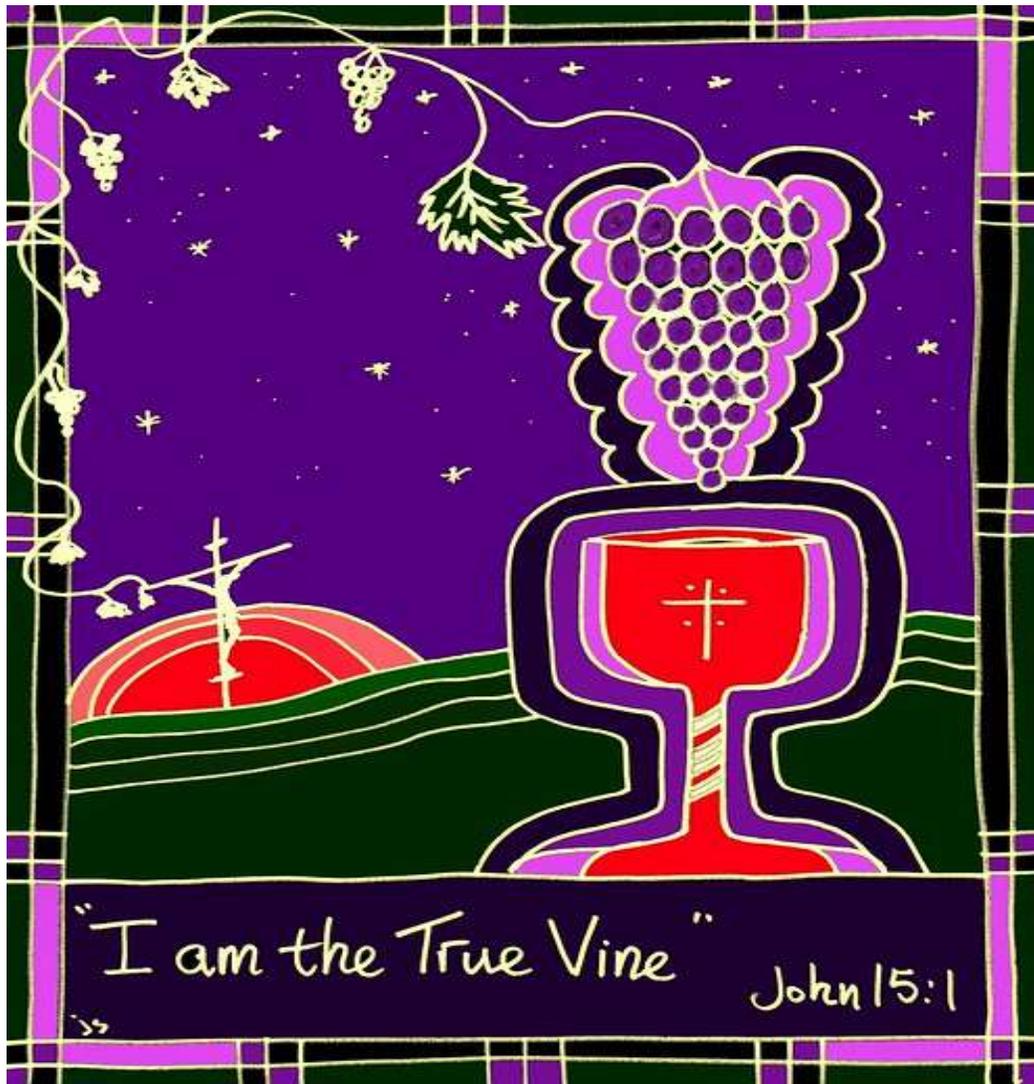


# ZION UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST OF TREMONT

April 28th, 2024

Fifth Sunday of Easter

A Service of the Word



## True Vine John 15:1

by Stushie (a Scottish pastor ministering in East Tennessee)

Church bulletin Art for Easter- 5B

Unique crayon and digital worship art - <https://stushieart.com/april 25, 2015>



**April 28th, 2024**

**Fifth Sunday of Easter**

**A Service of the Word**

**“Jesus wants us to know that we are branches who cannot stand alone. Jesus himself is our gardener who continuously nourishes our spirit. If we remain faithful to Him, our life will prosper and bear much fruit. If we remain loyal to our belief, the hard work we did will result into more than we ever expected. (May 22, 2019)”**

**-dlshsi.edu.ph-**

## **Welcome and Announcements**

## **Lighting of the Christ Candle**

## **Prelude – *Adam Petrosino***

## **\*Call to Worship**

One: We delight ourselves in the presence of Christ and Christ’s love for all creation.

