



Prospective

Membership

Class



An Introduction to our Church Family

October, 2011



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Village Bible Church of Sugar Grove resulted from a weekly Bible study begun in the home of Omar and Rose Sutherland in January 1971. Pastor Dick Martin led the study under the auspices of Plano Bible Church.

The first service was held on June 27, 1971, in the Sugar Grove Elementary School gymnasium. Those early days brought the excitement of new families, new believers, and new challenges.

Over the years we have seen God do amazing things. Each and every week we are given the greatest opportunity to exalt Christ in our times of corporate worship. Through the numerous ministries and activities we have been able to experience community with an ever-growing family of faith. Knowing that the Christian life is about meeting in others needs we have been challenged to make every effort to extend care by living out the one another commands. Using the biblical metaphor that speaks of the church as a body we have sought to edify the church through the gifts that He has given us in humble service towards God and others. Following our Savior's example we have endeavored to equip Christians for greater opportunities of service, and through faithfulness of His people we have sent many out to engage the culture in missions work both here at home and throughout the world.

As a result of God's faithfulness we have seen Him grow and raise a people who desire to live and love just as Jesus did, so that we might be the salt and light that He called us to be in this world

Throughout the years we have been indebted to our elders and pastors as well as all of the staff that have fulfilled their calling in leading and guiding Village Bible Church.

We also thank God for the blessings He has bestowed on us as a body. We are thankful for the physical gifts He has given us in the way of our properties and buildings which stand as a sign of God's faithfulness and provision to His people.

In 2008 God called Village Bible Church to a new vision and direction through the adoption of 2 other area churches – Grace Bible Church of Aurora and First Baptist Church of Shabbona. As a result of these new campuses, Village Bible began a new chapter of ministry as "One Church in Three Locations."

While history tells us where we have been and lays the foundation for who we are, it is the future that most excites us. In recent years our fellowship has been characterized by great unity, accompanied by exponential growth and the experience of great blessings from God.

Nothing is too big for God to do through His people in the days to come. As God continues to guide us, we look forward with great excitement to see how He will use ordinary people to accomplish extraordinary things for Him and His Kingdom.

WHAT'S BEHIND THE NAME?

VILLAGE is significant. It suggests both genuine fellowship within our church family and an open door to those around us.

As members of one body, we seek to preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. As a light in our community, we hope to be a place of peace for those in chaos, a place of forgiveness for the guilty, and a place of hope for the hopeless.



BIBLE is central because it is from God's Word's that we learn our purpose.

God has seen fit to reveal his promises and plans through the 66 books of Scripture. It is through the proclamation of the Bible that Christians are exhorted to exalt His son, Jesus Christ — the One whose death and resurrection gives us peace with God and the hope of heaven. The grace and mercy of God is the theme of God's Word. It is our prayer that you'll find this focus on God's Word to be the common thread that runs through every ministry and expression of worship here.



CHURCH is paramount because of its absolute uniqueness. While "Village" and "Bible" were our choice in defining who we are, "Church" was mandated by God — as revealed in His Word.

It is His designation for the assembly of people called by His name. As such, our course has been charted by God; our destiny has been planned by God; our members have been chosen by God; our purposes have been defined by God.





WHAT WE BELIEVE



Village Bible Church is an evangelical church that focuses on the essential doctrines of the Christian faith, while allowing for a diversity of opinion concerning doctrinal matters that are less critical to our purpose of ministering to people's spiritual needs.

