



Strategic Plan

Revised Spring 2020

Mission

Our Mission is to Be Disciples and to Make Disciples.

Vision

Our Vision is to be an international and diverse congregation for which Christ is the pattern, God's Love is the principle, and the Holy Spirit is the power.

Values

We value the kingdom of God:

We believe the kingdom of God, which is the future reign of God breaking into the present through the life and ministry of Jesus, is the overarching and integrating theme of the Bible. We are committed to proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God and to bearing witness to the “already and not yet” of the kingdom through our words and deeds—through healing (physical, emotional, and social), doing justice, and setting free those held captive by evil.

We value embracing the sacred in every aspect of life:

We believe that our whole life is set apart for Christ and His purposes. We view life in an integrated, holistic manner, rejecting the idea that there are “sacred & secular” aspects of life. We welcome God's presence, seeking to be attentive to what “the Father is doing,” and supporting His work with our whole lives. We avoid hype and other efforts to manipulate either God's presence or the response of others to his presence. We are committed to being open to the leading of the Holy Spirit and responding in a way that is naturally supernatural whether we are at church, home, work, school, or wherever.

We value living life together:

We do not want to be just a collection of individuals or a large crowd. God is looking for us to be a community of people who have joined His mission in the world – because following Jesus happens in the context of relationships, not in isolation. We aim to build up the church, and each other through maintaining mutual respect, open communication, determined cooperation, and believing and speaking the best about each other.

We value ministry based on the compassion of Jesus:

We believe that mercy is fundamental to all that God does in salvation. We therefore aim to extend compassion to one another, and to each person God brings into our lives. We are committed to being generous in every aspect of our lives, to “give away

our best,” whether people or resources, in order to expand God’s Kingdom.

Goals

- 1. To Be Disciples**
- 2. To Make Disciples**
- 3. To Form Kinship Groups**
- 4. To Reach the Future Leaders of the World**

1. Be Disciples

"A disciple is someone who has decided to be with another person, under appropriate conditions, in order to become capable of doing what that person does or to become what that person is."-Dallas Willard

As disciples we want to be with Jesus (Prayer, Fasting, Bible study, Communion, Fellowship, Service) so that we can become who he is (a person of love, humility, strength, holiness) and learn to do what he does (speak to others about God’s love, heal the sick, deliver the oppressed, mentor others). Or put another way, we want to more and more reflect the character of Jesus by exhibiting the fruit of the Spirit in our lives, and learn to do the work of Jesus by means of the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

A disciple of Jesus Christ is someone who:

- Exhibits a genuine love for God and others
- Has at least a basic understanding of Jesus’ teaching on the Kingdom of God
- Hears God’s Voice
- Exhibits an attitude of humility and service
- Reads the Bible
- Prays
- Fasts
- Spends time with those who are spiritual seekers
- Speaks to others about God’s love
- Regularly partakes of the Lord’s

- Supper
- Worships/fellowships with other Believers
- Prays for the sick to be healed
- Helps free others from spiritual bondage
- Spends time mentoring others
- Is regularly involved in acts of service to the community
- Lives life, and spends his or her resources, time and money, in a way that reflects Biblical values rather than those of the surrounding culture
- Obeys God’s Word

2. Make Disciples

"Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." (Mt 28:18-20 NIV)

In the Great Commission, Jesus commands us to go and introduce others to Jesus and teach them to follow Him. In doing so, we want to follow Jesus' method of discipling, or mentoring, others. Among other things, this will involve:

1. Reaching out to those who are far from God.
2. Forming a genuine relationship with them.
3. Ministering God's grace to them.
4. Welcoming them into community.

3. Form Kinship Groups

The Kinship group

Our overall strategy takes an approach similar to that employed by John and Charles Wesley in the 18th c. during the early stages of the Methodist movement. It is a strategy of decentralized pastoral care and oversight through a system of lay pastors who oversee kinship groups of members. Members of these "kinship groups" meet in one another's homes during the week to help one another love and follow Jesus by practicing the disciplines of Fellowship, Exaltation, Edification, Evangelism, Discipleship, and Service (FEEEDS). Kinship group members share their lives together, worship together, share their faith with friends outside the church, encourage one another to model their lives after Jesus, and engage in concrete acts of service to each other and their community. Through such groups, we seek to counteract the drift towards an impersonal or consumer approach to church and model for those outside the church authentic community. While church members continue to meet together on Sunday mornings for corporate worship and for Biblical instruction, the life-blood of the church continues to be the kinship group meetings that take place weekly in member's homes.

Such groups also will form the basis for future church plants. Studies have shown that one of the most effective ways to bring about spiritual change in a community is through

church planting. Church plants are typically more outward focused than more established churches and record a higher rate of conversion growth. We desire to be a church that plants other churches. Accordingly, we will seek to identify, equip and support individuals who have a heart to plant churches and see them sent out with a team comprised of various individuals with complementary gifts. At least three kinship groups meeting in the same area will form the basis of such church plants.