**All: Let us open our hearts to receive Christ’s abundant love.**

One: Christ calls us to see him as the vine and for us to become the branches.

**All: Let us seek to produce much fruit in God’s Garden where all are welcome.**

One: Come, let us worship the Master Gardener, Creator of all that was, is and forever will be.

**All: Amen and Asè (*pronounced “ah-shay” and is Swahili for Amen*).**

**\*Gathering Prayer**

**Living God, we embrace your presence in our lives. Help us to grow stronger together in your garden of love. Plant us together in your peace. Root us together in your hope. Transform us together by your equal justice for all. In your loving presence, we pray. Amen.**

**\*Gathering Hymn: NCH 21 - "God Reigns o'er All the Earth"**

**A READING OF THE WORD**

**First Reading Acts 8:26-40**

*In this season of Easter, we continue to read from the book of Acts in lieu of the Hebrew Scriptures lesson. Philip, one of the disciples, was told by an angel to go south of Jerusalem. On the road from Jerusalem to Gaza, he met a court official of the queen of Ethiopia, who was a eunuch. The eunuch had gone to Jerusalem to worship and was returning home, reading from the prophet Isaiah. There were non-Jews who believed there was one God, and who read and studied the scriptures. Non-Jews were allowed to worship in the outer court of the temple, but not all were able to convert. A eunuch would have been prevented by tradition. Instead, Philip explained the passage of the suffering servant in Isaiah 53:7-8 and interpreted it through the lens of Jesus. When they found water near the road, the eunuch asked Philip what was preventing him from being baptized, and Philip baptized him. The eunuch was one of the first converts, and church tradition holds he was the first missionary to Africa.*

**8** 26 An angel of God spoke to Philip and said, "Be ready to set out at noon along the road that goes to Gaza, the desert road." 27 So Philip began his journey. It happened that an Ethiopian eunuch, a court official in charge of the entire treasury of Candace, the ruler of Ethiopia, had come to Jerusalem on a pilgrimage 28 and was returning home. He was sitting in his carriage and reading the prophet Isaiah.

29 The Spirit said to Philip, "Go up and meet that carriage."

30 When Philip ran up, he heard the eunuch reading Isaiah the prophet and asked, "Do you understand what you are reading?"

31 "How can I," the eunuch replied, "unless someone explains it to me?" With that, he invited Philip to get in the carriage with him. 32 This was the passage of scripture being read:

"You are like a sheep being led to slaughter,

you are like a lamb that is mute in front of its shearers:

like them, you never open your mouth.

33 You have been humiliated  
and have no one to defend you.

Who will ever talk about your descendants,  
since your life on earth has been cut short?”

34 The eunuch said to Philip, “Tell me, if you will, about whom the prophet is talking—himself or someone else?”

35 So Philip proceeded to explain the Good News about Jesus to him.

36 Further along the road they came to some water, and the eunuch said, “Look, there is some water right there. Is there anything to keep me from being baptized?”\*

38 He ordered the carriage to stop; then Philip and the eunuch both went down into the water, and Philip baptized him. 39 When they came out of the water, the Spirit of God snatched Philip away; the eunuch didn’t see him anymore, and went on his way rejoicing.

40 Philip found himself at Ashdod next, and he went about proclaiming the Good News in all the towns, until he came to Caesarea.

**\*Psalm Response: Psalm 22: 25-31** *(Responsively)*

*The end portion of Psalm 22, a prayer for help, turns to praise in verses 25-31. God has remained faithful despite the hardships the psalmist has faced, and the psalmist calls upon the people to praise God, vowing to declare God’s goodness before the congregation. God is the one who has dominion over all the nations, over the earth. Even those who are dead are part of God’s congregation of praise, and those living shall live for God, even the generations yet to come.*

**22** 25 You are the theme of my praise in the Great Assembly,  
and I will fulfill my vows in the presence of your worshipers.

**26** Those, who are poor, will eat and be satisfied,  
those who seek you will give you praise—  
long life to their hearts!

