



VINTAGE**CHURCH**

New Members' Packet



OVERVIEW

What does it mean to be a member at Vintage Church?

To be a baptized follower of Christ who is committed to becoming more and more like Jesus by worshipping Him, caring for others in the church, and loving the people in our city.

We fulfill this commitment to Jesus and his church by worshipping him on Sunday, participating in biblical community, giving generously, serving as we're gifted, loving our neighbors, and giving of ourselves to see the city that we live in become more like God intended it to be.

What are the steps to becoming a member at Vintage Church?

1. Attend the New Members' Class.
2. Read the membership packet, and ask questions.
3. Get involved at your local Vintage church.
4. Write out your testimony.
5. Be baptized, if not already.
6. Sit down with your Community Group Leader or Local Church Pastor for an interview.



MEMBERSHIP IN A LOCAL CHURCH

What is the Church?

The Church is the true community of all true believers for all time. The church is made up of all the men and women who have been, are, or ever will be true believers in Jesus.

That means the Church is not a place or a building. It's not an event. It's not a service club or loose affiliation of people who hold roughly the same beliefs.

Paul makes this clear when he writes, "Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her" (Ephesians 5:25). Again, "the church" that Paul refers to isn't just the church or members of the church in Ephesus. It's everyone that Jesus died to redeem.

Universal and Local

This means Vintage Church isn't the only true church in the history of the church. It also means Vintage Church isn't the only true church in the Triangle. All true believers, no matter when or where they lived, make up the true church.

Yet, we have local churches. This isn't anything new. When Jesus left earth for heaven, he gave the apostles a basic mission: Take the good news of the gospel to the ends of the earth. The book of Acts tells us the apostles carried out that mission by starting local churches everywhere they went.

Therefore, it's helpful to realize that when you talk about the church, you can talk about the universal church and the local church. The universal church is the community of all true believers for all time. The local church is a particular group of Christians who gather together.

Vintage Church is a local church.



Visible and Invisible

It's also helpful to realize when you talk about the church, you can also talk about both the visible and the invisible church.

Because we cannot see the spiritual condition of people's hearts, the true, universal church, in its spiritual reality as the true community of all true believers for all time, is invisible. Only God can see the condition of people's hearts. As Paul says in 2 Timothy 2:19, "The Lord knows who are his." The invisible church is the church as God sees it.

But the church is also visible. When you come to a church service, you see members that make up Vintage, a local church. The visible church is the church as people see it.

Again, the Church is the true community of all true believers for all time. That community has always had local, visible expressions of what has always been an universal, invisible reality.

Jesus' Church, Jesus' Rules

The Apostle Paul said that Jesus obtained the church "with his own blood" (Acts 20:28). Jesus didn't shed his blood for a building or a service club. He didn't die for an event. He died for "a people for his own possession" (Titus 1:14).

The Church belongs to Jesus. Vintage Church is Jesus' church. Therefore, Vintage Church must do everything it can to operate in accordance with Jesus' commands.

Traditionally, many Church scholars have agreed that there are two major activities (or "marks") that Jesus set for every church to exhibit in order to be considered a true, local church: correct preaching from the Bible and correct administration of the sacraments.



The Bible

The first mark of a true church is the correct preaching from the Bible. This has less to do with the form of the sermons and more to do with the content of the sermons. The sermons need to consistently contain doctrine that is found in the Bible. It needs to clearly contain the true gospel message of salvation by faith alone. This isn't to say that there is a checklist of things that need to be in every sermon, but instead that the sermons need to follow what the Bible clearly teaches.

Vintage Church is committed to teaching what is in the Bible, in the sermons preached each Sunday and in the gospel message that is communicated. This is because we believe that the Old and New Testaments, in their entirety, constitute the written word of God and therefore are without error. They were written by men through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and are, therefore, fully authoritative in all matters for Jesus' followers.

God speaks through Scripture. Through Scripture, God tells us who he is and what he wants us to do.

Vintage Church is committed to teaching what is in the Bible because we believe in the authority, clarity, necessity, and sufficiency of the Bible.

When we say we believe in the **authority of the Bible**, we mean that all the words in the Bible are God's words. As we read in 2 Timothy 3:16, "all Scripture is breathed out by God." Therefore, to believe them is to believe God himself. To obey them is to obey God himself. To disbelieve them is to disbelieve God himself. To disobey them is to disobey God himself.

If God claims the words of Scripture are his own, then there is ultimately no higher authority one can appeal to for proof of this claim than Scripture itself. There is no higher authority than God himself.

When we say we believe in the **clarity of the Bible**, we mean that the Bible is written in such a way that all things necessary to become a Christian, live as a Christian, and grow as a Christian are clear. Though there are some parts of the Bible that are harder to understand than others (2 Peter 3:16), that shouldn't dissuade us from reading, studying, or listening to teaching on the Bible. For, "the testimony of the Lord is



sure, making wise the simple” (Psalm 19:7) and “the unfolding” of God’s “words gives light; it imparts understanding to the simple” (Psalm 119:130).

When we say we believe in the **necessity of the Bible**, we mean that without the Bible we could not know what it means to become a Christian, live as a Christian, and grow as a Christian. We need to read the Bible and listen to others teach the Bible in order to know God and know what he wants us to do. Paul hints at this when he asks how anyone can hear about becoming a Christian “without someone preaching” (Romans 10:14). For, he writes, “faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ” (Romans 10:17).

In addition, the Bible is our only source for clear and definite statements about God’s will. While God has not revealed all aspects of his will to us, there are many aspects of his will revealed to us through the Scriptures, “that we may do all the words of his law” (Deuteronomy 29:29).

When we say we believe in the **sufficiency of the Bible**, we mean that the Bible contains all the words of God that a person needs to become a Christian, live as a Christian, and grow as a Christian. In the Bible, God has given us instructions that equip us for “every good work” that he wants us to do (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

This should encourage us to search through the Bible to try to find what God would have us think about a certain issue or do in a certain situation. While the Bible will not directly answer every question we can think up, it will provide us with the guidance we need “for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:17). When we don’t find the specific answer to a specific question in the Bible, we are not free to add to the commands of Scripture with what we believe might be helpful or pragmatically correct. We can’t consider our own preferences or convictions to have the same authority as Scripture. And we shouldn’t place any modern revelations, leadings, or other forms of guidance we believe to be from God on par with Scripture.

The Sacraments

The second mark of a true church is the correct administration of the sacraments, baptism and the Lord’s Supper. These sacraments serve as membership controls for the church. Baptism is a means for admitting individuals into the church and partaking of the Lord’s Supper is a way those members continue to show their membership in the church.



The sacraments are means of grace—an outward means by which Jesus communicates to his people the truths of redemption. As St. Augustine wrote, a sacrament is a “visible form of an invisible grace.” Sacraments reinforce the content of the gospel, but people can be saved without sacraments. We believe there are two sacraments, baptism and the Lord’s Supper.

If you read the book of Acts, you will find baptism is the normal response to people becoming a follower of Jesus. In the early church, baptism was a purification ritual. To be submerged in water and then brought back up was a sign that you were washed clean. It was also an act of repentance. When we are baptized today, it is symbolic repentance. We are saying that that the work of Jesus to free humanity from sin has freed us as well. In actuality, we are being submerged with Jesus in his death and raised with him in his life.

Baptism is also an outward confession of our beliefs—a sign of faith. It is a way to announce to the world that we are dedicated to God’s will and to his ministry. This is the reason Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist, a mere man. Through this act he demonstrated to the world in a practical way his commitment God and our salvation. Therefore, we too are baptized as a sign to the world that we are followers of Jesus.

To become a member at Vintage Church, you must be a baptized follower of Jesus. Vintage practices credo-baptism meaning that a person is baptized on the basis of his or her ability to articulate the Gospel and profess faith in Jesus Christ. Covenantal Baptism is an open-handed issue at Vintage. If you were baptized as a child and believe in Covenantal theology, there is no need to be baptized again to be a member here.

Before he died on the cross, Jesus instituted what we call the **Lord’s Supper** as a way to prepare his disciples for his death and resurrection. He broke bread and gave it to them as a means of explaining that his body would be broken for their sin. He took a cup and gave it to them as a means of explaining that his blood would be shed for their sin.

