

# THE SALTSHAKER

A PUBLICATION OF COVENANT REFORMED PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, ASHEVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA

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## Chris Brown Interview

By Rev. Sean McCann

*Over the past month or so Lindsey and I have had the privilege of getting to know Chris and Anna Kathryn Brown, our new Assistant Pastor and his wife. I first met Chris at General Assembly in Atlanta, then as part of the interview process they had dinner in our home with the elders and their wives, and we've shown them around town and the church. They are a wonderful couple that I know each of you will enjoy getting to know, so I hope this interview is only a jumping off point in your developing a relationship with our new pastor.*

*Tell us about yourself: Where did you grow up? What did you study in college? When did you and Anna Kathryn meet?*

I am a PCA pastor's kid, and moved around depending on my father's call. I was born in Tallahassee, FL, and lived there for 5 years before living in Crystal River, FL, for the next 7 years. After that we journeyed up to Chattanooga, TN, where I attended Chattanooga Christian School. During that time I had several wonderful teachers who nurtured my interests in fine art and in literature. I went to Belhaven University in 2008 to study fine art, and ended up majoring in it, minoring in creative writing, finishing in the honors college, and studying some philosophy on the side. Anna Kathryn was born and raised in Jackson, MS, and we ended up meeting through some family friends when I was in town to look at Belhaven! She ended up at Belhaven as well, and we became quick friends. Anna Kathryn studied philosophy and art history, and has a bachelors in Philosophy. Our friend group in college was tightly knit. Anna Kathryn and I dated each other in our Senior year, and were engaged at the end of it. We were married during my first semester at Reformed Theological Seminary.

*What experiences has God used to form you as a pastor?*

I think there are two main experiences that God used to form me as a pastor. The first experience is simply the

long-term, ordinary efforts of my pastors and teachers. My parents have always faithfully pointed me to Jesus Christ for salvation. Two or three teachers in high school fueled my interest in Scripture (though I didn't take advantage of this until college). Several ministers faithfully ministered to me through my teen years. While in College, my English professor, three art professors, two RUF campus ministers, and a slew of ministers at FPC Jackson all served as faithful examples. But the second main experience that God used to form me as a pastor is the study of Scripture. Once I attended college, I considered for myself whether or not I truly believed in the faith of my parents. I read the Qur'an, the Upanishads, works of philosophy and atheistic literature. But I also read the Bible! I had never truly studied God's Word for myself. But as I read it, I became convinced of its truth--that our ancestors (Adam and Eve) rebelled against God, that we have all fallen in them, but that God in love has sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for all who believe. As my certainty and assurance about this truth grew, so did my desire to preach the gospel. I thought that though I loved art, I had to preach this or I would die!

*Why did you enter the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (EPC) after seminary?*

I attended Reformed Theological Seminary, Jackson, and came to the point where I had (and still have) no exceptions to the Westminster Confession of Faith. I was taken under care of FPC Jackson, and of the Mississippi Valley Presbytery (PCA), and eventually served as an intern at FPC Jackson. As my time at RTS drew to an end I received a call from a conservative EPC congregation in a conservative presbytery of the EPC. The EPC allows a variety of views in regards to the charismatic gifts as well as to the ordination of women. I personally believe that Scripture teaches that only men are to be ordained to the offices of elder and deacon, and believe that the revelatory and confirming

## September and October

### Upcoming Events

For more information about any of these events, refer to our website ([www.covenantreformed.net](http://www.covenantreformed.net)), or the church office (828-253-6578; [crpchq@gmail.com](mailto:crpchq@gmail.com)).

#### The Lord's Supper

Please prepare your hearts in advance to take of the sacrament together.

During Morning Worship: September 2, 16 October 7, 21	During Evening Worship: September 30
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#### Brown Family Welcome Meal:

September 2, following morning worship.

#### Game Night:

September 8, 6:30 p.m at the church.

#### Church Picnic:

September 23, following morning worship.

#### Elder Groups:

October 7, following morning worship.

#### Veterans' Restoration Quarters Meals:

September 20, October 3 and 10.

### Weekly Events

#### Sunday:

Opening Exercises	9:30 am	
Sunday School	9:45 am	
Morning Worship	11:00 am	
Evening Worship	6:00 pm	Except for 1st Sundays

#### Wednesday Evenings:

Supper	6:00 pm
Bible Study/Prayer	6:45 pm

### Bible Study

#### For Men:

Men's Prayer Breakfast	8:00 am	2nd & 4th Saturdays
ROMEOS	8:00 am	Every Thursday
<i>(Retired Old Men Eating Out)</i>		
at J&S Cafeteria, River Ridge		
Norm Bomer's Home	7:00 pm	1st & 3rd Thursdays

#### For Women:

Carol Belz's Home	9:30 am	Every Tuesday
Fellowship Hall	10:30 am	Every Wednesday
Debbie Cate's Home	7:00 pm	1st & 3rd Thursdays

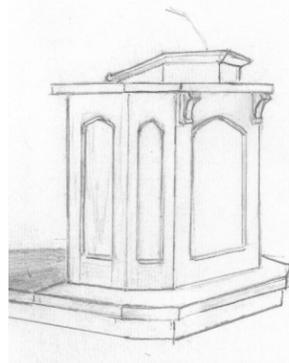
*Continued from Page 1*

gifts (tongues, prophecy, healing) have ceased. After some discussion with elders in my PCA presbytery, and with the Central South presbytery credentials committee (EPC), I felt assured that I could reasonably hold to my convictions in the EPC, which has been the case.