27 The whole earth, from one end to the other,  
will remember and come back to you;  
all the families of the nations will bow down to you.

**28 For yours is the kin-dom,  
you Ruler of nations!**

29 Those who had feasted and devoured those who are poor—  
now they'll bow down;  
those who are most affluent in the land  
will kneel before you. They all go down to the dust  
and none can keep themselves alive.

**30 But my children will be faithful to you,  
and they will be told about God  
for generations to come.**

31 They will come and proclaim your justice  
to a people yet unborn:  
**"All this God has done!"**

**Second Reading: 1 John 4:7-21**

*The writer of 1 John declares that God is love. If you know love, you know God, and if you do not love, you do not know God. God's love was revealed through God's Only Begotten, who has called us to love one another. No one has seen God, but we know God through the love we have for one another—that is how God is made known to us. We love because God first loved us. "Fear has to do with punishment" the writer declares, but love casts away fear. There is no fear in love. Note that this is not the same use of "fear" as often in used in the term "fear of God," for that word fear in the Hebrew scriptures might be better translated as "trembling awe." Perfect love from God as known through Jesus is not about a fear of hell or punishment, but instead mirroring the image of God's love in us. If we do not love our neighbors, we do not love God, for this is God's commandment through Christ. If we cannot love those we have seen (or known by other senses), we cannot love God whom we have never seen.*

**4** 7 Beloved,

let us love one another  
because love is of God;  
everyone who loves is begotten of God  
and has knowledge of God.

8 Those who do not love have known nothing of God,  
for God is love.

9 God's love was revealed in our midst in this way:  
by sending the Only Begotten into the world,  
that we might have faith through the Anointed One.

10 Love, then, consists in this:  
not that we have loved God,  
but that God has loved us  
and has sent the Only Begotten  
to be an offering for our sins.

11 Beloved,  
if God has loved us so,  
we must have the same love for one another.

12 No one has ever seen God.  
Yet if we love one another,  
God dwells in us,  
and God's love is brought to perfection in us.

13 The way we know that we remain in God and God  
in us  
is that we have been given the Spirit.

14 We have seen for ourselves and can testify  
that God has sent the Only Begotten as Savior of the  
world.

15 When any acknowledge that Jesus is the Only Begotten,  
God dwells in them  
and they in God.

16 We have come to know and to believe  
in the love God has for us.  
God is love,  
and those who abide in love  
abide in God,  
and God in them.

17 Love will come to perfection in us when we can face the day of judgment without fear—  
because our relation to this world is just like Christ's. 18 There is no fear in love, for perfect love  
drives out fear. To fear is to expect punishment, and anyone who is afraid is still imperfect in love.

19 We love because God first loved us. 20 If you say you love God but hate your sister or brother, you are a liar. For you cannot love God, whom you have not seen, if you hate your neighbor, whom you have seen. 21 If we love God, we should love our sisters and brothers as well; we have this commandment from God.

**Gospel Reading: john 15:1-8**

*In these verses of John 15, Jesus uses the example of being a vine and we disciples are the vine branches. God is the vine-grower, and through Christ we are called to bear fruit. We cannot bear fruit if we do not abide in the true vine, which is Jesus. Branches that do not bear fruit are useless. We must live out our faith, otherwise, we are useless branches.*

**15** 1 “I am the true vine,  
and my Abba is the vine grower  
2 who cuts off every branch in me that doesn’t bear  
but prunes the fruitful ones  
to increase their yield.  
3 You’ve been pruned already,  
thanks to the word that I have spoken to you.  
4 Live on in me,  
as I do in you.  
Just as a branch cannot bear fruit of itself  
apart from the vine,  
neither can you bear fruit  
apart from me.  
5 I am the vine;  
you are the branches.  
Those who live in me and I in them  
will bear abundant fruit,  
for apart from me you can do nothing.  
6 Those who don’t live in me  
are like withered, rejected branches,  
to be picked up and thrown on the fire and burned.  
7 If you live on in me,  
and my words live on in you,  
ask whatever you want  
and it will be done for you.  
8 My Abba will be glorified  
if you bear much fruit  
and thus prove to be my disciples.

