

DISCOVERING Northstar

We are glad you have chosen to find out more about Northstar Church. This class is the basic introduction to our church family. The goal of this class is four-fold:

1. **Lead you to affirm your belief in Jesus**
2. **Provide information about the who's and how's of Northstar Church**
3. **Communicate value of uniting with the Northstar family**
4. **Invite you to life on mission with us as we live out the Gospel to our community and beyond**

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OUR SALVATION

A MEMBER HAS A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD THROUGH AN ACTIVE FAITH IN JESUS CHRIST

In Northstar Pulaski, we believe that the initial step in discovering life's true purpose is to understand **why God created us**. We understand in Scripture that even before God created the world, God loved us and chose us in Christ to be holy and without fault in his eyes¹, since God is holy and blameless. His unchanging plan has always been to **adopt us** into his own family by bringing us to Himself through Jesus Christ².

GALATIANS 3:26-28 -- "26 for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, **through faith**. 27 For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

THE BARRIER TO ADOPTION: SIN

The sole reason we need adoption by our Creator is because ever since sin arrived in **GENESIS 3:1-19**, the universe has been cursed with sin and death. Nothing in creation, outside of God is immune to this brokenness. Our sin is the barrier which has eternally separated us from our perfect Creator God³.

ISAIAH 59:2 -- "But your iniquities (sin) have made a separation between you and your God, and your sins have hidden his face from you so that he does not hear."

REMOVING THE BARRIER – THE GOOD NEWS (GOSPEL) OF JESUS CHRIST

Realizing our sin has separated us from our Creator is incredibly bad news. That's where the Good news comes in! Our God, in His infinite wisdom and sovereignty, had a rescue planned out since the beginning of time. Our Good News is God's Son, Jesus Christ^{4&5}!

¹ EPH 1:4-5 - "4 Even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love 5 he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ, according to the purpose of his will"

² JOHN 1:12-13 - "12 But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, 13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God."

³ EPHESIANS 2:12 - "12 remember that you were at that time separated from Christ, alienated from the commonwealth of Israel and strangers to the covenants of promise, having no hope and without God in the world."

⁴ ROMANS 5:8 -- " 8 but God shows his love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us."

⁵ JOHN 14:6 -- "6 Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

JOHN 3:16-17 -- “16 For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.”

GALATIANS 3:4-7 -- “4 But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, 5 he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, 6 whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”

WHAT MUST HAPPEN FOR ME TO ENTER GOD’S FAMILY?

God initiates the drawing into His family⁶. We who are drawn by the Holy Spirit have a passive role in the process. There is no doubt that we respond to His drawing us, but the drawing itself is all on His part. Until then, the things of God are folly to us⁷.

- **First**, the Holy Spirit convicts us of our sinful state and our need for a Savior
 - He awakens in us a previously unknown interest in spiritual things and creates a desire for them that was never there before
 - Suddenly our ears are open, our hearts are inclined toward Him, and His Word begins to hold a new and exciting fascination for us
 - Our spirits begin to discern spiritual truth that never made sense to us before
- **Second**, we (truly) believe!

ROMANS 10:13 -- “For ‘everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.’”

WHAT SHOULD I DO RIGHT NOW TO BE FORGIVEN, ENTER GOD’S FAMILY AND RECEIVE ETERNAL LIFE?

Upon accepting the gospel (Good News) of Jesus Christ, which means simultaneously believing in both God’s complete perfection and our hopeless sin nature:

- **Third**, you confess your sins to God⁸

1 JOHN 1:9 -- “If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

- **Fourth**, then you repent (turn away) from that sin

⁶ JOHN 6:44 -- “44 No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him.”

⁷ 1 CORINTHIANS 2:14 -- “14 The natural person does not accept the things of the Spirit of God, for they are folly to him, and he is not able to understand them because they are spiritually discerned.”

⁸ ROMANS 10:9 -- “9 because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”

At that point, we are **justified** in Christ.

Justification: We are justified, declared righteous, at the moment of our salvation. Justification does not make us righteous, but rather pronounces us righteous. Our righteousness comes from placing our faith in the finished work of Jesus Christ. His sacrifice covers our sin, allowing God to see us as perfect and unblemished. Because as believers we are in Christ, God sees Christ's own righteousness when He looks at us. This meets God's demands for perfection; thus, He declares us righteous—He justifies us.

ROMANS 3:21-26 -- “21 But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it— 22 the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction: 23 for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, 24 and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, 25 whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins. 26 It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.”

GROWING AS A CHRISTIAN

Becoming a Christian is both an event and a process. It is an **event**, a moment when you fully trust Jesus Christ as both God and Savior for your forgiveness and salvation (which is described above). It is a **process** as you continue to trust Him daily for the rest of your life for growth, direction, help, strength, wisdom and power to live for His glory. This process is known as sanctification.

Sanctification: is a translation of the Greek word *hagiasmos*, meaning “holiness” or “a separation.” It is the same as growing in the Lord⁹ or spiritual maturity. God started the work of making us like Christ, and He is continuing it¹⁰, transforming us from the inside out.

EZEKIEL 36:26-27 -- “26 And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. 27 And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes and be careful to obey my rules.”

⁹ 2 PETER 3:18 - “18 But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. To him be the glory both now and to the day of eternity.”

¹⁰ PHILIPPIANS 1:6 - “6 And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.”

This type of 'progressive' sanctification is to be earnestly pursued by the believer^{11&12} and is affected by the application of the Word.

JOHN 17:17 -- "Sanctify them in the truth; your word is truth."

In the past, God granted us justification, a once-for-all, positional holiness in Christ. Now, God is guiding us to maturity through the Holy Spirit, the Word of God, prayer, and communion of the saints. In the future, God will give us glorification, a permanent, ultimate holiness.