He encouraged them to continue to partake of this meal to remember his death and resurrection. So when we eat the bread and drink from the cup we are reminded that Jesus’ body was broken and his blood was shed for our sin.



Jesus loves us and gave himself for us. He invites us to remember this when we partake of the Lord's Supper. We invite Jesus' followers to partake of the Lord's Supper each week during our worship services.



Leadership in the Local Church

Vintage Church is Jesus' church. Therefore, we want our leadership structure to follow what Jesus laid out in the Scriptures. The primary elements of this ecclesiological structure include an understanding of the active leadership role of Jesus in the local church, qualified and competent male elders, and male and female deacons.

Jesus is the Senior Pastor of the Church

The key to understanding the church (Ecclesiology) is the Gospel (Christology). If who Jesus is and what he has done is not exceptionally clear and practically integrated into the church, then eventually the church will become very sick.

Jesus Christ is the senior pastor who leads the church.

When the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away. (1 Peter 5:4)

Jesus Christ is the head of the church.

Jesus Christ is the Head, from whom the whole body, supported and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows as God causes it to grow. (Colossians 2:19)

Jesus Christ grows and builds the church.

I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. (Matthew 16:18)

Jesus Christ's presence leaves a church for becoming faithless and/or fruitless.

Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lamp stand from its place. (Revelation 2:5)

Elders are the Senior Leaders Under Jesus

Anyone who is interested in the topic of elders would do well to read through the books of 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus, which Paul wrote to instruct these men on how to govern the church and appoint elders and deacons. In the book of Acts, we see the church beginning to form its structure, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. In Acts 6, the apostles call out a group of men to oversee the distribution of food to the poor, because the apostles needed to be devoted to prayer and to the ministry of the word. This is the beginning of the structuring as elders and deacons. Elders would emerge as those called to the ministry of prayer and word, and deacons as the lead servants in the community.



Qualifications of Elders

1 Timothy 3:1-7 lays out the expectations of elders:

The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God's church? He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil.

The elder qualifications listed in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9 are virtually identical and are the basic criteria that should be expected of any man being considered for eldership. The following are taken from 1 Timothy 3:1-7.

Relation to God:

- + A man — masculine leader
- + Above reproach — without any character defect
- + Able to teach — effective Bible communicator
- + Not a new convert — mature Christian

Relation to Family:

- + Husband of one wife — one-woman man, sexually pure
- + Creates Gospel environment – where children can find salvation
- + Manages family well — provides for, leads, organizes, loves

Relation to Self:

- + Temperate — mentally and emotionally stable
- + Self-controlled — disciplined life of sound decision-making
- + Not given to drunkenness — without addictions
- + Not a lover of money — financially content and upright

Relation to Others:

- + Respectable — worth following and imitating
- + Hospitable — welcomes strangers, especially non-Christians for evangelism
- + Not violent — even-tempered
- + Gentle — kind, gracious, loving
- + Not contentious — peaceable, not quarrelsome/divisive
- + Good reputation with outsiders — respected by non-Christians
- + Exemplary lifestyle



Duties of Elders

The duties of elders are many, according to Scripture, and include the following:

- + Prayer and Scripture study (Acts 6:4)
- + Ruling/leading the church (1 Timothy 5:17)
- + Managing the church (1 Timothy 3:4-5)
- + Caring for people in the church (1 Peter 5:2-3)
- + Giving account to God for the church (Hebrews 13:17)
- + Rightly using the authority God has given them (2 Corinthians 10:8, 13:10, Titus 2:5)
- + Preaching (1 Timothy 5:17)
- + Praying for the sick (James 5:13-15)
- + Teaching sound doctrine and refuting false teachings (Ephesians 4:11, 1 Timothy 3:2, Titus 1:9)
- + Working hard (1 Thessalonians 5:12)
- + Rightly using money (1 Peter 5:1-3)
- + Spiritual Discipline (Matthew 18:15-20)

Installation of Elders

The New Testament instructs churches to install elders and deacons who lead the church while allowing freedom to set up the functionality of leadership in the manner most helpful for that local body. At Vintage, our elders do not have specific term-limits of service nor are they voted in by a democratic system. We function in this manner because we believe the call of an elder is to pastor the church—not serve on a board of directors. Our elders are men called by God to be pastors of our body. For this reason, the training of an elder is lengthy in hopes to have properly called and empowered men, who love Jesus through his church.

We invite you to email tyler@vintagenc.com and request the “Elder training manual” to see the full requirements of an elder. When an elder candidate has finished the training process, he is put up before the church for 30 days allowing the congregation to agree that he is “above reproach” (1 Timothy 3) and then he is installed as an elder.



What is the Relationship between Deacons and Elders?

- + Deacons serve under the authority of the elders as the lead ministers of the community.
- + Deacons are the front-line ministers under the elders/pastors.

As ministry work grows, elders call upon men and women to carry the ministry load. This allows the elders to focus on their primary responsibilities of preaching the Gospel and prayer, enabling them to better serve the local body of Jesus. From Acts 6:1-7, a simple model emerges; as the ministry loads of senior leaders increase, the leaders are free to appoint people to aid them however they see fit. These “deacons” are simply servants, as its Greek origin *diakonos* translates, that carry out ministry. Practically, deacons are helpers to the elders, leading by the works appointed to them. A deacon’s responsibilities are not described in Scripture because deacons serve in whatever capacity is needed. However, the qualifications and rewards of deacons are provided in scripture (1 Timothy 3:8-13). These qualifications are more about character than abilities, allowing deacons to care for and serve others just as Jesus, the greatest servant of all, did. Following the pattern of Acts 6, Vintage Church’s elders appoint lead deacons to oversee ministries where they have the freedom to appoint deacons to assist them. Adhering to Scripture (Romans 16:1-2, Philippians 4:2-3, Acts 6:1-7), deacons at Vintage are comprised of both Godly men and Godly women who love the Lord. The issue of women serving as deacons in the local church is often a debated topic. We see clear examples of women serving as deacons throughout Scripture (Romans 16:1-2, Philippians 4:2-3). Vintage has had and will always have vibrant, Godly women in the deacon and lead deacon roles.

Qualifications of Deacons

1 Timothy 3:8-13 lays out the expectations of deacons:

Deacons likewise must be dignified, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for dishonest gain. They must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. And let them also be tested first; then let them serve as deacons if they prove themselves blameless. Their wives likewise must be dignified, not slanderers, but sober-minded, faithful in all things. Let deacons each be the husband of one wife, managing their children and their own households well. For those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and also great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.

- + Worthy of respect — without any character defect, holy
- + Sincere — heartfelt, earnest, honest, authentic
- + Not indulging in much wine — without addictions, self-controlled
- + Not pursuing dishonest gain — not greedy, financially content and upright
- + Keeping hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience — sound biblical theology held with deep conviction
- + Tested — proven worthy over time



Duties of Deacons

Jesus is the perfect servant and was servant to all. The word deacon simply means servant; those who take on the role of deacon should be prepared to serve in ways that meet needs and reveal the Gospel. We find joy and privilege when we serve like Jesus and people see him through our actions and behavior.

Installation of Deacons

Vintage has four deacon trainings each year. The trainings are designed to teach prospective deacons, or anyone interested in becoming a deacon, about what the bible says about the role. This training is a prerequisite to becoming a deacon at Vintage. After the training, those interested in pursuing deaconship move into a time of investigation and testing. Once this time has been completed, the prospective deacon moves into the deacon role and is celebrated in a public installation ceremony.



Why Join a Church?

*If the church is a building, then we must be bricks in it; if the church is a body, then we are its members; if the church is the household of faith, it presumes we are part of that household. Sheep are in a flock and branches are on a vine. Biblically, if one is a Christian, he must be a member of a church. Leaving aside the concrete particulars for a moment --whether membership lists are kept on white cards or on computer disks--we must not forsake our regular assembling (Hebrews 10:25). This membership is not simply the record of a statement we once made or of affection toward a familiar place. It must be a reflection of a living commitment or it is worthless, and worse than worthless, it is dangerous. Uninvolved members confuse both real members and non-Christian about what it means to be a Christian. And active members do the voluntarily inactive members no service when they allow them to remain members of the church, for membership is the church's corporate endorsement of a person's salvation. Again, this must be clearly understood: membership in a church is that church's corporate testimony to the individual member's salvation. (Mark Dever, *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church*)*

In 2 Peter 2:10, Peter encourages every one of Jesus' followers to "be all the more diligent to make your calling and election sure." That means, he wants us to do everything we can to assure ourselves and others that we are true followers of Jesus.

