

# Gateway Mission Statement

## Heart transformation through a personal faith in Jesus Christ is our primary focus.

Our purpose is to glorify God by becoming a community of faith through whom Christ can reveal His glory on earth and through whom His purposes can be accomplished. We exist to adore Him, to follow Him, to serve Him, and to share Him.

A verse of scripture that has great relevance at Gateway Community Church is: "If, when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of His Son, how much more, being reconciled, we shall be saved through His life" (Romans 5:10).

This verse declares that Christ's death on the cross is God's way of saving us from the penalty of our selfish behavior. We enter into this salvation through personal faith that is choosing to depend on Christ alone as the one who satisfied all the demands of God's holiness in our place. Because this is true, we are able to receive forgiveness as a free gift.

But there is so much more to the Christian life than just being forgiven. Every individual who accepts Christ as personal Savior receives a second gift . . . the gift of the Holy Spirit. He takes up residence in the life of the believer. What does it mean to be indwelt by the Holy Spirit? It means that Christ Himself is now at home in our hearts! This is what the Bible means when it describes our decision to follow Christ as "new birth."

At Gateway, our emphasis is on the faith process which activates our new life in Christ. We are learning how to "walk in the Spirit." We are learning how to be instruments through which the glory and love of God might be experienced on earth. In the gospels we see Jesus empower His disciples to preach the kingdom of God and to substantiate their words with the authority to deliver, to heal, and to bring life from death. We don't just want to talk about Jesus and become activity oriented. We want to know Him. We want to listen to Him and obey Him. We want to be pure and responsive instruments through which His Kingdom power can be felt on earth.

As Gateway believers, we:

1. are committed to breaking down barriers that hinder true "Community". Jesus said, "I have given them the glory . . . that they may be one . . . ." As we catch a glimpse of the glory of Christ, we will share His passion for a Body that is united in the midst of its natural diversity. Our fellowship is comprised of people from mainline, evangelical and charismatic backgrounds who are united through Christ's Lordship in our hearts.
2. are committed to being a family. Our success is related to helping each other know God and care for each other's needs, and to encourage each other to bring the light of Christ's love to those outside of our family of faith.
3. expect God's Glory to be revealed through our Body. We believe that the church assembled is a spiritual beacon through whom God reveals His glory on earth. As we worship, we expect God

to manifest His presence through worship, preaching, caring relationships, powerful answers to prayer, and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.

4. reach out because we care for hurting people. We believe that God is glorified as we help others to know and follow Christ. Jesus told His disciples: "This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples" (John 15:8). Gateway has an outward focus. We want to be used to bring people to Christ. The most natural way of sharing Christ is through meaningful relationships. Through our friendships, we find a natural avenue of bringing Christ's love to others.

## **Doctrinal Foundation: A Statement of Shared Beliefs**

We acknowledge the need of a common truth base to bind us together. Therefore, in addition to being united by our spiritual rebirth through personal faith in Christ's saving work, we hold the following truths to be essential components of our shared life:

1. There is but one God in heaven (Deuteronomy 6:4), existing as three coeternal Persons-God the Father, Jesus Christ His Son, and the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19)-to whom every human being is accountable and responsible (Romans 14:10). This Triune God is perfect in both love and holiness (I John 4:8) (I Peter 1:15).
2. The Bible is God's inspired, accurate and complete revelation of redemptive truth which is both timeless and binding upon all humanity (II Timothy 3:16-17) (II Peter 1:20-21).
3. Jesus Christ, God's unique Son, though eternally and fully God, became truly human and lived on earth as a man in order to become the source of our salvation (Galatians 4:4) (Romans 9:5) (I John 4:2).
4. The bible accurately declares that Jesus Christ was born of a virgin (Matthew 1:22-23), lived a sinless life (Hebrews 4:15), was sacrificed on the cross for our sins (I Peter 3:18), rose bodily from the grave in resurrection triumph (Romans 1:4) is now ascended to the right hand of the Father (Mark 16:19) (Acts 7:55), and will one day return to earth to judge both the living and the dead (II Timothy 4:1).
5. Man is naturally selfish and sinful (Ephesians 2:1-3), separated from God (Isaiah 59:2), and completely unable to save himself through good deeds and religious rites (Titus 3:5) (Isaiah 64:6).
6. Our salvation was made possible through the saving work of Jesus Christ who was crucified on the cross as our sin bearer and who rose again from the dead as the source of our new life (II Corinthians 5:21) (Romans 6:4, 11).
7. We are justified (pardoned from all our sins) through personal faith in Jesus Christ alone (Ephesians 2:8-9) (Romans 3:24-25), at a point in time called conversion, and therefore, can know the genuine assurance of both sins forgiven and new life in Christ (Romans 5:1, 8:1).

