



Chapel Identity Statement
Prepared by Chris Lash, Director of University Ministries
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Judson University is, has been, and will continue to be a Baptist, “conservative, evangelical Christian university that represents the Church at work in higher education, equipping students to be fully developed, responsible persons who glorify God by the quality of their personal relationships, their work, and their citizenship within the community, the nation and the world.”¹ Judson University understands participation in Chapel to play a vital role in realizing this mission.

Worked into the fabric of the student’s collegiate experience, Judson’s Chapel ministry has historically sought to “attain greater Christian maturity, and to acquire distinctly Christ-like attributes.”² The main goal of Chapel has always been to make Jesus Christ real to students in the context of the disciplines of the liberal arts.

There have been a number of shifts in the life of Judson University necessitating a re-articulation of the Chapel ministry’s theology, philosophy, strategy, and audience. We shall review three. First, President Gene C. Crume has taken time to hone and reinforce the faith identity for the University. Second, the Trustees, President, and Leadership Team have made it clear that Chapel is to be the center of campus and Judson will remain committed to engaging the spiritual lives of students. Third, structural leadership changes have allowed personnel to devote more time and energy to be poured into the Chapel ministry.

This document detailing the shift in Chapel Identity has been formed by numerous documents (many being formal foundational documents).

- Faith Identity Statement
- Mission Statement & Educational Goals
- 1968 Statement of Purpose
- Faculty Handbook
- Student Handbook
- Personnel (Staff) Handbook
- Educational Goals
- Community Standards
- Lifestyle Expectations and Conduct Guidelines
- Student Development mission, vision, and values
- Goal five of the Strategic Plan

¹ This comes directly from Judson University’s mission statement.

² Cramer, J.D. (1971) *Recommendation of ad hoc committee on the Judson College: Chapel philosophy* [Paper]. Obtained from Dr. Warren Anderson.

- President Crume’s articulation on *how* Judson will “shape lives that shape the world” (commitment to student, spiritual development, leadership, and excellence)
- Informal papers from previous chapel coordinators (trustee reports, job descriptions, regulations and procedures, etc.)

This updated Chapel Identity is theologically grounded, biblically based, Christ exalting, and rooted in the history and values of Judson.

Theology (Why do chapel?)

The question we shall attempt to answer is, theologically, why do we do chapel? Why does Judson University have a chapel ministry? Is it out of obligation or a kind of empty tradition? Is it to “certify” us as a Christian university? Is Judson attempting to mimic a local church? Simply, why would we spend resources three times per week to gather for a chapel service?

The Scriptures tell the Story of a self-revealing Trinitarian God who formed a world full of mystery and wonder. After God created man and woman, entering into relationship with them, He charged them with the task of shepherding and caring for creation, pursuing human flourishing. Even after sin polluted the created order, the world still teemed with beauty, and humanity remained charged with the good work of shepherding creation. This charge married reason and revelation, both being necessary to rightly fulfill the charge.

Adam and Eve were, in part, called to reason, learn about, study, experience, and understand the creative order. For how could they organize or care for that which they do not understand? Coupled with their pursuit of learning and experience, God unveiled Himself, revelation. In revelation God gave Himself to Adam and Eve, allowing Adam and Eve to peer into the life of God and enter into relationship with Him.

Now, reason and revelation alone cannot stand as an end in themselves. God did not task Adam and Eve to shepherd and care for creation because He needed to delegate responsibly. Nor did He reveal Himself merely to grant metaphysical knowledge. The purpose of reason joined with revelation is so that delight and pleasure rises past ourselves and is fulfilled in God. In short, the purpose of study (reason) and knowledge of God (revelation) is *worship* (response).

Judson University has a unique position compared to other Universities. As an academic Baptist evangelical Christian institution, Judson University imparts not only reason but also revelation in the students’ everyday academic pursuit.³ Students have the opportunity to study major specific information as well as learn about the revealed God, what He has done, and who He invites us to be.

Judson University’s Chapel program provides for the Judson community the opportunity to fortify the fusion of reason and revelation throughout the week by affording opportunities for worship. We meet for chapel in order to nourish the spiritual lives of (primarily) students amidst academic pursuits. *Chapel primarily draws the Judson community to worship and*

³ This is underscored in the University’s mission statement: equipping students to be fully developed, responsible persons who glorify God by the quality of their personal relationships, their work, and their citizenship within the community, the nation and the world.

evangelism by introducing and reminding the community of the life-changing gospel of Jesus Christ.

Philosophy (What do we want to be about?)

Mission: Chapel exists *to make plain the whole gospel to the whole person for the good of the whole world.*⁴

To make plain the whole gospel...

We want, in everything we do, to make plain the freeing gospel (good news) of Jesus Christ. Chapel will proclaim that the incarnation, life, death, resurrection, ascension, and intercession of Jesus Christ frees us from having to strive to earn approval from God; the work is finished! Chapel will at the same time proclaim the good news that through Jesus Christ God invites us to participate in the re-creation of all things.

...to the whole person...

Through the gospel, our very identity has been changed. Jesus Christ in the gospel by the power of the Spirit takes our whole being into Himself and transforms our head (the way we think), our heart (the way we believe), and our hands (the way we act). It truly is a holistic transformation. He makes our whole being new!

*...for the good of the whole world.*⁵

There is great need everywhere and the Holy Spirit directs us to the needs we are to meet. We can participate in spreading the gospel of Jesus Christ with our head, heart, and hands by loving our neighbors in the dorm, across the street, in our city and country, and even in the remotest points on earth.

