

# Who is Vinelife?

When you think about it, every decision you make is a reflection of both who you are and what's important to you. Your decisions may differ from those around because you have a unique identity and core values. The same is true for a community of people. Every church community has a specific role to play in the larger Body of Christ.

What you hold in your hands is a small book that unpacks who we believe God has called us to be at Vinelife Church. We have done our best to capture a few statements about our identity as a church, the things that are important to us, and then a handful of decisions that we have made along the way that best express how we feel this should all play out.

The Church of Jesus Christ is very diverse in its spiritual identities and missions. Some churches are called to one thing in building the Kingdom and other churches are called to other things in building the same Kingdom. Vinelife's calling is found in the words of the 61st chapter of Isaiah reproduced below. These words were spoken over Vinelife at its beginning and have been continually reaffirmed over the years.

From its beginning, Vinelife has been engaged in the pursuit of intimate relationship with God. This pursuit has been consistent and it has resulted in a changing and growing identity as an organization. For some three decades, we have together engaged in this constant pursuit.

As part of your journey of exploration for this vision, please read the verses below (1 to 3) which are the first part of this powerful mission statement for Vinelife - then go to your Bible and read verses 4 to 11 which complete the picture of God's Plan for us.

We know His Kingdom is now, and is becoming at the same time. We are thrilled and honored to be in the now, and the becoming.

*[61:1] The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me,  
because the LORD has anointed me  
to preach good news to the poor.  
He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted,  
to proclaim freedom for the captives  
and release from darkness for the prisoners,  
[2] to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor  
and the day of vengeance of our God,  
to comfort all who mourn,  
[3] and provide for those who grieve in Zion—  
to bestow on them a crown of beauty  
instead of ashes,*

*the oil of gladness  
instead of mourning,  
and a garment of praise  
instead of a spirit of despair.  
They will be called oaks of righteousness,  
a planting of the LORD  
for the display of his splendor.  
and a garden causes seeds to grow,  
so the Sovereign LORD will make righteousness and  
praise spring up before all nations. (Isaiah 61: 1-3  
NIV)*

The decisions shared here are not something we've simply invented. They are mostly an articulation of where we feel we've been for some time now. These decisions are not destinations - but rather journeys - journeys along an ancient path - we have not found some new way - but rather we've been awakened to the path of faith as old as Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. The same righteous path followed by Moses, Joshua and Caleb - Paul, John, Peter. The path followed by the first century church - a church that revolutionized the culture of the first century and beyond. It is a path that is relevant to the world we live in today. It is a path of bold faith - believing that what God says is really true and acting on it; outrageous generosity - giving our life away in order to demonstrate His Kingdom; radical love - loving God with everything in us and our neighbor as ourselves.

***It is a path of liberty, freedom, and healing. On this path you find significance,  
purpose, and destiny. This is a path less traveled – however - it is not a path only available  
to a select few - but to whosoever will - may come.  
It is for people of every nation, tribe and tongue - for those in any occupation or vocation.***

We welcome your investigation as you read through these pages and become acquainted with who we are at Vinelife.

# Foundations

The following statements are what we believe to be the foundations of the Christian faith. These are universal truths that will never change.

**There is only one true God who is the eternal King**, Creator and Redeemer of all that is. He is perfectly holy, just, loving and truthful. He has revealed Himself to be eternally self-existent - one being in three persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

**The Bible, to be the inspired and only infallible and authoritative Word of God.**

**Humankind was created in the image of God** to know and enjoy Him, yet we willfully rejected the Lordship and glory of God for which we were intended. Because of this, sickness, death and judgment entered the world and now creation experiences the effects and consequences of sin.

**The Lord Jesus Christ, the one and only Son of God, was conceived of the Holy Spirit**, born of the virgin, Mary, and is God's Anointed One, empowered by the Holy Spirit to inaugurate God's Kingdom on earth. He was crucified for our sins, died, was buried, resurrected and ascended into heaven, and is now alive today, in the presence of God the Father and in His people. He is "true God" and "true man."

**We are saved by God's grace, through faith in the person and work of Jesus Christ.** Anyone can be restored to fellowship with God through repenting, believing and receiving Jesus as their Savior and Lord. The Holy Spirit, convicts, regenerates, justifies, and adopts us as we enter the Kingdom of God as His sons and daughters.