8. Christians are totally dependent on the power of the Holy Spirit, who indwells every believer and bestows spiritual gifts on each for the benefit of the whole Body (Romans 8:9) (I Corinthians 12:13). As the Spirit is allowed to fill us (Ephesians 5:18), we are given power to overcome sin (Galatians 5:16), to become passionate lovers of Christ, to be His witnesses (Acts 1:7), and to reveal the glory of God.

9. The visible church on earth is called to reflect the nature and glory of the invisible Body of Christ (I Corinthians 12:27) and commit itself to fulfilling the Great Commission, sharing in spiritual worship, developing fully devoted followers of Christ, and serving both its people and community (John 14:12-13).

10. When Christ comes again, He will judge the living and the dead (Romans 14:12) (II Timothy 4:1) (Acts 10:42). Those who have trusted Him as Savior will spend eternity with Him in heaven (Hebrews 9:27-28) (I Thessalonians 5:9-10). Those who reject Him "will be punished with everlasting destruction" (II Thessalonians 1:7-9). Justice will one day prevail both in heaven and on earth. Our actions, attitudes and choices have eternal significance. We are personally responsible for the way we live (II Corinthians 5:10).

### **Congregational Distinctives: A Statement of Shared Values**

If one were to study the history of the church in the twentieth century, he/she would discover that most church splits are not doctrinal in nature. Christians are more likely to break fellowship with each other over more subtle issues. It is vitally important to agree on practical values that need to be embraced by everyone if the congregation is to be spiritually healthy. In other words, unity is as much a result of shared values (distinctives) as it is of shared beliefs (doctrinal foundation). Our uniqueness as a congregation can best be understood by studying the following ten distinctives which give us a special flavor:

1. As a first principle, we are an expression of the Body of Christ through whom He is able to reveal Himself on earth. As we yield our lives to Christ and walk in the Spirit, God uses us to reveal His truth, love and power.

2. Biblically, we are evangelical because we declare that Jesus Christ, as presented in the gospel, is the only hope of salvation to every person on earth. Our mission is to bring Christ to the ends of the earth.

3. Congregationally, we are inclusive because we believe that our body is mature enough to embrace all who know Christ as Savior and Lord, and who are committed to living in obedience to God's Word. Christians from evangelical, charismatic, mainline denominations and no church background at all are equally welcome in our fellowship.

4. Spiritually, we are committed to substance rather than appearance; godliness rather than mere outward morality. Nothing less than a "grace awakened" heart and sincere devotion to Christ will satisfy us. It is not pastoral intimidation, but the fullness of the Spirit that transforms us.

5. Culturally, we are diverse because we are able to distinguish between the absolute truths we cherish and the forms we use to worship the God of truth. We confess that the forms we prefer are influenced by personal taste, background, and perhaps, our age. We honor these divergent tastes by providing cultural choices in worship.

6. Structurally, we are a small church. In our home fellowships, we find pastoral care, spiritual accountability, and intimate friendships. These groups are central to our congregational health.

7. Philosophically, we are a family because the Bible addresses us as "brothers and sisters" in the "household of faith." When teaching is Biblical and relevant, when love is real, and when commitments and relationships matter, the congregation will grow.

8. Clinically, we are a hospital offering hope to the hopeless, care to the needy, and a second chance to those who have tasted personal failure.

9. Tactically, we are spiritual soldiers standing together and engaged in intense warfare against spiritual powers of darkness intent on destroying our fellowship with God. This conflict can only be won through prayer, fasting, praise, repentance from all sin, and the skillful use of our spiritual armor.

10. Strategically, we are super-naturalists who believe in the miraculous power of God. We believe He can do anything. Our great need is to learn how to listen to Him and do what He asks. Our hope does not rest in planning alone, but in prayer and in complete dependence upon the power of God.