The way Jesus set up for his followers to do this is by membership in a local church. Again: "Membership in a church is that church's corporate testimony to the individual member's salvation" (Dever, *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church*).

When you join a local church, the leadership of that church affirm that they believe you are a true Christian. When you join Vintage Church, the pastors and other leaders are affirming that they believe you are a true Christian. That is why, if you haven't been baptized, you need to be baptized to join the church. For in baptism, you are publically affirming you are a sinner and Jesus is your savior. It's why we encourage you to take the Lord's Supper each week. For when you take the Lord's Supper, you continue to proclaim that you are a sinner and Jesus, through his life, death, and resurrection, is your only savior.

In addition, by joining a local church, you are able to obey the encouragement in Hebrews 13:17: "Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you."



The elders at Vintage (“leaders” in Hebrews 13:17) don’t consider that verse justification to be domineering or controlling, but instead as a reminder to both the elders and the members at Vintage Church, that membership in a local church is affirmation of an individual’s salvation. Therefore, the elders want to lead you in such a way that it encourages you to grow in your faith and continues to affirm that which we believe is true about you: You are a true follower of Jesus.

Church Discipline

If you continue to unrepentantly live in a way out of line with how a true believer in Jesus is to live, the elders will, as ones commanded by God to keep watch over your soul, call you to repentance. If you are unrepentant in your sin, they will institute process of church discipline.

Church discipline has a negative connotation in our society because it has been portrayed as excommunication, but this is not the intention. We must look at the truth of Scripture and understand that the purpose of discipline has always been for renewal and restoration.

1 Corinthians 5:11-13 makes it clear that the process of accountability and discipline is to happen within the context of followers, and not those outside the church. In Matthew 18:15-17, Jesus gave us a process for addressing sin in a fellow follower’s life:

If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.

The goals of renewal and restoration must drive us to seek out the person with grace, patience, and love. The multi-step process that Jesus laid out in Matthew 18 shows us that when faced with sin, we are not to hastily write someone off, but rather pursue him or her with the love of Jesus.

This process typically starts with the person’s community group leader meeting with them, and if the person needs further communication, the community group coach becomes involved, and then the elders would step in to begin the gracious process of pursuing restoration. If the person is in a position of leadership, the elders will ask him or her to step down until the issue is resolved. We do this to ensure that the person is able to focus on restoration and health, while we continue the mission of the church in health.



If after all efforts of renewal and restoration have been pursued the person refuses to return to a Gospel-centered life, then the elders prayerfully apply Scripture on a case-by-case basis to ensure they pursue the best option to maintain the health of the church and the health of that individual.



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VINTAGE CHURCH

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HISTORY OF VINTAGE CHURCH

When Vintage Church opened its doors at 515 W. Hargett Street in 2002, it was because God called our church to plant in Raleigh—to live in and love our city.

Tyler and Kimberly Jones moved to Raleigh in 1997 to work with InterVarsity Christian Fellowship at NC State. For five years they labored to show college students God’s love, and then they shifted focus to the city. They secured a lease in the Warehouse District and Vintage began to thrive.

As God grew Vintage Church, we moved to 209 Oberlin Road and then again to 117 S. West Street in July 2007. The time was full of blessings and growth, and several new projects sprang up. We began a family ministry to reach out to the growing number of families in our church and focused more on kids ministry and community group Bible studies. In the center of the city, we began to focus energy on art shows, concerts and other events that engaged the city.

In January 2009, we opened our first multi-site location in downtown Durham with the hope of sharing God’s love with another community in a culturally relevant way. Since then, Vintage Church Durham has continued to thrive and engage local residents.

In January 2013, we expanded to Vintage Church Midtown, a growing church plant that meets in Sanderson High School with families from the mid- and north Raleigh areas.

In December 2014, Vintage Church closed on the purchase of its first property, the third oldest church building in the city. The building is home to flagship Vintage Church Downtown as well as central offices. The 130-year-old church building is our latest landmark to God’s continued faithfulness and provision.



WHAT VINTAGE BELIEVES

Before joining a church, it's important to know what the church does and doesn't believe. We've summarized our beliefs below and will continue to discuss them in this class. Please read through this document before your membership interview and let your interviewer know if you have any questions.

Why Bother with Doctrine?

We have a responsibility as the church to hold fast to the truth God revealed to us in Jesus, and to guard it from the subtle corruption of theological error.

And from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them. Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish everyone with tears. (Acts 20:30-31)

By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, guard the good deposit entrusted to you. (2 Timothy 1:14)

You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability. (2 Peter 3:17)

You shall not add to the word that I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God that I command you. (Deuteronomy 4:2)

Those are simply a few examples of explicit statements within the Bible regarding guarding the truth and keeping it from error. The book of Galatians was written to guard the church from doctrinal error, and much of John's writings emphasize Jesus' nature as both fully human and fully God in response to doctrinal error. Therefore, clearly the New Testament writers themselves were concerned with doctrine in an effort to keep the church pure and to preserve the Gospel.

But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed. (Galatians 1:8)

We are careful with doctrine because the Scriptures admonish us to be, and because we desire to guard the Gospel from being corrupted. This means that we turn to the Scriptures first and foremost, and that we trust them to be our reliable guide for salvation and for new life in Jesus. Our desire is to honor God in what He laid out in the Scriptures and not use the Gospel as a tool for manipulation.



A. We believe that God wrote the Bible, through men, without error.

The Old and New Testaments, in their entirety, constitute the written Word of God and are therefore without error. They were written by men through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and are consequently fully authoritative in all matters for the follower of Jesus.

(2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Matthew 5:18; John 16:12-13)

B. We believe that God exists eternally in the Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

There is one God, infinite, eternal and unchangeable in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, love, justice, goodness and truth, eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, whose desire is that we should know him intimately and live a life of fulfillment through the pursuit of his glory.

(Genesis 1:3, Genesis 1:26, 2 Corinthians 13:14, 1 John 1:1)

C. We believe that God the Father is the first person of the eternal, triune God.

God the Father, by means of the Son, is the creator of all things. He spoke the universe into existence, thereby creating the world out of nothing. Through his Word, he sustains all of creation. He is the king of the universe, and his sovereign purposes cannot be thwarted. He cannot lie, he keeps his covenant, and he works all things together for good for those who love him. He is all powerful, all knowing, all loving, and all wise. In his unfathomable grace, he gave his Son, Jesus Christ, in order that the world he loved might be saved. He made humanity for fellowship with himself, and intended that all creation should live to the praise of his glory. God the Father is, therefore, the author of eternal salvation, having loved the world and having given His Son for its redemption.

(Genesis 1:1, Colossians 1:16, Numbers 23:19, Deuteronomy 7:9, Romans 8:28, 1 Chronicles 29:11, Romans 11:33, John 3:16,17, 1 John 4:7-10, Ephesians 1:12)

D. We believe that Jesus Christ is the second person of the eternal, triune God who became a man, lived a sinless life, died on a cross, was buried, and physically rose from the grave to redeem sinful humanity.

He is True God of True God, begotten not made. He became human; conceived by the Holy Spirit, and born of the Virgin Mary. He made his dwelling among us, living a full life without sin. His life and his death on the cross provide the only atonement that fully satisfies the righteous requirements of God for the sinner. The



death of Jesus was a full and final payment for sin – redemptive, substitutional and efficacious. The historic fact of Jesus’ resurrection from the dead is a powerful witness to his deity and is humanity’s ultimate hope in God. Jesus Christ will make a personal and imminent return to Earth. His return is a sanctifying “hope” which has vital bearing on the life of every Christian.

