



Village Christian

WHAT WE PURPOSE¹

**Through the Gospel
we have been called together
by God
to experience and express
the Supremacy & Sufficiency
of the Lord Jesus Christ
in all things & to all people²**

***Village Christian Fellowship exists then for
Christ, Christians and the Community***

¹ "For if the bugle produces an indistinct sound, who will prepare himself for battle." (1 Corinthians 14:8) "The children of Issachar . . . were men that had understanding of the times, to know what Israel ought to do." (1 Chronicles 12:32) "Where there is no vision the people are unrestrained" (Proverbs 29:18) Jesus to the disciples: "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and even to the remotest part of the earth." (Acts 1:8)

² "All over the world this gospel is bearing fruit and growing, just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and understood God's grace in all its truth." (Colossians 1:6) "The Lord's message rang out from you . . . your faith in God has become known everywhere." (1 Thessalonians 1:8)

VILLAGE CHRISTIAN EXISTS FOR CHRIST . . .³

- Jesus is our Lord and Savior⁴
- *We are learning to glorify and enjoy God as our Heavenly Father through Christ*⁵
- God graciously made us His children. We endeavor to respond to Him as grateful and passionate worshippers – gladly obedient to His will (*as He helps us with our numerous struggles all along the way*)⁶

KEY POINT: *Through the gospel we are learning to love God*

FOCUS: *This defines our “upward” focus*⁷

³ “yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom are all things, and we exist for Him; and one Lord, Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we exist through Him.” (1 Corinthians 8:6)

⁴ “that if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you shall be saved” (Romans 10:9) “The Father has sent the Son to be the Savior of the world.” (1 John 4:14)

⁵ “for of Him and through Him and to Him are all things: to whom be glory for ever” (Romans 11:36) “blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ” (Ephesians 1:3)

⁶ “He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace” (Ephesians 1:5-6) “I will extol You, My God, O King; and I will bless your name forever and ever.” (Psalm 145:1) “But his delight is in the law of the Lord” (Psalm 1:2) “If we say that we have no sin, we are deceiving ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:8-9) “For whom the Lord loves He reproves, even as a father, the son in whom he delights.” (Proverbs 3:12)

⁷ “But You, O Lord, are a shield about me, My glory, and the One who lifts my head” (Psalm 3:3)

VILLAGE CHRISTIAN EXISTS FOR CHRISTIANS . . . ⁸

- *As those who follow Jesus as Lord and Savior we are a spiritual family⁹ steeped in the faith, hope and love of Christ.¹⁰*
- *We are learning to enjoy, encourage and challenge each other both deliberately (through training and discipleship)¹¹ and informally (through growing and maintaining friendships).¹²*
- *God is developing among us disciples -- equipped to take the initiative and act responsibility as Christ's representatives and examples within the family, at work or at school, among friends, in the church and throughout the community.¹³*
- *We endeavor to respect and support all other Christians in this region -- to foster racial and social reconciliation, and to work together with God's greater church in advancing the cause of Christ.¹⁴*

KEY POINT: *Through the gospel we are learning to love God and other Christians¹⁵*

FOCUS: *This defines our "inward" focus¹⁶*

⁸ Concerning the interrelated nature of the church the scripture states: "For even as the body is one and yet has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are one body, so also is Christ. For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. For the body is not one member, but many. . . . that the members should have the same care for one another. And if one members suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it." (1 Corinthians 12:12-14, 25-26)

⁹ "You also, as living stones, are being built up as a spiritual house for a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ." (1 Peter 2:5) "This commandment we have from Him, that the one who loves God should love his brother also." (1 John 4:21) "So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are . . . of God's household." (Ephesians 2:19)

¹⁰ "Now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love." (1 Corinthians 13:13)

¹¹ "for the equipping of the saints for the work of service to the building up of the body of Christ." (Ephesians 4:12)

¹² "they were continually devoting themselves to . . . fellowship . . . breaking bread from house to house, they were taking their meals together with gladness and sincerity of heart." (Acts 2:42, 46)

¹³ Family (Colossians 3:18-21; Ephesians 5:22-6:4; 1 Peter 3:1-7); Career (Colossians 3:22-4:1; Ephesians 6:5-9); Friendship (2 Peter 1:5-11; Proverbs 17:17; 18:24; 19:6; 27:6, 9, 10, 17); Church (1 Timothy 3:15); Community (Matthew 5:13-16; Philippians 2:15)

¹⁴ "Now I exhort you brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you all agree, and there be no divisions among you, but you be made complete in the same mind and in the same judgment." (1 Corinthians 1:10) "I urge Euodia and I urge Syntyche to live in harmony in the Lord." (Philippians 4:2) "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brothers to dwell together in unity!" (Psalm 133:1)

¹⁵ Jesus to his disciples: "A new commandment I give to you that you love one another, even as I have loved you that you also love one another." (John 13:34)

VILLAGE CHRISTIAN EXISTS FOR THE COMMUNITY & THE WORLD¹⁷

- To impact the communities of Hampton Roads is our *immediate mission*.
- To reach various people groups throughout the world is our *extended mission*.¹⁸
- *God is commissioning us to represent Him effectively:*¹⁹
 - by *our words* as we express the good news about Jesus Christ;²⁰ and
 - by *our lifestyle* as we express the example and care of Christ through godly actions within our culture.²¹

KEY POINT: *Through the gospel we are learning to love God, other Christians and all persons*²²