We believe . . . that the Bible is the verbally inspired Word of God, without error as originally written. It is the complete revelation of God's will for salvation and the only unailing rule of faith and practice for the Christian life.¹

We believe . . . in one God, the Creator of all things, eternally existing in three persons – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – and that these three are equal in dignity and power.²

We believe . . . in the full deity and full humanity of Jesus Christ; His miraculous conception by the Holy Spirit; His virgin birth; His sinless life; His substitutionary death on the cross; His bodily resurrection; His ascension to the right hand of the Father; and His personal, imminent return.³

We believe . . . that humanity was created by and for God; that as a consequence of Adam's disobedience to God every human being has incurred the sentence of both physical and spiritual death, which is eternal separation from God; and that all people are sinners by nature and practice.⁴

We believe . . . that the Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins and that all who turn from sin and place their trust in Him are declared righteous and come into right relationship with God.⁵

We believe . . . that the Holy Spirit regenerates and indwells all believers and that he empowers them for life and ministry.⁶

We believe . . . that the Church, which is the body of Christ and of which Christ is the Head, is made up of all who have been truly born again.⁷

We believe . . . in the bodily resurrection of everyone who has ever lived – the everlasting blessedness of those who are in right relationship with God, and the everlasting punishment of those who have rejected God's forgiveness in His Son.⁸

***For a complete doctrinal statement, please see our church constitution.
www.villagebible.org/distinctives/**

¹2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21; ²Deuteronomy 6:4; Matthew 28:19; Galatians 1:1; Colossians 2:9; Acts 5:3-4. ³Matthew 1:23; John 1:1, 14; Romans 3:25, 8:34; 1 Corinthians 15:50; Philippians 2:5-8; Colossians 2:9; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 1 Peter 2:22, 24. ⁴Genesis 1:26-28; Romans 3:23, 5:12. ⁵Romans 10:9-10; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4; 2 Corinthians 5:21. ⁶John 14:17; Romans 8:9, 11, 13; 15:13. ⁷1 Corinthians 12:12-13; Colossians 1:18. ⁸1 Corinthians 15:35-57; Revelation 20:11-15.

OUR MODEL



The vision that God has given us to fulfill is to be "One Church, Meeting in Multiple Locations." Each of our locations are connected as one, despite physical distance, because each has a similar dynamic worship experience, including "personal touches" such as live bands and campus pastoral teams.

The teaching pastors at each campus preach through the same sermon series bringing continuity across all locations. The pastors of all campuses meet weekly to collaborate with each other regarding ministry locally and church-wide.

People who attend Village Bible Church will find the quality of a large church with the intimacy and personal interaction of a smaller church.

OUR PASSION

Passion for the person of God:

Perhaps the most glorious of all the truths in the Bible is that the Lord is a loving God who longs to enjoy relationship with His people. It is the privilege and duty of all who have met God to worship and adore Him. We celebrate the life of God in our midst by uniting in worship weekly and by cultivating a love relationship with Him daily.

Passion for the people of God:

Scripture is clear that one of the primary tasks of the church is the building up of believers in Jesus Christ. The church is to provide care, support, and training for believers endeavoring to live for God. In living the life of faith, we all desperately need the support, exhortation, and accountability that comes from being a significant part of God's family.

Passion for the precepts of God:

At the center of the Christian faith is the Word of God. Since God has chosen to reveal Himself through His Word, studying and meditating on the Bible are essential to our relationship with Him. Our understanding of God's Word forms the basis of our understanding of God, ourselves, and our world. An essential part of salvation is being "transformed by the renewing of our minds" (Romans 12:2). In this day of shifting values and moral relativism, the Bible gives us timeless truths around which we can build our lives.

Passion for the purpose of God:

In God's plan for ministering to this fallen world, He has determined to work through His Church. He has commissioned His people to allow His power to work through them in such a way that He is made visible to those who do not know Him. This is accomplished when the Church builds up the spiritual lives of its people so that, as they participate in society on any and every level, the reality of God's presence will be evident to others, and they will be drawn to Him. This participation should include both words and works, both evangelism and social concern.

OUR SALVATION

Our deepest desire and privilege is the opportunity to share the good news of Jesus Christ with all. We long that all who enter our doors will hear the gospel and come to a saving knowledge of Christ.

Below is a summary of what it means to know the Lord in a personal and saving way.

