

WELCOME HOME

THIS IS OUR MANIFESTO.

Or Creed. Or platform. Or proclamation. 'Or something...
Whatever you call it, this is who we are and this is why we are here.

We're a young church. We started in 2012.

And we just opened our own building in 2020,
then a pandemic hit and interrupted our plans.

We're still figuring out some things about how to be a church. Specifically, we are still learning how to be the kind of church we think God is calling us to be. But there are some things that have been true about us from the beginning.

These are those things.

If these things resonate with you, we think you'll feel right at home here.

We are named after a creek that runs through southwest Champaign. Well, it's technically a slough, but Copper Slough Church doesn't exactly roll off the tongue. Besides, creeks are more fun.

Also, the abbreviation for Copper on the periodic table is CU. As in, Champaign-Urbana! Total accident, but how cool is that?

As you read through these pages, we think it will be obvious: We try not to take ourselves too seriously. But we do take Jesus seriously. Especially when Jesus talked about loving our neighbor.

We are doing this for our neighbors. For you.

A collection of wooden blocks, each engraved with a chemical symbol and atomic number, scattered on a white surface. The blocks are arranged in a circular pattern, with some overlapping. The text "COPPER CREEK CHURCH" is overlaid in the center in a large, white, sans-serif font.

COPPER CREEK CHURCH

WELCOME HOME

Those words are the first thing you'll see when you walk in our doors.

Somebody once asked us, are you a "Welcome, but" kind of church?
She and her wife had found plenty of churches that told them they were welcome,
but not completely.

Welcome to show up, but not welcome to serve.
Welcome to worship, but not welcome to get married.
Welcome to give, but not welcome to receive communion. You get the idea.

To be clear: We are a "**Welcome, completely**" kind of church.

Here's the thing -

We have a lot of friends who have given up on church.

They walked away mad. Or confused. Or hurt. They didn't see the point.

Or it just didn't seem to matter.

And you know what?

We get it. A lot of us were in the exact same place.

So we made a church where people like that (like us) would feel at home and feel like we belong. We exist to create a home for those who have given up on church.

If that's you, welcome home! You belong here!



**7
HILLS
WE'LL DIE
ON**

AKA our core values.

We all have to pick our battles. And decide what really matters.

There are seven things that we've decided matter most for us.
We have fought hard for these seven things.
Those battles have defined us.
They continue to shape us.

If you want to know who we are, this is about as clear as we can get.
For us, these are hills worth dying on!

We think our focus on these 7 hills help us create a space that feels like home for those who have given up on church. (And those who haven't.)

1. WE'LL DIE ON THE HILL OF LOVING.

People have a lot of ideas about what God is like.
Some of those ideas are weird.
Some are downright terrifying.

We think it's pretty simple, actually. God is love.
Of all the words they could have used to describe God, the writers of the Bible picked that one to sum it all up. God is love!

We'll die on the hill of **loving**, like Jesus did.

Loving every single person.
Loving unconditionally.
Loving all the time.
Loving no matter what.



**Speaking of love, we love coffee.
Come early for a latte on us.
We even have decaf. But what's the point, really?**



2.

WE'LL DIE ON THE HILL OF ACCEPTING.

Maybe you've been there.
You've been told you don't really belong. Or maybe they didn't use words.
You just felt it. You weren't really accepted.

Like the people who hung out with Jesus.
They weren't really accepted. Especially by religious people.
Thieves and hookers, tax collectors, untouchables, rule breakers,
undesirables, "notorious sinners" (best phrase in the Bible)...all of them felt
at home with Jesus. They felt like they belonged with Jesus.

They were accepted. And included. Completely.
Some even became apostles.

Same thing here. **You are accepted. Completely.**
At every level and in every way.
You can join, sing, serve, lead, teach, help, get baptized, take communion,
get married, preach, and even drink coffee!



2.

WE'LL DIE ON THE HILL OF GROWING.