FOCUS: *This defines our “outward” focus*²³

¹⁶ “But you beloved, building yourselves up on your most holy faith” (Jude 20) “Let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds, not forsaking our own assembling together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another.” (Hebrews 10:24-25)

¹⁷ Jesus prayed to God the Father for us: “And I am no more in the world and yet they themselves are in the world . . . I do not ask You to take them out of the world, but to keep them from the evil one. They are not of the world even as I am not of the world.” (John 17:11, 15-16) “You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden . . . Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven.” (Matthew 5:14, 16) “For we do not preach ourselves but Christ Jesus as Lord.” (2 Corinthians 4:5)

¹⁸ “You shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and even to the remotest part of the earth.” (Acts 1:8) “From Jerusalem and round about as far as Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ.” (Romans 15:19)

¹⁹ “As You did send Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world.” (John 17:18) “And Jesus came up and spoke to them saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’” (Matthew 28:18-20)

²⁰ “Preach the word.” (2 Timothy 4:2)

²¹ Matthew 25:31-46 (“Truly I say to you, to the extent that you did it to one of these brothers of Mine, even the least of them, you did it to Me.”) “The poor have the gospel preached to them,” Jesus said affirming that He and His message were from God. (Matthew 11:5) “They only asked us to remember the poor – the very thing I also was eager to do.” (Galatians 2:10)

²² Jesus said to his disciples in describing the second most important commandment: “The second is like it, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’” (Matthew 22:39)

²³ “Therefore, however you want people to treat you, so treat them, for this is the Law and the Prophets.” (Matthew 7:12)

SOME OF WHAT WE VALUE --

VALUES ESSENTIAL IN CONNECTING PEOPLE TO CHRIST²⁴

CENTRAL PLACE OF THE GOSPEL²⁵

- *The Gospel that redeems and renews in grace alone, by faith alone, through Christ alone is the foundation for all things Christian, for all our interaction with God, with other Christians and with the local community and world²⁶*
- *The Holy Spirit empowers us to declare timeless biblical truth²⁷ that remarkably addresses the timely challenges of contemporary life, and in turn accomplishes authentic and ongoing personal and community changes²⁸*
- *The Bible itself requires that we both (1) maintain the accuracy of the unchanging Gospel message; and (2) utilize biblical ways to express this Word to this generation.²⁹*

GRATEFUL WORSHIP AND OBEDIENT LIFESTYLE³⁰

- *The Gospel of grace presents Jesus Christ to faith which is itself the gift of God.³¹*
- *A humble and grateful response to God for His grace involves heart-felt repentance and belief followed by life-long expressions of worship, obedience, prayer and love to God (and others).³²*

²⁴ "Abide in Me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself, unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you, unless you abide in Me. I am the vine, you are the branches; he who abides in Me and I in him, he bears much fruit; for apart from Me you can do nothing." (John 15:4-5) "I can do all things through Him who strengthens me." (Philippians 4:13) "For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things." (Romans 11:36)

²⁵ "For I am not ashamed of the gospel for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes . . . for in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, 'But the righteous shall live by faith.'" (Romans 1:16-17)

²⁶ "He has now reconciled you in His fleshly body through death, in order to present you before Him holy and blameless and beyond reproach – if indeed you continue in the faith firmly established and steadfast and not moved away from the hope of the gospel." (Colossians 1:22-23) "Only conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the gospel of Christ; so that . . . you are standing firm in one spirit with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel." (Philippians 1:27) "The gospel . . . has come to you just as in all the world also it is constantly bearing fruit and increasing, even as it has been doing in you also since the day you hear of it and understood the grace of God in truth." (Colossians 1:6) "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature." (Mark 16:15)

²⁷ "Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today and forever." (Hebrews 13:8) "You've been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God. 'All flesh is like grass, and all its glory like the flower . . . The grass withers and the flower falls, but the word of the Lord abides forever.'" (1 Peter 1:23-24)

²⁸ "It was revealed to them that they were not serving themselves, but you, in these things which now have been announced to you through those who preached the gospel to you by the Holy Spirit sent from heaven – things into which angels long to look." (1 Peter 1:12)

²⁹ "Though I am free from all men, I have made myself a slave to all, that I might win the more. And to the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might win Jews; to those who are under the Law, as under the Law, though not being myself under the Law, that I might win those who are under the Law; to those who are without law, as without law, though not being without the law of God but under the law of Christ, that I might win those who are without law. To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak; I have become all things to all men, that I may by all means save some." (1 Corinthians 9:19-22) "Give no offense either to Jews or to Greeks or to the church of God; just as I also please all men in all things, not seeking my own profit, but the profit of the many, that they may be saved." (1 Corinthians 10:32-33)

³⁰ "I will sprinkle clean water on you and you will be clean; I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols. Moreover, I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; and I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances." (Ezekiel 36:25-27)

³¹ "For by grace you have been saved through faith and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God." (Ephesians 2:8)

³² "Behold there was a woman in the city who was a sinner and when she learned that He [Jesus] was reclining at the table in the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster vial of perfume and standing behind Him at His feet, weeping, she began to wet His feet with her tears and kept wiping them with the hair of her head and kissing His feet and anointing them with the perfume. Now