4. Reach the Future Leaders of the World

University of Virginia sociologist, James Davison Hunter, in his book *How to Change the World*, examines extensively the factors involved in societal change. He's found that one of the factors driving societal change is always, involvement by cultural leaders. Even though we're a relatively small church, we believe we're strategically placed to change the world. Why? Because we have the opportunity to affect the future cultural leaders of the world. Ithaca College has students from 47 states, 3 U.S. Territories and 68 different countries. Cornell has students from all 50 states, 3 U.S. territories and 79 different countries. And not just any students. The students from these two institutions have the potential to have an inordinate impact on their world. As an Ivy League institution, Cornell has a tremendous impact. Out of the 2,500 four year institutions in the United States, 50% of our leaders graduate from the 8 universities that make up the Ivy League. Ithaca College also produces many cultural leaders. It's often said that politics is downstream from culture and Ithaca College produces numerous alumni who shape and drive the entertainment industry in the U.S. We believe as a church that we can change the world by equipping the future cultural leaders of the world to be effective disciples and sending them back to their home countries. Our congregation includes people from: South Africa, Brazil, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Haiti, Kenya, the United Kingdom, Tanzania, China, Jamaica and Cuba.

Our Overall Strategy

Our overall strategy includes the following components:

- *One-on-One Mentoring.* Monthly informal meetings between staff pastors and the various couples who lead the kinship groups in their congregation. We want to equip kinship group leaders to help the members of their group practice and grow in their relationship with Jesus by practicing the spiritual disciplines of: prayer, Bible study, fasting, fellowship, Communion and service.
- *Kinship Groups.* Weekly gatherings for the purpose of helping members to grow in their relationship with Jesus by encouraging members to incorporate into life the spiritual

disciplines of: prayer, study of Scripture, fasting, fellowship, service to others, and participating in the Lord's Supper. These gatherings will usually consist of between 8 to 14 people and will take place in members' homes. Kinship groups will be the primary vehicle whereby church members develop close supportive relationships, worship together, serve each other and their community, and encourage each other to pattern their lives after Jesus. Such groups will also provide the primary ingress for people into the church by promoting friendship evangelism through "Matthew Parties", gatherings hosted by the kinship groups for friends who are spiritual seekers or those not yet interested in Jesus.

- *Medium Sized Groups.* Leadership meetings for the purpose of: 1.) Equipping kinship group leaders and assistants with the skills to better lead their groups, 2.) Reaffirming the overall vision of where we're headed as a church, and 3.) Giving kinship group leaders an opportunity to "huddle" with their staff pastor and the other leaders in their congregation. These meetings will take place once a month. Adult education classes that support our goals of growing as apprentices of Jesus, making apprentices, forming kinship groups and planting churches. The core curriculum will consist of: 1.) Introduction to the Vineyard Church of Ithaca, 2.) The Message and Meaning of Jesus, 3.) Ministering the Way Jesus Ministered and 4.) Spiritual Disciplines for an Effective Christian Life.
- *Large Groups.* Weekly Sunday services for the purpose of Celebrating what God is doing in our lives, casting the vision of where we're headed as a church, and Biblical teaching related to what it means to be followers of Jesus Christ. Discussion questions related to the sermon will be distributed to kinship group leaders on Sunday for use in their kinship group meetings that week. Through such discussions the teaching from Sunday is reinforced and members are encouraged to implement what they've been taught into their personal lives.

Goals, Strategies, and Objective

Goal #1	Strategy	Objective
Be Disciples	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• <u>Large group gatherings</u> held on Sunday for the purpose of Celebrating what God is doing in our lives, casting the vision of where we're headed as a church, and Biblical teaching related to what it means to be followers of Jesus Christ.• <u>Kinship groups</u> held weekly in members' homes that encourage members to be better disciples and which attract <i>new</i> members through team friendship evangelism.• <u>Large Group</u> Congregation-wide outreach events monthly• Medium Size Groups (Adult	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 70% of regular attendees have a basic theological understanding of what Jesus meant by the "Kingdom of God" by 3/5/20• 85% of regular attendees have prayed for someone to be healed in the last 6 months by 3/5/20• 70% of regular attendees have prayed for someone to be delivered from spiritual oppression in the last 6 months by 3/5/20• 70% of regular attendees read their Bible at least 3x week by 3/5/20• 70% of regular attendees set aside time at least 3x week for prayer, meditation and reflection by 3/5/20• 50% of regular attendees fast in some way, shape or form, at least once a month by 3/5/18• 75% of regular attendees take communion at least 1x month by 3/5/20• 70% of those who regularly attend The Vineyard's Sunday large group meetings are involved in a kinship group (or college small group) by 3/5/20• 60% of regular attendees are involved in some form of regular service to their communities by 3/5/20• 60% of regular attendees feel they have grown in their love for God over the past 6 months by 3/5/20• 70% of regular attendees feel they have grown in their love for others over the past 6 months by 3/5/20

Education Classes) held on Sunday that Reinforce our Goals

- Provide ongoing adult education classes before the service on various books of the Bible.
- Periodically throughout the year, offer our Foundations for Faithfulness Members class after the service.

