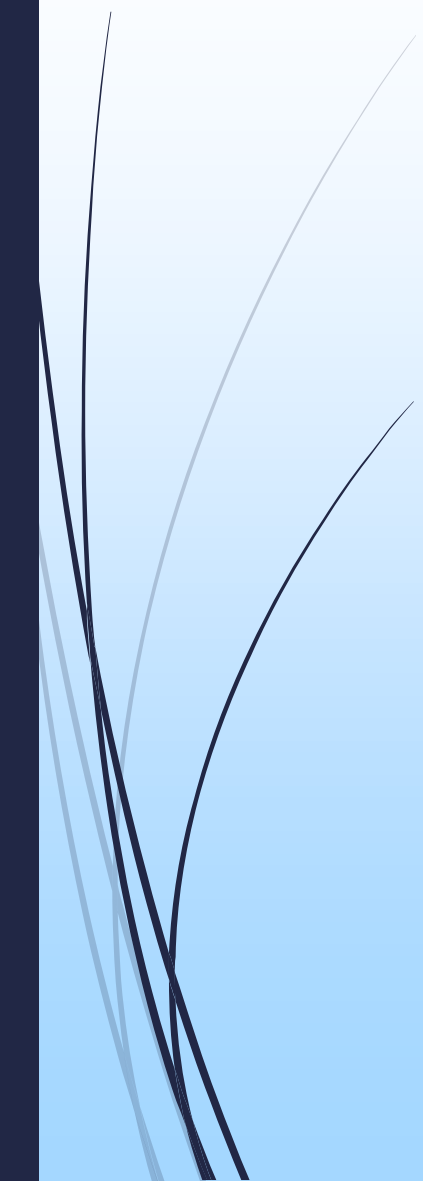




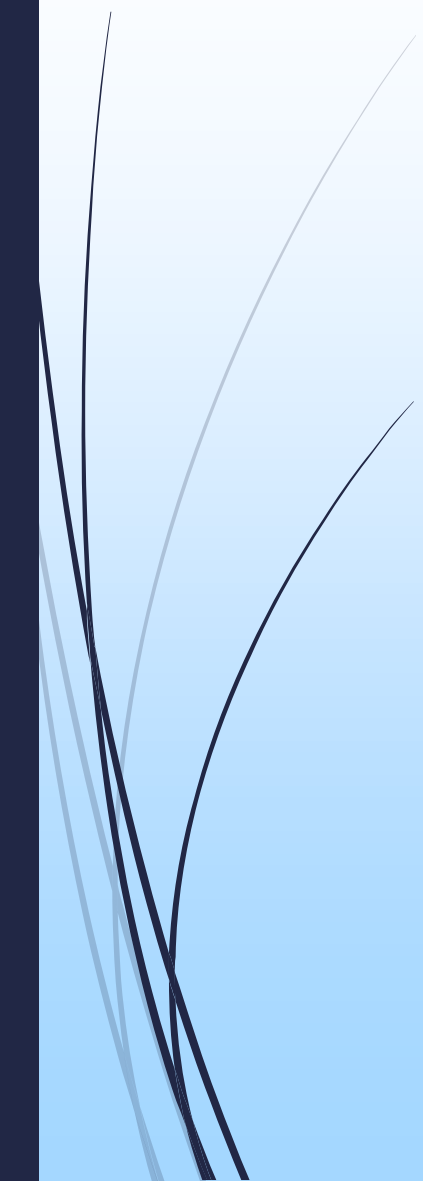
# **Winsome Community**

**Building Community by Faith**  
(Saturday morning)



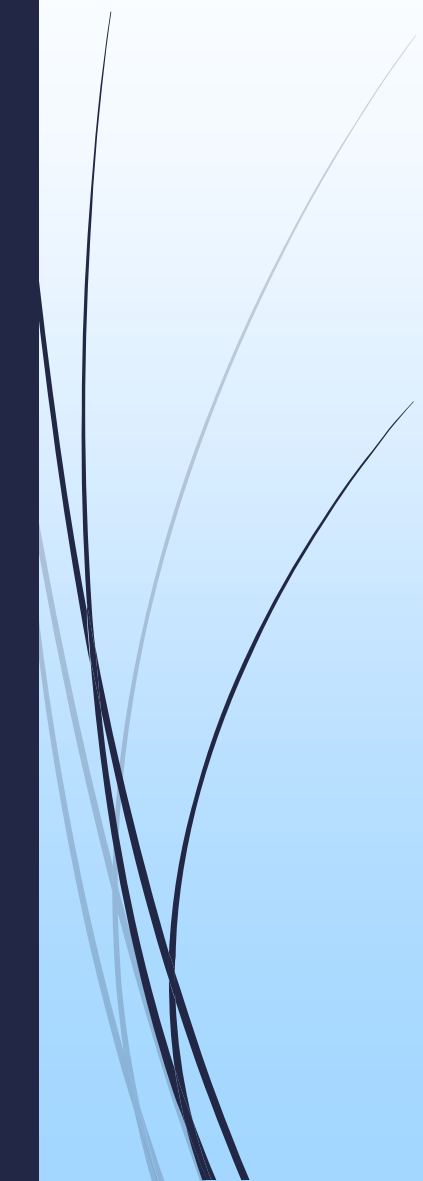


# Everyone has a Big Story

- Where did the cosmos (including us) come from?
  - Where is it going?
  - How do we get to live, or how should we live, in the light of the answers to the first two questions?
- 



# Exercise



Think of someone you know who does not consider himself or herself a Christian (It might be you). Take a moment to imagine that person answering these questions.