(John 1:1-2, 14; Luke 1:35; Romans 3:24; 1 Peter 2:24; Ephesians 1:7; 1 Peter 1:3-5, Ephesians 2:1-10)

E. We believe that the Holy Spirit is the third person of the eternal, triune God; that the Holy Spirit is the supernatural agent in salvation, birthing all Christians into the Kingdom of God at conversion, thereby indwelling and sealing them until the day of Jesus’ return.

The Holy Spirit regenerates the lost through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit is personal and divine, the third member of the Godhead. He convicts the world of sin and its consequences. He brings repentance and faith to the believer. He indwells the believer with the radical life of Jesus Christ. He gives gifts to every believer for mutual service within the body of Jesus. He unites believers in the Body of Jesus and seals them in that relationship. He bears the fruit of Christian character in the life of every believer. He guides, instructs, and empowers the believer for Godly living and service. He is worshiped with the Father and the Son.

(John 16:8-11; 2 Corinthians 3:6; 1 Corinthians 12:12- 14; Romans 8:9; Titus 3:5)

F. We believe that God created all humans in His image. He created them uniquely, male and female.

All humans are created in God’s image and as such, all human life is sacred. In creating humans as male and female, God communicated his image through harmonious interpersonal relationships, equality of persons, importance of individuals and the ability to distinguish roles and authority.

(Genesis 1:27)

G. We believe that all humans are sinful and in need of salvation. Salvation is the gift of God, brought to humanity by grace alone and received by personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Christians are kept by God’s power, forever.

God has created every person in the image of God, but we have fallen into sin, and are therefore lost, and only through the life-giving regeneration by the Holy Spirit can salvation and spiritual life be obtained. All



humans are sinners and face the judgment of God. The shed blood of Jesus Christ and His resurrection provide the only ground for justification. Only those who place faith in Jesus will be delivered from the wrath of God toward sin. Those who receive Jesus Christ by faith are said by Holy Scripture to be justified, sanctified, and adopted into the family of God as heirs with Jesus. There are no other means of salvation for a person aside from repentance and an honest confession of Jesus Christ as Redeemer and King. We also believe that a true Christian will persevere to the end of their life, or until Jesus returns, meaning that you cannot lose your salvation if you were genuinely saved.

(Genesis 1:26-27; John 1:12, 6:37-40, 10:27-30; Romans 3:22-23, 5:12, 8:1, 38-39; 1 Corinthians 1:4-8; Ephesians 1:7; Ephesians 2:1-3, 8-10, 12-13; 1 Peter 1:3-5, 18-19)

H. We believe that the church is a spiritual organism made up of all believers everywhere for all time.

All Christians in all times and in all places have been united into a single body by an operation of God. This resultant union is called the Body of Jesus, the Universal Church. Simply put, we're not the only true church; we recognize that all who have put their faith in Jesus throughout history are part of God's true Church.

(Ephesians 1:22-23, 5:25-27; 1 Corinthians 12:12-14)

I. We believe that every follower of Jesus is called to be a member of the local church and is called to recognize baptism and the Lord's Supper.

Scripture commands that all Christians band together in assembly for instruction, worship, service and fellowship. These assemblies are called local churches. As a local church, Vintage embraces the rich and vibrant traditions of the Universal Church. Only those who are members of the Universal Church are eligible for membership in the local church. Baptism of responsible believers and the Lord's Supper are the two sacraments to be observed by the local church in the present age. These ordinances are not to be regarded as means of salvation.

(Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 2:41-42; Acts 13:1-4; Acts 15:19-31; Acts 18:8; 1 Corinthians 3:9; 1 Corinthians 11:23-34)

J. We believe that Jesus is returning to earth to judge all people and to rule and reign with His saints forever.

All people will be resurrected to give account of their lives before God. The believer in Jesus will be resurrected to everlasting blessedness and joy in the presence of God. The non-believer will be resurrected



to judgment and everlasting conscious punishment.

What's significant in this statement is that we as a church do not necessarily affirm any single position on Jesus' return. We do affirm what is clear biblically; that Jesus is returning, that there is a resurrection of the dead to occur and that there will be a judgment after which the believers will live in the presence of God, and non-believers will be resurrected to eternal punishment and judgment. This means we believe in hell and that we believe that it is an eternal punishment.

(Zechariah 14:4-11; 1 Thessalonians 1:10; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 1 Thessalonians 5:9; Revelation 3:10-12; Revelation 19:11-16; 20:1-6)

What We Believe About the Gospel (Means Good Story Entomologically)

The Gospel means "good news." The good news is that we have done nothing to merit God's favor and yet we have received everything in response. Through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, he has accomplished everything needed to reconcile us with God. The Gospel is his free gift to us received by faith through grace. This is good news!

For many people today, the Gospel has lost its beauty. The word Gospel itself has become a church word, a judgmental word, a dead word. It is the highest hope of Vintage Church to restore the meaning of the Gospel to people. The ironic thing is this; the Gospel is the most powerful force on the planet and in reality, it has not lost any beauty, any potency, or any capacity to change men and women. The perceived dullness and religiosity of the Gospel has nothing to do with the Gospel itself. The issue is on our side as we've created a religion of morality and called it "Gospel." People hate religion and Jesus hates religion. The true Gospel of Jesus has nothing to do with quaint moralism, good ethics, or religious duty.

Moralism and the Gospel deal with the same issue, the issue of sin. We see sin in every aspect of our world and in every part of our lives. Rape is sin. Genocide is sin. Gossip is sin. Pride is sin. Sin is the reason there is no world peace. Sin is the systemic issue of starvation, war and all human suffering. It may seem at first, that discussing sin is judgmental. We ask, then: why not just mind your own business? Why not just forgive and forget? The beauty of the Gospel starts with this: God loves us too much to just forget our sin.



The power of sin is immense (Romans 8). The Scriptures teach us (Genesis 3, Genesis 8, Mark) that sin is not just an action that we commit, but also a condition of the soul/heart. Our sin has killed us, it has separated us from God, it actively ruins all that is good in our lives, it oppresses those we love most and degrades all human life. Sin is ultimately death and it plagues every human who has ever lived.

The church is famous for implementing Moralism to deal with sin. Unfortunately we think that stipulating “good actions” will make “good people”: don’t cuss, don’t drink, don’t go to R-rated movies, etc. Moralism unwittingly believes that if we can change the actions of men, then they will have the appearance of holiness and God will be forced to love us as we have earned His favor. Moralism fails to overcome sin as it only deals with surface level issues or the “actions of sin;” and never brings life to our dead hearts, which is the “condition of sin.”

The Gospel of Jesus deals with the “condition of sin.” Jesus entered into our “condition of life:” He left heaven, descended to earth, lived as a man, experienced life in every way we do, experienced all the temptations that we do, he was falsely tried in a mock court, was beaten and crucified. Jesus died a real death and in his death, he entered into our “condition of death.” A verse that we use often at Vintage Church to reflect the work of Jesus assuming our condition is 2 Corinthians 5:21: “For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” The Gospel is the only thing that has the power to change our hearts, in that Jesus became what we were, overcoming our “sin condition of death” with his own death and now, in his resurrection, we can have life “in his resurrected condition.”

The Gospel says you are more flawed and lost than you ever dared believe, yet you can be more accepted and loved than you ever dared hope because Jesus lived and died in your place. The Gospel says God first loved you and gave his Son for you. The Gospel says there is nothing you can do to earn the favor of the Lord but he, in his sovereign beauty, has chosen to give you Life again. The Gospel says God has done everything for you and it costs you nothing—so believe in Jesus. So we, as a church family, invite you to the feet of Jesus. We invite you to a spiritual trade: Jesus’ life for your life! Simply believing that Jesus gave his life for you, that he traded his life for your life, your death for his death and now offers you his resurrected life as your new life is the ONLY way to eternal life. This is the beauty of the Gospel and it will never be tarnished.



What We Believe About Scripture

A. How does God speak?

God speaks through Scripture. No one is born with a clear comprehension of who God is. So, in an effort to know about God, various philosophers and religious leaders have presented their speculations about God with seemingly endless and contradictory declarations. But God has chosen to lift the fog of human speculation with divine revelation. Whereas speculation is the human attempt to comprehend God, revelation is God's communication to humanity with clarity that is otherwise impossible. The object of that revelation is the sixty-six books of Scripture.