⁴ There are three documents that helped to form Chapel's new mission: Judson's Faith Identity, Judson's mission statement, and the mission of Student Development. There are three points that stood out among those documents:

- 1) The commitment to Jesus Christ and the gospel.
In each of the documents mentioned above it is clear that Judson University is determined to remain steadfast in preaching and living like Jesus Christ to/among the Judson Community and the world. Packaged a different way, it is clear that Judson University is committed to setting the gospel of Jesus Christ as our unwavering foundation.
- 2) The desire to provide holistic education.
It is also clear that Judson desires for students to graduate as whole persons. It is not acceptable for students, upon graduation, to have a developed intellect and an anemic spiritual life. The Chapel mission statement underscores this desire by asserting that when the whole gospel is preached it forms the whole person.
- 3) The desire for students to be globally minded.
Judson is founded on the legacy of Adoniram Judson, the first missionary to Burma. Further, in the aforementioned documents it is clear that care and concern for the world is vital to the mission of Judson. It is important that the gospel of Jesus Christ moves students to living their lives as missionaries, dedicated to bringing light near and far.

⁵ Gen. 12:2; Ps. 65; Titus 2:11-15; Eph. 2:1-10; 1 Cor. 15:1-8.

Vision:

By fostering a safe space for students to wrestle with the gospel and setting the stage for life-changing encounters with Jesus Christ, we envision Judson graduates shaping their world by bringing the gospel of Jesus Christ to bear in all areas of their lives.

What We Value⁶

- **STORYFORMED:** We are formed by God's Story.

Everyone is caught up in a story. For all people, there is a greater Story that shapes our lives, defines who we truly are, informs how we interact with others, and describes how we relate to God. This is the story of Divine pursuit of broken humanity. As Christians, we believe we can participate in God's age-old unfolding Story. Therefore, we regularly grasp and remind ourselves of the Story by connecting with God's Word in the Scriptures.

(Gen. 28:10-22; Deut. 15:15; Lk. 24:27; Eph. 2:1-10)

- **COMMUNITY:** We courageously pursue being known.

We are not to be isolated, truly individual, creatures. We were created to dwell in community for our joy and to show the world who God is and what He is like. Though many recoil at the prospect of being known, we know that in our mess, because of Jesus, we can extend and receive radical grace. Accordingly, we are an inclusive community, welcoming the religious, irreligious, burned-out, skeptic, doubter, and believer.

(Gen. 12:2; Jn. 17:20-23; 1 Pt. 3:8; Eph. 4:15-16)

- **HONESTY:** We're real.

We value honesty—not a moral principle but a freedom we experience in the gospel— because of Jesus Christ. Jesus delights in us as we are, in this moment, allowing us to be candid with ourselves about our own stories, share our story with others, and express our hurts and celebrations with God. As God liberates us from image management we are liberated to rest in Jesus Christ.

(Ps. 139:23; Rom. 8:1; Heb. 4:14-16)

- **BEAUTY:** We create and enjoy beauty.

Life teems with beauty. God has built in the hearts of people the passion to enjoy and create what is truly magnificent. Everything that is beautiful and lovely ultimately points to the beauty of the Creator, who is to be enjoyed forever. We value enjoying, recognizing, and creating beauty-things as an act of worship.

(Gen. 1:1; Eccl. 3:11; Col. 1:15-20)

- **DEPENDENCE:** We constantly need Christ.

⁶ Why these values? Each value connects with something that our campus needs to recall consistently. STORYFORMED highlights that we value Scripture. We let Scripture read us and our culture. It reveals Christ to us by the illuminating work of the Spirit and calls us to participate in God's unfolding story. BEAUTY emphasizes that we believe God has given good gifts to us for us to enjoy, create, and share. HONESTY stresses that our community pursues openness and authenticity in relationships and community gathering. COMMUNITY expresses our commitment to friendship and open dialogue across theological, ethnic, socio-economic, and sexual identity boundaries. Lastly, DEPENDENCE expresses that we rely on Jesus Christ and His changing work for internal (personal) and external (campus-wide) change and growth. We want to make plain that we never outgrow the gospel of Christ.

The Christian life is not one of independence but *dependence*. As Jesus leads us into deeper belief, we become increasingly dependent on His grip, His grace, and His goodness. We believe that as we are more aware of our frailty, we are even more aware of Jesus' strength and presence. We endlessly fix our eyes on Christ.
(Ps 20:7; Eph. 3:18-19; Heb. 12:2)

Strategy (How will we do this?)

- We will regularly preach the gospel of Jesus Christ.
- We will passionately worship through excellent musical, visual, and performing arts.
- We will emphasize active student participation by training and equipping student leaders.
- We will provide opportunities for students to engage in small groups.
- We will have fun, laugh, and celebrate.

Audience (Who do we serve?)

The Judson University Chapel Program exists to serve the entire Judson community and places particular emphasis on traditional undergraduate students. Faculty, staff, alumni, adult program students, and trustees are welcome and encouraged to attend and will occasionally be invited to participate in leadership in various chapels, but the focus of programming will be for Judson's traditional undergraduate student body. Further, as stated in the Faith Identity Statement, Judson University is committed to open enrollment for prospective students who are not professing Christians. Therefore, Chapel will remain sensitive to the theological and cultural presuppositions of non-Christians while simultaneously focusing on calling both Christians and non-Christians into ongoing, freeing, and life transforming faith in Jesus Christ.