*(Editor's Note: Even though Chris is ordained, he will have to go through the PCA examination and ordination process. Because of this, we have told Chris that his main priority during his first few months with us is to study for his exams!)*

*Tell us about your art background and some of your current artistic interests.*

Over the years I have had a number of wonderful art teachers, all of whom have really shaped my view of art, aesthetics, and the role of art from a Christian world-and-life view. One professor in particular has forever emblazoned into my mind the idea that the foundation of all of art is drawing. While in seminary my sketchbook habit fell to the wayside, but I now try to draw a little bit each week. My original media in art was experimental darkroom photography, but eventually I branched out into painting with beeswax. This medium fits best with my desire to have a material that both reveals and conceals its own history, which I like to think is an analogy for our own understanding of God's providence. My work is not representational or figurative, but I still attempt to make art that is symbolic, speaking to biblical or theological themes through a contempo-



## The Sacred Desk

By Rev. Sean McCann

In September we will begin a new preaching series during the evening worship service through the book of 1 Samuel. During the past two years of preaching through John, we've seen various signs and teachings showing that Jesus is the Christ, the Messiah. John's original audience was primed to hear of this Messiah because he had been so vividly foreshadowed in the Old Testament, particularly by King David, the anointed one. I am eager to study how the success and failures of God's kings, as recorded in 1 Samuel, point us forward to the beauty and glory of the coming Christ.

I also want to take this moment to remind you of the great value we place on evening worship and invite you to join us for this new series. Our second service is born out of some of our most precious commitments as a church. Central to our ministry is a dependence on God to work through

his means of grace - primarily prayer and the word - to convert sinners and build us up in the faith. There are many other fine things that we could emphasize in the church calendar, but we believe that what happens in worship is so vital to a healthy Christian life that it must be at the forefront among our ministries. In addition to this, it is our desire to be faithful to the fourth commandment to remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy. The Lord's Day is a day set apart for worship and rest, and the two worship services serve as bookends to the Lord's Day: they provide form and structure. With these two services in place the rest of the day is easily filled with preparation, fellowship, private worship, and rest. Parents with young children often struggle with what to do with their kids on Sunday, and attendance at evening worship by and large answers this question.

If it is not your habit to return for evening worship, I hope you'll give it a try this month as we start this new series. It may be a struggle at first to adjust to a different Sunday schedule, but I am confident that if you stick it out for a few weeks it will become a joy. Many of our regular evening attenders testify that this service has a sweet intimacy to it and has become their favorite service of the day. As your shepherd, I encourage you to come to the rivers of life and place yourself in the streams of God's grace to experience the renewal of your soul at the closing of the Lord's Day.

Preaching Schedule		
Date	Morning	Evening
Sep. 2	Acts 8:4-25	
Sep. 9	Acts 8:26-40	1 Sam. 1:1-20
Sep. 16	Acts 9:1-22	1 Sam. 1:21-2:11
Sep. 23	Acts 9:23-31	1 Sam. 2:12-35
Sep. 30	Acts 9:32-43	1 Sam. 3
Oct. 7	Acts 10:1-48	
Oct. 14	Acts 11:1-30	1 Sam. 4
Oct. 21	Acts 12:1-25	1 Sam. 5
Oct. 28	Acts 13:1-22	1 Sam. 6

rary format. I currently make a little bit of artwork when I have spare time, but don't try to make a vocation out of it.

*What do you and your family like to do?*

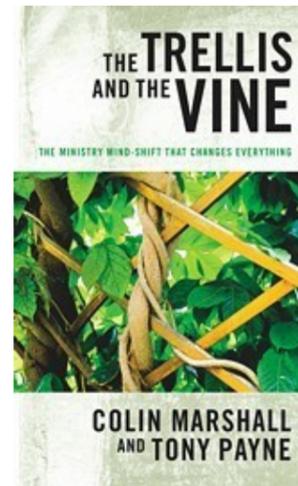
We love exploring! Emma Rhymes (our daughter) enjoys walks through the neighborhood, and trips to the park. While we aren't really much for hiking (at least not yet), we love investigating the city. We enjoy arts districts, coffee shops, music venues, and things like that. I (Chris) also enjoy soccer and cycling.