B. What does Scripture say about Scripture?

Before arriving at a conclusive position about Scripture, it is fitting to first investigate what Scripture says about itself. If Scripture does not declare itself to be from God, without error or helpful, then it is foolish to assign attributes to Scripture that it does not claim for itself. The following is a brief selection of some of the statements Scripture makes about itself:

- + Nothing to be taken from or added to (Deuteronomy 4:2; 12:32; Proverbs 30:6)
- + Effective (Isaiah 55:11)
- + Pure (Psalms 12:6; 119:140)
- + Perfect (Psalm 19:7)
- + Precious (Psalm 19:10)
- + True (Psalm 119:160; John 17:17)
- + Helpful (Proverbs 6:23)
- + Flawless (Proverbs 30:5)
- + To be obeyed (Luke 8:21; James 1:22)
- + The standard by which all teaching is to be tested (Acts 17:11)
- + Faith-building (Romans 10:17)
- + For everyone (Romans 16:26)
- + Sin-cleansing (Ephesians 5:26; James 1:21)
- + The very words of God (1 Thessalonians 2:13)
- + Divinely inspired (2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:19-21)



C. Why does our view of Scripture matter?

The opening line of Scripture introduces us to its hero, God. Throughout its pages, Scripture reveals this God. In the closing line of Scripture, we are reminded that the God who is the hero of the true story of Scripture is Jesus Christ. Thus, the written Word of God reveals to us the incarnate Word of God, Jesus Christ. And without the written Word, we cannot rightly know the incarnate Word. Therefore, our view of Scripture matters because without a proper understanding of Scripture, we cannot truly know and love the real Jesus.

D. What is the purpose of Scripture?

The purpose of Scripture is to declare the story of God to his people in order that they may be saved. The apostle John explains the purpose of his own writing:

Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name. (John 20:30-31)

The story of God begins with God creating the universe out of nothing, and creating humanity in his image. It then tells of the fall of humankind into sin and spiritual death. However, even in Genesis, the first book of the Bible, there is a hint of what God intends to do to redeem fallen humanity. God makes a covering for Adam and Eve from the skin of an animal, foreshadowing the sacrifice that Jesus would ultimately make to cloth his people in righteousness (Genesis 3:21).

God, by his grace, did not forsake the human race, choosing instead to bring salvation through Jesus Christ, and the rest of the Bible unfolds this story of redemption. This story comes to its climax in the New Testament, with the life, death, and resurrection of the Son of God. The Old Testament declares the promises of God, and in the New Testament, Jesus fulfills the promises of God (Romans 15:4, Hebrews 1:1-2).

E. Jesus and Scripture

One of the reasons Vintage Church loves the Scriptures and desires to relent to them in their entirety is that Jesus loved the Scriptures. All through Jesus' ministry, the Scriptures were the cornerstone of his teaching and were the authoritative support he rested on for his claim as the Christ. We follow Jesus' lead. We love what he loves. We want to deal with the Scriptures in the same manner Jesus did—we love them, we teach



from them and we will relent to the scriptures constantly by putting our lives under their authority. Here are some examples from Scripture on how Jesus dealt with the word of God:

- + Jesus summarized the Old Testament Scripture as existing in three parts: the Law, the prophets and the Psalms (Luke 24:44).
- + He accepted the Old Testament Canon as it exists today, without any modifications, and He came to fulfill it (Matthew 5:17).
- + Jesus treated the Old Testament narratives as straightforward facts: Genesis 1 and 2 (Matthew 19:4-5; Mark 10:6-8), Abel (Luke 11:51), Noah (Matthew 24:37-39; Luke 17:26-27), Abraham (John 8:56), Sodom and Gomorrah (Matthew 10:15; 11:23-24; Luke 10:12), Lot (Luke 17:28-32), Isaac and Jacob (Matthew 8:11; Luke 13:28), the manna (John 6:31, 49, 58), the wilderness serpent (John 3:14), Moses as Lawgiver (Matthew 8:4; 19:8; Mark 1:44; 7:10; 10:5; 12:26; Luke 5:14; 20:37; John 5:46; 7:19), false prophets (Luke 6:26), and Jonah (Matthew 12:40).
- + Regarding authorship, Jesus said Scripture was given by Moses (Mark 7:10), Isaiah (Matthew 13:14; Mark 7:6), David (Mark 12:36), and Daniel (Matthew 24:15).
- + In matters of controversy, Jesus used the Old Testament as His court of appeals (Matthew 5:17-20; 22:29; 23:23; Mark 12:24).
- + In times of crisis, Jesus quoted Scripture (Matthew 4:1-11 cf. Deuteronomy 8:3, 6:13, 6:16; Matthew 27:46 cf. Psalms 22:1; Luke 23:46 cf. Psalms 31:5).
- + Jesus repeatedly taught that Old Testament prophecy had been fulfilled because it was true (Matthew 11:10; 26:24, 31, 53-56; Mark 9:12-13; 14:21, 49; Luke 4:21; 18:31-33; 21:22; 22:37; 24:25-27, 44-47; John 5:39-47; 13:18; 15:25; 17:12).
- + Jesus taught that the Scriptures could not be broken (Matthew 5:18; Luke 16:17; John 10:35).
- + Jesus claimed that all Scripture, including the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms, was fulfilled in Him (Matthew 5:17-20; Luke 24:25-47).
- + Jesus also said the primary purpose of the Old Testament was to reveal Himself (John 5:39).

F. Jesus and the New Testament

Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would inspire the writing of the Gospels and Epistles (John 14:25-26; 16:13). He said that his people would recognize his teaching (John 10:4, 27; 18:37). This is possible because the Holy Spirit who inspired the writing of Scripture also teaches it to God's people in whom he dwells (1 Corinthians 2:13-14).

Following his return to heaven, Jesus' students wrote the remaining books of Scripture and likewise upheld Scripture as God's unique, perfect, authoritative, helpful and powerful revelation to humanity. The New Testament writers claim that the Old Testament is sacred Scripture (Matthew 21:42; 22:29; 26:54, 56; Luke 24:25-32, 44-45; John 10:35; Acts 17:2, 11; 18:28; Romans 1:2; 4:3; 9:17; 10:11; 11:2; 15:4; 16:26; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4; Galatians 3:8, 22; 4:30; 1 Timothy 5:18; 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21; 3:15-16). Furthermore, New Testament authors quote the Old Testament roughly 300 times.



Paul used “Scripture” and “God’s spoken word” interchangeably (Genesis 12:3 cf. Galatians 3:8; Exodus 9:16 cf. Romans 9:17). The New Testament teaches that what the Bible says is what God says (Genesis 2:24 cf. Matthew 19:4-5; Psalms 2:1 cf. Acts 4:24-25; Psalms 2:7 cf. Hebrews 1:5; Psalms 16:10 cf. Acts 13:35; Psalms 95:7-8 cf. Hebrews 3:7-8; Psalms 104:4 cf. Hebrews 1:7; Isaiah 55:3 cf. Acts 13:34). Peter and Paul claimed that Scripture has dual authorship by both men and God (1 Corinthians 2:12-13; 1 Peter 1:10-12).

Most New Testament writers were eyewitnesses of Jesus (Luke 1:1-3; John 20:30-31; Acts 1:1-3, 9; 10:39-42; 1 Corinthians 15:6-8; 1 Peter 5:1; 2 Peter 1:16; 1 John 1:1-3). Others received firsthand information from other reliable witnesses. Luke received his information from Paul (2 Timothy 4:11) and numerous eyewitnesses, (Luke 1:1-4) Mark received his information from Peter, (Luke 1:1-4) and James and Jude were closely associated with the apostles and were probably Jesus’ brothers. Paul claimed that Jesus was speaking through him (1 Corinthians 14:37; 2 Corinthians 13:3). Paul quotes Luke as Scripture (1 Timothy 5:18 cf. Deuteronomy 25:4; Luke 10:7). New Testament writers claimed that their writings were Holy (2 Timothy 3:15). They said that their writings were the very words of God (1 Corinthians 14:37; 2 Corinthians 13:3). Peter called Paul’s writings “Scripture” (2 Peter 3:15-16). Paul commanded that his letters be read in the churches and obeyed (Colossians 4:16; 2 Thessalonians 3:14) and the early church treated the apostles’ teaching as authoritative (Acts 2:42; Ephesians 2:20; 1 John 4:6).