**Choir Hymn: NCH 44 - "Beautiful Jesus"**

**"Beautiful Jesus"**

**Source: Münster Gesangbuch, 1677**

**Translation © 1993 Madeleine Forell Marshall**

**Tune: SCHÖNSTER HERR JESU 5.6.8.5.5.8.**

**Harmonizer: Richard S. Willis, 1850**

**Source: Silesian folk melody**

**Choir: Barbara Rossington, Bob Bucklew, and Keith Konet**

**Accompanist: Adam Petrosino**

**Reflection – "Living On" - Rev. Scott Rosenstein**

**WE RESPOND**

**\* Prayer of Response**

**Mystery of Mysteries, help us to seek your wisdom by living into your truth, and your truth is found in the love we have for one another. May our love be fearless. May our love be without judgment. May our love call us into your ways of justice, your ways of practicing kindness, and your ways of building peace. Mystery of Mysteries, we only know you in a glimpse; but we know you most fully in the abiding love we have for one another, a love that comes only from you, who gave your life for us. Amen.**

**\*Hymn of Response: NCH 451 - "Be Now My Vision"**

**Invitation to Share Our Tithes and Offerings**

**One: Cultivating God, in your generosity, we receive new blessings with each passing day.**

**All: Great is your faithfulness, O God.**

**One: You offer us light from the sun, moon, and stars to guide, nurture, and lovingly shine upon all creation.**

**All: Great is your faithfulness, O God.**

**One: Your loving generosity is more than we could ever hope for and beyond imagination.**

**All: Great is your faithful abundance, O God.**

**One: Let us give our offerings with a heart of gratitude for God's Garden of blessings and love.**

**The Offertory – *Adam Petrosino***

**\*Presentation of Offerings – Doxology**

**Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise God, all creatures here below;  
Praise God above, you heavenly host;  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

**\*Blessing of the Gifts**

**Compassionate God may these gifts be blessed by your light that cultivates love for all creation. As our gardener, O God, sprinkle water on our dry branches of despair to bring us hope. Shine your light of peace on our weariness to bring us justice for all. With Christ as our vine, save us from all that seek to bring us harm. May these fruitful gifts be a blessing in your garden of love. Amen.**

**Prayers of the People**

**The Lord's Prayer (*using "debts" and "debtors"*)**

**Our Father, who art in heaven  
Hallowed be thy Name.  
Thy kingdom come.  
Thy will be done,  
On earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our debts,  
As we forgive our debtors.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
But deliver us from evil.**

For thine is the kingdom,  
and the power,  
and the glory,  
forever.  
Amen.

## GOING FORTH

**\*Parting Hymn: NCH 495 - "Called As Partners in Christ's Service"**

### **\*Commissioning**

One: Go now, in the love of our God.

**All: We will live for others through our God.**

One: Go now, in the grace of Jesus.

**All: We will forgive others, just as we have been forgiven.**

One: Go now, in the community of the Spirit.

**All: We will serve others in every need, in every place, in every heart.**

### **\*Benediction**

Great is your faithfulness, O God, our strength and our Redeemer. Without you, nothing would be possible. Without you, there would be no light amidst the shadows. But, in Christ, we see that all things are possible. In Christ, we are the branches on the vine living according to your divine purpose. Creating God, help us to see your faithfulness as we leave this place of worship. Let us grow in your mercy. Strengthen us as we seek to produce much fruit for the harvest of your love here on earth as it is in heaven. **In Christ's name, we pray. Amen.**

**Postlude - Adam Petrosino** *(please be seated for the Postlude)*

\* \* \* \* \*

## Credits

- (1) Call to Worship, Gathering Prayer, Tithes and Offering, Blessing of the gifts and Benediction are adapted from *Much Fruit: Service Prayers for the Fifth Sunday of Easter* was written by The Rev. Dr. Sheila Harvey, Pastor of Union Congregational United Church of Christ. Permission given to reproduce or adapt this material for use in services of worship or church education. All rights reserved.
- (2) The Prayer of Response is adapted from *Worship Resource for April 28th, 2024, Fourth Sunday of Easter* written by the Rev Mindi Welton Thomas, and posted April 17th, 2024, on his blog , *Rev-o-lution*. <http://rev-o-lution.org/>
- (3) Commissioning is adapted from *Liturgy and Communion for April 28th, 2024, Easter 4-B*, written by Thom M. Shuman, and posted April 21st, 2024, on the blog, *Lectionary Liturgies*. <http://lectionaryliturgies.blogspot.com/>.
- (4) Permission to stream the music in this service obtained from ONE License #A-736636. All rights reserve

### **Ministers, All of Us**

**Scott Rosenstein, Pastor**

**Adam Petrosino, Music Director and Pianist**

**Keith Konet, Council President**

**Beverly Wurm, Administrative Assistant**



## NEWS AND UPCOMING EVENTS

### **God is Still Speaking...**

No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey, you will find a spiritual home in this United Church of Christ congregation. WELCOME!

