

## Four Mile Church Pillars

### **Pillar 10. Grateful Hearts (thankful/merciful/charitable/generous)**

- a. FMC is committed to taking our next steps towards Christ together by being thankful, merciful, charitable, & generous
- b. FMC possesses a spirit of thanksgiving and gratitude in all aspects of its interactions
- c. FMC experiences gratitude for God's grace and mercy in our lives, compelling us to extend grace and mercy to others
- d. FMC focuses as much on the heart and intention behind our giving as we do on the gift itself
- e. FMC acknowledges that our time, talents, & treasure don't belong to us; all go back in the box at the end of the game
- f. FMC covenant partners give tithes/offerings from the outflow of Christ's work in their lives; we don't pass a plate
- g. FMC sees tithes & offerings as an act of worship, a privilege, & an opportunity to participate in Christ's work on earth
- h. FMC operates generously; we don't meet needs minimally; we meet them with a spirit of generosity and abundance
- i. FMC is a good steward of resources, measuring ROI for all expended resources (time, talent, and treasure)

### **Relevant Scripture**

1. Rom 12: 1-2 (The Message), So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him. Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you.
2. Acts 2:42-47, And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved.
3. Rom 12:3-8, For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. 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 one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.
4. 1 Cor 12: 27-31, Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? But earnestly desire the higher gifts.
5. Eph 4: 11-16, 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. Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.
6. Heb 12:28, Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe.

7. Psalm 7:17, I will give thanks to the Lord because of his righteousness; I will sing the praises of the name of the Lord Most High.

8. Psalm 9:1, I will give thanks to you, Lord, with all my heart; I will tell of all your wonderful deeds.

9. Eph 5:18-20, Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.

10. Phil 4:6-7, Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.

11. 1 Thes 5:16-18, Rejoice always, pray continually, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus.

### **Reformed Theological Tenets**

1. ECO Tenets, practice right stewardship of the goods we have been given, showing charity to those in need and offering generous support of the Church and its ministries.

2. ECO Tenets, Progress in holiness is an expected response of gratitude to the grace of God, which is initiated, sustained, and fulfilled by the sanctifying work of the Holy Spirit. The first response of gratitude is prayer, and the daily discipline of prayer – both individually and together – should mark the Christian life. The life of prayer includes praise to God for His nature and works, sincere confession of our sin, and intercession for the needs of those we know and for the needs of the world. As we practice the discipline of regular self-examination and confession, we are especially guided by the Ten Commandments.

3. Heidelberg Catechism, Q. 2. How many things must you know that you may live and die in the blessedness of this comfort? A. Three. First, the greatness of my sin and wretchedness. Second, how I am freed from all my sins and their wretched consequences. Third, what gratitude I owe to God for such redemption.

4. Heidelberg Catechism, Q. 86. Since we are redeemed from our sin and its wretched consequences by grace through Christ without any merit of our own, why must we do good works? A. Because just as Christ has redeemed us with his blood he also renews us through his Holy Spirit according to his own image, so that with our whole life we may show ourselves grateful to God for his goodness and that he may be glorified through us; and further, so that we ourselves may be assured of our faith by its fruits and by our reverent behavior may win our neighbors to Christ.

### **Recommended Books:**

1. Spurgeon, Charles. The Practice of Praise

2. Voskamp, Ann. One Thousand Gifts: A Dare to Live Fully Where You Are

3. Pao, David W. Thanksgiving: An Investigation of a Pauline Theme

4. Crabtree, Sam. Practicing Thankfulness: Cultivating a Grateful Heart in All Circumstances

5. Crowe, Dustin. The Grumbler's Guide to Giving Thanks: Reclaiming the Gifts of a Lost Spiritual Discipline

6. Wolgemuth, Nancy. Choosing Gratitude: Your Journey to Joy

7. Alcorn, Randy. The Treasure Principle

8. Morris, Robert. The Blessed Life

### **Venues to Implement the Pillar**

1. Work with the finance committee to cultivate innovative ways to provide funding for ministry projects
2. Work with the Trustees to ensure that the church expresses an appropriate level of gratitude to contractors, volunteers, and other donors.
3. Support Abby as the brand and church aesthetics director to ensure the church always conveys reverence, gratitude, that we are good stewards of resources, & that we serve a generous and loving God.

**Platforms & Exercises to Develop the Pillar**

1. Develop a list of items the church can do at social functions to make them a first class - event
2. Develop FMC specific items to include in meals that are delivered or services that the church supports such as funerals & weddings.
3. Break out into groups of 2-3 and discuss ways the church can express gratitude better in our worship.