Also, at the time of its writing, upwards of one-quarter of Scripture was prophetic in nature, promising future events hundreds, even a thousand, years in advance. These facts include Jesus’ virgin mother (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18-23), his birth in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2; Luke 2:1-7), flight to Egypt (Hosea 11:1; Matt 2:13-15) entrance into the temple that was destroyed in AD 70 (Malachi 3:1; Luke 2:25-27), betrayal for thirty pieces of silver (Zechariah 11:12-13; Matthew 26:14-15), clothing divided by the casting of lots (Psalms 22:18; John 19:23-24), crucifixion (Psalms 22:16; Luke 23:33), death and burial in a rich man’s tomb (Isaiah 53:8-9; Matthew 27:57-60; Luke 23:50-53) and resurrection from death (Psalms 16:10; Isaiah 53:10-12; Acts 2:25-32).

The Bible is clearly a book of history and not just philosophy because it continually promises concrete historical events that, in time, come to pass exactly as promised. These fulfillments of prophetic promises



show the divine inspiration of Scripture and prove that a sovereign God rules over human history and brings events to pass as he ordains them. Consequently, we can trust the internal consistency of the Bible to be a chorus of faithful witnesses who sing together in harmony. Nonetheless, not everyone accepts the teachings of Scripture.

G. What does Scripture offer?

*(The following was taken from Paul Tripp's book *Lost in the Middle*)*

1. A comprehensive worldview that addresses everything that is. Scripture is not exhaustive in that it directly addresses every subject, but it is comprehensive in that it gives information for understanding all aspects of reality.
2. Practical perspectives on every human problem. The Bible has something to say about everything that is important for human life. It gives us an essential understanding of these things and how we should respond to them.
3. Life before death. The Bible doesn't simply promise that some day in distant eternity we will know life. The Bible calls us to embrace a quality of life now that would otherwise be impossible without the person and work of the Lord Jesus.
4. Practical help for the deepest issues of the human experience. In the Bible I find the Creator who made me and therefore knows everything about me. I find a Savior who walked on earth in my shoes and understands everything about my experience. The Bible faces the deepest issues of human experience head-on, with bright hope and functional wisdom.
5. Real comfort. The more you read the Bible, the more you realize that no human experience is outside the scope of the Gospel. God understands it all, and His Son has covered it all. Every day we can allow ourselves to be comforted with the amazing biblical reality that provision has been made for everything we will face.



What We Don't Believe

To help clarify our beliefs, we believe it may also be helpful to declare what we do not believe. In stating what we are not, we do not seek to attack those who disagree with us, but rather distinguish ourselves so that it is clear who we are, as well as who we are not.

We are not theologically liberal. We do not embrace culture without discernment. We will take the whole Gospel and make it accessible to culture without compromising any part of the message. As Christians, we believe the truths of the Bible are eternal and therefore, fitting for every time, place, and people.

We are not cessationists who believe that the Charismatic Spiritual gifts ceased with the closing of the Canon of Scripture and/or the death of the last apostle. We do believe that all spiritual gifts mentioned in the New Testament are in effect today and are to be used according to the criteria clearly established in Scripture.

We are not fundamentalists who retreat from cultural involvement and transformation. The people of God are missionaries, faithful both to the content of Scripture and context of ministry.

We are not isolationists who shut out all other Christian churches and/or groups. Instead, we partner with like-minded Christians from various churches, denominations and organizations for the greater good of the Kingdom of God.

We are not hyper-Calvinists who get mired down in secondary matters and theological speculation outside of what Scripture tells us. Rather we pray, evangelize, and do good works because we believe that the sovereign plan of God is accomplished through us, his people.

We are not Open Theists who believe that God does not know the future. We do believe in the sovereignty and foreknowledge of God in all things.

We are not nationalists seeking to simply improve one nation. Contrarily, we are ambassadors of the King of Kings commissioned to proclaim and demonstrate the coming of His Kingdom to all nations of the earth.



We are not moralists seeking to help people live good lives. We are evangelists laboring that people would become new creations in Jesus Christ.

We are not relativists. Rather, we gladly embrace Scripture as our highest authority above such things as culture, experience, philosophy, and other forms of revelation.

We are not Universalists (i.e. all roads in life lead to heaven or after-life); there is no salvation apart from repentance of sin and faith in Jesus Christ alone.

We are not Annihilationists (i.e. believe if you are not Christian then when you die you will no longer exist); many people will spend eternity in the torments of hell.

We are not naturalists (i.e. believe only things that can be tested with the five senses are true). Satan and demons are real enemies at work in this world and are subject to God.

We are not rationalists (i.e. truth is determined by reason alone), but we believe that not everything can be known, that God calls us to live by faith with mystery and partial knowledge regarding many things.

We are not evangelical feminists. God reveals Himself as a Father and is to be honored by the names He reveals to us without apology.

We are not embarrassed by the bloody death of Jesus Christ. We believe that Jesus Christ died as a substitute for the sins of His people in selfless love.

We are not ashamed of the Gospel. We proclaim a loving Gospel of grace that sounds like foolishness and offensiveness to the unrepentant, and yet it is salvation to multitudes with ears to hear the good news.

We are not polemicists who believe that it is our task to combat every false teaching today. We are passionate about preserving the integrity of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

In summary, we love the Jesus of the Bible and reject whatever is contrary to him.

Close-Handed Versus Open-Handed Issues



We will major on the majors of our faith and minor on the minor areas. We will hold complete unity in the members of the church on the essentials of our faith (close-handed issues) and we will discuss and dialogue, but not divide, over the non-essentials of our faith (open-handed issues).

Close-Handed Issues

To be a member at Vintage Church you must agree with the following:

- + Scripture is inspired by God and we submit to the authority it has in our lives
- + Everyone is born broken and sinful and is therefore born under God's judgment, but the believers in Jesus Christ have been saved by God's grace
- + Faith is a gift of God, provided under his grace through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus
- + The Holy Spirit has been sent to all believers to regenerate and provide full justification, sanctification, and glorification; the Holy Spirit actively engages believers in progressive sanctification and empowers them with certain gifts to glorify the body of Jesus
- + Jesus will return and we will stand before Him in judgment

Open-Handed Issues

While the Elders of Vintage Church do hold to particular viewpoints on the open-handed issues, it is not required that you agree with our position regarding these biblical concepts. We do expect, however, that you will not be divisive on any of these issues and that you will actively study Scripture to understand these things more fully. The following are examples of open-handed issues at Vintage:

- + Predestination/Election (limited vs. unlimited atonement)
- + Extent of God's sovereignty (Arminian vs. Calvinist)
- + Views on Eschatology (end times study)
- + Views of Creation (literal days vs. periods of time)
- + Certain spiritual gifts (We believe every Christian has been gifted by the Holy Spirit to fulfill ministries and service in and through the church (1 Corinthians 12-14, Ephesians 4:7-13). All gifts of service are embraced by Vintage and should be exercised by each and every member. There is a diversity of opinion among Christian regarding the so-called "sign gifts" (i.e. tongues and prophecy) so we will remain open on this issue. Those who believe in the continuance of the gifts may practice them in private and for the good of the church when the gifts are practiced in obedience with 1 Corinthians 12-14.



WHAT VINTAGE IS CALLED TO DO

Our Mission

Vintage exists to make much of Jesus. We do that by making disciples who know the gospel, live the gospel and advance the gospel.

Our Vision

Vintage strives to be a vibrant worshiping community committed to seeing people become everything God designed them to be and seeing their city become everything God desires it to be. We will replicate these communities by planting churches across the Triangle and throughout the world.

Our Values

The Gospel is the Message. The gospel, the good news of about the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus, is the only true message of salvation. This message “of first importance” (1 Corinthians 15:58) is simultaneously deep enough to engage those who are doubters, seekers, and followers of Jesus. There is no greater message to be communicated to the world.