VALUES ESSENTIAL IN CONNECTING PEOPLE AS CHRISTIANS³³

PURSUING DISCIPLESHIP TOGETHER³⁴

- Learning impacts living -- as the gospel informs & transforms us.³⁵
- The instruction of Jesus Christ prepares us for all of life – for growth as individuals, family members, career people, students, friends, church members, and as people involved redemptively in the greater community and world.³⁶

DEMONSTRATING A LOVE THAT FOSTERS MUTUAL ACCEPTANCE & ACCOMPLISHMENT³⁷

- The gospel mandates mutual acceptance expressed in a deep community of friendship, caring support and challenge³⁸
- The gospel mandates mutual accomplishment expressed in an active community teaming together for effective ministry/service³⁹

PARTICIPATING IN SERVING⁴⁰

- Every Christian counts . . . because every Christian is made in God's image, is redeemed to be conformed to Christ's image, is a priest to God & is uniquely designed & gifted by God for meaningful service in this world⁴¹
- Every Christian must receive ongoing discipleship, teaching and equipping to function effectively with others in team together to fulfill God's mission⁴²

when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this he said to himself, 'If this man were a prophet He would know who and what sort of person this woman is who is touching Him, that she is a sinner.' . . . Turning toward the woman, He [Jesus] said to Simon, 'Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has wet My feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You gave Me no kiss; but she, since the time I came in, has not ceased to kiss My feet. You did not anoint My head with oil, but she anointed My feet with perfume. For this reason I say to you, her sins, which are many, have been forgiven, for she loved much; but he who is forgiven little, loves little.'" (Luke 7:37-50) "Come and hear all who fear God, and I will tell of what He has done for my soul. I cried to Him with my mouth and He was extolled with my tongue. . . . Blessed be God who has not turned away my prayer nor His lovingkindness from me." (Psalm 66:16-17, 20)

³³ "And all those who had believed were together . . ." (Acts 2:44) "Now there are many members, but one body. And the eye cannot say to the hand, 'I have no need of you' . . . Now you are Christ's body, and individually members of it." (1 Corinthians 12:20-21, 27)

³⁴ "Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I commanded you." (Matthew 28:19-20)

³⁵ "I urge you therefore brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice acceptable to God which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind that you may prove what the will of God is that which is good and acceptable and perfect." (Romans 12:1-2)

³⁶ Individual (Psalm 23; Psalm 40, etc.); Family (Colossians 3:18-21; Ephesians 5:22-6:4; 1 Peter 3:1-7); Career (Colossians 3:22-4:1; Ephesians 6:5-9); Friendship (2 Peter 1:5-11; Proverbs 17:17; 18:24; 19:6; 27:6, 9, 10, 17); Church (1 Timothy 3:15); Community (Matthew 5:13-16; Philippians 2:15)

³⁷ "And now I ask you, lady, not as writing to you a new commandment, but the one which we have had from the beginning, that we love one another." (2 John 5)

³⁸ "If therefore there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose. Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind let each of you regard one another as more important than himself; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others." (Philippians 2:1-4)

³⁹ "For we are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them." (Ephesians 2:10) "And they went out and preached everywhere while the Lord worked with them and confirmed the word by the signs that followed." (Mark 16:20) "Who gave Himself for us, that He might redeem us from every lawless deed and purify for Himself a people for His own possession, zealous for good deeds." (Titus 2:14)

⁴⁰ "Have this attitude in yourselves which was also in Christ Jesus, who, although He existed in the form of God, did not regard equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men. And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself by becoming obedient to the point of death, even death on a cross. Therefore, also God highly exalted Him and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father." (Philippians 2:5-11)

⁴¹ "And God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness. . . . and God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.'" (Genesis 1:26-27) "For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren." (Romans 8:29) "To Him who loves us and released us from our sins by His blood, and He has made us to be kings and priests to His God and Father." (Revelation 1:5-6) "But to each one is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good . . . But one and the same Spirit works all these things, distributing to each one individually just as He wills." (1 Corinthians 12:7, 11)

⁴² See note 47 above. "Let us consider how to stimulate one another to love and good deeds not forsaking our own assembling together." (Hebrews 10:24-25) "Now after this the Lord appointed seventy others and sent them two and two ahead of Him to every city and place where He Himself was going to come." (Luke 10:1)

VALUES ESSENTIAL IN CONNECTING PEOPLE TO THE COMMUNITY AND THE WORLD ⁴³

INVOLVEMENT IN THE LIVES OF NON-CHRISTIANS ⁴⁴

- *Caring About People . . .* All Christian activity is in one sense evangelistic.⁴⁵ So all Christians should be prepared to explain the gospel, handling with respect the questions of non-Christians and unchurched individuals.⁴⁶
- *Imaginative Ministry Initiatives.* We encourage members in creative attempts at ministry – in order to provide many contexts for interaction with non-Christians and unchurched individuals⁴⁷
- *Redemptive Actions.* The gospel requires practical expressions of mercy and kindness, framing the gospel in redemptive actions as well as through redemptive words⁴⁸

PLANTING NEW CHURCHES

- *Planting and Establishing New Congregations.* The spread of the gospel, the multiplying of disciples results in the formation of new churches that in turn spread the gospel and multiply disciples resulting in the formation of new churches that in turn . . .⁴⁹ Church-planting includes a praying congregation, preparation of disciples & leaders, and providing financial and other resources.

