

DISCIPLESHIP FOCUS

Bethlehem Lutheran Church



THE DISCIPLESHIP FRAME

"Go and make disciples baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold I am with you always to the end of the age." -Jesus [Matt 28:19-20].

My mentor David Putman always says, "Clarity isn't everything, but it can change everything". I think about that simple phrase a lot when I think about the concept of discipleship. Why? When it comes to the concept of discipleship in the church, I think we often struggle to find a clear picture of what it means. Questions creep in that we aren't sure how to answer like: What does it mean to be a disciple? When am I a mature disciple of Jesus? What are we supposed to do as disciples? Imagine what could happen if we had a clear picture of discipleship. What could that mean for our church, and more importantly for our communities? The goal of this book is to create some clarity around the question of discipleship. To do that we are going to use a simple tool called, "The Vision Frame."

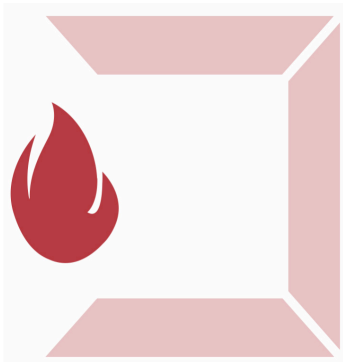
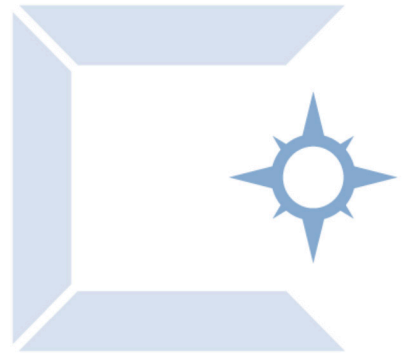
While this tool is known as the vision frame, it is better to think of this as a discipleship frame. The goal of this tool is to answer the 5 irreducible questions of clarity. These are 5 questions, that when answered, can help us better understand what it looks like to be disciples of Jesus, and to be on mission as the church. The first 4 questions can be seen over to the right. The fifth question will be addressed at the end.

It is my hope that this book will give you a better understanding of why we do what we do here at Bethlehem, and how we can help you grow in your own discipleship journey with Jesus.

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Matt Peeples
Senior Pastor

Mission - What?

The mission is the guiding compass of the church. The mission answers the question, "What are we ultimately supposed to be doing?" It makes the overall direction of the church unquestionable and points everyone in that direction. The mission is also like a golden thread that weaves through every activity of the church. Therefore it brings greater meaning to the most menial functions of ministry.

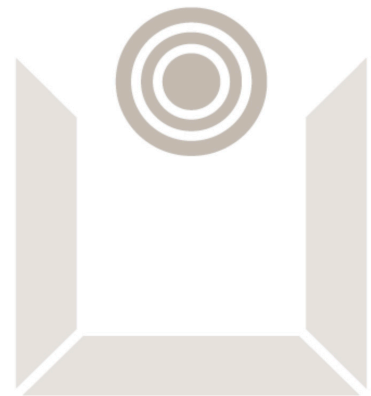


Values - Why?

Values are the motivational flame of the church. They are the shared convictions that guide your actions and reveal your strengths. Values answer "Why do we do what we do at our church?" They are springboards for daily action and filters for decision-making. Values represent the conscience of the organization. They distinguish your philosophy of ministry and shape your culture and ethos.

Measures - When?

Mission measures are the attributes or characteristics of an individual's life that reflect the achievement of the mission. The measures answer the question, "When are we successful?" Measures are visualized as hitting the bull's eye. Ideally, everything in the church is designed around hitting the same target.



Strategy - How?

The picture or process that demonstrates how the church will accomplish its mission on the broadest level. Strategy answers the question "How do we do what we do?" It is a flashlight that shows new people clear next steps. It also sets the expectation of involvement for all members. Facilitis.



OUR MISSION

A clear, concise statement of what we are ultimately supposed to be doing:

Connecting the
Disconnected to a
Christ-Centered Life.