THE IMPORTANCE OF BAPTISM

At Northstar Church, we believe the Scripture teaches that all persons who express faith in Jesus Christ should then be baptized. It is clear in the New Testament that they practiced baptism by immersion in water. Jesus himself was baptized in the Jordan River.

Baptism does not make one a Christian; instead it is a picture of and witness to what happened to us when we entered God's family.

MARK 1:9 -- "In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan."

ACTS 9:18-19 -- "18 And immediately something like scales fell from his (Paul's) eyes, and he regained his sight. Then he rose and was baptized; 19 and taking food, he was strengthened."

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

WHAT DOES BAPTISM REALLY MEAN?

Very simply, baptism is an outward testimony of the inward change in a believer's life.

Christian baptism is an act of obedience to the Lord after salvation; although baptism is closely associated with salvation, it is not a requirement to be saved.

¹¹ 1 PETER 1:15 - "15 but as he who called you is holy, you also be holy in all your conduct, 16 since it is written, 'You shall be holy, for I am holy.'"

¹² HEBREWS 12:14 - "14 Strive for peace with everyone, and for the holiness without which no one will see the Lord."

The Bible shows in many places that the order of events is^{13&14}:

- A person believes in the Lord Jesus
- Then he is baptized

COLOSSIANS 2:12 -- “Having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead. “

WHY DO WE PRACTICE IMMERSION BAPTISM?

The Greek word baptize means “to dip or immerse in water.” The New Testament gives a clear picture of *immersion* baptism as it was practiced.

MATTHEW 3:16 -- “And when Jesus was baptized, immediately he went up from the water...”

ACTS 8:38-39 -- “38 And he commanded the chariot to stop, and they both went down into the water, Philip and the eunuch, and he baptized him. 39 And when they came up out of the water...”

WHAT IF I HAVE ALREADY BEEN BAPTIZED?

We recognize your baptism – even if it was not by immersion – as long as it occurred after your profession of faith in Christ.

If you were baptized as an infant, we affirm that as an important part of your dedication to Christ by your family, but we do not see any instance of infant baptism occurring in the New Testament. Therefore, we humbly request that you seek believer’s baptism by allowing us to joyfully baptize you by immersion.

WHO SHOULD BE BAPTIZED, AND WHEN SHOULD THEY BE BAPTIZED?

In Acts, it is clear that everyone who believed in Christ was baptized and that they were baptized *after* their conversion¹⁵. A new believer in Jesus Christ should desire to be baptized as soon as possible.

If you have decided to receive Jesus Christ today, and/or have never been immersed as a believer in Jesus Christ, let us know so that we can celebrate your decision and schedule your baptism!

¹³ ACTS 2:41 - “41 So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls.’

¹⁴ ACTS 16:15 - “15 And after she was baptized, and her household as well, she urged us, saying, ‘If you have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come to my house and stay.’ And she prevailed upon us.”

¹⁵ Acts 2:41 -- “41 So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls”

COMMUNION OR THE LORD'S SUPPER

The Passover was the most sacred feast of the Jewish religious year. It commemorated the final plague on Egypt when the firstborn of the Egyptians died and the Israelites were spared because of the blood of a lamb that was sprinkled on their doorposts. The lamb was then roasted and eaten with unleavened bread. God's command was that throughout the generations to come the feast would be celebrated. The story is recorded in **EXODUS 12**.

During the Last Supper—a Passover celebration—Jesus took a loaf of bread and gave thanks to God.

LUKE 22:19-21 -- “19 And he took bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, ‘This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me.’ 20 And likewise the cup after they had eaten, saying, ‘This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood. 21 But behold, the hand of him who betrays me is with me on the table. 22 For the Son of Man goes as it has been determined, but woe to that man by whom he is betrayed!’”

He concluded the feast by singing a hymn¹⁶. It was there that, as predicted, Jesus was betrayed by Judas. The following day Jesus was crucified.

1 CORINTHIANS 11:23-26 -- “23 For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed took bread, 24 and when he had given thanks, he broke it, and said, ‘This is my body, which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.’ 25 In the same way also he took the cup, after supper, saying, ‘This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.’ 26 For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes.”

We see **Communion**, or the **Lord's Supper**, as an event that commemorates the sacrifice of Jesus Christ for our sins. As such, it is both sorrowful and celebratory. It's quite the paradox!

On one hand, it was our sin that caused Jesus' suffering on the cross; on the other hand, it was His death and Resurrection that liberated and saved us from our sins to enjoy eternal life with Him through faith!

So we regularly observe the Lord's Supper at Northstar in order to remember our Savior and the joy He has provided us through a love relationship with Him.

¹⁶ MATTHEW 26:30 - “30 And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives.”

OUR LOVE

OUR MEMBERS ARE BOUND TO ONE ANOTHER BY LOVE. WE ARE A FAMILY

JOHN 15:12 -- “This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you.”

Relationship

Jesus was asked what the greatest commandment was by a young man who wanted to know the essence of Jesus’ teachings. Jesus replied:

MATTHEW 22:37-41 -- “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets.”

We want to keep it simple at Northstar. ***It’s all about love.*** Our desire is to cultivate loving relationships with God and with one another. When our relationships are anchored with a profound awareness of how much God loves us, along with an intentional love for each other, it is possible to work through any relational conflict we could face.

It’s primarily through the reading of God’s Word that we learn how to love others unconditionally¹⁷. Biblical love will be anchored by our joyful obedience to God and our loving humility to others.

That the world will know...