Goal #2	Strategy	Objectives
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Make Disciples

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Friendship Evangelism</u> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 90% of the congregation spends at least one hour a week in <u>significant</u> interaction/or conversation with someone who is a spiritual seeker by 3/5/20 • 70% of the congregation has raised the issue of spiritual things in the past six months with someone who does not know God by 3/5/20 • Each kinship group has hosted two cookouts or other events to which they have invited friends who are spiritually seekers by 3/26/20 • 35% of regular attendees are involved in a mentoring relationship by 3/5/20 • Three people have re-oriented their lives towards Jesus in the past 6 months by 3/5/20 |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Formal Evangelism</u> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • During the warmer months, hold coffee giveaways (with evangelistic banners) to encourage life conversations. |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>Children’s Education Classes</u> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hire a new Children’s and Family pastor by 7/1/19 • See number of children in church increase by 5% by 1/20 |

Goal #3	Strategy	Objectives
<p>Form Kinship Groups</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>One-on-one mentoring</u> by paid staff of kinship group leaders, and of assistants by kinship group leaders • <u>Medium-Sized Group</u> for initial Orientation and Training of Kinship group Leaders • <u>Medium-Size Meetings</u> held once a month for dev. of SG leaders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To See <u>1 New</u> Kinship Group Started by 3/26/20 • Current kinship groups are meeting weekly and practicing FEEEDS on a regular basis by 3/26/20 • 75% of kinship groups have an assistant leader in place by 11/27/20 • 75% of kinship groups involved in some form of outreach to the community at least 2x a semester by 3/26/20 • Each KG group has hosted/participated in two cookouts or other events to which they have invited friends who are spiritually seekers by 3/26/20 • Lead Pastor meeting monthly with Kinship Group leaders and elders by 11/27/20 • Pastor visiting kinships monthly 11/27/20 • Kinship group leader's training completed by 10/1/20 • Leader's Training KG held by 10/1/20 • Leader's meetings held monthly

Goal #4	Strategy	Objectives
<p>Reach the Future Leaders of the World</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>To equip undergraduate and graduate students through our preaching, adult education and kinships groups to be effective disciples, and send them into the world.</u> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To see students continue to make up at least 40% of our congregation by 3/26/20 • To continue to have at least 10 countries represented in our congregation by 3/26/20

Evaluation

In order to ensure that we are achieving our goal of being disciples, making disciples, forming kinship groups and planting churches, every 6 months we will distribute questionnaires to church members. Questionnaires will be anonymous and be filled out on a Sunday. Through them we will seek to answer the following questions

(Goal #1: To Be Disciples)

- What % of regular attendees has at least basic understanding of Jesus' teaching on the Kingdom of God?
- What % has prayed for someone to be healed in the last 6 months?
- What % has prayed for someone to be delivered from spiritual oppression within the last 6 months?
- What % reads their Bibles at least 3 times a week?
- What % sets time aside at least 3x week for prayer, meditation and reflection?
- What % fasts at least once a month?
- What % takes Communion at least once a month?
- What % is involved in a kinship group or campus small group?
- What % is regularly engage in some form of service to their immediate neighbors, or their community?
- What % feels they have grown in their love for God in the last 6 months?
- What % feels they are more loving towards others than they were 6 months ago?
- What % feel they are able to hear God's Voice/be directed by His Spirit?

(Goal #2: To Make Disciples)

- What % spends at least one hour a week with someone who is un-churched?
- What % has raised the issue of spiritual things in the past six months with someone who does not know God?

- What % of kinship groups has hosted a cookout or other event to which they have invited friends who are spiritual seekers?
- What % is involved in what could be described as a discipleship, or mentoring relationship?
- How many people have committed their lives to Jesus in the last 12 months?
- How many regular attendees have led someone to re-orient their lives towards Jesus in the last 12 months?
- What % of our growth is through first time conversion?
- What % of our growth is due to people who have transferred from other churches?
- What % of our growth is due to people moving into the area looking for a church home?

(Goal #3: To Form Kinship groups)

- How many kinship groups do we have that are practicing FEEEDS on a regular basis?
- How many new groups have formed in the past 6 months?
- What % of kinship groups are hosting Matthew Parties at least 1x every 4 weeks?
- What % of kinship groups are doing some form of outreach at least 1x every 4 weeks?
- How many kinship group leaders do we have?
- What % of kinship group leaders has at least one assistant?