SUPPORTING WORLD MISSIONS

- *Impacting People Groups and Nations.* The spread of the gospel, the multiplying of disciples and the formation of new churches results in missionary initiatives among foreign peoples and nations⁵⁰ Involvement in missions includes a praying congregation, the preparation of both career and short-term missionaries, and providing financial and other resources.

⁴³ "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you shall be My witnesses both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and even to the remotest part of the earth." (Acts 1:8)

⁴⁴ "And the word of God kept on spreading and the number of the disciples continued to increase greatly in Jerusalem and a great many of the priests were becoming obedient to the faith." (Acts 6:7)

⁴⁵ "Let your light shine before men in such a way that they may see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven." (Matthew 5:16)

⁴⁶ "But sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence." (1 Peter 3:15)

⁴⁷ "So then while we have opportunity, let us do good to all men. . ." (Galatians 6:10) "Do not neglect to show hospitality to strangers for by this some have entertained angels without knowing it." (Hebrews 13:2) "John said to Him, 'Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name and we tried to hinder him because he was not following us.' But Jesus said, 'Do not hinder him, for there is no one who shall perform a miracle in My name and be able soon afterward to speak evil of Me.'" (Mark 9:38-39)

⁴⁸ See notes 25, 45, 53. "Keep your behavior excellent among the Gentiles so that in the thing in which they slander you as evildoers, they may on account of your good deeds, as they observe them, glorify God in the day of visitation." (1 Peter 2:12) "Let him who steals steal no longer; but rather let him labor, performing with his own hands what is good, in order that he may have something to share with him who has need." (Ephesians 4:28)

⁴⁹ The first church in Jerusalem, multiplied disciples that in turn planted new churches outside of Jerusalem. (Acts 2:47; 9:31) One of those churches was located in Antioch. This congregation multiplied disciples that in turn planted new churches outside of Antioch. (Acts 11:19-26; 13:1 – the rest of the book)

⁵⁰ "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." (Matthew 24:14)

... Our Mission Defined

in Connection with Worship

WORSHIP EXALTS GOD

As we *gather together*, are filled with the Holy Spirit, and unite our hearts and voices to worship Christ: we give ourselves wholeheartedly to:

- Praise with Music -- in *celebrating* His remarkable grace towards us, and in *reflecting* on who He is and on what He does -- we mainly utilize a *contemporary musical style* in addition to some *traditional elements* including the great hymns. The Bible contains words for worship but no prescribed music – thus the instruments are there to serve the voices which in turn express the biblical message.
- Preaching of the Word -- in *proclaiming* and *receiving* by faith the Word of God,
- Gifts of the Holy Spirit -- in expressing our respective *spiritual gifts* through the Spirit as a conservative charismatic congregation to build up, challenge and comfort each other,
- Confessing and Repenting -- in *confessing* and repenting of our faults and sins and receiving His forgiveness and renewal,
- Communion and Baptism -- in remembering His death for us by eating from His Table – *the Lord's Supper*, and in *baptizing* new Christians,
- Giving Money -- in honoring Him with our tithes and *offerings*,
- Telling our Story -- in *providing an accurate account* about what Christ has uniquely accomplished in and around our lives,
- Carryover into Life -- in purposing that those attitudes of gratefulness, reverence, joy and obedience expressed publicly in praise will come to characterize the entirety of our life.

WORSHIP EDIFIES CHRISTIANS

The Lord has so designed things – that in worshipping and serving Him we also build up and serve His people. Worship that exalts Christ instructs, encourages, strengthens, comforts and challenges Christians as well

WORSHIP EVANGELIZES NON-CHRISTIANS

The Lord has so designed things – that in worshipping and serving Him we effectively communicate Christ's glory, presence, power and gospel to non-Christians.

... Our Mission Defined

in Connection with Discipleship & Character

We endeavor to evangelize and disciple people through preaching and teaching the Word of God; and through the power of the Holy Spirit working in the speaker and listener to bring both into a maturing and triumphant relationship with the Lord Jesus.⁵¹

The gospel informs and transforms all of life, so that learning impacts living. Faith involves more than giving mere intellectual assent to the proper set of facts concerning Jesus Christ. It includes the commitment and on-going transformation of our whole life in light of Christ's Word.

Discipleship then involves transforming *both* our lifeview (*our core set of beliefs*) and our lifestyle (*how we live out those beliefs*).⁵² A genuine faith in Jesus Christ will always result in the development of genuine heart character.

A triumphant lifestyle built on Jesus Christ results in increasing degrees of holiness and graciousness in the Lord. The Holy Spirit is exactly that – holy! *“Therefore come out from among them and be separate. Touch no unclean thing and I will receive you. I will be a Father to you and you will be my sons and daughters. . . . Since we have these promises, beloved, let us purify ourselves from everything that contaminates body and spirit, perfecting holiness out of reverence for God”* (2 Corinthians 6:17 – 7:1).

The good news is that God has fully provided for our victory over the ungodliness in our hearts and in the world: *“His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through these He has given us His very great and precious promises so that through them you may participate in the divine nature and escape the corruption in the world caused by evil desires”* (2 Peter 1:3-4).

DISCIPLESHIP IS . . . LEARNING TO UNDERSTAND THE CONTENT OF THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST.

1. GOD SPEAKS IN HIS WORD & THROUGH HIS SON JESUS.⁵³

- This Word communicates the person and principles of Christ as the only foundation for our Christian belief and practice. The Word is also our basis for developing a Christian Lifeview and Christian Lifestyle. This Word then provides the continuing means through which we all grow and develop in our relationship with God and with people.