# The Christian “Big Story”

Focused on Jesus


Counter-intuitive to many

One of its strongest arguments is  
community.



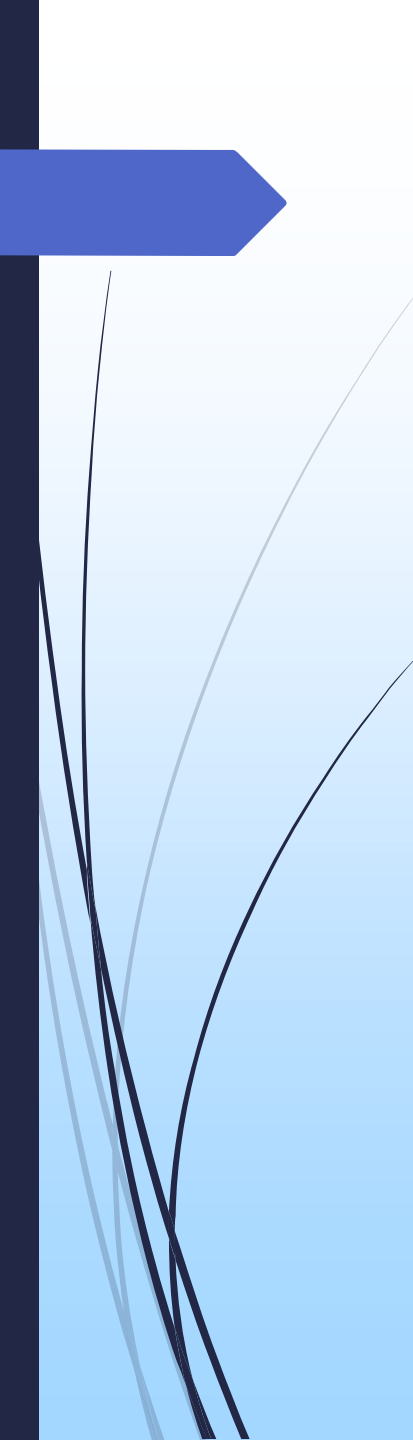
## ***Romans 12:1-8***

*I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. <sup>2</sup> Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of*




*your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.*

*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. <sup>4</sup> For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, <sup>5</sup> so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. <sup>6</sup> Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in*



*proportion to our faith; <sup>7</sup> if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; <sup>8</sup> 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.*



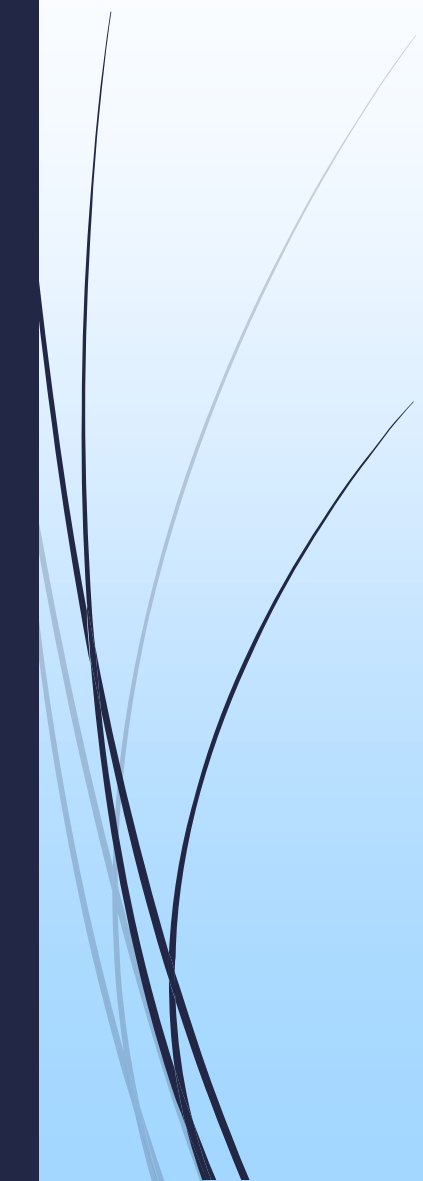


# Building community by faith

*<sup>2</sup> Do not be conformed to this world, but be **transformed by the renewal of your mind**, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.*



# Three great realities to believe

- We are beloved
  - We are on our way to becoming beautiful
  - We belong to each other
- 



## A) We are beloved

*I appeal to you, therefore, brethren,  
by the mercies of God...*

“Bill, there is nothing you have that I need.”



## Beloved (cont.)

Cheerful and energetic with each other.