Would you rather drift backward toward what's comfortable
or run forward towards growth?

We'll take growth every single time.

God is in the business of remaking, renewing, healing, transforming...
GROWING.

We've found that every time we step out in faith, God grows us.

We get a little stronger.

A little more capable.

A little more like Jesus in our hearts and minds.

We're not big fans of status quo.

There just isn't much appeal for us in a religion that tells us everything is ok.

We know it isn't. **We are committed to a faith helps us grow.**

Every week, we expect God to do something in us.



2.

WE'LL DIE ON THE HILL OF CONNECTING.

One wolf on its own won't make it. It will starve.

Everybody needs a wolfpack. A community. A team.
Everybody needs a place to belong.

God didn't wire us to do life on our own. Sure, we all need time and the space to be alone and catch our breath sometimes. We leave the lights low in the big gathering space so you can be anonymous until you are ready.

But we know the best stuff happens when we pursue it together.

**No matter who you are, there's a place here for you.
You belong here.**



THE LORD
HELPS THOSE
WHO HELP
THEMSELVES.

~~OTHERS~~



2.

WE'LL DIE ON THE HILL OF SERVING.

No matter what your 3rd grade teacher told you, you are gifted!

God gives each one of us gifts and abilities - not for our own sakes, but for the sake of people around you.

We've found that faith comes alive when we serve.

Plus, our whole church family grows when we serve.

Which means more people find a place to belong when we serve.

It turns out, one of the best ways to grow is to help other people grow.

And every single person has a part to play.

It takes all of us for this place to be all it can be.

We need each other to do all the things God is calling us to do.

From the first sermon of Jesus:

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because the Lord has anointed me. He has sent me to preach good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the prisoners and recovery of sight to the blind, to liberate the oppressed, and to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor. Luke 4: 18-19

A little while later, Jesus said this:

I have set you an example. Go and do likewise. John 13:15



2.

WE'LL DIE ON THE HILL OF IMPACTING.

Jesus sent out his followers to do the same things he did.
We are his followers. So, we think we need to go and make a difference, too.

We **support** local organizations who are already making a difference financially.
We **offer** space in our facility to community groups to expand their programming.
We **partner** with a few organizations and bring our time and energy to what they are already doing to try to make an impact in the world around us.

We **work** to make things in the world look a little more like the Kingdom of God.

Lisanjala Church is our sister church in Malawi, Africa. We have a beautiful partnership that is built on the theme of mutual encouragement. We work hard to have an impact there. And they work really hard to have an impact on us. It works!

Our friends in Malawi have hosted nearly 100 of us in their homes over the last 10 years. They've fed us and taught us. They've shown us Jesus. They raised funds to help us build our church building.

Through that partnership, we have provided clean drinking water to over 50,000 people. We support education by feeding hundreds of preschool children through a porridge program and by providing scholarships to dozens of high school and college students every year.

2.

WE'LL DIE ON THE HILL OF AUTHENTIC-ING.

Yeah, we know it's not a word. We're just real like that.

But seriously, **what you see is what you get.**

If you are looking for a church of people who have it all together, you might need to look elsewhere.

If you need a pastor who has all the answers, this may not be the place for you.

If you are perfect, please don't come mess up the good thing we've got going here.

This is a place where you can bring your baggage, your vices, your struggles, your doubts, your fears, and your flaws. We bring ours.

When we are free to be real, we are more likely to encounter the real Jesus.

And when we encounter Jesus, we find healing, hope, meaning, and the freedom to live like Jesus did.



MAROKKO

MILLER VERLAG

7 HILLS WE WON'T DIE ON

AKA our non-core values

- 1. Actual hills. This is Illinois. There are no hills.**
- 2. Dress codes.... #casualfridayeveryday**
- 3. Cubs or Cards**
- 4. Capitol Hill**
- 5. Finishing your plate before having dessert.**
- 6. Having lists of seven things.**





coppercreekchurch.org