**In the sanctifying power of the Holy Spirit**, by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live holy and minister supernaturally. The baptism of the Holy Spirit according to Acts 1:4-8 and 2:4 is poured out on believers that they might have power to be witnesses.

**The victorious redemptive work of Christ on the cross** provides freedom from the power of the enemy - sin, lies, sickness and torment.

**The Church consists of all who put their faith in Jesus Christ.** He gave His church the ordinances of Baptism and Communion. The Church exists to carry on the ministry of Jesus Christ and further advance His kingdom by undoing the works of the enemy, preaching and living the good news of God's love, discipling the nations, baptizing and teaching them to love and obey God.

**In the ever increasing government of God and in the Blessed Hope**, which is the glorious visible return of our Lord Jesus Christ for His overcoming bride - His church. Heaven and hell are real places. There will be a resurrection of the saved and the lost, the one to everlasting life and the other to everlasting death.

# Core Values

## **Intimacy with God Living in Community Expanding the Kingdom**

We have committed as a company of people, to live our mission, within the context of three primary core values: *Intimacy with God, Living in Community, & Expanding the Kingdom.*

Our highest priority and greatest joy is knowing God in a personal and intimate relationship. This is what each of us is created for - moment by moment communion with God. This is a chosen lifestyle. This is worship. **This is intimacy with God.**

**Living in Community** is a response stimulated by our intimacy with God. You will notice as a church, Vinelife's commitment is not so much to programs, as it is to a lifestyle of relationship, personal growth and contribution to a body of believers. Opportunities for Community Life come out of our intentional involvement in corporate gatherings, small group interaction, classes, training and equipping schools, personally pursuing friendship with others at Vinelife and in the community.

Intimacy with God and Living in Community naturally translates into our partnership with Him in the work He is doing. This work is **Expanding the Kingdom**. God is aggressively drawing people out of the darkness and into the light. He has given each of us a part to play in this great work. We believe that this Kingdom expansion includes bringing good news to the afflicted, binding up the broken-hearted, and setting the captives free (Isaiah 61).

This very reference is our guiding revelation. At our most effective level, we desire to send out many to minister, both locally and globally, as we establish a culture of honor, healing and equipping.

# Identity

Often Jesus would use metaphors and analogies to bring a heavenly truth, promise, and principal to us. It is important to relate to one another in these word pictures because the way we see ourselves is critical to the fulfillment of our mission.

As an example, Jesus said, “You are the salt of the earth.”; “You are the light of the world.” Matt. 5:13-14.

It is important that we get a picture of both who we **are** and who we are **not**.

## **In our relationship with the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit:**

- *We see ourselves as forgiven, beloved sons and daughters.*
- *We see ourselves as passionate worshipers returning our debt of love continually.*
- *We see ourselves as obedient servants having a strong desire to do His will.*
- *We see ourselves as a people pursuing our destiny in Christ. The Apostle Paul said our callings are without repentance and we are each called.*

## **In our relationship to each other:**

- *We see ourselves as a spiritual family caring deeply for each other.*
- *We see ourselves as “living stones” discovering our place and contributing our part to this “house” of faith.*
- *We value and see ourselves as both pioneers and settlers - pioneers to expand our territory and settlers to build on those territories - but we are not squatters - people who take up space others have fought for without ever improving it. Rom. 15:20*

## **In our relationship to the world:**

- *We see ourselves as a mission outpost and not a museum: Eph. 4*
- *We see ourselves to be radical lovers and outrageous givers. John 15:12*
- *We see ourselves as ambassadors for Christ to the world. 2 Cor. 5:20*

## **In relating to spiritual forces of darkness:**

- *We see ourselves in Christ; doing the work of Christ to destroy the works of darkness. 1 John 3:8*
- *We see ourselves as a crew on a battle ship not a cruise ship. On a cruise ship the purpose of the crew is to entertain the passengers. On a battle ship the purpose of the crew is to be trained and take their place to accomplish her mission against the enemy. Eph. 6:10-18*
- *We see ourselves as an army, not an audience; Special forces not spectators. Eph. 6:10-18*

# Decisions that Define Us

So, then - these are the decisions we adhere to by the power of God that flows out of our identity & values.