If you have any questions about what it means to live a life devoted to Christ, we would love the opportunity to talk with you and answer any questions you might have.

Salvation involves the following action points:

Recognize your need of Christ.

Romans 3:23: For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

Remember God's love for you.

Romans 5:8: But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Repent of your sins.

Acts 3:19: Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord.

Receive Jesus as your Savior.

John 3:16: "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.

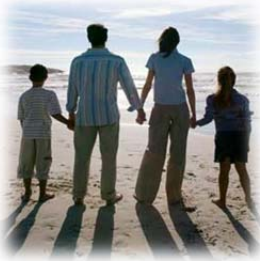
Rejoice with other believers in your salvation.

Hebrews 10:25: Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another--and all the more as you see the Day approaching.

OUR VISION



Village Bible Church desires to be a family...



of growing believers committed to glorifying God by



reaching our world with the life-changing Gospel of Jesus Christ.

OUR MISSION

Matthew 22:37-39

And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. ³⁸This is the great and first commandment. ³⁹And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself.

We fulfill these two commands when we are...

Loving Jesus to
the point to of
transformation.



Loving each other to
the point of
sacrifice.



Loving our neighbors to
the point of
action.





OUR CORE VALUES



We value worship.

It is the privilege and the duty of all who have met God to worship and adore Him. Proper worship engages both our minds and our hearts, and it cultivates a balanced sense of awe and intimacy in our approach to God. Our worship style should be culturally relevant while remaining theologically pure. We unite in worship weekly and we cultivate a love relationship with God daily.

We value the Bible.

At the center of the Christian faith is the Word of God. Since God has chosen to reveal Himself through His Word, studying and meditating on the Bible are essential to our relationship with Him. Every believer should be regularly fed through individual reading of the Word, small group Bible study and relevant expository preaching.

We value prayer.

We are committed to developing a church-wide prayer focus, strategy, and organization, utilizing a range of ideas, opportunities, and ministries for meaningful, powerful, and passionate prayer that helps each one to know God more intimately and give Him the worship due Him.

We value grace.

The church should be a place where lost, hurting, and broken people are free to be authentic, while yearning for and moving toward continued growth. Jesus Christ came to seek the lost, heal the brokenhearted, and transform lives to reflect His glory. Transformation does not happen overnight with any of us; it takes place in an environment of both grace and truth - grace that frees us to be transparent about our hurts and failures, and truth that encourages us to continue to walk in obedience to Him.

We value the leadership of elders.

Village Bible Church is led by a group of mature men who seek and submit to the Lord's direction for His church. The living head of the church is Jesus Christ; He alone is the Chief Shepherd. At the same time, in shepherding His flock, Jesus has entrusted its care and protection to a group of mature "under-shepherds" called elders. These men are accountable to the Lord to lead the Body in a way that is consistent with the Word of God and the leading of the Spirit.

We value family.

Village Bible Church is here to encourage and support parents and grandparents in helping children love God with all their hearts! We desire to be a home-centered and church-supported ministry. It is our goal to equip parents to disciple their children in the Christian faith, so that their children will in turn be able one day to disciple their own children.

We value community.

The church is to provide care, support, and training for believers endeavoring to live for God. The ministry of the church is to be carried out by all believers as they use their spiritual gifts to glorify God and build up His body. Since authentic Christian community involves much more than can possibly take place in Sunday morning worship, commitment to a small group should be an essential part of every believer's experience of church.

We value outreach.

The church is in the world not for itself, but for others. We are to be God's witnesses, both at home and around the world. We have been commissioned to make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey all that Christ has commanded us. We have also been commanded to love our neighbors as ourselves, demonstrating by our actions the life-changing power of the Gospel.

OUR LEADERSHIP

A team of elders who uphold the principles of plurality, equality, and consensus leads VBC.