VALUES

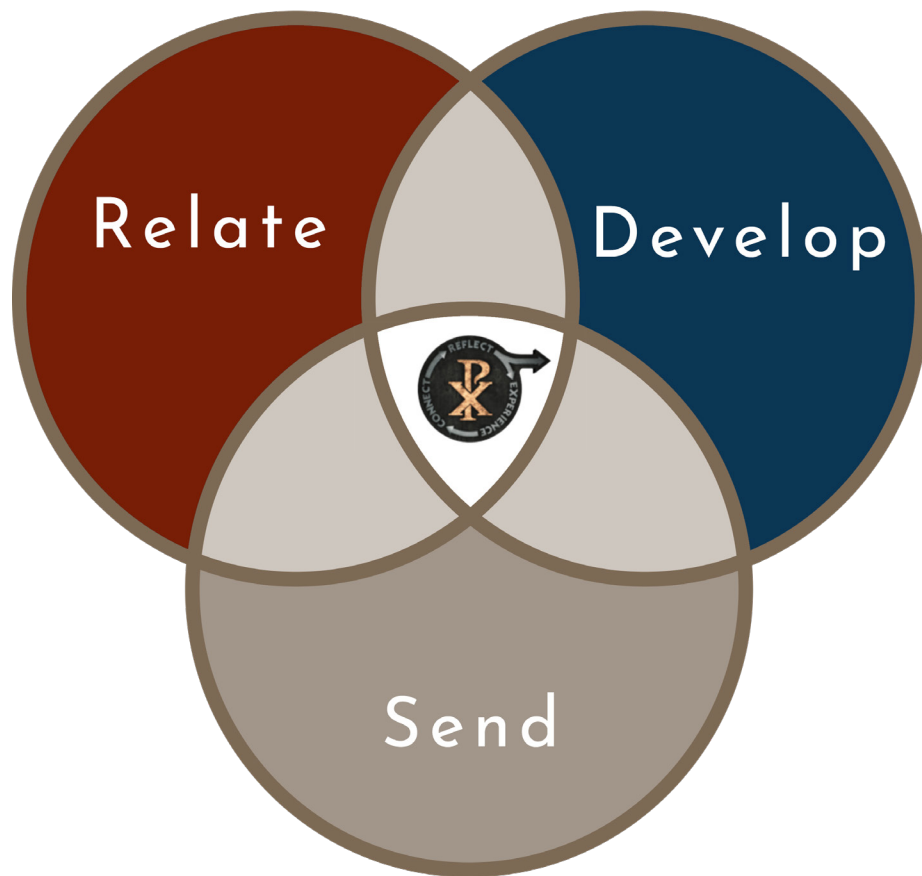
Shared convictions that guide our decisions
and reveal our strengths:

OUR VALUES

- Incarnating The Gospel - Embody or represent Christ in human form.
- Radical Hospitality - A practice of putting extraordinary effort and emphasis on making people feel welcome.
- Forward Thinking - Favoring innovation and development; progressive.
- Unflinching Generosity; Not showing fear or hesitation, quality of being kind and generous.
- Prayer Focused - Prayer Chain

Disciple Making Strategy

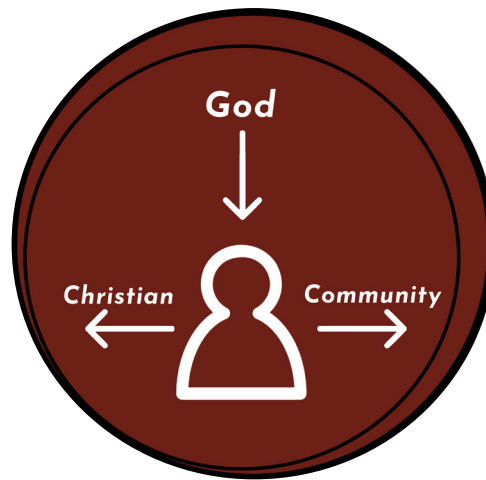
(Solo, Micro, Macro)



Whether you are on your own, in a Connection Group, or gathering together on a Sunday, these are three areas that will help you grow in your faith. Only the Holy Spirit can help people grow in their faith and ability to follow Jesus (1 Cor. 3:6), but these are the areas that God consistently uses to help people grow in their faith.

Relate

God, Christian, and Community



GROWING THROUGH RELATIONSHIPS

Faith begins and is sustained in relationships. It begins with our relationship with God – a God that meets us where we are but doesn't leave us there. We believe that all of faith is built on a relationship with Christ (Eph 1: 3-13) and it is sustained through our relationship with Jesus (John 15:1-11). While it is important for us to do this in our own time, faith is something that ultimately grows in community, and Christian community is a vital ingredient for growing in faith (John 13:34-35, Heb 10:24-25).

Develop

Scripture, Prayer, and Obedience

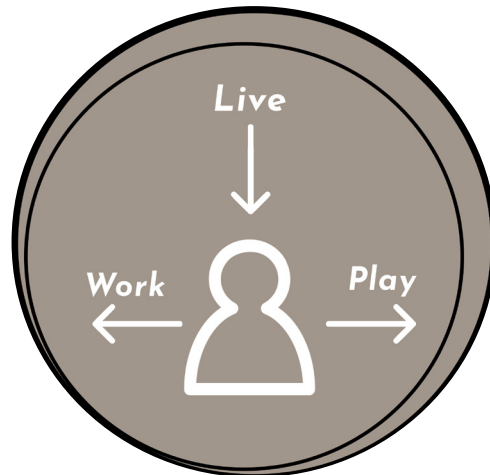


DEVELOPING THROUGH SPIRITUAL DISCIPLINES

Throughout the history of Christianity, spiritual practices and disciplines have been an important part of growing in faith. Three areas specifically are vitally important: Scripture, prayer, and obedience. Hebrews tells us that Scripture is living and active (4:12-13). It not only brings us to a knowledge of salvation, but it helps us better understand who God is and who we are. Prayer is the opportunity to have a conversation with God, and to allow him to speak into our life. Last, we must remember that Scripture and prayer are not just there to help us know more about God and what he says, but these are given to us so that we can actually put Jesus' ways into practice in our lives. This is what we mean by obedience.