**Zion United Church of Christ of Tremont** is committed to reaching out to all people with the saving "Good News" of God's Love. To do this, we strive to attain a covenant relationship with people of all races, colors, ethnic origins, ages, sexual orientations and gender identity. We are also committed to grace-filled inclusivity in our worship, programs, membership, mission and social activities. We very strongly believe in outreach and community involvement, as well as ecumenical spiritual involvement within the surrounding community. We are committed to listening to history while joining with the future.

**Tithes and Offerings** - Checks and Money Orders can be made payable to: "Zion United Church of Christ" and placed in the offering basket or mailed to:

**Zion United Church of Christ**

**c/o Keith Konet**

**1039 Bridlewood Drive**

**Copley, OH 44321**

Questions: Contact Keith Konet at 330.604.6939

### **Adam D. Petrosino, Our Music Director/Pianist**

We are so pleased to welcome Adam, and his partner, Kiel, to our community of faith here at Zion United Church of Christ of Tremont. We're grateful to you sharing your presence, faith, and your musical gifts with us. Adam can be reached by e-mail at [A.D.Petrosino@gmail.com](mailto:A.D.Petrosino@gmail.com) and by phone at 234-205-9397.

### **Administrative Assistant, Beverly Wurm**

Beverly is keeping some limited Office Hours at church (2700 W. 14<sup>th</sup> Street/home). The days and hours are:

**Winter Schedule:**

Tuesday– 9am – 1pm

Wednesday – 10am-2 pm

Thursday – 9am – 1pm

Beverly can be reached at: [zionchurchtremont@gmail.com](mailto:zionchurchtremont@gmail.com) or by phone at: 216-273-7561 (church) or 216-310-6810 (mobile)

## OWLS Cleveland

(Older, Wiser, Livelier, Seniors)

Cinco de Mayo Celebration, Wednesday, May 8<sup>th</sup>, 2024, 11:30a.m. - 1:30 p.m.

Zion UCC Church, 2700 W. 14<sup>th</sup> Street

Speaker, Dr. Ronan Factora, MD from The Center for Geriatric Medicine Cleveland Clinic Foundation.

50/50 and raffle baskets.

Call 216-310-6810 to RSVP for lunch.

Made possible through Neighborhood Connections Grant.



*\*Cinco de Mayo, or the fifth of May, is a holiday that celebrates the date of the Mexican army's May 5, 1862 victory over France at the Battle of Puebla during the Franco-Mexican War. The day, which falls on Sunday, May 5 in 2024, is also known as Battle of Puebla Day. While it is a relatively minor holiday in Mexico (it is not Mexican Independence Day), in the United States, Cinco de Mayo has evolved into a commemoration of Mexican culture and heritage, particularly in areas with large Mexican-American populations. – from History.com*

### Please Remember in Prayer

- The Universal Church, its members and mission,
- The nation and all in authority, the leaders of our nation - federal, state, and local.
- For democracy and our democratic institutions and norms in the United States.
- The welfare of the world and the concerns of the local community.
- The interrelationship of Gospel values and civic engagement.
- Ministries of the United Church of Christ and of Zion Church.

