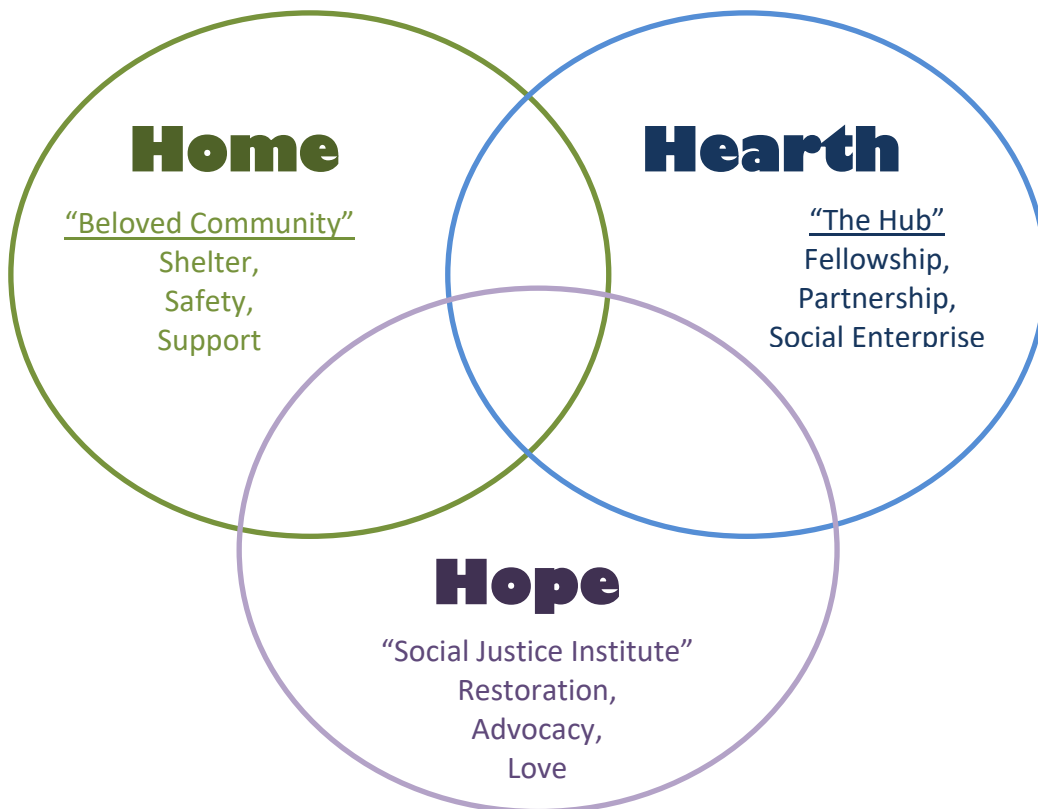


# A Proposal for Exploring: A Hearth of Welcome and Restoration for the City

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## Proposal Prepared by Caldwell Presbyterian Church February, 2017

Caldwell Presbyterian was founded as a traditional Presbyterian church in 1912, nearly closed its doors in 2006 due to dwindling membership, and was “reborn” as a unique, inclusive, welcoming and fervently missional Presbyterian church when seekers of all kinds began to create a “New Thing” on its old campus. Propelled by growth, faith, determination, and prayer, the church entered its second century by dreaming big.

We dream of how Caldwell could pioneer an inclusive, intentional, justice-oriented ministry that deepens community in a divided city and heals and equips people to live meaningful, resilient lives. We dream of the best use of our campus, our energies, and our faith in service to our community. We dream of serving as a beacon and a model to other congregations who similarly seek to make a difference for our sisters and brothers at the margin.