You may have heard it said, “If you think you’ve found the perfect church, don’t join it, or it will stop being perfect.” The church is a wonderful organism. It’s a representation of Christ’s life and ministry on earth. However, because normal, ordinary folks are involved, **there are no “perfect” churches**. Only Jesus is perfect.

At Northstar, we seek to cultivate biblical unity and community, just as Jesus prayed to God the Father in **JOHN 17**¹⁸, so that the world around us will know about the love of God

We see our genuine love for the body of Christ – ours and other Christ-confessing fellowships – as being one of the greatest proofs to the world that Jesus is the world’s Savior. And so we seek to preserve it diligently.

¹⁷ JOHN 14:15 -- “If you love me, you will keep my commandments.”

¹⁸ JOHN 17:22-23 -- “22 The glory that you have given me I have given to them, that they may be one even as we are one, 23 I in them and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know that you sent me and loved them even as you loved me.”

CULTIVATING OUR LOVE THROUGH UNITY AND CONFLICT

We are Imperfect People

Because we are still imperfect people, it is only a matter of time before we have to deal with our differences, which include backgrounds, experiences, gifts, perspectives, and even various levels of spiritual maturity. And yet, if we are commanded to love each other as Christ has loved us¹⁹, we must pursue that love.

Church unity is such a powerful witness to people who are not a part of God's family. In this section, we want to explain how that command can be obeyed and how we seek to maintain unity.

HOW DO WE PRACTICE LOVE AND MAINTAIN UNITY?

1. BY CHOOSING TO DEVELOP RELATIONSHIPS WITH ONE ANOTHER

1 JOHN 4:7-8 -- "7 Beloved, ***let us love one another***, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. 8 Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love" (emphasis added)

Friendships are developed and cultivated as believers ***choose*** to meet together, talk to one another, share their stories, eat together, pray for one another, and remain authentic in sharing the ups and downs of life. In our Northstar family, we expect our covenant members to:

- Be involved in a Life Together group with other believers
- Find a place to serve regularly in the church and/or community

2. BY EMBRACING OUR DIFFERENCES IN GIFTING AND MATURITY

Followers of Jesus have all been given different spiritual gifts, for the sake of the church.

1 CORINTHIANS 12:4-7 -- "4 Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; 5 and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; 6 and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who empowers them all in everyone. 7 To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good."

Different spiritual gifts lead to different passions and priorities. What one believer sees as absolutely essential may be viewed as only marginally important by another who possesses a different gift from God. **Our unity depends on our ability to appreciate another's passion when it is not our own.**

¹⁹ JOHN 15:12 -- "This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you."

If we are a healthy church, we will not all be at the same stage of spiritual growth and maturity simultaneously.

HEBREWS 5:13-14 -- “13 for everyone who lives on milk is unskilled in the word of righteousness, since he is a child. 14 But solid food is for the mature, for those who have their powers of discernment trained by constant practice to distinguish good from evil.”

Believers grow from one level of maturity to the next (known as “progressive sanctification”) as they come to **know** and **practice** the truths in God’s Word and **live under** the discernment and leadership of the Holy Spirit.

Although healthy followers of Jesus are growing in maturity, no one is as mature as we should be. Remembering this reality should help us:

- Give them grace and space to grow in their maturity
- Prayerfully discern if/how to speak into their lives with grace and truth

3. BY TRUSTING CHURCH LEADERS

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.”

At Northstar, we want to cultivate a high level of trust, especially in church leaders. It’s clear in the New Testament that any leader of God’s people should be a servant-leader. The leaders at Northstar are highly valued and trusted because we seek to encourage, support, and follow them as they shepherd the flock that God has entrusted to them^{20&21}.

4. BY RESISTING RELATIONAL SINS

We strive to be an authentic church where people are real and confident in their relationships with each other. Honesty and openness are prized. As followers of Jesus, we should live with a desire to protect each other’s reputations while dealing with relational problems in an

²⁰ 1PETER 5:1-4 -- “So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: 2 shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; 3 not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. 4 And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.”

²¹ LUKE 22:24-26 -- “24 A dispute also arose among them, as to which of them was to be regarded as the greatest. 25 And he said to them, “The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them, and those in authority over them are called benefactors. 26 But not so with you. Rather, let the greatest among you become as the youngest, and the leader as one who serves.”

appropriate, biblical manner. Relational sins, such as gossip, are seen for what they are - a threat to fellowship, unity and health.

EPHESIANS 4:29 - "Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear."

5. BY RESOLVING CONFLICTS GOD'S WAY

MATTHEW 18:15 - "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."

It is not 'if' but 'when' problems arise within the family of Northstar. We are human, and therefore flawed. So when people gather together for any consistent amount of time, it won't be long before issues surface and need to be dealt with. These issues can range from personality quirks, to grudges, to unrepentant sin.

The solution we must embrace is to deal with them from a posture of discerned truth and grace (aka biblical approach). Jesus described the process of accountability in **MATTHEW 18**, while Paul also provides some instruction in **GALATIANS 6:1**²².

As hard and difficult as it is to practice biblical restoration, it is absolutely essential for the health of the church and the glory of God. We humbly seek to practice an attitude of humility and love as we speak the truth in such instances²³.

²² GALATIANS 6:1 - "Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted"

²³ EPHESIANS 4:15 - "Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ,"

OUR BELIEFS

OUR MEMBERS AGREE ON THE CORE TEACHINGS OF THE BIBLE

EPHESIANS 4:4-6 -- “4 There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to the one hope that belongs to your call— 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.”

What are the core teachings of the Bible?

At Northstar, our theology is based solely on the Word of God, the Bible. We seek to model a ***lifestyle of obedience*** to the teachings revealed in Scripture and resist settling with a “head-knowledge” only form of Christianity²⁴ which will surely lead to pride and complacency.

