

MISSION, VISION, VALUES & BELIEFS

We often say at Willow Creek, “People matter to God.” We humbly recognize that we are among the “lost” Jesus came to seek and save. It is out of this recognition that we have built our mission statement: to turn irreligious people into fully devoted followers of Christ.

The Son of Man has come to seek and to save that which was lost.”
LUKE 19:10

A MISSION, A VISION, A PLAN

JESUS CHRIST HAD A MISSION. He came to earth from heaven knowing His purpose. His single-mindedness, determination, and reliance on His heavenly Father’s guidance ensured that at the end of His ministry, He could pray confidently, “I have accomplished the work which You gave me to do” (John 17:4).

He also had a vision — to build a community of believers—only twelve at first—that would be the foundation of a vast network of followers who would fulfill His vision. Knowing His disciples’ exciting potential but precarious position, Jesus prayed, “As You have sent Me into the world, I also send them into the world” (John 17:18).

Jesus also had a plan. His ministry unfolded in stages. Workers needed to be trained, and He began to call people right out of their preoccupation with other interests. The control He exercised in relation to His ministry was always in response to the leadings of His heavenly Father—and as the appropriate way to facilitate His mission and vision in accordance with His values.

MISSION: What We’re Doing

“Our mission is to turn irreligious people into fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ.”

As Christ followers at Willow Creek Community Church, we desire to carry on His mission. Because Jesus came to seek and to save the lost, we feel compelled to do the same. But Jesus went beyond rescuing people from hell; He wanted to make them fit for heaven. Our ministries are designed not only so people can “meet” Christ, but so they will grow in faith by being obedient to His commands and conformed to His character.

VISION: What We’re Becoming

“Our vision is to be a biblically functioning community of believers so that Christ’s redemptive purposes can be accomplished in the world.”



WHAT WE BELIEVE

Our core beliefs are centered in Christ and His message, found and supported in Scripture. Ours is a biblical theology rather than a theology that is speculative or a theology that is merely rooted in tradition. This is nothing new. Anyone familiar with historic Christian doctrine will recognize that our theology is derived directly from the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

THE BIBLE

The basis of our belief is in the 66 books of the Bible, both Old and New Testament. We believe that all of Scripture originated from God and that it was revealed to individuals chosen specifically for that purpose. Scripture speaks with the authority of God, while reflecting the backgrounds, styles, and vocabularies of the human authors. We hold that the Scriptures, in their original manuscript, are the unique, full, and final authority on all matters of faith and practice, and there are no other writings similarly inspired by God.

GOD

God exists in three persons— Father, Son and Holy Spirit—each possessing all the attributes of deity and the characteristics of personality. In the beginning, by His power, wisdom and goodness, God created the world and everything in it. He continues to sustain His creation and He is operating throughout history to fulfill His redemptive purposes.

SALVATION

God’s desire is to call all people into fellowship with Himself. By defying God and going his own way, man became alienated from God. This “fall” happened at the beginning of human history and all people since then have suffered the consequences of the fall and are in need of God’s saving grace.

The salvation of mankind is a work of God’s free grace, rather than the result of human works or goodness. Each person can receive salvation through repentance and faith. God assures us that He will then continue His saving work in us forever.

JESUS CHRIST

The second Person of the Trinity is Jesus Christ who, following a miraculous conception and birth, lived a life of perfect obedience to the Father. Jesus voluntarily paid the price for the sins of all humans by dying on the Cross as our substitute. After His death, He rose from the dead and ascended into Heaven to sit at the right hand of God. Jesus is the only Mediator between God and humans. He has promised that He will come to earth again to complete God’s eternal plan.

THE CHRISTIAN LIFE (THE HOLY SPIRIT)

Following the example of Jesus, Christians are called to a life of obedience by submitting to the Holy Spirit, the third Person of the Trinity. The Holy Spirit applies the saving work of Christ by indwelling every believer at the point of salvation, giving each gifts to build up the body of Christ. The Holy Spirit guides believers in understanding and applying the Scripture. His power and control are appropriated by faith, making it possible for the believer to lead a life of Christlike character and to bear fruit to the glory of the Father.

