

# Voice of The Avenue

Vision:

**The Avenue Church exists to inspire you to encounter Jesus and find a better way to do life.**

Slogan:

**A better way to do life.**

A better way to do life. Quite a bold claim. Yet, at The Avenue Church, we confidently stand by it and understand that when someone encounters Jesus in community with others, they will experience a better way to do life. Everything that we do is committed to that—our language, our attitude, and our actions.

The Avenue Church exists to inspire *everyone* to encounter Jesus on a personal level, especially those who have never truly been introduced. Maybe it's someone who simply hasn't heard about him, someone that has doubts and questions, or someone that feels His people, the church, has betrayed them. We exist so these people can have a safe place to be introduced to the real Jesus and find a better way to do life.

We don't assume that anyone who attends in person or online has any answers or understands definitions commonly used in most churches. So, the language we use matters. How we say it matters.

If you are reading this document, you have a role that will represent The Avenue. Below are basic communication guidelines and best practices that can help equip you to join the vision we have at The Avenue to help people find a better way. Let's do our part to introduce people to Jesus.

# Communication guidelines

## **We communicate what we want for people, not what we want *from* them.**

We're not giving people to-dos. We're presenting them with opportunities, acknowledging that these opportunities might be new, strange, even offensive to some in the audience. Meet people in this resistance with grace. We want our communication to make people's lives easier, not more difficult. We're on their side and put their interests before our own. We are not the hero of the story. They are.

## **We avoid insider lingo.**

We won't use words that are hard to understand. We explain terms and phrases that may be confusing to someone who has never stepped inside a church. Use everyday language. Don't make assumptions about what people understand, but also avoid sounding patronizing.

## **We're not subpar.**

If it's worth putting into words, it's worth getting right. We communicate with excellence.

## **We say less to communicate more.**

We keep it brief, knowing people are more likely to engage with concise content. This is true across all communication platforms (from stage to email, from social media to classes).

## **We don't sell.**

We understand people tune out advertising and manipulation. We inform, cast vision, and share experience. We describe real outcomes that can benefit our audience. We tell stories. We speak with humility, understanding that God is the one that makes the sale.

## **We've got personality. We laugh.**

We let it shine by being authentic and positive with the right touch of humor.

# Communication best practices

## **Have a goal.**

For every piece of communication, before you do anything else, determine the goal. Do whatever is needed to gain clarity about the desired outcome and keep it in front of you during the entire creation process.

## **Add an evaluation step.**

Once the piece goes out, it's important to look back and ask whether it met its intended goal. What can we learn for future pieces?

## **Know your audience.**

The group we're talking to determines how we approach our communication. What is their experience with us? Put yourself into their shoes and communicate based on their perspective, keeping in mind that The Avenue's audiences span from those who are far from God to those who are leading.

## **Choose the right channel.**

Your message and your goal should determine the communication channel you use, whether it's a video, email newsletter, Facebook post, text message, etc. For example, if people need to take action online, an online method of communication might be the best choice.

## **Consider context.**

Where is your content going to live? What else is being talked about there? Does what you're communicating conflict with that? Does it duplicate that? Is it out of place there?

## **Lead with the most important thing.**

Don't bury key information under several sentences or paragraphs. Keep the most important, foundational information at the top.

## **Get a second set of eyes on it.**

Have a qualified proofreader look over your piece. Typos and misspelled words undermine a beautifully crafted piece. Not only is this a best practice, it's a must practice.

## **Cut, cut, cut!**

Avoid redundancy and wordiness. Once you write a piece, see how much you can eliminate without losing meaning.

# Cautionary word list

The exact same word can often carry a different meaning for different people. Below are a few example words that, as we grow and deepen in our faith, have great significance and meaning for us due our understanding of the Bible. However, to the general public, they often carry baggage based on personal church experience or cultural stereotypes. Within the church, we often use these terms without even thinking about that difference. Let's work to reduce any assumptions about people's understanding or perspective.

We are in no way saying don't use them – please do – but use them *with wisdom, authenticity, and a clear explanation.*

Lord	Satan	Calvary
Savior	Devil	rapture
cross	redemption	missions
Messiah	justification	missionary
Christ	sanctification	preacher
blood of Jesus	Holy Ghost	testimony
Gospel	repent	congregation
holiness	Hell	minister
righteousness	salvation	born again
sin	judgment day	