of God.
49. That there is more unity in the church worldwide.
50. That we have religious unity without fighting.
51. We hope that divisions might fall and all who believe in Christ may share this great good news of God's love and Jesus's death and resurrection.
52. That unity in the Spirit is more prevalent among churches.
53. That we bond with all churches, all denominations, all races to become one with God in God beside God forever!!
54. That church universal focus on what is important rather than differences that are less important.
55. I hope for reconciliation and peace among all people on earth, all religions, and all protestant denominations.
56. That there is more unity reaches the younger generation.
57. I hope all churches work together regardless of faith.
58. That we have unity, as "truly" one to do God's good work.
59. That we forget about boundaries and denominations. Just be Christians, Jesus followers.
60. That we would be more integrated with our neighbors and their needs.
61. That we have less denominations.

62. That we will build on what we agree and not our differences.
63. That we become a universal church so that all are following in Christ's footsteps.
64. That we eliminate borders so we lived as a united group to love Jesus.
65. That there are less divisions, more grace, mercy with grace and justice.
66. That we would be the church universal not so concerned with denominations.
67. That the church usher in a movement of unity not division.
68. That we have peace and respect with all religions in all areas of the world.

NEW LIFE

69. That there is spiritual renewal and revitalization.
70. That there is church growth – return to center of the community.
71. That there is regrowth of church in Europe.
72. That there be a 4th great awakening of the Christian faith in our society.
73. That Jesus will return and bring his kingdom.
 - a. That Jesus return.

GREATER ECUMENISM

74. That religion is people of different beliefs to allow room for love, acceptance, joy and peace.
75. That there be unity, civility, reconciliation, hope, celebration, communion.
76. That we have worldwide interfaith cooperation.
77. That there is mutual recognition of Christians, Jews and Muslims as true parts of the people of God.
78. That major religions would be able to worship and serve together.
 - a. That there is ecumenical reconciliation and unity, interfaith dialog and cooperation.
 - b. That there is better acceptance of other religions around the world, to better serve the people on earth.
79. That there is real communion with Christians from other traditions.
 - a. That we hope for interdenominational cooperation.
 - b. That we might work across denominations to bring Christ to our world.
 - c. That we become one church not many protestant congregations.

80. That there is mutual and full recognition of Protestant, Roman Catholic and orthodox churches as part of the body of Christ.

CREATION CARE

81. That we understand the greatness of creation.
82. That we have advocacy for creation, the environment.
 - a. That we have advocacy of behalf of the environment.

FAITH AND SPIRITUAL PRACTICES

83. That personal faith is a thing of importance.
84. That we remain faithful to our call in Christ.
85. That we trust still the sovereignty of God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit for our lives.
86. That the bible study is taken more seriously.
87. That we are more faithful to impetus of scripture.
88. That we go back to the bible as the true word of God and spread the good news.
89. That the Gospel of grace remains central.
90. That we get God back in everyone's life.
 - a. That there is God in people's life.
91. That we make Sundays and every day to worship God.
 - a. That Sunday be a church day.
92. That there are more families in church together.
93. That we are more prayerful.
94. That we are more worshipful.
95. That everyone love the Lord.