

NLV community: An organizational overview.

A document like this is necessarily a snapshot of a moment. We are always evaluating how we organize and act. Most of these statements would require further explanation. Our goal is to give the reader a sense of who we are and how we operate.

Our Mission

We are called to be ‘a community living out the words and works of Jesus’.

Our Values

Passionate worship
Intentional discipleship
A lifestyle of justice
Authentic community

These statements are what lead our community. Our mission and these values serve to motivate, guide and direct us. They also help to evaluate what we are doing.

It is not our intention to provide programs that enable people to do the ‘words and works of Jesus’. Instead we choose to create a culture or an environment that encourages people towards

Hearing what God is asking them to do as individuals
Helping people discern where God is already at work in their life

We believe our mission and values will be lived out amongst us as we create such a culture. There are times when this will lead to working with other individuals or groups of people and there are times when we will call our whole community to work together.

As we strive to live out our mission and values we have organized into a multi-congregational model. While remaining one legal organization we gather as smaller congregations in different locations. We completely share our resources with one another. This enables us to experience the intimacy of smaller groupings while enjoying the resources of a larger organization.

We value belonging rather than membership. This means we call people to gather and organize around our mission and values rather than become members by affirming doctrinal or denominational statements.

The Bible is our foundational story, which we seek to understand and live out in a way that is faithfully and recognizably consistent with the story of Jesus Christ.

We hold to the Apostles Creed and the Nicene Creed as true doctrinal statements and a valuable profession of Christian belief and faith. (See note at end of document)

We recognize that different people will be at different stages of their spiritual journey and that we may not all agree about everything. We value differences of opinion around non-essential ideas and items.

We want to impart our values, practices and beliefs in a relational and contextual manner. We hope all 'equipping' will happen by learning as we participate. We learn corporately, in small groups, in mentoring relationships, through personal study and most importantly by practicing what we learn.

Our Practices

Meeting weekly or bi-weekly as congregations to worship, pray and eat together in the presence of Jesus, telling the foundational biblical story and learning how to live that story out and for mutual support and sharing

Gathering in small groups or 'house' groups to share our lives

Gathering for prayer and other spiritual practices

Working on behalf of the poor, including serving and building relationships with poor and marginalized people

Creativity, including but not limited to, songwriting, visual arts, creative writing and performing arts

Intentional gatherings outside of Sunday meetings to pursue mentoring and discipleship

Extending hospitality to one another

Youth and children's groups

Our Personality

Every church community has a character or personality. Our NLV personality would best be described with words like:

Relational

Informal

Authentic

Collaborative

Our Leadership Structure

We have spent a great amount of time thinking about and discussing our structure and are still working out what it might look like. We believe Jesus Christ leads our church and our goal is to listen to Him. To this end our leadership groups are team-based and work through a process of consensus.

All leadership positions, including paid staff, are appointed by our elders through a process of consultation and consensus with our congregations and leadership teams. While we may not always agree, in an environment of mutual trust and submission, we hope to come to a place where we can say that our decisions ‘seem good to us and to the Holy Spirit’ (Acts 15:28)

Our hope is to keep meetings to a minimum and help people process their own decisions within the groups and relationships they have established.

Leadership meetings should be marked by a balance of relationship, prayer and sharing, as much as by church business. All groups and teams have input into managing our financial resources.

NLV elders

This is a team of people responsible for leading the NLV community. Some are remunerated for the time they give to leading the church while others receive no financial compensation. Their role is to influence the life of our community by:

- Communicating and modeling our mission and values
- Teaching people how to hear and recognize God
- Helping congregations and staff stay accountable to the mission and values
- Praying for the church
- Listening to the voice of the Holy Spirit and discerning His leading for the church
- Facilitating church discipline issues

Congregational leadership teams

These teams are comprised of people who are influential and functionally leading in the life of a congregation. Aside from functional leadership we also look for people who attend regularly, serve, give generously and have Godly character. These teams are responsible for leading individual congregations by:

- Communicating and modeling our mission and values,
- Teaching people how to hear and recognize God
- Encouraging the congregation and individual people to live out the mission and values
- Praying for the church and leadership
- Supporting and encouraging leadership
- Practicing discernment by being the ‘eyes and ears’ of the congregation

Congregational Pastors

Congregational pastors will give general oversight to a congregation. They will be part of their congregational leadership team and part of the NLV elders.

We value the pastoral role carried out through a variety of different tasks and disciplines, including but not limited to:

- Prayer
- Reading scripture
- Giving spiritual direction
- Facilitating vision
- Leadership development and implementation

We recognize that as we grow and plant new and unique congregations it is conceivable that they may not choose or require congregational pastors.

NLV staff

These are people who are remunerated for their roles in the life of the community. We understand that some tasks take more time than can be realistically expected of someone who volunteers their time. Their task is not to undertake the mission on behalf of others but to help as many people as possible actively engage in community life. These staff may include but are not limited to:

- Congregational Pastors
- Administrative staff/accounting/communications
- Youth/children's leaders
- Worship leaders

NLV directors

We are legally required as a Canadian charitable organization to have a board of directors. This group is responsible for the financial and legal aspects of our community. They are responsible for entering into legal contracts and for giving financial guidance such as creating and approving an annual budget. The directors are legally responsible and liable for the decisions and actions of our community.

Our Affiliation

We belong to Vineyard Churches Canada: a family of churches connected through committed relationship and recognizing functional and relational authority, bound and shaped by a common Kingdom theology.

Additional Networks and Friends

Beyond our own church community we have a broad network of relationships and friendships with which we connect, pray, visit, serve, and share resources, etc. these include, but are not limited to:

- Friends and informal groups in our neighbourhood
- Other churches in our city and neighbourhood (Walnut Grove Lutheran Church in particular).
- Jacob's Well, Positive Haven, Opportunity International
- Members of our community serving in foreign countries

The Creeds

The Nicene Creed

We believe in one God, the Father, the Almighty,
Maker of heaven and earth, of all that is, seen and unseen.
We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only son of God,
Eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light,
True God from true God, begotten, not made,
Of one being with the Father.
Through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation he came down from heaven:
By the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary,
And was made man.
For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;
He suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures;
He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,
And his kingdom will have no end.
We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,
Who proceeds from the Father [and the Son].
With the Father and the Son he is worshipped and glorified.
He has spoken through the Prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic Church.
We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.
AMEN.

The Apostles Creed

I believe in God, the Father Almighty, the Creator of heaven and earth,
And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord:

Who was conceived of the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary,
Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried.
He descended into hell.

The third day He arose again from the dead.

He ascended into heaven

And sits at the right hand of God the Father Almighty,
Whence He shall come to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic church,

The communion of saints,

The forgiveness of sins,

The resurrection of the body, and life everlasting.

AMEN.