- The leaders of our church: local, regional, and national, including The Rev. Karen Georgia Thompson, General Minister and President of the United Church of Christ. We also pray for our Living Water Association UCC, Association General Minister, The Rev. Nayiri Karjian, and Association Faith in Action Minister, The Rev. Michael Howard.
- The ministers and missionaries of the world.
- Those who are refugees and immigrants.
- For racial and religious justice and reconciliation in the United States and around the world.
- Mother Earth and the global reflection on climate disruption.
- For peace, justice, and freedom throughout the world and – and for an end to violence and bloodshed particularly for the peoples of Ukraine, Afghanistan, Iraq, Yemen, Israel and Gaza.
- The people of Haiti.
- According to data from the Gun Violence Archive a total of 141 mass shooting incidents occurred in the US in 2024 as of April 18th

**Mass shooting incidents in the past 10 years in the US:**

2023 – 656 (*While mass shooting incidents increased slightly since 2022, 2023 has shown an 8-10% overall DECREASE in deaths and injuries from gun violence. Some cities saw 20%+ decreases.*)

2022 - 646

2021 - 689

2020 - 610

2019 - 414

2018 - 335

2017 - 247

2016 - 383

2015 - 332

2014 - 272

While we pray for the families and friends of those whose lives have been taken in violent acts – and we pray for those injured in body, mind, soul, and spirit—and for their neighborhoods and communities across the United States – We know that our words and prayers are not enough. We must repent for our collective inaction and commit to tirelessly working toward meaningful gun violence prevention.

- For those affected by the coronavirus COVID-19 pandemic and the various variant surges: for all those who are infected and/or sick, and those who are grieving, for all who are affected, all around the world, for essential workers and frontline workers...we pray for their comfort, for safety, for health, and for wholeness.

- The residents and management of the San Sofia Apartments who share a campus with us.
- Those anticipating surgery, recovering from surgery, or undergoing medical procedures, tests, or treatments.
- Those living in assisted living or in a nursing home
- Those who are homebound and those who are caregivers
- Those who suffer or are in any trouble, and the departed.
- Those on our church prayer list:
  - Patti Augustine and family including Noah, Kate, Lucy, and Max along with Patti's brother Dave doing well after another procedure ).
  - Robert O Bucklew (*Bob Bucklew's Dad*) is residing in Senior Living. Robert recently celebrated his 91st Birthday.
  - The family, loved ones, and friends of Betty Funk.
  - Marian Heffernan (*neighbor to Scott and Bob*)
  - Ken Kauffman & friends: Nim Bryant, Isadora Almaro, Joe & Janelle Reardon, and Nancy Moore's neighbor - also Ivory, Ken's downstairs neighbor.
  - Maddie (the young daughter of Scott's friend) prays for her, her parents, Rachel and Ron, and her younger brother.
  - Keith Konet and family (including granddaughter, Jocelyn Paulette, and her parents, Kevin & Jacqui - and for Keith's brother -in-law Bob Naugle
  - The family, loved ones, and friends of Elaine Lukacs.
  - Patricia Matheny Kellogg and family (*including prayers for her Cousin Paul Kevin McCray*). Also Patricia's friend, Sue Renovitz and Heather diagnosed with thyroid cancer.
  - Our Music Director & Pianist, Adam Petrosino, and his partner, Kiel.
  - Our Pastor Scott Rosenstein
  - Barbara Rossington and Barb's cousin, Robert
  - Debbie Webb
  - Beverly Wurm and family

**On Sunday, May 5, 2024 we welcome to Zion Church  
The Rev. Nayiri Karjian, Association General Minister,  
Living Water Association**

**Ohio NorthEast United Church of Christ**

330.940.2220 x 102 | [nayiri.agm@livingwaterone.org](mailto:nayiri.agm@livingwaterone.org)

Nayiri has been serving as the General Minister of the Association since February 2018. An Armenian Christian born and raised in Aleppo, Syria, Nayiri graduated with a Bachelor of Arts from Haigazian University, and Near East School of Theology, Beirut Lebanon; and with a Master of Divinity degree from Lancaster Theological Seminary, Lancaster, PA. Since her ordination in 1985 she has served UCC congregations in Pennsylvania, Tennessee, Connecticut, Wisconsin, Chicago, Houston, St Louis, and Colorado Springs. Nayiri has shared her gifts both as settled and transitional Minister, including numerous board and committees on the UCC National Setting.



**Contact Nayiri for:**

- Pastoral care and consultation to pastors and lay leaders.
- Guest preaching and worship leadership
- When your pastor resigns or retires
- Issues of Committee on Ministry, including Members in Discernment
- Pastoral Excellence and Communities of Practice
- Installations, ordinations, church anniversary celebrations, etc.
- Worship planning/development
- Visioning, Revisioning and Assessment
- Governance restructuring
- Conflict resolution
- Leadership development
- Church closures and Legacy/Forever Church