In more specific terms, we dream:

- That our old *campus will teem with activity not just on Sundays* but throughout the week, a gathering place for all the city
- That we will *provide a home for the homeless*, embodying the fulfillment of the Biblical vision of *Koinonia, a diverse, beloved community for a mix of people* at turning points in their lives (teen moms, at-risk families, LGBTQ youth)
- That we will *foster connection and economic opportunity for those at the margins*, advancing social justice at the same time

To test our “dreams,” Caldwell leaders spent late 2016 and early 2017: assessing the city’s needs; gathering input from congregation leaders and members; and, engaging its closest community partners. Remarkably consistent and consonant themes clearly emerged:

- **WE WILL BUILD A HOUSE FOR THE BELOVED COMMUNITY:** The housing that Caldwell will provide on campus will reflect our inclusive, diverse congregation. We will provide a home for the “beloved community,” where real and lasting connections are made across diversity of experience. We believe we can:
  - o Build a large residential-style home (rather than institutional housing), matching the context of our historic neighborhood, and providing 15-20 residents the stability and support needed to launch back into purposeful, self-sustaining lives.
  - o Shelter people who might not otherwise be eligible for service from the city’s coordinated network of affordable housing providers. This beloved community would host a diversity of residents with short- to intermediate-periods – such as LGBTQ youth and single mothers - and would include transitional housing for men, women and families in crisis.
  - o Provide residents with professional case management and adequate supportive services to build resiliency and reentry into life, and be there for them as a touchstone even as they move on.
  - o “Anchor and infuse” the home’s sense of community by housing some of Caldwell’s own members whose needs for adequate, affordable housing are real and who can connect their fellow residents to the love and inclusiveness that reflects Caldwell’s mission.
  - o Provide a visible example for other churches in how their land and resources can be harnessed to serve others in the spirit and service of Christ.

- **WE WILL PROVIDE A FELLOWSHIP HALL AND COMMUNITY CENTER:** Belk Hall will be renovated or replaced and will continue to serve as a community “hearth” for our campus. It will retain its value as the congregation’s fellowship and gathering space and also incubate and launch social justice activities and economic enterprise on behalf of our residents and the entire community. By providing a place to commune, we will:
  - Ensure that Caldwell’s established social enterprise, The Third Place Coffee House, can expand its hours and continue to be a platform for learning basic jobs skills and business management.
  - Instill in our campus residents a sense of “skin in the game” of the larger Caldwell vision and enterprise. This could take the form of a commitment by the residents to work in The Third Place to help expand it as a social enterprise, explore new social enterprises, or be a steward of other aspects of what it takes to operate Caldwell as a church for the entire city.
  - Create a hub for partnering with neighboring institutions such as CPCC to connect Caldwell’s resident community to educational resources, or, such as Novant-Presbyterian Hospital to place residents in learning roles or permanent employment.
  
- **WE WILL DEMONSTRATE AND FOSTER SOCIAL JUSTICE AND EQUITY FOR OUR DENOMINATION AND OUR CITY:** In partnership with St. Andrews University and Union Theological Seminary-Charlotte, we will create on our campus an institute that will serve as an incubator for social justice and organizing. This will be a place where emerging leaders in the Presbyterian Church and beyond can reclaim the position justice can play in reinvigorating the often-staid Presbyterian tradition. The goal will be to help close the city’s vast – and deeply documented – economic opportunity gap between the haves and have nots:
  - St. Andrews and Union students will serve as “residents” at Caldwell working with those living in the campus house to learn their journeys, identify their needs and responsibilities and – where appropriate - work with them to advance their lives through channels of justice and restoration in Charlotte.
  - The Institute will serve the denomination as a beacon for how the passions and interests of the rising generation of Presbyterians can embrace Christ’s call to justice and love.

**With thanks to God for the servant leadership that has built our church, we plan to complete:**

- An in-depth proposal, covering in detail the costs, intended goals and benefits and implementation, of each of the three components of our campus dream.
- An initial architectural rendering for the house and Belk Hall.
- A detailed joint proposal, including partners St. Andrews and Union Seminary, with a “proof of concept” for the social justice institute.