HUMAN DESTINY

When we die, believers will be received into eternal communion with God. Having rejected God, unbelievers will suffer His judgment in eternal condemnation.

THE CHURCH

Through union with Jesus Christ, all believers become members of His body, the one true Church. The Scripture commands believers to gather for worship, prayer, fellowship and the teaching of the Word; to observe Baptism and Communion as established by Jesus Christ; to offer service to the body through the development and use of talents and gifts; and to engage in outreach to the world. The local expression of the church is found wherever God’s people meet regularly in obedience to this command. Members, led by elders or other supportive leaders, work together to glorify Christ.

FAITH AND PRACTICE

In matters of faith and practice, scripture is the final authority. In matters where Scripture is silent, each believer should seek to be led by the Lord, to whom he or she alone is ultimately responsible.

VALUES

VALUE 1: We believe that anointed teaching is the catalyst for transformation in individuals' lives and in the church. This includes the concept of teaching for life change—Romans 12:7, 2 Timothy 3:16–17, James 1:23–25.

VALUE 2: We believe that lost people matter to God, and therefore, ought to matter to the church. This includes the concepts of relational evangelism and evangelism as a process—Luke 5:30–32, Luke 15, Matthew 18:14.

VALUE 3: We believe that the church should be culturally relevant while remaining doctrinally pure. This includes the concept of sensitively relating to our culture through our facility, printed materials, and use of the arts—1 Corinthians 9:19–23.

VALUE 4: We believe that Christ-followers should manifest authenticity and yearn for continuous growth. This includes the concepts of personal authenticity, character, and wholeness—Ephesians 4:25–26, 32, Hebrews 12:1, Philippians 1:6.

VALUE 5: We believe that a church should operate as a unified community of servants with men and women stewarding their spiritual gifts. This includes the concepts of unity, servanthood, spiritual gifts, and ministry callings—1 Corinthians 12 and 14, Romans 12, Ephesians 4, Psalm 133:1.

VALUE 6: We believe that loving relationships should permeate every aspect of church life. This includes the concepts of love-driven ministry, ministry accomplished in teams, and relationship building—1 Corinthians 13, Nehemiah 3, Luke 10:1, John 13:34–35.

VALUE 7: We believe that life-change happens best in small groups. This includes the concepts of discipleship, vulnerability, and accountability—Luke 6:12–13, Acts 2:44–47.

VALUE 8: We believe that excellence honors God and inspires people. This includes the concepts of evaluation, critical review, intensity, and excellence—Colossians 3:17, Malachi 1:6–14, Proverbs 27:17.

VALUE 9: We believe that churches should be led by men and women with leadership gifts. This includes the concepts of empowerment, servant leadership, strategic focus, and intentionality—Nehemiah 1–2, Romans 12:8, Acts 6:2–5.

VALUE 10: We believe that the pursuit of full devotion to Christ and His cause is normal for every believer. This includes the concepts of stewardship, servanthood, downward mobility, and the pursuit of kingdom goals—1 Kings 11:4, Philippians 2:1–11, 2 Corinthians 8:7.

WHY MEMBERSHIP?

“So we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.”

ROMANS 12:5

We believe the concept of membership is biblical. The concept is implicit throughout the New Testament as believers clearly identified themselves with a specific local body and were challenged to become devoted participants. Formal membership is valuable to the leaders of the church as they seek to fulfill their God-given task of shepherding and it is important to identify those who truly comprise the “flock” at Willow Creek—the core that can be counted on to build and sustain the ministries of the church. Most importantly, membership benefits the individual. It moves us out of the vague clouds of our good intentions and into the clear light of committed participation. In this sense, membership can be a significant “defining moment” in one’s lifelong discipleship journey.

Union with Christ, which happens at the instant of your conversion, means that you are part of His Church, solely as the result of His Grace. This “positional” membership is eternal and unchanging. However, the Bible also urges “Positional Members” to continue growing by becoming “Participating Members” in a specific local assembly.

Being committed to Christ and becoming more like Him is an amazing spiritual journey and it’s what Participating Membership at Willow Creek is all about.

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Willow Creek
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