The New Testament scriptures give examples of local churches being led by a plurality of godly leaders. The elders are given the ultimate responsibility and authority to see that the church remains on a Biblical course and the mission of the church is carried out.

They are responsible for shepherding by insuring the feeding of the body through insightful, relevant and accurate Biblical teaching. Elders are to guide the life of the church with the assistance of other spiritually mature individuals.

They are to care for the spiritual well-being of members and regularly pray for the sick. They are to guard the body against harmful influences, confronting those who are contradicting Biblical truth or who are continuing in patterns of sinful behavior [I Peter 5:1-5, Acts 20:28-31, Titus 1:9, James 5:14].

Elder Leadership:

- Although Jesus Christ is the head of His church, the scriptures teach that a local church is to be led by a group of individuals, called elders, whom He has called and gifted to serve.
- The governing authority of Village Bible Church rests with a group of biblically qualified elders.
- The elders are chosen to serve in submission to Christ and to the Word. Collectively, they are responsible for the oversight and spiritual care of the church.
- Flocks: Each elder is responsible for the direct shepherding of a segment of the congregation, which we refer to as a flock group

Three guiding Principles for Elder leadership at VBC

Plurality: Village is led by an entire team of elders - not just one person.

Equality: Each elder has equal status and influence.

Consensus: Decisions are made only when each elder has given his consent.

OUR STRATEGY

Village Bible Church has come to believe that to be a "disciple-making church" is to follow a heavenly model ... a model that Christ Himself took off the drawing board and put into action. By so doing, He changed the world. Now it's our turn.

We seek to fulfill the Great Commission by making disciples who are fully devoted to Jesus Christ.

We seek to follow the scriptural call to "equip the saints for works of service" (Eph.4:12), in order that we might be agents of change in a world desperate to see, feel, and experience the love of God.

It is our goal to equip Christians to change the world through irresistible lifestyles and influential works of service as they live lives that are:

- Biblically measured
- Prayerfully dependent
- Morally pure
- Family centered
- Financially faithful
- Evangelistically bold
- Socially responsible
- Passionately committed



Our Everyday Commission to Make Disciples (Acts 2 & Matthew 28)

- 1.0 Exalting Christ:** *Participate in worship services*
- 2.0 Experiencing Community:** *Become involved in fellowship activities (like ABF)*
- 3.0 Extending Care:** *Begin to give not just receive. (Membership, small groups)*
- 4.0 Edifying the Church:** *Being good stewards of your time, talent, treasure.*
- 5.0 Equipping Christians:** *Growing in our abilities to serve and minister*
- 6.0 Engaging Culture:** *Understanding our culture and reaching out to others*

WHY MEMBERSHIP MATTERS

While all believers are part of the universal church, the New Testament also stresses the importance of all believers being a part of a local church. A local church is comprised of a definable group of people who, on the basis of their commitment to the Lord, have identified themselves with and committed themselves to one another. While membership in a local church does not guarantee one's salvation, it is imperative for all believers to be connected to a body of believers for the sake of encouragement, edification and equipping.

While church membership gives believers certain rights within a local congregation, its purpose is far more biblical. In the God-ordained environment of a local church, members function as one body, building up each other in love according to the rule of Scripture. Throughout Scripture, it is clear that God intended for His people to enter into covenants with Him and with one another. Membership at Village Bible Church is a covenant relationship among fellow believers, as well as with their leaders under Christ. In order to implement the principles of accountability and commitment to the local body of Christ as defined in the New Testament and practiced in the early church, Village Bible Church recognizes the need for formal membership (Acts 11:26; Romans 16:1; 1 Corinthians 1:2; 2 Corinthians 8:1; Philippians 1:1).

12 biblical reasons answering the question, "Why should I join a church?"