⁵¹ *“We proclaim Him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ. To this end I work, striving with all His energy, which so powerfully works in me”* (Colossians 1:28-29); *“My preaching was not with enticing words of man's wisdom, but in demonstration of the Spirit and of power: that your faith should not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God”* (1 Corinthians 2:4-5)

⁵² *“I urge you therefore brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice acceptable to God which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind that you may prove what the will of God is that which is good and acceptable and perfect.”* (Romans 12:1-2)

⁵³ *“God, after He spoke long ago to the fathers in the prophets in many portions and in many ways, in these last days has spoken to us in His Son for this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, lest we drift away from it* (Hebrews 1:1; 2:1). *If you abide in My word, then you are truly disciples of Mine and you shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free. (John 8:31-32). As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word that by it you may grow in respect to salvation* (1 Peter 2:2).

2. UNAIDED, OUR MINDS DO NOT UNDERSTAND THE WORD.⁵⁴

- The Holy Spirit enables us to have an accurate understanding of Christ and His gospel. We pray then that the Spirit would fill our lives, give us insight, frame our actions, and help us preach and teach in accordance with the Word of God.

3. THE COMMUNICATION OF GOD’S WORD IN THE POWER OF THE HOLY SPIRIT CHANGES CHRISTIANS TOO.

DISCIPLESHIP IS . . . LEARNING TO APPLY THE CONTENT OF THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST.

1. THE TIMELESS MESSAGE OF CHRIST APPLIES TO THE TIMELY CHALLENGES OF CONTEMPORARY LIFE.⁵⁵

- The Word does not simply teach us how to “do church” but how to “do life.” Discipleship prepares us to grow in Jesus Christ as individuals, family members, career people (or students), friends, church members, and as people involved redemptively in the greater community and world.
- In this process of discipleship the gospel informs and transforms all of life so that preaching and teaching impact learning which in turn impacts practical and triumphant living for Christ.

2. HOW WE PRIORITIZE DISCIPLESHIP AND LEARNING.

- Preaching the Gospel as the all-inclusive answer for all of life.
- Incorporating larger gatherings for preaching, teaching and vital whole-church instructional ministry including Sunday School for all ages, children through adults.
- Utilizing smaller gatherings for more concentrated and specific training. Emphasizing development in core character, ministry service and leadership.
- Encouraging the healthy development of individual mentoring, accountability and discipleship relationships (Acts 2:46; 2 Timothy 2:2).

⁵⁴ “Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is from God, that we might know the things freely give to us by God, which things we also speak, not in words taught by human wisdom, but in those taught by the Spirit, combining spiritual thoughts with spiritual words. But a natural man does not accept the things of the Spirit of God for they are foolishness to him and he cannot understand them because they are spiritually discerned” (1 Corinthians 2:12-14).

⁵⁵ *Individual* (Psalm 23; Psalm 40, etc.); *Family* (Colossians 3:18-21; Ephesians 5:22-6:4; 1 Peter 3:1-7); *Career* (Colossians 3:22-4:1; Ephesians 6:5-9); *Friendship* (2 Peter 1:5-11; Proverbs 17:17; 18:24; 19:6; 27:6, 9, 10, 17); *Church* (1 Timothy 3:15); *Community* (Matthew 5:13-16; Philippians 2:15)

... Our Mission Defined

in Connection with Relationships

We endeavor to be a church family steeped in the faith, hope and love of Christ with active support between members learning to enjoy, encourage and challenge each other; and with hospitality towards guests; and compassion to those in need.⁵⁶

RELATIONSHIPS – A BIBLICAL PRIORITY:

1. CHRISTIAN FRIENDSHIP (GREEK WORD ΚΟΙΝΩΝΙΑ)⁵⁷ INCLUDES THE IDEAS OF:

- Standing together in faith and worship, and in everything else, as friends
- Participating in a community that seeks to honor Jesus, advance His Kingdom & to serve others
- Sharing the same ultimate values, purpose and goals in life with Christ as Lord.

2. FRIENDSHIP/FELLOWSHIP ARE PRIZED GIFTS THAT GOD SEEKS WITH US AND AMONG US

- Abraham received the highest accolade being known as “the friend of God” (*James 2:23*). Christ came to renew and sustain our fellowship with God through the gospel (*1 John 1:3*)
- Christ commands sacrificial love for others (*John 13:34*). Jesus prayed that the church “may be one, as we are one” (*John 17:11*)

RELATIONSHIPS – ESSENTIAL FOR OUR DEVELOPMENT:

1. THE MIXED MESSAGE OF THE WORLD

- Our culture frequently *stresses values* associated with individualism, self-empowerment, comparison and competition; and often *neglects values* associated with mutual dependence, service, cooperation, and community building.
- Our society often identifies spiritual issues as private, self-defining matters best worked out in isolation.