Send

Live, Work, and Play



GROWING ON MISSION

One of the last things Jesus said to his disciples was “go and make disciples.” When he said this, he did not mean “leave,” but rather the word “go” is better translated “as you are going.” What Jesus was saying is that he wanted his followers to share the gospel wherever they went. As followers of Jesus today, we realize we grow in our faith when we share our faith with others in the places we live, work, and play. We believe that God doesn’t do anything on accident. We believe that when we leave church, we are being sent out into the world, wherever we are already going, to share the gospel in the world around us. When we find ways to share the gospel in the places we live, work, and play we grow in our own understanding of the gospel, and what it means for our lives.



Experience, Connect, Reflect.

When you read through the scriptures, followers of Jesus are not people who simply attend a church, rather they are people that experience, connect, and reflect Christ in their everyday lives. Through their lives, people that are disconnected from Jesus have an opportunity to experience, connect, and reflect Christ. This is what it looks like to be a disciple. This leads us to an important question: what does it mean to live a life like this?

Experiences God



This is someone who lives a life that experiences the grace of God where they are. They realize they are not loved by God because of what they have done, but because of what he has done for them (Eph 2:8-9). This is a life that has daily rhythms with Scripture and prayer so that they can grow in their understanding and relationship with God.



Connects in Relationships

A relationship with God naturally leads us into relationships with others. When we connect to the grace of Jesus it causes us to connect in community with other disciples of Christ. This is good for our own growth in the faith and for our understanding of how grace works in our everyday lives. Our relationship with God also causes us to connect with those who are disconnected from Christ. The life of a disciple is one that loves those both in and out of the church and seeks to embody loving relationships in both areas.



Reflects Christ

When someone is experiencing and connecting Christ it naturally leads to a life that reflects the love of Christ in the lives of people where they live, work, and play. A follower of Jesus is someone that will seize opportunities to serve selflessly and love people the way that Jesus loves people, whether they are connected or disconnected from Christ. (Eph 2:10) In order to better reflect Christ they continue to find ways to experience Christ and connect in relationship, realizing that the life of a disciple is a journey that takes a lifetime.

OUR Measures

The Christ-Centered Life is One That...



WHERE ARE WE GOING?

We live in an area where people no longer go to church and churches no longer go to people. As a result we are part of a district filled with declining and dying churches that needs a new vision to move forward. We have always been an anchor church, and now is the time to be something more. Now is the time for us to be a catalyst for gospel renewal.

We will become a place where every home, school, workplace, neighborhood, and third space occupied by a Bethlehem person will see and hear the gospel. We will be a church of active disciples who no longer see themselves as spectators, but as shepherds and missionaries to their neighborhoods who are equipped and empowered to read the needs of our community and bring gospel solutions to every sector of our community.



We will be a catalyst of gospel renewal that starts new churches and revitalizes existing churches in the New Jersey District and beyond through training, equipping, deploying, and supporting planters and revitalization leaders as a training and sending church (Spiritual Formation leading to Geographical Saturation).

OUR VISION

The final question in the life of our church is where. Where are we going over the next 5 years? What follows is the vision of discipleship that we are moving toward together as a church.

Implement A New Mission Culture

We will align our strategies, attune our leaders, and activate our visionary plan by forming everyday missionaries, while helping our church understand how a 21st century- church staff can and will operate.



Develop A Missional Disciple/Leadership Engine

We will develop and implement an intentional lay and professional discipleship and leadership engine around our measures focusing on the implementation of our vision.



Community Outreach Initiative

We will build intentional connections with our community by identifying areas of brokenness where we can bring gospel transformation and renewal. We will release people to do the same where they live, work, and play.



Resource Our Mission and Vision

We will elevate the regular generosity of our church to \$1M annually, replenish our legacy giving, complete our Connecting Fund remodel, and resolve our housing needs for staff and interns.



RESOURCES DESIGNED TO HELP YOU GROW IN YOUR FAITH.

Download The Free Bethlehemchurchlive Mobile App
Or Visit Our Website Bethlehemchurch.live For All Our Resources.

Starting Point

Every journey begins with a single step. We designed this book is to help you learn more about what the life of faith is all about. We pray this book is a blessing to you as you journey in this new life of faith in Christ. Please reach out and let us now how we can help you in that journey.



The Fundamentals

The Fundamentals is a podcast that walks through the basics of the Christian faith. Using Luther's Small Catechism as a guide, this podcast unpacks the core elements that shape a life of faith. A lot of what we discuss in The Fundamentals mirrors what we teach in Confirmation classes, but The Fundamentals isn't just for Confirmation students. It's designed so that anyone can dig deeply into what the Lutheran faith means and what it looks like to live out that faith in everyday life today.

The Commute Reading Plan

The average American commutes 27 minutes a day each way to work, and some people even commute an hour in a half each way! If you took just 15 minutes from your daily commute, you could read the entire Bible in a year. That is the heart behind The Commute. The Commute is a Bible reading plan we created that you can read or listen to on your smartphone while you commute. You can also download the pdf of the plan and follow along on your own.



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