The Church is the Plan. The church is God’s chosen vehicle to bring the gospel message to the entire world. It is “through the church the manifold wisdom of God might be made known to the rulers and authorities in heavenly places” (Ephesians 3:10). When Jesus told the apostles to take the gospel message to the whole world, they did so by planting churches. There isn’t a better, more God-honoring plan.

The Triangle is the Target. We want to leverage everything we have to bring this gospel message to the million plus people that call the Triangle home. This is the place God put us. We will plant Vintage Churches throughout the Triangle. Those churches will work together to plant like-minded churches throughout the world.

God’s Glory is the Goal. As the gospel advances through the church, God gets the glory. Jesus saves people. Jesus builds and strengthens his church. Jesus protects his church. As we follow him, working in his power and working on his mission, we bring him glory, the very thing we were created to do.



Churches Vintage Supports

- + Grace Church, Leith, Scotland | Athole Rennie
- + Veritas Church, Fayetteville, NC | John Murphy
- + Leaders Collective | Church Planting Residency Program

For more information about how Vintage plants churches, visit churchplanting.vintagenc.com.



KNOWING AND LIVING THE GOSPEL

Knowing the Gospel

1. All people are sinners. “All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Romans 3:23).
2. The penalty for our sin is death. “For the wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Romans 6:23).
3. Christ died to pay the penalty for our sins. “God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us” (Romans 5:8).

The gospel message can be summarized like this: God saves sinners.

Believing the Gospel

1. I know the gospel message.
2. I believe the gospel message is true.
3. I believe the gospel is true for me. I personally trust Jesus to save me.

Living the Gospel

The gospel is not only the message of our salvation, it's also the means by which we become more and more like Jesus.

In 2 Peter 1:8 we read of qualities that keep us from being “ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.” He also explains why that is true.

His divine power has granted to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of him who called us to his own glory and excellence, by which he has granted to us his precious and very great promises, so that through them you may become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped from the corruption that is in the world because of sinful desire. (2 Peter 1:3-4)

God has given us everything we need to live as is fitting for a follower of Christ. Through his divine power, we can “make every effort” to show forth the qualities Peter says should be part of every follower of Jesus.

For this very reason, make every effort to supplement your faith with virtue, and virtue with knowledge, and knowledge with self-control, and self-control with steadfastness, and steadfastness with godliness, and godliness with brotherly affection, and brotherly affection with love.



For if these qualities are yours and are increasing, they keep you from being ineffective or unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. (2 Peter 1:5-8)

Peter doesn't just tell us how to keep from being ineffective or unfruitful, he helps us by telling why we may be ineffective. "For whoever lacks these qualities is so nearsighted that he is blind, having forgotten that he was cleansed from his former sins" (2 Peter 1:9).



GIVING

AT VINTAGE

While the Bible might not give us the detail we desire when it comes to how much money we should give (pre-tax or post-tax? a percent of just our paycheck or should we also give on money we make on the sale of something like our house?), it is clear on this point: How you think about money and what you do with the money you have reveals a lot about your heart. As one songwriter aptly put it, “I’ve got faith in the bank / and money in my heart.” You don’t need to have much money at all, or even a bank account, to have that attitude.

When Jesus said, “Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Matt. 6:21), he made it clear there is a tight connection between our spiritual lives and how we handle money. Therefore, though it may seem uncomfortable, talking about money and giving is an essential part of what it means to be your pastor. It’s also important you understand what the pastors at Vintage believe as it relates to money and giving.

God’s people giving money to support Jesus’ church is a Holy Spirit-enabled action from start to finish. Like everything else in the Christian life, generosity is a sign and gift of grace (*Read 2 Cor. 9:8*). Those whom Jesus died to call his own are “a people of his own possession who are zealous for good works” (*Titus 2:14*).

The Holy Spirit’s seal upon us confirms our new owner and new identity. Therefore, our giving a portion of our wealth is simply a reflection of a larger reality: We are God’s. He has claim on all that we are and all he has entrusted to us. It’s what Jesus meant when he said, “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s,” those things that bear Caesar’s image. “And (render) to God the things that are God’s,” us, since we bear God’s image (Luke 20:25).

While giving a percentage of our income (often called a tithe and often considered 10 percent of income) is a helpful starting place for believers as they consider how to respond to God’s lavish grace in obedience and joy, it is not a binding-on-the-conscience command.



It means that giving 10% of your income—off the top as the first thing you do—can be a helpful starting place. But it isn't some kind of law the church can impose on you. We, your pastors (and God, for that matter), aren't interested in simply taxing your income. But starting at taking 10% off the top can be a really helpful place to start.

All Christians are called to give; that much is clear. The amount of we are to give isn't so clear. Some are given vast amounts of wealth and a gift of generosity along with it. Others barely have enough to get by, yet out of their poverty put in all they have to live on.

Jesus looked up and saw the rich putting their gifts into the offering box, and he saw a poor widow put in two small copper coins. And he said, "Truly, I tell you, this poor widow has put in more than all of them. For they all contributed out of their abundance, but she out of her poverty put in all she had to live on." (Luke 21:1-4)

As New Testament Scholar Reggie Kidd explains, based on Jesus' teaching on giving,

We are not to tithe the way so many of us pay our taxes—making sure to give as much as required and no more.. Securing autonomy over the other 90 percent by relinquishing a claim on 10 percent is the economy of the Devil. It is to turn God's economy on its head...

It's as though Jesus expects us to discern, to exercise wisdom in dependence on the Holy Spirit.. With the coming of Christ, God wrote His law on our hearts. He gave us the Holy Spirit, a Spirit, of understanding, a Spirit that teaches discernment. We received the Spirit who assures us that our Heavenly Father proudly places our feeblest attempts at obedience on His heavenly refrigerator. We have become His "works of art" (*poiema* at Eph. 2:10), and He delights in our grateful offerings regardless of how little they approximate true beauty. His vision is forever impaired by the lens of Christ."¹

¹ Kidd, Reggie. "Tithing in the New Covenant?" in *Perspectives on Tithing: 4 Views*. Nashville, Tenn.: B&H Academic, 2011, p. 99.



While policy and rules may seem an easier way to encourage generosity in the Church, King Jesus is the only lawgiver in his church (Isa. 33:22) and we aren't to make laws where he hasn't. As Paul makes clear, his call to giving is not a command, but instead a confirmation of one's faith and love (2 Cor. 8:8). We aren't after a specific gift from each member, but instead the way their generosity reveals what's in their heart (Phil. 4:17).

In all of this, Jesus himself is our pacesetter: "For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich" (2 Cor. 8:9).

Jesus models what it's like to live a life that is wholly and utterly pleasing to God. And then he makes it possible for us to live that way. That's tremendous grace. Our response—as we imitate Jesus—is an act of worship. He was rich, beyond measure. He became poor. Now, in his poverty, we've become rich. Why? One reason is so that we can be wildly generous, just as Jesus is.

Martin Luther said that "the purse" is often the last thing to undergo conversion. He meant it's a struggle to think of giving as a first thought, not an afterthought.

Giving in response to Jesus' lavish grace is an act of worship. It demonstrates faith in God. It also grows our faith in God, for as we give, we find him more faithful and generous toward us than we had hoped or imagined. Therefore, it is good to encourage one another to make giving to God a top priority in each of our budgets

Giving generously is good for our hearts. It can help free us from a love of money, which Paul says is the root of all evil (1 Tim. 6:10). It helps us pursue contentment, which Paul says reveals a trust in God who promises to provide us with everything we need.

In Philippians 4:17, Paul makes an interesting comment about giving: "Not that I seek the gift, but I seek the fruit that increases to your credit." Paul says that the Philippian church's generosity is a sign of God's work in their lives. They didn't give to gain something from God but instead out of a response to God and what he's done for them. The same is true for us.



Paul is fine to go without the money the church gave him. In fact, he is as content not to have it as he is to have it. He makes it clear he's not eager for their money. Instead, he's eager for them to show forth the work of God in their life. And God, out of mercy and love—not obligation—will bless them for it.