1. Personal Safety & Accountability
2. Simple Obedience
3. Granting governing authority of the church
4. Christian Purpose
5. Care
6. Expose false gospels
7. Edify the church
8. Evangelize the world
9. Glorify God
10. A Cultural Reason - It is an Antidote to our Society
11. A Practical Reason - It Defines Who Can Be Counted On
12. A Personal Reason - It Produces Spiritual Growth

➤ For a fuller understanding of these 12 reasons, refer to the booklet *Why Membership?*
www.villagebible.org/distinctives

PURPOSES OF CHURCH MEMBERSHIP

It identifies a person as a committed follower of Christ (Eph 2:9, Rom 12:5).

It provides a spiritual family to support and encourage a person in his or her walk with Christ (Galatians 6:1-2, Hebrews 1:24-25).

It places a person under the spiritual protection and guidance of Christ-centered leaders. (Hebrews 13:17, Acts 20:28-29).

It gives a person the accountability needed to grow spiritually (Ephesians 5:21).

It provides the opportunity to teach and hold offices in the church.

It gives a person the privilege of voting on church matters (if 18 years or older).

FIND YOUR PLACE

Have you wondered: “Where do I fit in?” “Why am I here?” “What can I do to make a lasting difference in my life and the lives of others?” PLACE begins with a comprehensive exploration of the unique gifts and talents of each individual.

Personality Discovery

Learning Spiritual Gifts

Abilities Awareness

Connecting Passion with Ministry

Experiences of Life



Begin the process today! www.villagebible.org/place

PROCESS FOR BECOMING A MEMBER

Qualifications for Membership

Those who give testimony and evidence of their faith in Christ as their Savior and Lord, who have been baptized, who affirm their commitment to follow the Word of God in all matters of faith and practice, and who voluntarily submit themselves to the authority of Village Bible Church are eligible to apply for membership.

Membership Commitments

The commitment is birthed out of our love for the church body and its individual members whom we hope will experience the fullness of joy which is found in the presence of the Lord. The primary purpose of this commitment is to serve as a teaching document with five functions:

- To remind us of our biblical obligations and expectations as part of a community of believers.
- To establish teaching and doctrinal parameters for the church body.
- To serve as a tool for reflection and growth toward holiness – encouraging us to live in humble reliance upon the Holy Spirit as we seek to honor and submit to God.
- To create an environment that draws others toward maturity in Christ and involvement in His Kingdom.

(The entire commitment document can be found at the welcome center or online at: www.villagebible.org/distinctives)

Process for Membership

One who desires to become a member of Village Bible Church and meets the qualifications set forth above is invited to take the following steps:

1. Complete the introductory membership class.
2. Submit an application form to the elders.
3. Read and commit by signature to live in accordance with the *Membership Commitments* of this church.
4. We strongly recommend that you complete the PLACE spiritual gifts assessment prior to your membership interview.
5. Before a team of at least one elder and another member of the church, declare a personal commitment of faith in Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, display evidence of a maturing, active, love relationship with Jesus, and express a clear understanding of the responsibilities of membership.

Maintenance of Membership

Ongoing membership status will be maintained through:

1. Annual signature reaffirmation of the *Membership Commitments*
2. Compliance with the *Membership Commitments*
3. Regular church involvement

MEMBERSHIP QUESTIONNAIRE

Mr./Mrs./Miss: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: (H) _____ (W) _____

Email: _____ Date of Birth: _____

Marital Status: (circle one) S M D

Spouse: _____

Name and city of church in which you last held membership:

Please provide a short description of how and when you received Christ as Lord and Savior.

How has Christ transformed your life since you became a believer?

Have you been baptized? If so, when?

What are some evidences or fruits in your life that would verify the genuineness of your conversion?

If you are able to do so, please identify your spiritual gifts.

In what ways might you like to serve at Village Bible Church?

Having accepted Jesus Christ as my personal Savior and having been baptized since becoming a believer, and being in agreement with VBC's statements, strategy, and structure, I now feel led by the Holy Spirit to unite with the VBC family and be shepherded.

Name

Date

Counseled by: _____ & _____

Date: _____