

The Vision of Outreach Ministry

Following Jesus into the world to work for, work with, and be with others

“...in Mt. Pleasant, the lowcountry, and around the world.”

The heart of Outreach Ministry at Christ Church is that we find Jesus *in the world* in places of material and spiritual need. In the 25th chapter of Matthew’s gospel, Jesus suggests that when we feed the hungry, welcome the stranger, alleviate the sick, clothe the naked, and visit the prisoner, we have done these things to Jesus.

When we follow Jesus into the world, we look to the pattern of his earthly life to determine how we as the church might interact with issues of material and spiritual need. The priest-theologian Sam Wells points out that of Jesus’ 33 years on the earth, he spent one week of his life *working for* others, dying and rising for our salvation, doing what we could never do for ourselves. He spent three years of his life *working with* others, partnering with his disciples and catalyzing them to spread the good news of the kingdom of God. Finally, he spent thirty years of his life simply *being with* others, forming friendships and being present to us as God in the flesh.

Drawing on the insights of Sam Wells, and seeking to follow the pattern of Jesus, we believe that outreach ministry should be multifaceted in approach, with the recognition that building cooperative and loving relationships is one of the most powerful ways we can share the love of God and work toward sustainable flourishing in our community. Accordingly, we *work for* others, helping those in situations of dire need, responding to emergencies and crises with resources and support. We *work with* others, partnering with organizations as well as those in need to generate sustainable growth and flourishing. And finally, we find ways simply to *be with* others, forming friendships and sharing the love of Christ.

The bottom line is that we want to be involved in different ministries that represent all three of these modes of approaching material and spiritual need: working for, working with, and being with others. The emphasis on *being with* is not at all to diminish the importance of *working for* or *working with*, but seeks to maintain a proper focus on the centrality of relationships, which is often easy to ignore. Some of our outreach ministries are more oriented toward *working for*, some more oriented toward *being with*, though most will involve some form of *working with* others. If you’d like to find out more, contact Fr. Joe Carnes Ananias at jananias@christch.org.