Paul is a good pastor. He isn't interested in getting money from his friends in Philippi. He is, however, passionate about them showing that God is at work in their lives. And he's passionate about them receiving the blessing that comes from their giving. The same is true for the pastors at Vintage. We aren't after your money; we are after your heart.

The New Testament encourages our giving to be primarily to our local church, not a giving designated only for the things we care about most. The first places our giving under the accountability and authority of the elders at our church; the later keeps our giving under our own authority and keeps it on our own terms.

Members of the early church gave the apostles authority over how to spend their gifts to the church ("laid it at the apostles' feet," *Acts 4:37*). Paul collected and directed distribution of money from other churches to give to the financially-strapped Jerusalem Church, and encouraged the church to give at their worship service each Sunday (*1Cor. 16:1-4*). Like the Priests and Levites, Paul affirmed that "those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel" (*1 Cor. 9:14*). It is expected that church members will take financial responsibility for the expenses of the church.

While encouraging you to give 10 percent of their income before they spend any additional money can be a helpful way to encourage giving, it is not some church law. Instead, the pastors at Vintage want to encourage you to excel in generosity by first giving yourselves to the Lord and then giving the church (*Read 2 Cor. 8:5-7*). Each should give "as he has made up his mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver" (*2 Cor. 9:7*).

The pastors at Vintage want you to give joyfully. We want you to give freely. We take up an offering each week to remind you of the grace that is yours in Jesus and the way that giving can be good for your heart. We have stuff like PushPay and receive checks in the mail so you have a way to experience the joy that comes from being generous.



Give yourself to God. Then, give to the church, not under compulsion but cheerfully, in response to God's mercy.



HOW TO WRITE YOUR TESTIMONY

Introduction

When you write out your testimony, your story of how God saved you, part of what you're trying to communicate is the fundamentals of your personal relationship with God. However, a part of the challenge is the fact that your narrative (testimony) is the most recent chapter in a much larger narrative of God's redemptive work in the world. Roughly outlined that bigger narrative looks something like this:

1. God's broken relationship with mankind:
 - a. Perfect God
 - b. Sinful humanity.
2. Christ's sacrifice / offer to restore that relationship:
 - a. Living a perfect life we should've lived so that we might be counted as righteous.
 - b. Dying the horrible death we should've died so that our sins might be forgiven.
3. Restoration of the relationship through our:
 - a. Repentance of our sinfulness
 - b. Faith in Christ

Your testimony will most likely focus on the third point, but it should also discuss the first and second points. That is, it should include answers to questions like:

- How did you come to know there was a perfect God?
- How did the word "sin" even enter into your vocabulary so that you were able to repent of it?
- Who is this savior you're believing in?
- Why is he so special?

That said, remember that you're writing a story—your story— and not a book on theology. You don't have to include every bit of the above outline (that outline itself is missing some pretty important things).

Volumes have been written on Sin, God, Christ, Faith, and Repentance. Don't expect to say everything about these topics in your testimony. Instead, just tell us your story as simply and plainly as you can. You aren't trying to impress someone with your knowledge. You are trying to impress them with your God.

Discuss your early life. Were you raised a Christian? What did you understand about the gospel at a young age? Were you raised a non-Christian? What was your life like before you became a Christian? (Spend the least amount of your time discussing this section).



Examples:

I was raised in a Christian home. There was never a time when I didn't know Christ. My parents would pray with us nightly and "Jesus" was a household name (in a good way). I remember my dad ...

I entered college and was convinced that my purpose in life was to drink myself silly. One day I woke up hung over and thought, "there must be something more to life than this." I tried lots of things to fill the void ...

I never really gave much thought to the whole religion thing. I had everything I needed: a big house, nice car, good job, great wife, and even well-behaved kids. Moreover, I was a good person. I paid my taxes, didn't cuss, and even picked up trash for my neighborhood association occasionally...

Tell how Christ first impacted your life. When did you realize that you needed a savior? How did God bring you to that realization? Did he use a specific person or conversation? Were there a series of events that led you to that conclusion? What was your response?

Examples:

I prayed to accept Jesus at a young age, but it was later—maybe middle school—when I realized how badly I needed him. I tried to cheat on my math test, and I was caught. It seemed like nobody was happy with me. I was convinced that even God was angry with me, but then I remembered how my Sunday School teacher had said that God poured out his anger and wrath on Jesus so that our sins would never count against us ...

Drugs, women, video games, I tried everything. Nothing filled the void. Nothing made me feel truly loved. I was depressed and even considered suicide. That's when I came across an open Bible in my dorm's lobby. It was open to John 3:16. I realized that there WAS someone who loved me. He loved me enough to forgive me of all the stupid things I was trying to replace him with ...

I was perfect, or at least so I thought. I had never smoked, drank, or chewed. I thought that was what was important. Then by some fluke my iPod downloaded this weird guy named Tyler Jones talking about the prodigal son. After the listening, I was convicted that I was the older brother – the one who was self-righteous. I was like the Pharisees – always judging others and never looking at myself. I was always thinking about how everyone else needed Jesus, but it was then that I realized I needed him desperately to forgive even this hard-hearted Pharisee.

Discuss a few of the ways that the gospel and your relationship with Christ have grown through the years. How has the value you place on Christ increased? Is there another specific event where Christ has radically broken into your life that you'd like to tell us about?



Examples:

Over the years there have been many lessons that God has taught me, and I'm constantly learning to appreciate Christ more and more. I used to worry that I might slip up one day and lose my salvation, but then I've read verses like the one that says, "He who began a good work in you will be faithful to complete it." Jesus didn't just die for my sins, he's sent His Spirit to work righteousness into me. I still mess up, and he still forgives, but he's also transforming me more and more to his likeness. Some of the ways he's done that are ...

*Love was just one thing that Christ brought into my life. A few years later I was struggling again. This time it wasn't that I felt unloved, I had lost my job. It felt like I had no purpose in life. That's when a friend of mine reminded me that God was in control and that since I already knew He loved me if I didn't have a job there was a good reason for it. The next day I stopped moping about and started working on my first book, *The Purpose Driven Life*...*

The amazing thing about realizing my sin was forgiven I suddenly found the courage to seek out sin in my life and confront it. Whereas before I would deny it, run from it, cover it up, now I could own it and run with it to the cross, knowing that I had a savior who wouldn't hate me because of it. No. Instead of the old feelings of guilt I expected, the more I learned about the horrible ugliness of my sin the more beautiful the cross became to me.

Discuss the present value of Christ in your life. Why is all this Christian stuff still worth it to you? How is Christ's work still affecting your life?

Examples:

These days I still struggle with feeling forgiven, but Christ still faithfully reminds me of my forgiveness through friends, family, and his word. Were it not for Christ, I don't think I could face the world, but knowing that he has died for me, makes all the difference.

Each year God brings a new challenge into my life and each day he gives me the strength through Christ to face those challenges. Occasionally I doubt that the strength exists, but then I am reminded of Christ. He took on the world, sin, Satan, and even death and he rose victorious. His strength is sufficient for any challenge I could possibly face.

I would never go back to the "perfect" life that I had. It was a fake, pretend life. My life in Christ is so much better. Even though occasionally from my perspective there are messes, I know that in God's eyes everything is going perfectly according to plan—a plan that will one day see me glorified with him in eternity.



MEMBERSHIP PROCESS

1. Attend the New Members' Class.

2. Read the membership packet, and ask questions.

Email a pastor at the Vintage Church you attend:

Downtown: Matt Stevens (matt.stevens@vintagenc.com)

Durham: Aaron Anderson (aaron.anderson@vintagenc.com)

Midtown: Tanner Griffith (tanner.griffith@vintagenc.com)

3. Get involved at your local Vintage Church.

If you aren't sure how, email the local at the Vintage Church you attend (see above).

4. Write out your testimony.

Use the "How to Write Your Testimony" document as a guide.

5. Get baptized.

If you have not yet been baptized, email the local pastor at the Vintage Church you attend to find out when the next Baptism Sunday is happening (see above).

6. Schedule a Membership Interview.

Finally, schedule a membership interview with your community group leader. If you are not in a community group, email your local pastor (see above) to schedule an interview. During the meeting you'll discuss your testimony and what membership for you at Vintage Church entails.