We hope to be like the Bereans:

ACTS 17.11-12 -- “11 Now these Jews (the Bereans) were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so. 12 Many of them therefore believed, with not a few Greek women of high standing as well as men”

We also affirm the great theological confessions of the past including:

The Apostles' Creed (ca. AD 180)

I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth. And in Jesus Christ his only Son our Lord; who was conceived by the Holy Ghost, born of the Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried; He descended into hell; the third day He rose again from the dead; He ascended into heaven, and sits on the right hand of God the Father Almighty; from thence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead. I believe in the Holy Ghost; the holy catholic Church; the communion of saints; the forgiveness of sins; the resurrection of the body; and the life everlasting. Amen.

The Nicene Creed (AD 325)

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible. And in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds; God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God; begotten, not made, being of one substance with the Father, by whom all things were made. Who, for us men and for our salvation, came down from heaven, and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin

²⁴ 1 CORINTHIANS 8:1-3 - “We know that ‘all of us possess knowledge.’ This ‘knowledge’ puffs up, but love builds up. 2 If anyone imagines that he knows something, he does not yet know as he ought to know. 3 But if anyone loves God, he is known by God”

Mary, and was made man; and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate; He suffered and was buried; and the third day He rose again, according to the Scriptures; and ascended into heaven, and sits on the right hand of the Father; and He shall come again, with glory, to judge the quick and the dead; whose kingdom shall have no end. And I believe in the Holy Ghost, the Lord and Giver of Life; who proceeds from the Father and the Son; who with the Father and the Son together is worshipped and glorified; who spoke by the prophets. And I believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church. I acknowledge one baptism for the remission of sins; and I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

Essential Beliefs

In the essential beliefs that follow, we ask agreement. In non-essential beliefs (matters relating to such issues as the timing of end-time events, how often to celebrate communion, and other debatable matters) we allow liberty. Toward those who differ with us we show love and respect.

“In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, liberty; in all things, charity.” (Peter Meiderlin, 1627)

SEVEN CORE BELIEFS

1. ABOUT GOD: God is the creator and ruler of the universe. He is all wise, all seeing and all understanding. His basic attitudes toward us are love and compassion, yet He is also capable of anger and wrath. God created all people and will one day judge all people by the standards set out in His Word. God desires a relationship with us and sent His Son Jesus Christ to make that relationship possible. God is discovered in the pages of both the Old and New Testaments.

NEHEMIAH 9:6 -- “You are the LORD, you alone. You have made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them; and you preserve all of them; and the host of heaven worships you.”

COLOSSIANS 1:16 -- “For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him.”

JOHN 3:16-17 -- “16 “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only Son, that whoever believes in him should not perish but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.”

2. ABOUT JESUS CHRIST: Jesus Christ is the Son of God and the promised Messiah of Israel. Jesus was born in Bethlehem to a virgin and lived under the authority of his parents until

he began his public ministry. He labored and taught for a little over three years in Israel, was tempted and tested by Satan, performed miracles, spoke often to the masses and selected twelve men to be His disciples. His life, lived out in dynamic relationship to His Father, provides a practical example of godly living and effective ministry for all of his followers throughout the ages. His story is told in four biographies in the New Testament: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. Jesus was betrayed by one of His disciples, Judas Iscariot. His death was demanded by the Jewish religious leaders, and he was crucified by the Romans. He arose from the dead after three days, and later ascended to be with His Father in heaven. By the sacrifice of His life and His resurrection, He made possible forgiveness of sin and eternal life for all who choose to believe in Him. He is the founder and head of the church. At a future date, known only to the Father, He will return to earth to reign as King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

JOHN 1:1-3 -- “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. 4 In him was life, and the life was the light of men.”

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.”

3. ABOUT THE HOLY SPIRIT: The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of God, and He is given to all who place their faith in Jesus Christ. The Spirit imparts peace, power, inspiration, encouragement, understanding and leadership to all believers who submit themselves to His working. He also gives to believers unique spiritual gifts that enable them to minister to the church family. The Spirit works with non-believers by moving and leading them to confess their sin and believe in Jesus Christ.

JOHN 14:26 -- “But the Helper, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you.”

ACTS 1:8 -- “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you, and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

4. ABOUT THE BIBLE: The Bible was written by men under the leadership and inspiration of the Holy Spirit. Because it is God’s Word, it can be trusted to be thoroughly accurate, reliable, practical and relevant to every generation and to people of all cultures. Both Old and New Testaments are authoritative and instructive, and each is worthy of the believer’s study. The Bible is to be read, studied and meditated upon consistently by all who wish to grow in Christian maturity. It is the basis and guide for all teaching in the church. It sets the behavioral standards for all who name the name of Christ. All of scripture was given to help us live in response to being loved - to help us understand that we are loved. It shows us - plainly, clearly, logically - what a loved people should do in response to such great, everlasting and sacrificial love.

2 TIMOTHY 3:16 -- “All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work.”

HEBREWS 4:12 -- “For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.”

5. ABOUT PEOPLE: Human beings were created by God and fashioned in his image. God’s desire for all people is that they know, love, serve and live with Him for eternity. People choose to disobey God and thereby sin against Him, and are separated from God until they trust in Jesus Christ and his sacrifice for them on the cross. When brought into a right relationship with God, people are capable of great creativity and highly effective ministry. Apart from God, all people are capable of the darkest evils. After death, people who have given their hearts to God in faith, trusting Him alone for their salvation, are destined to live forever in heaven with Him. Those who do not know God will live forever in hell without Him.

GENESIS 1:27 - “So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.”

ROMANS 3:10-12 -- “None is righteous, no, not one; 11 no one understands; no one seeks for God. 12 All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one.”