2. THE MESSAGE OF THE SCRIPTURE

- The gospel describes those who assert their individual identity through self-serving attitudes and actions and at the expense of others, not as strong persons to be admired, but as fundamentally unhealthy and in violation of God’s commandments

⁵⁶ “Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. The one who does not love does not know God, for God is love. By this the love of God was manifested in us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another” (1 John 4:7-11). “Therefore if there is any encouragement in Christ, if there is any consolation of love, if there is any fellowship of the Spirit, if any affection and compassion, make my joy complete by being of the same mind, maintaining the same love, united in spirit, intent on one purpose. Do nothing from selfishness or empty conceit, but with humility of mind regard one another as more important than yourselves; do not merely look out for your own personal interests, but also for the interests of others” (Philippians 2:1-4)

⁵⁷ “We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship (KOINONIA) with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with His Son, Jesus Christ.” (1 John 1:3)

- We are made by God both for direct friendship with Him (where we come to know our individuality apart from others) and for friendship with people (where we come to know our individuality in connection with others). (*Psalm 23:1; 100:3*)
- Christian friendships/fellowship produce strong and healthy individuals, not apart from, but rather within a strong, healthy community of faith in Christ. (*Psalm 68:6; Romans 12:5; John 13:35; Romans 1:11-12; 1 Corinthians 13:1-14:1*). Instead of expressing debilitating personal weakness or unhealthy reliance on others, Christ-honoring friendships are an essential means to developing our whole person. The Church is the place that shows us how God combines unity and diversity, sameness and variety, together under Jesus Christ.

3. AN IMPORTANT REMINDER!

- We worship a perfect God but with imperfect people. (*Matthew 5:48; 1 John 1:8*) We admit then that fellowship, relationship and friendship are imperfect in this world. (*2 Peter 1:2-11*)
- A strong church is not a perfect church (none exists this side of heaven) but a church that handles conflicts and imperfections according to God's Word.
- We therefore assume the occasional stress of a strained or broken relationship and the necessity of understanding, patience, forgiveness, correction, discipline, reconciliation and restoration. (*1 Peter 4:8*)

4. PUTTING IT INTO PRACTICE

- We provide regular preaching and teaching that accentuates the underlying values supporting Christian relationship, hospitality, friendships and including:
 - *our need for people in all areas of life;*
 - *the command to love;*
 - *giving and receiving in the Lord;*
 - *serving over being served;*
 - *humility that initiates with others;*
 - *hospitality for guests and strangers;*
 - *supporting others in times of trial;*
 - *rejoicing with others in times of prosperity; and*
 - *forgiving and other essentials for conflict resolution.*

Scriptures: 1 Corinthians 12:14, 21-26; 1 John 4:7; 2 Corinthians 8:1-24; Matthew 20:27; Philippians 2:1-11; Romans 12:15; Ephesians 4:31-32
- We combine large group and small group dynamics to facilitate:
 - *assimilating new people into the church and into new friendships;*
 - *regular shepherding and caring for people within an established relational context; and*
 - *expressions of special care and prayer in times of crises and rejoicing in times of triumph.*

Scriptures: Hebrews 13:1-2; Acts 20:28-32; Hebrews 10:24-25; James 5:13-20

... Our Mission Defined

in Connection with Outreach & Mercy

We represent Jesus Christ to the world in our words, through our character and by our acts. We endeavor through the Gospel to equip each Christian as an effective representative of God within their respective community.

EXPRESSING IN WORD THE REDEMPTIVE NEWS ABOUT JESUS CHRIST

- ***The Unchanging Truth of the Gospel.*** Equipping people to proclaim Christ in accordance with the Great Commission of the 1st century (*Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15*)
 - *Learning to demonstrate absolute accuracy in presenting the unchanging gospel message (2 Timothy 4:1-4)*
- ***The Application of the Gospel Today.*** Equipping people to proclaim Christ effectively to a 21st century audience.
 - *Learning to demonstrate flexibility and wisdom in utilizing culturally effective ways to present that message (1 Corinthians 9:19-22)*
 - *Learning to demonstrate sensitivity and respect for non-Christians while presenting the gospel message, its promises, and its demands (2 Timothy 2:24-26)*

EXPRESSING IN ACTIONS THE REDEMPTIVE EXAMPLE AND CARE OF JESUS CHRIST

- ***The Power of a Redemptive Lifestyle.*** The gospel emphasizes the importance of a godly lifestyle in accordance with scripture, modeled in practice and sometimes maintained through restorative church discipline (*Matthew 5:3-16; Philippians 2:12-15; 1 Peter 2:12; Matthew 18:15-35*).
- ***The Power of Redemptive Care.*** The gospel requires ministry that demonstrates the compassionate mercy of God (*Matthew 25:31-46; Acts 2:44-47; Romans 12:13; James 1:27; 2:1-26*).
 - *towards believers first and then towards others who are experiencing economic difficulty and/or poverty,*
 - *towards those who are experiencing physical problems or ill-health,*
 - *towards those who have been unjustly wronged*
 - *towards those who are experiencing a variety of other genuine difficulties*
 - *towards those who may not be experiencing any known difficulties (and may indeed be content and happy) but who are not Christians and remain in danger of losing everything for eternity at death.*

... Our Strategy

for Developing a Committed Involvement

FROM MERELY ATTENDING CHURCH . . .

TO BECOMING A PARTICIPATOR . . .

Those words have a certain attraction . . . but in this busy age it's easy to feel "swamped" with responsibilities. To feel there's little time left over to devote to *any* additional activities.

And yet, God has intended to make us to become more than attendees in this thing He calls His church.

People today are realizing they've got to *make wise and deliberate choices* with their time. Many are also realizing afresh the need to be involved in SIGNIFICANT SERVICE.

