

## Church Cooperation

The elders of Christ Community Church have entered *exploratory* discussions with Christ Redeemer Church of Hanover, NH. The discussions have not gone beyond, "We have an idea, and we are wondering what you think." After two lunch meetings, the leadership of both churches concluded that cooperating with one another may prove to be beneficial to the gospel ministry. Before proceeding further in discussions, we believe it prudent to inform the membership that we are exploring the idea, and to solicit input for consideration. At this point, there are hundreds more questions than answers.

### Reasons to Formally Cooperate with Another Upper Valley Church

The benefits we seek from cooperating with one another are as follows:

1. Augmented Leadership and Accountability – Increasing the number of men who can help affect the various ministries is of benefit to CCC. Cooperating will potentially provide men we know and trust to step in as needed for guidance, situational wisdom, input, and encouragement.
2. Enhanced Pulpit Ministry – While cooperating with one another, pastoral colleagues may review and provide input into the pulpit ministry. It may also be good to add fresh voices and perspectives to the pulpit as ministers rotate among the congregations. In times of vacation or sudden illness, there are men within CRC who are "on call" and prepared to share, and CRC has an active pastoral internship program with ready pulpit supply.
3. Shared Resources – Cooperating adds an "economy of scale". Having a network of churches could increase the deepness of our well. For example, we found it helpful to talk with other churches during the COVID crisis about protocols and approaches. Having a cooperative relationship will potentially make networking and sharing resources easier.
4. Enhanced Gospel Vision – We have a good vision for worldwide missions. We desire to raise our awareness of the Upper Valley as a mission field. Our area is less *Christian* than some of the areas where our missionaries serve (less than 2% of the population regularly attend a Bible-believing church). Cooperating within a multi-church family may help us to increase our reach in the mission field of the Upper Valley.

### Reasons to consider cooperating with Christ Redeemer Church

The reasons we are considering cooperation with CRC are as follows:

1. Theology – CRC and CCC are like-minded theologically. Both churches proclaim a Christ-centered message. Our distinctives include having a high view of God, Scripture, and the church.
2. Proven Maturity – The leadership of CRC demonstrates a proven track record in this region. The current family of CRC churches shows a practical ability to manage a multi-site church network.
3. Partnership as different communities – CRC understands the indigenous flavor of church communities within the Upper Valley and would not apply a disruptive "cookie-cutter" approach in the relationship.
4. Fits CRC Vision – CRC already is working within a church network in the Upper Valley. They have two church plants, one in New London, NH and the other in Quechee, VT. Adding established churches (such as CCC) into their network is already in CRC's vision.

### Timing and Expectations

There are many areas of discussion. The topics needing discussion include doctrinal distinctives, core values, priorities, missions, ministries (children, men, women, teens), administration, leadership, and so forth. It is important for us not to have unrealistic expectations with the timing involved to cooperate with other churches. We are considering venturing into an important relationship and we desire outcome effectiveness to take precedence over expediency. We humbly ask for your prayerful patience, input and wisdom as we seek what the Lord has in store for us.