6. ABOUT THE CHURCH: The church is people - all who belong to God through faith in Jesus. Collectively, the church is God’s primary instrument on earth to make known the good news of the gospel. The church is the chief means by which people are helped to mature in the faith, and encouraged to use their gifts in ministry. The church is a family which provides nurture, encouragement, protection, fellowship and even correction to all family members.

ACTS 2:42-47 -- “42 And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. 43 And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. 44 And all who believed were together and had all things in common. 45 And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need. 46 And day by day, attending the temple together and breaking bread in their homes, they received their food with glad and generous hearts, 47 praising God and having favor with all the people.”

7. ABOUT THE CHRISTIAN LIFESTYLE: Beliefs must translate into life; otherwise they are only words. At Northstar, we place a special emphasis on living out our beliefs in the following areas.

LUKE 11:28 -- “But he (Jesus) said, ‘Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!’”

1 JOHN 1:6 -- “And this is love, that we walk according to his commandments; this is the commandment, just as you have heard from the beginning, so that you should walk in it.”

LIVING IT OUT

It is not just about what we believe. It is how we live out what we believe that will help maximize the spiritual impact we can have in our families and communities, especially when it comes to being a disciple who is intentional about making disciples.

We want to encourage our members to authentically live out what we claim to believe through the gospel of Jesus Christ in three distinct ways:

1 - BIBLICALLY-BASED LIVING

Our attitudes and actions should always be anchored in and tested by the Word of God. When faced with a decision, we must always ask, “***What does the Bible say about this?***” The Word of God is the guide for everything we do, therefore we encourage daily Bible reading and study.

1 JOHN 2:3 -- “And by this we know that we have come to know him, if we keep his commandments.”

2 - CIRCUMSPECT BEHAVIOR AND MORAL PURITY

We are always in a mode of disciple-making. Either we are pointing others toward the good news of Jesus Christ, or we are pointing them away from it. Therefore, we guard our own and the church’s reputation by pursuing pure and godly lives. In our language, relationships, habits at work, and family life we refuse to do or say anything that could cause our own testimony to be harmed or would bring reproach on Northstar Church, or on our Savior Jesus Christ.

Abstain from fits of anger, sexual immorality, and displays of any behavior that would be clearly seen as uncharacteristic of a follower of Jesus Christ. Although we are still human and will make mistakes, as new creations in Christ, we take pains to avoid even the appearance of evil.

GALATIANS 5:19-21 -- “19 Now the works of the flesh are evident: sexual immorality, impurity, sensuality, 20 idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, fits of anger, rivalries, dissensions, divisions, 21 envy, drunkenness, orgies, and things like these.”

3 - OUTWARD FOCUS

We purposefully cultivate an outward focus that makes us aware of our responsibility to people who do not know Christ. We are God's ambassadors, and in that role we develop friendships with non-churched people, invite them to connect with the church family and Life Together groups, and share, when appropriate, our own story of how God has been at work in our lives. In addition, we are prepared to share the content of the Gospel with all with whom we are given the blessing of influencing.

1 PETER 3:15-16 -- "15 but in your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you; yet do it with gentleness and respect, 16 having a good conscience, so that, when you are slandered, those who revile your good behavior in Christ may be put to shame."

THEOLOGICAL ALIGNMENT

Our theology aligns with the theology of the Southern Baptist Convention. Still, we appreciate and love those of other traditions and denominations, as long as they do not contradict the gospel of Jesus Christ and/or the Word of God.

OUR STRUCTURE

WE AGREE ON THE WAY WE FUNCTION AS A CHURCH

1 CORINTHIANS 14:40 -- “40 But all things should be done decently and in order.”

What is the leadership structure of Northstar Church?

Northstar Church has a structure that is different from that of many traditional churches. In many congregations, the pastor and staff are asked to carry out most of the ministry tasks of the church, while the congregation, through boards, committees and regular business meetings provides supervision and administration.

Northstar’s leadership teams seek to **equip** the membership to discover, embrace and use their ministry abilities and gifts to build up the church²⁵.

EPHESIANS 4:13 -- “13 until we all attain to the **unity** of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,”

We Are a Priesthood of all believers

Every follower of Jesus is commissioned to GO and make disciples²⁶. When **every** member does his/her part, empowered by the Holy Spirit, the church enjoys **unity** and the community will be impacted by the gospel of Jesus Christ.

EPHESIANS 4:16 -- “when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.”

We Cultivate Fellowship, harmony and voting

At Northstar, we foster fellowship and unity through a deep level of love and trust, open communication, flexibility and approachability.

We do not emphasize voting, however. The New Testament has only one mention of voting²⁷.

²⁵ EPHESIANS 4:11-12 -- “11 And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, 12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, “

²⁶ MATTHEW 28:19-20 -- “19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.”

²⁷ ACTS 27:9-12 -- “9 Since much time had passed, and the voyage was now dangerous because even the Fast was already over, Paul advised them, 10 saying, ‘Sirs, I perceive that the voyage will be with injury and much loss, not only of the cargo and the ship, but also of our lives.’ 11 But the centurion paid more attention to the pilot and to the owner of the ship than to what Paul said. 12 And because the harbor was not suitable to spend the winter in, the majority decided to put out to sea from there, on the chance that somehow they could reach Phoenix, a harbor of Crete, facing both southwest and northwest, and spend the winter there.”

In **ACTS**²⁸, the apostles had to replace Judas. A vote would have been a likely scenario, however, so foreign was this concept to the disciples, they cast lots (threw dice) to determine the proper successor.