We encourage members to seek the Lord and sample the various ministry activities of Village Christian . . . Then we encourage them to ask the Lord where they should "plug in" and help make a difference.

DEVELOPING IN FAITH

We assist those who are seeking *to make an initial commitment of faith* to Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior (*and afterward to the church*).

To meet this goal we offer ministry that:

- EVANGELIZES. . .
accurately presenting the "good news" about Jesus Christ to interested persons. That they might respond in faith to God with a new heart and a renewed lifestyle

DEVELOPING IN CHARACTER

We assist Christians who are seeking *to maintain and grow in their commitment* to Jesus Christ and His church.

To meet this goal we offer ministry that equips mem-bers to mature in many areas of life, for example as:

- INDIVIDUALS. . .
helping each other grow as followers of Christ by teaching on the variety of personal issues we all face
- FAMILY MEMBERS. . .
encouraging and challenging married couples and parents with practical biblical instruction

- CAREER PEOPLE . . .
to strengthen each other to approach work with a thoroughly Christian perspective
- FRIENDS . . .
to understand the importance of developing and maintaining Christian friendships
- CHURCH MEMBERS . . .
to encourage people to grow in their participation in and support of the local church and its activities
- COMMUNITY PARTICIPANTS . . .
emphasizing the necessity for believers to impact our surrounding community with redemptive actions and words

DEVELOPING IN SERVING

We assist growing Christians who are seeking to make a commitment to develop their gifts & minister to others:

- PROVIDING TRAINING . . .
to equip members to pass on to others what they themselves have learned:
 - a) *in coming to Christ and the church*
 - b) *in maturing and growing as a Christian*
 - IDENTIFYING GIFTING . . .
to help members identify and use their gifts in serving and leading others.
 - WORKING IN TEAMS . . .
Joining with Christians who work together to conduct specific areas of ministry.
-

... WHAT WE BELIEVE

Statement of Faith

We constantly ask the Holy Spirit to lead us in truth.

We therefore express these beliefs in hope that they derive entirely from the Word of God – the only rule for Christian faith and practice.

GOD AND HIS WORD

We believe that there is One God who exists forever in Three Persons: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. God is a Spirit, completely self-sufficient and infinite in being, honor, happiness and perfection. He is eternal, unchangeable, incomprehensible, everywhere present, all-powerful, knowing all things, wise, holy, just, merciful and gracious, long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth.

We believe that God is the Sovereign Creator and Sustainer of all things visible and invisible. He authored the redemption of the church.

We believe that God has revealed Himself to humanity through the Bible – His completed Word and without error in the original writings. The scripture is given by inspiration of God and is the only rule for faith and life.

THE HUMAN RACE

We believe that God directly created Adam and made him the head of the human race. Adam disobeyed God and through his sin brought the continuance of sin and guilt upon all people. All mankind participated in Adam's fall from his original sinless state.

We believe that every person sins and disobeys God's commandments and is deserving of judgment. We cannot save ourselves from this sinful condition.

JESUS CHRIST

We believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, eternal and equal with God the Father, begotten and not created by the Father, and that He became man. Christ then is God and man, one person with two distinct natures, who is the appointed Mediator between God and man.

We believe that Jesus Christ lived an absolutely perfect life in accordance with the Law of God and that He suffered death on the cross. Christ was raised from the dead and returned to heaven where He makes intercession forever for the Church.

Christ satisfied the penalty of sin and secured the gift of eternal life for His people whom He empowers to believe.

We believe that Jesus Christ is the Head of the Church and that He governs us through His Word and Spirit, directs us to proclaim His gospel throughout the world, and assists us through His power and wisdom to overcome His enemies and all who war against our souls. Christ will return again to earth in order to establish the eternal kingdom of God.

THE HOLY SPIRIT

We believe that the Holy Spirit is eternal and equal with God the Father and with God the Son in the Godhead. The Holy Spirit eternally proceeds from the Father and the Son.

We believe that the Spirit accomplishes God's work in the world, originally inspired and now teaches us the Word of God, applies the benefits of Christ's work in our redemption, empowers all Christian living and service, and directs the activities of the Church.

Every believer, being born of the Spirit, has the Holy Spirit. But every Christian should also pray and ask the Heavenly Father to receive the baptism and filling of the Holy Spirit. The various gifts of the Spirit described in Scripture remain in operation today in the contemporary church.

SALVATION

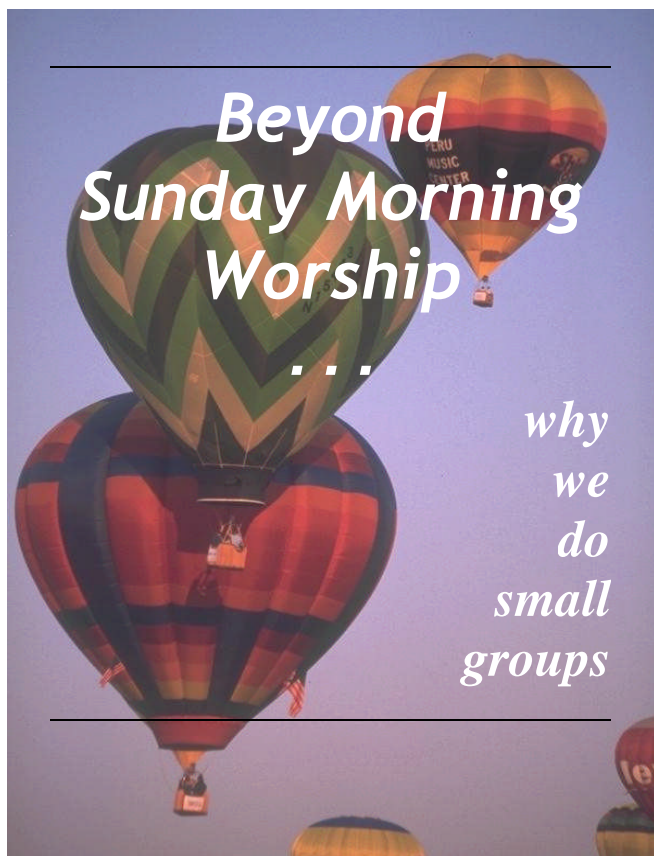
We believe that it is through God's grace that the Holy Spirit creates us anew and brings us to repent and believe in Jesus Christ. Because of the propitiatory death and resurrection of Jesus Christ those who believe receive the forgiveness of sins, eternal life, and new relationship with God.