*Why are you and Anna Kathryn excited to move to Asheville and minister at Covenant Reformed?*

We are excited about the move to Asheville, and about ministering to CRPC for a number of reasons. For one, we really love seeing the Church built up to love Jesus and one another. We're excited to have opportunities to make godly friends, to disciple others and be taught, and also to do outreach to a community that clearly needs the gospel. Also, we've spent years reaching out to lost friends and family, and we think that this city and Church will be a great place to continue and develop that.

## What Is A Pastor?

by Rev. Sean McCann



A few years ago I met a new pastor in town. After chatting for a bit I found out he was at a large church with a lot of pastors on staff, so I asked him what his role was in particular. Much to my surprise, he replied that he was the pastor of small groups for the middle school youth. This job description was (and is) the narrowest I have ever heard of for a pastor! While I am sure my colleague was excited for this call, I walked away grateful for my call at the time as a pastor tasked with the full

range of duties involved in the pastoral ministry.

As we welcome a new pastor with a new job description, I think it is helpful to examine our expectations so that we can fully welcome him and encourage him in his work. In Scripture we do not find heavily regulated roles for different types of pastors. Rather we see that the pastor is simply a man who exemplifies the requirements for an elder in Christ's church (1 Tim 3:1-7; Titus 1:5-9), and is called to "labor in preaching and teaching" (1 Tim 5:17). One of the clearest of these descriptions is found in Paul's charge to young Timothy:

I charge you in the presence of God and of Christ Jesus, who is to judge the living and the dead, and by his appearing and his kingdom: preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with complete patience and teaching...As for you, always be sober-minded, endure suffering, do the work of an evangelist, fulfill your ministry. (2 Tim 4:1-3, 5)

Another formative passage is directed to all elders in their ministry to the flock of God:

So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. (1 Peter 5:1-3)

Some of you have already noted how young Chris Brown is (which is the same thing many of you said about me two years ago...I guess I am the old man now?!) But of course a pastor's age doesn't change his work either, as Paul makes clear:

Command and teach these things. Let no one despise you for your youth, but set the believers an example in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith, in purity. Until I come, devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to exhortation, to teaching. Do not neglect the gift you have, which was given you by prophecy when the

council of elders laid their hands on you. Practice these things, immerse yourself in them, so that all may see your progress. Keep a close watch on yourself and on the teaching. Persist in this, for by so doing you will save both yourself and your hearers. (1 Tim 4:11-16)

With all this in mind, the Session has called Pastor Chris as a generalist and fellow shepherd. He is your pastor and will be regularly praying for you, feeding you the word, and leading you to follow the good shepherd. I will continue to be the primary preacher and teacher, but Pastor Chris will regularly fill the pulpit and share some of those duties. He will also be involved regularly in leading worship, administering the sacraments, and visiting the flock. In addition to these general duties, Pastor Chris will focus some of his time and energies in areas of outreach and evangelism. Don't expect Chris to start any programs any time soon, but he will be tasked with thinking and praying about how we can reach out to the North Asheville community, the UNC Asheville campus, and the city of Asheville. He will also focus on discipling our younger members and oversee the discipleship and education ministry of the church.

As I think about my own expectations for Chris, I come back again and again to a helpful analogy found in Colin Marshall and Tony Payne's book, *The Trellis and the Vine: The Ministry Mind-Shift that Changes Everything*. In his excellent book review, Pastor Tim Challies explains the meaning of this metaphor for ministry: "A trellis, of course, is a structure that is used to support, to hold up, a vine. In this metaphor the trellis refers to the administrative work within a church, those tasks that, though important, are not actually directly related to discipling people. Vine work, on the other hand, is those tasks of working with the vine, drawing people into the kingdom through evangelism and then training them to grow in their knowledge of God and their obedience to him. As the authors say, "The basic work of any Christian ministry is to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ in the power of God's Spirit, and to see people converted, changed and grow to maturity in that gospel." The problem, though, is that trellis work tends to take over from vine work. Perhaps it's because trellis work is easier and less threatening; perhaps the trellis work looks more impressive. But for one reason or another, many Christians, and pastors in particular, soon find themselves consumed with trellis work, leaving them little time and attention for the vine. "Whatever the reason, there is no doubt that in many churches, maintaining and improving the trellis constantly takes over from tending the vine.""

There are always more programs to be planned, e-mails to be sent, and systems to be fine-tuned, but this is all "trellis work" that can distract pastors from their primary calling of ministering the word of God to the people of God. Pastor Chris' varied job description may take some getting used to as none of our most recent assistant or associate pastors (Bill Clark, Alex Howarth, John Larson, Philip Canes, or Berry Stubbs) have had these types of responsibilities, but I am hopeful that with the Spirit's leading and your patience, we will see the ministry of the word grow and increase in our fellowship and in our community.

<sup>1</sup><https://www.challies.com/book-reviews/the-trellis-and-the-vine/>