Five Decisions We Currently Vote On:

1. To call or dismiss the Lead Pastor or to approve a full time pastoral member of staff
 2. To approve the purchase of real estate or construction of a new building or to approve the renovation of an existing church building
 3. To approve the church incurring any secured debt by the membership such as the purchase of real estate or the construction of a church building
 4. To approve or amend the *Discovering Northstar* (Covenant Membership) Materials or *Northstar Nuts and Bolts* (Northstar Bylaws)
 5. To approve the annual church budget
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²⁸ ACTS 1:23-26 -- “23 And they put forward two, Joseph called Barsabbas, who was also called Justus, and Matthias. 24 And they prayed and said, ‘You, Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which one of these two you have chosen 25 to take the place in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas turned aside to go to his own place.’ 26 And they cast lots for them, and the lot fell on Matthias, and he was numbered with the eleven apostles.”

COVENANT MEMBERSHIP

Although you will not find the word ‘member’ in Scripture, Northstar highly values covenant membership. For many Christians, membership sounds stiff and exclusive, not resembling a biblical picture of the family of God. At a closer look, however, we begin to see how local church membership is not only biblical, it facilitates our call to make disciples and equip the saints for the work of ministry.

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.”

THIS PASSAGE PRESENTS TWO IMPORTANT QUESTIONS:

- The **First** question is, if there is no biblical requirement to belong to a local church, then **which leaders should an individual Christian obey and submit to?**

If there is no clear understanding of local church membership, then who are we to submit to and obey? Paul warns the Elders/Overseers in **ACTS** about a time when wolves will enter the church to intentionally twist the truth and mislead followers of Jesus²⁹.

Are believers biblically responsible to obey and submit to any Elder, Overseer, Pastor, Reverend, or other leadership title from any church, denomination, or theological tribe?

- The **Second** question from the **HEBREWS** passage is, **who does the Pastor and/or Elder Board give an account for?**

Scripture clearly commands an Elder body to care for a specific people^{30&31}. Therefore, we take very seriously our responsibility before God to watch over and spiritually equip the souls in our care.

²⁹ ACTS 20:28-20 - “28 Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood. 29 I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; 30 and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them.”

³⁰ 1 PETER 5:1-5 - “So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: 2 shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; 3 not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. 4 And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory. 5 Likewise, you who are younger, be subject to the elders. Clothe yourselves, all of you, with humility toward one another, for ‘God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.’”

³¹ TITUS 1:5 - “This is why I left you in Crete, so that you might put what remained into order, and appoint elders in every town as I directed you”

If there is no clear understanding of local church membership, then is our Pastor and/or Elder Board held spiritually accountable for every follower of Jesus in the New River Valley?

There are local churches with whom Northstar has strong theological and philosophical differences. Will our leaders have to give an account for what they teach on Sundays and in small groups or Sunday School, or what they do concerning local and international missions?

- **One further question.** If there is no local commitment to a covenant community of faith, how does church discipline work? How do you, if/when necessary, remove someone from a community of faith³²?

Church discipline, although commonly misunderstood as always negative, is a reality when dealing with imperfect people. Discipline, when biblically implemented, is an effective part of our spiritual accountability and growth.

Without clear and formal church membership it is incredibly difficult, if not impossible, to effectively cultivate:

- Obedience and submission to designated, biblically anchored, church leadership
- Shepherding, discipleship, and spiritual equipping
- Church discipline and accountability

Our heart for covenant membership is primarily so our leadership can be as effective and diligent as possible in our responsibility to care for, equip, unite, encourage, and discipline followers of Jesus. As you dive deeper into the Scriptures, you begin to see multiple examples of the early universal church being organized into smaller, more organized local church families in order to thrive as disciples and disciple makers for the glory of God.

Covenant membership is required for any leadership role in Northstar Pulaski, although it is not required to participate or attend

COVENANT RENEWAL

Each January, typically during our annual *State of the Church* address, every member is removed and subsequently invited to renew their intent to join us in life on mission and to come under the spiritual guidance and leadership of Northstar Pulaski.

³² 1 CORINTHIANS 5:1-5 - "It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans, for a man has his father's wife. 2 And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn? Let him who has done this be removed from among you. 3 For though absent in body, I am present in spirit; and as if present, I have already pronounced judgment on the one who did such a thing. 4 When you are assembled in the name of the Lord Jesus and my spirit is present, with the power of our Lord Jesus, 5 you are to deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord."

LEADERSHIP & MINISTRY STRUCTURE

HOW WE'RE ORGANIZED TO BE DISCIPLES AND MAKE DISCIPLES WHILE CULTIVATING UNITY AND LOVE

STAFF TEAM

Vision, Leadership, Equipping, Direction



ELDER BOARD

Praying, Discerning,
Advising, Monitoring

CHURCH TEAMS

Family, Worship,
Hospitality, Safety,
Mid-service, Setup/
Teardown, Leadership
Support, Stewardship

LIFE TOGETHER GROUPS (DISCIPLESHIP)

Small groups, D28, Missional Communities

LEADERSHIP PHILOSOPHY

Although we are all equipped with various levels and amounts of gifting, it is our leadership philosophy to “give the ministry away” as a way to pass-the-baton. We encourage this for a couple of reasons:

- It allows the current leader to move on to another role while ensuring the ministry they were leading is in good hands and will flourish
- It allows others, who may or may not be even more gifted, to step into a role of leadership
- It prevents whatever role or level of leadership you are in to subtly become a point of pride

[you can learn more about our leadership process in Exploring Northstar]

HOW IS NORTHSTAR SUPPORTED FINANCIALLY?