We believe that through the righteousness of Jesus Christ we are made right with God and adopted as His children. Jesus commands all those who believe in Him to be baptized in water.

We believe that the continuing work of salvation, sanctification, is the life-long process of God's grace whereby Christians become increasingly like Jesus as they obey and abide in Him.

CHURCH

We believe that the Church consists of all believers in Jesus Christ. As a local Church we gather together as Christians under the authority of Christ to worship God, proclaim His Word, participate in the sacraments, love each other, and advance His work in the world. Jesus Christ commanded us to go and make disciples of all nations. . . .



At Village Christian

we emphasize the importance of attendance in the Sunday Worship Service *and* participation in a home group. We believe that the LORD Jesus has especially designed us to derive a wealth of benefits in each setting.

It's worth noting -that Christianity began with a small group – the twelve disciples. Note the early Christian use of both the large and small formats:

“and they, continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, did eat their bread with gladness and singleness of heart, praising God, and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved.” (Acts 2:46-47)

WHAT HAPPENS IN SMALL

GROUPS?

We constantly need to renew a strong connection with God – *to receive His essential grace and give Him our whole heart in passionate worship.*

We continually need to maintain strong connections with other followers of Jesus Christ – *to accomplish the following designs:*

- **FRIENDSHIPS** . . . we're not meant to walk through this life alone. We need to develop Christian friendships.

The smaller setting provides an opportunity to make and maintain these friendships. In addition to Christ-centered learning and sharing, the fewer number of persons involved, the informal format, eating together, doing fun things, etc. -- all contribute to getting to know people. A small group also sets the stage for our growth in caring about others, in encouraging and challenging each other in godly ways. It helps us to answer the questions, “Do I fit in? Am I accepted here?”⁵⁸

⁵⁸ “Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God.” (1 John 4:7).
“Bear one another’s burden and thus fulfill the law of Christ.” (Galatians 6:2) “Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their efforts. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falls down; for he does not have another to help him up.” (Ecclesiastes 4:9-10)

- **PARTICIPATION** . . . the smaller setting facilitates participation -- assisting us to develop in our God-given gifts, talents, character and care for others.

We know that God has created us to make a difference in the lives of others – and for others to express their practical experience and faith to us.⁵⁹ A small group helps us answer the questions, “Can I help and make a difference? How can I contribute and serve?”

- **PERSONAL GROWTH** . . . learning is a vital part of maturing in the LORD. Small groups can help us gain:⁶⁰

- ❖ *knowledge about Jesus Christ and Scripture that effects our character*
- ❖ *understanding how to practically apply what we learn as Christians at home, at work, in friendships, at church and in the community.*

This setting affords us the opportunity to learn from Scripture but also from one other as well. Invariably, it helps us to see “life” through the eyes and experience of other Christians. A small group helps us answer the questions, “Am I really growing in my faith and character? How am I helping other people to experience growth?”

- **WORSHIP-PRAYER** . . . small group meetings can help us focus on God and His greatness – to keep our faith strong and consistent through every season in life – in good times and bad:

- ❖ *Worship* – directs our thanks & gratefulness to Jesus Christ and helps us to reflect on who He is and the great things that He’s done for us
- ❖ *Prayer* – becomes a forum to present our needs and circumstances to the group and to God - knowing that Christ listens and is actively involved in answering our prayers.⁶¹

A small group helps us answer the question, “Am I getting closer to God and His plan for my life?”

- **OUTREACH** . . . small group meetings also provide the opportunity to introduce friends, family & acquaintances to the message about Jesus Christ among the Christians that you most trust.⁶²

A small group helps us answer the question, “How am I sharing my faith and experiences with Jesus Christ with others?”

⁵⁹ “When you assemble, let each one have a psalm, a teaching, a revelation, a tongue, an interpretation. Let all things be done with the purpose of building up others.” (1 Corinthians 14:26-27)

⁶⁰ “As newborn babies, crave for the pure milk of the Word, so that by it you may grow concerning your salvation.” (1 Peter 2:2). “But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.” (2 Peter 3:18)

⁶¹ “They were continually devoting themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer . . . praising God and having favor with all the people.” (Acts 2:42, 47) “Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom; teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord.” (Colossians 3:16) “Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.” (Ephesians 6:18)

⁶² “For though I am free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I might gain the more. . . . I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some.” (1 Corinthians 9:19, 22)