(Goal #4: To Reach the Future Leaders of the World)

- What % of our congregation is comprised of students?
- How many countries of the world are represented in our congregation?

Statement of Faith

The following tenets of faith and practice compose the doctrinal beliefs and practices that give our fellowship its distinctive testimony and comprise the life and ministry skills that we shall endeavor to model and impart to our membership:

- A. WE BELIEVE that there is ONE LIVING AND TRUE GOD, eternally existing in three persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, equal in power and glory; that this triune God created all, and governs all.
- B. WE BELIEVE that the Holy Spirit inspired the human authors of Holy Scripture so that the Bible is without error in the original manuscripts. We receive the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments as our final, absolute authority, the only infallible rule of faith and practice.
- C. WE BELIEVE in GOD THE FATHER, an infinite, personal Spirit, perfect in holiness, wisdom, power, and love; that He concerns Himself mercifully in the affairs of men; that He hears and answers prayer; and that He saves from sin and death all who come to Him through Jesus Christ, and that He invites us to relate to Him, through Jesus as a loving Father.
- D. WE BELIEVE in JESUS CHRIST, God's only begotten Son, conceived by the Holy Spirit. We believe in His virgin birth, sinless life, miracles, teachings, His substitutionary atoning death, bodily resurrection, ascension into heaven, perpetual intercession for His people, and His personal, visible return to earth. We believe that in His first coming, Jesus inaugurated the fulfillment of the Kingdom of God.
- E. WE BELIEVE in the HOLY SPIRIT, who was poured out on the Church at Pentecost in power, baptizing believers into the Body of Christ and releasing the gifts of the Spirit to them. The Spirit brings the permanent indwelling presence of God to us for spiritual worship, personal sanctification, building up the Church, gifting us for ministry, and driving back the kingdom of Satan by the evangelization of the world through proclaiming the word of Jesus and doing the works of Jesus.
- F. WE BELIEVE that the Holy Spirit indwells every believer in Jesus Christ and that He is our abiding Helper, Teacher, and Guide. We believe in the filling and baptism of the Holy Spirit for ministry today. We believe in the present ministry of the Spirit and in the exercise of all of the biblical gifts of the Spirit. We practice the laying on of hands for the empowering of the Spirit, for healing, and for recognition and empowering of those whom God has ordained to lead and serve the Church.
- G. WE BELIEVE that Satan, originally a great, good angel, rebelled against God, taking a host of angels with him. He was cast out of God's presence and, as a usurper of God's rule, established a counter kingdom of darkness and evil on the earth.
- H. WE BELIEVE that God created mankind in His image, male and female, for relationship with Himself and to govern the earth. Under the temptation of Satan, our original parents fell from grace, bringing sin, sickness, and God's judgment of death to the earth. Through the fall, Satan and his demonic hosts gained access to God's good creation. Creation now experiences the consequences and effects of Adam's original sin. Human beings are born sinners, subject to God's judgment, death and captive to Satan's kingdom of darkness.
- I. WE BELIEVE that all people are sinners by nature and choice. All people therefore are under God's just judgment. Through the preaching of the Good News of Jesus and the Kingdom of God and the work of the Holy Spirit, God regenerates, justifies, adopts and sanctifies through Jesus by the Spirit all who repent of their sins and trust in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.
- J. We Believe that the term "marriage" has only one meaning: the uniting of one man and one woman in a single, exclusive union, as delineated in Scripture (Gen 2:18-25.), and that God intends sexual intimacy to occur only between a man and a woman who are married to each other. (1 Cor 6:18; 7:2-5; Heb 13:4.)
- K. WE BELIEVE in the one, holy, universal Church. All who repent of their sins and confess Jesus as Lord and Savior are regenerated by the Holy Spirit and form the living Body of Christ, of which He is the head and all are members.

- L. WE BELIEVE that Jesus Christ committed two ordinances to the Church: water baptism and the Lord's Supper. Both are available to all believers.
- M. WE BELIEVE that God's kingdom has come in the ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ, that it continues to come in the ministry of the Spirit through the Church, and that it will be consummated in the glorious, visible and triumphant appearing of Christ in His return to the earth as King. After Christ returns to reign, He will bring about the final defeat of Satan and all of his minions and works, the resurrection of the dead, the final Judgment, the eternal blessing of the righteous, and eternal conscious punishment of the wicked. Finally, God will be all in all, and His kingdom, rule, and reign, will be fulfilled in the new heavens and the new earth, recreated by His mighty power, in which righteousness dwells, and in which He will forever be worshipped.
- N. WE BELIEVE in what is termed the "Apostle's Creed" as embodying fundamental facts of Christian faith, and endorse the historic orthodox creeds of the church.