TITHES & OFFERINGS

Northstar is supported through the financial offerings of its members and attendees. In the Old Testament, a *tithe* was 10% of a person's income and was the standard for giving back to God. Although the New Testament does not mention a literal tithe, there is still a clear precedent to give back to God generously and joyfully. It is a great joy to grow in the grace of giving, and it's a sign of Christian maturity to embrace generosity. It's another sign of a person's surrender to the lordship of Jesus.

ACTS 2:44-45 -- "And all who believed were together and had all things in common. And they were selling their possessions and belongings and distributing the proceeds to all, as any had need."

1 CORINTHIANS 16:1-2 -- "Now concerning the collection for the saints: as I directed the churches of Galatia, so you also are to do. 2 On the first day of every week, each of you is to put something aside and store it up, as he may prosper, so that there will be no collecting when I come."

2 CORINTHIANS 8:3, 7 -- "For they gave according to their means, as I can testify, and beyond their means, of their own accord... But as you excel in everything—in faith, in speech, in knowledge, in all earnestness, and in our love for you—see that you excel in this act of grace also."

2 CORINTHIANS 9:6-8; 9-10 -- "6 The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. 7 Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. 8...9 As it is written, 'He has distributed freely, he has given to the poor; his righteousness endures forever.' 10 He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness."

MALACHI 3:10 -- "'Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this,' says the Lord Almighty, 'and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it.'"

HOW IS NORTHSTAR STRUCTURED TO HANDLE MONEY

The Budget:

- The Stewardship Team, which is a team led by members of the Elder Board, prayerfully considers the requests from staff and members for the upcoming ministry year
- A proposed budget is then presented to the church in a called Membership Meeting
- A majority vote of those present in the meeting is necessary for the budget to be approved

Giving:

- Our desire is to practice giving at least 10% of what we budget for ministry and operations to missions – through local, national and international channels
- We not only give through denominational channels, but we also give gifts to individual missionaries, ministries, and mission organizations
- We believe in a three-fold focus to missions and disciple-making that embraces our local community, our state and country, and the nations

Counting Money:

- Money is counted each Sunday after the worship service by designated church members
- Those funds are deposited on Monday after registering each donation in the administrative software

Accounting:

- Payroll tasks and bills are carried out by Northstar's financial secretary who tabulates and records individual member's gifts and also gives the church a monthly income and disbursement statement
- Northstar members are given copies of financial statements at least four times per year, and donors are sent letters by the end of January each year for charitable tax reporting purposes
- The financial secretary ensures that all money matters are handled professionally and with accountability, and also pays all bills and maintains all financial records

OUR STRATEGY & VISION

OUR MEMBERS EMBRACE WHY WE EXIST AS A CHURCH

MATTHEW 4:19-20 -- "19 And he said to them, 'Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men.'
20 Immediately they left their nets and followed him."



DON'T simply GO TO CHURCH. BE THE CHURCH.

Being a follower of Jesus is not just about "attending" church services or events. It's about living obediently for Jesus Christ and growing in a love relationship with God through Him. We want to encourage and equip others to **ENJOY** their relationship with God through joyful, loving obedience to Him.

We are joyfully intentional and insistent that Christians should grow in their faith³³. We are, after all, called to be **disciples who make disciples**³⁴.

- **Disciple** - someone who is following Jesus, being changed by Jesus, and is committed to the mission of Jesus
- **Disciple maker** - a disciple of Jesus who enters into relationships with people to help them trust and follow Jesus
- **Disciple making** - entering into relationships to help people trust and follow Jesus, which includes the whole process from conversion through maturation and multiplication

OUR STRATEGY

So our strategy is simple. Our desire for every member of Northstar is to BE the church. We gather regularly, but as we scatter, we want to encourage you to **LIVE**:

- **LIVE** Intentionally
- **LIVE** Daily
- **LIVE** Obediently

³³ COLOSSIANS 1:28 -- "28 Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ."

³⁴ MATTHEW 28:19-20 -- "19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you."

Northstar will help **equip** you³⁵, **encourage** you, **pray** with you, **teach** you, **assist** you, and **go with** you as you follow Jesus in the many ways that He asks you to serve Him and others. When we are all following Christ, we are amazed at how He works through us and in us.

JOHN 14:12 -- “Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever believes in me will also do the works that I do; and greater works than these will he do, because I am going to the Father.”

We offer several tools to help equip members of Northstar to be disciples and disciple makers and ultimately grow in their faith:

DISCOVERING NORTHSTAR: For anyone who has been visiting and/or is interested in learning more about Northstar, we offer a class (if you are reading this, you are probably well aware) where you will learn the heart of who we are as a church. *Discovering Northstar* typically meets once a month. This is where you will discover our theology, vision, strategy for disciple making, and more as you consider becoming a covenant member of our local church.

EXPLORING NORTHSTAR: Once someone has completed *Discovering Northstar*, and if they have decided to go on mission with us for the Lord through membership, we offer a follow-up class called *Exploring Northstar* designed to equip new members into the rhythm of the church.

DISCIPLE TRAINING: Whether someone is a member of Northstar, or even attends Northstar, we also offer a 3-6 month disciple training through our partnership with *The Timothy Initiative*. The heart of this training is anchored in our call to be disciples of Jesus who make disciples of Jesus. It requires a high commitment and high level of authenticity and accountability as you grow in your faith by living by the Spirit, learning to share your story within God’s story, pursuing a life of prayer and consistent quiet time in the Word.

[you can learn more about our leadership process in Exploring Northstar]

³⁵ EPHESIANS 4:11-12 -- “11 And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, 12 to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ”

LIFE TOGETHER

“If there is so much blessing and joy even in a single encounter of brother with brother, how inexhaustible are the riches that open up for those who by God’s will are privileged to live in the daily fellowship of life with other Christians!” – Dietrich Bonhoeffer (Life Together)



Northstar emphasizes the ***Life Together*** rhythm of church life. We encourage every person in Northstar to be committed to and regularly involved in our Sunday worship gatherings. This is the environment where we corporately worship, fellowship, sing, pray and hear the preaching of God’s Word. Sunday mornings are awesome and important when it comes to corporately celebrating our thankfulness and hope in Jesus Christ.