*vv.6, 8: Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them:...the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.*

When we know we are beloved...



## **B) We belong to each other**

*v. 5: ...so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.*



# We belong (cont.)

Hard to believe, especially when we deeply disagree politically...

Hard to believe, given the unevenness in our experience of life's "good things"



## C) We are on our way to becoming beautiful

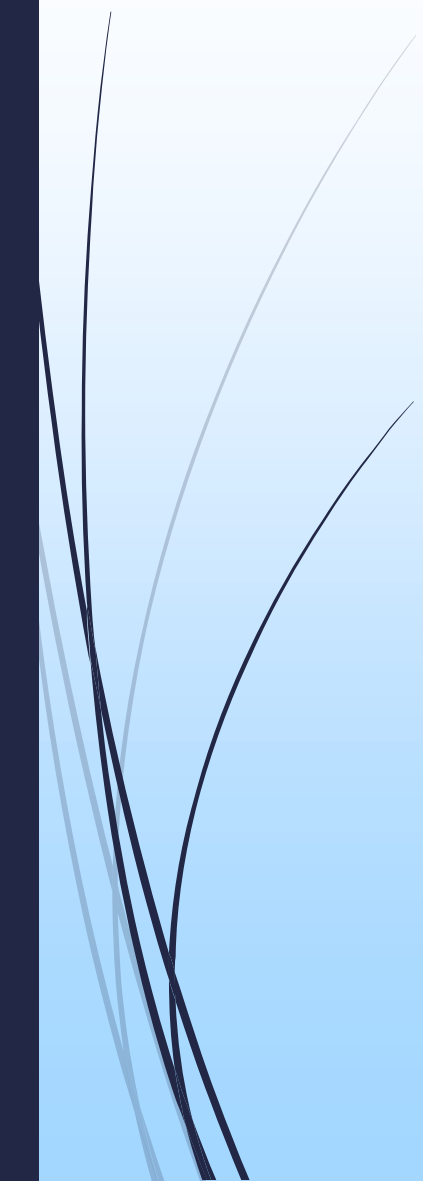

- *v. 1: ...present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God.*
- *v.2: ... be transformed by the renewal of your mind*



## **Becoming beautiful (cont.)**

“He will make the feeblest and filthiest of us into...a dazzling, radiant, immortal creature, pulsating all through with such energy and joy and wisdom and love as we cannot now imagine, a bright stainless mirror which reflects back to God

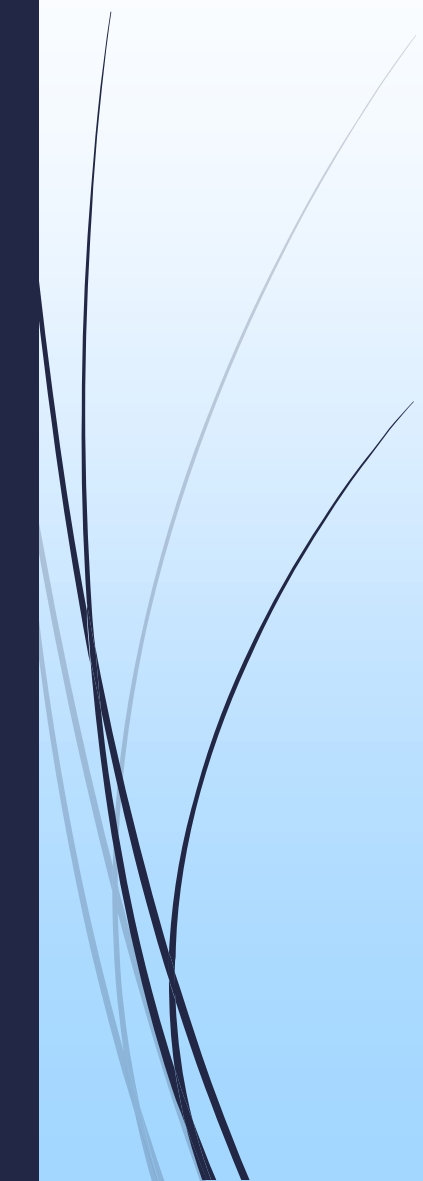





perfectly (though, of course, on a smaller scale) his boundless power and delight and goodness. The process will be long and in parts very painful, but that is what we are in for. Nothing less. He meant what he said.” (C. S. Lewis)




# Small group discussion



1) When love is strong in a church community, people are drawn in. Tell stories where you have seen this happen.




2) *Romans 12:2* tells us that we are *transformed by the renewal of our minds*, which means (among other things) that we grow into an attractive and satisfying community by repeatedly choosing to believe certain things about ourselves and each other.



Three of the beliefs we discussed in the talk are:

- We are beloved (v. 1).
- We belong to each other (v. 5).
- We are on our way to becoming beautiful (v. 2).

Tell stories about how believing one or more of these realities (either about yourself or about someone else) has helped you get along with people.



3) Charlie talked about the unevenness in our experience of life's "good things".

How have you thought about and leveraged for the benefit of others some of those "good things".