We have decided and are continually deciding:

- To create a **culture of honor** where we honor Christ as Lord and Savior and in turn honor each other as the Spirit empowers us. We will refuse to dishonor one another by participating in gossip, accusation, judgment, & slander. Honor is not always deserved, but always required.
- **To walk in relational faith**, defined by our identity as Sons and Daughters of the Father, not by our performance. This makes us confident in bold prayer and permits us to honor the revelations we receive resulting in good preaching, good doctrine, and a washing in His Word. *Rom 16:25*
- To **work intentionally** at creating a Kingdom culture on a foundation of relational faith (the power of our identity as Sons and Daughters of the Father) and a culture of honor (our relationship with each other – Brothers and Sisters in Christ). *Matt. 6:10*
- To **teach the Gospel both by word and deed**. We expect God to do mighty works, signs and wonders that He might increase and be glorified in our midst. *Rom. 15:18-19*
- To **study the Bible** as a vital way to grow in our knowledge of Christ—how He is, how He thinks, how He acts, how He relates and how He empowers us by His Spirit to bring experience to our knowledge of Him. *The Gospels*
- To **continually know** that we are on the way to Heaven and our goal is to continually be known by Him and participate fully in His experience in this life. *Gal. 4:9*
- To **acknowledge** that having faith-related programs is good, so we will use them so long as they are anointed to accomplish what God wants. We are willing to discard any program which interferes with or does not further transformation and the demonstration of God's power in our lives. *Heb. 12:1*
- To understand that **gifting and character is necessary**, interactive and interdependent, and we will develop them together. *1 Cor. 13*
- To **embrace** that worship is a necessary way God uses to transform us. He even delivers us from evil through our worship in song! *John 4:24*
- To **be convinced** that relational faith and its resulting fruit of works is the fulfillment of the Law of Christ. Our behavior comes from our relationship first with the Father and second with each other. *James 2:17*
- To **gain great faith** from the Book of Acts and to be Holy Spirit filled, Holy Spirit led, and Holy Spirit empowered just as the early Church. *Acts, Gal.5:12*
- To **recognize** that confident faith is good and that bold faith increases when we move in that confidence. *Eph. 3:8-12*
- To **effectively and practically equip and train** the church to be able to take the Good News of Christ in demonstration and power of the Spirit we will raise up world changers to fight in the spirit for our faith. *Eph. 4: 11-16*
- To **welcome experiential learning** that confirms the truth of God's written and living Word and to continue to grow in Christ by remaining teachable with a humble attitude of a new learner. We will remain open to others who teach and preach in the Body of Christ and will embrace truth when it is presented and dismiss that which we understand not to be helpful. *Luke 18:17*

- To **pursue learning** in order to be transformed, not just learning in order to know. We pursue His love which passes knowledge.
- To **tell the stories of God's power** – it is our testimony to reveal what God is doing in this time. *Rev. 19:10*
- To **live saved and supernatural lives**. This is what we have been called into as Children of God. *Rom 8:16*
- To **be open to new experiences with God**, checking them with the Word of God and His Spirit.
- To **be more concerned** about how many we send out into the world than how many we convince to come into the building. This building is meant to be filled and it will be – but by it we will not measure who we are or how effective God has made us.
- To **honor the past** – it is His testimony in us. We see our past successes and failures as stepping stones not stop signs in both our individual and corporate story. We will live in the present with our eyes on His future for us.
- To **focus on what could be**, not only on what is or has been. Without a vision we perish.
- To **not be limited** to the four walls of this building. Our influence is not restricted by location - Not even the nations are out of bounds. Jesus said "...Go into the world..."
- To **be committed**, while discerning the will of the Father, to an open and transparent process of conflict resolution. We recognize and understand that in the context of a culture of honor such conflict is an opportunity to draw closer to each other in love in respect. *2 Corinthians 5:18*
- To **recognize the foundations of the five-fold ministry**, recognizing the gifting of apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers, and evangelists. *Ephesians 4:11*
- To **establish an ongoing atmosphere** where the goodness and kindness of God are recognizable through our interactions and that peace is the outcome and evidence of that recognition.

# Notes - My Journal

What does Vinelife mean to me:

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How do I feel I would fit in:

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Where could I serve and have an impact if Vinelife were my church:

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What are my questions concerning Vinelife that I would like to have answers about:

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