DISCIPLE MAKING THROUGH LIFE TOGETHER

As awesome as our Sunday morning worship gatherings are, if someone is only relying on them as their primary connection to the Northstar family it becomes difficult, if not impossible, for members to be discipled, cared for, and spiritually equipped effectively. Therefore, we also strongly encourage members of Northstar to commit to ***Life Together*** with other followers of Jesus throughout the week.

The following *spaces* are where relationships, prayer, scripture reading, love for one another, accountability, encouragement, and many other disciplines are planted and nurtured. **Life Together** is where the most intentional disciple making occurs:



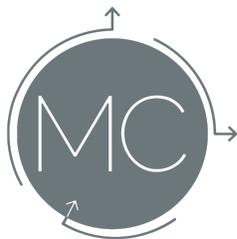
Community Space (think of Jesus being among the crowds) — this space would be anything on a larger scale including block parties, park tours, GO Pulaski, and even our Sunday morning worship gatherings.

Small Group Space (think of Jesus with the twelve disciples) — this is a smaller space ranging from 5-15 people who meet weekly to hang out, eat, pray, and open the Bible together to introduce the disciple making principles of life together.

D28 Space (think of Jesus with Peter, James, and John) — D28 triads range from 2-5 people, based on gender and someone’s personal desire for accountability and desire to grow deeper in their faith. D28 meets weekly to focus on life, prayer, and God’s Word while cultivating accountability,



transparency, and spiritual formation. The heart of D28 comes from Paul's mandate to the Colossian church³⁶.



Missional Community Space (think of the early church) — as relationships/accountability/love grow between people through other spaces, the MC Space becomes a tangible reality. This is where families and/or individuals begin to literally pursue life on mission together throughout the week and throughout our community. They eat together, pray together, open the Word together, worship together, share their faith story together, while growing in their maturity.

Personal Space (think of Jesus alone with the Father) — this is a space that we cannot overemphasize as disciples of Jesus. Life happens at 100+ mph for many of us and it is too easy to forget this space in our daily routine. Walking by the Spirit³⁷ can be cultivated by the other spaces but it has to happen when we consistently plan the time to get alone with the Father in prayer, Scripture reading, and other forms of spiritual discipline.

All staff and leaders in Northstar are asked to consistently participate in corporate worship and in *Life Together*.

We recognize there will be seasons of life that make consistent participation in *Life Together* difficult. Life happens, and we totally understand that, but in general, we desire for our members to be intentional about connecting. Life is too hard to live alone. In fact, life was never intended to be lived alone, especially for followers of Jesus.

Most all of our **Life Together Spaces** use a D.B.S. (Discovery Bible Study) way of learning and living out the Word of God. DBS simply provides everyone, regardless of spiritual maturity, an equal opportunity to hear, read, and apply the Scriptures to their lives.



Along with DBS, we offer other specific Disciples Making Disciples (DMD) Training opportunities for anyone who is ready to get serious about their walk with Jesus. These DMD trainings require a high commitment and high accountability to live obediently as a disciple of Jesus.

Our goal is to help one another draw nearer to Christ, encourage faithfulness, and grow to spiritual maturity. To be disciples who make disciples for the glory of God.

³⁶ COLOSSIANS 1:28 - "28 Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ."

³⁷ GALATIANS 5:16-17 - "16 But I say, walk by the Spirit, and you will not gratify the desires of the flesh. 17 For the desires of the flesh are against the Spirit, and the desires of the Spirit are against the flesh, for these are opposed to each other, to keep you from doing the things you want to do."

OUR VISION FOR MISSIONS, CHURCH PARTNERSHIPS, AND CHURCH PLANTING

It's not enough for us to stay in the New River Valley when Jesus commanded His disciples to **GO** and make disciples of all nations³⁸. Therefore, we have a desire and a commitment to **BE** both a *sending* and a *going* church.

Partnerships:

- Baptist General Association of Virginia
- Southern Baptist Conservatives of Virginia
- Western Blue Ridge Baptist Network
- Liberty Church Network
- North American Mission Board
- The Timothy Initiative

Missions Giving and Missions Focus:

Northstar's goal is to exalt the name of Jesus Christ in all nations by making disciples everywhere we go. **All our mission and ministry activity is evaluated by whether there is a gospel connection.** While we may occasionally assist with humanitarian projects, these are the exception rather than the normal. Our hope is to be a church that mobilizes, gives and goes to places where the gospel has not been established³⁹.

In Conclusion...

Will you *BE* the church with us? Will you live *Life On Mission*, for His glory?

After covering these five sections, we will make available Northstar's Membership Covenant. Those who have committed themselves to Jesus Christ and have participated in believer's baptism may prayerfully sign the covenant and become members of Northstar Church

NEXT STEPS

- Upon completion of *Discovering Northstar*, we ask that you prayerfully discern becoming a covenant member
- We will follow up with you within a few weeks
- If/when you decide to become a covenant member, we would ask you to consider taking our *Exploring Northstar* class, which will help equip you in the regular rhythms of life within the Northstar family

³⁸ MATTHEW 28:18-20 - "18 And Jesus came and said to them, 'All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.'"

³⁹ ROMANS 15:20-21 -- "20 and thus I make it my ambition to preach the gospel, not where Christ has already been named, lest I build on someone else's foundation, 21 but as it is written, 'Those who have never been told of him will see, and those who have never heard will understand.'"