



Vision Packet

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Vision Snapshot

Mission Statement: *building lives together on Jesus*

Vision Statement: *a growing culture that connects & renews our region*

Values Statement: *we are a replicating community of worshipping servants*

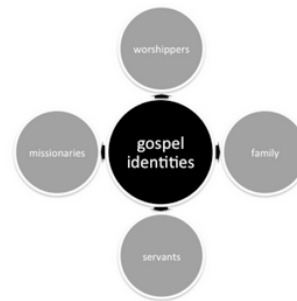
GOSEPL IDENTITIES	CORNERSTONE VALUES
<i>Worshippers</i>	Worship
<i>Family</i>	Community
<i>Servants</i>	Service
<i>Missionaries</i>	Replication

As WORSHIPPERS, we value WORSHIP (PHILIPPIANS 3:3)

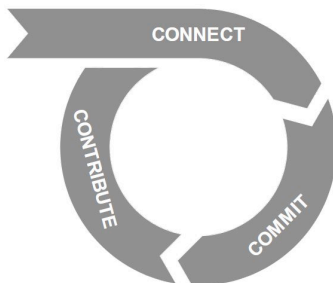
As FAMILY, we value COMMUNITY (ROMANS 8:15-17)

As SERVANTS, we value SERVICE (MARK 10:42-45)

As MISSIONARIES, we value REPLICATION (MATTHEW 28:18-20)



Building Strategy: *connect with outsiders so that they **commit** to Jesus and **contribute** to His mission*



1. CONNECT	2. COMMIT	3. CONTRIBUTE
- invest & invite	- conversion/baptism	- teams
- community groups	- membership	- groups
- special events	- groups & fight clubs	- giving
- web & social media	- training & mentoring	- leadership

Our Mission

What are we here to do? Our mission is what we are here to do and determines our success or failure as a church – it is our “win.” According to our website, our mission is “to worship the Lord Jesus Christ, become more like Him and continue to make disciples for Him.” Of course, the church’s mission is disciple-making and we can state this a number of ways, but if the whole church is going to be on mission then we need to state it so that it is understandable, memorable, and reproducible.

*What is the difference between **purpose** and **mission**?*

	PURPOSE	MISSION
Question	<i>Why do we exist?</i>	<i>What are we supposed to be doing?</i>
Scope	Broad	Narrow
Intent	To glorify God	To make disciples
Focus	God	Man
Use	Internal and external	Internal

What Biblical text or metaphor is shaping your mission?

1 Peter 2:4-7 As you come to him, a **living stone** rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, 5 you yourselves like living stones are **being built up as a spiritual house**, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. 6 For it stands in Scripture: "Behold, I am laying in Zion a stone, a **cornerstone** chosen and precious, and whoever believes in him will not be put to shame." 7 So the honor is for you who believe, but for those who do not believe, "The stone that the builders rejected has become the **cornerstone**."

The re-stated mission of Cornerstone Church is...

building lives together on Jesus

This is our take on the Great Commission that Jesus gave to the Church to “go and make disciples of all nations...baptizing them...teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you” (Matthew 28:18-20). Just as our name “Cornerstone” indicates, we believe that Jesus is the necessary building block for everyone, so we are committed as His people to helping everyone we encounter to build their lives on Him. Everyone is building their lives, identities, righteousness, values, and character on something. The good news is that Jesus is the only viable foundation that can both secure us through God’s judgment and satisfy us forever - and anyone can be gathered to Him!

Our Vision

What can we see? Our vision is what we can see our church being and doing in the future – this is our direction. The vision particularizes the mission – it provides a specific picture of mission success. Andy Stanley has well said – “a broken heart is fertile ground for vision.”

What is the difference between a mission and a vision?

	MISSION	VISION
Definition	statement	snapshot
Length	short	long
Purpose	informs	inspires
Activity	knowing	seeing
Focus	broad	narrow

If the mission is building lives together on Jesus, then what does that look like in reality?

We want to be a growing culture that connects and renews our region.

When lives are built together on Jesus, it naturally creates a community built on Jesus. But what we are seeing is not just a community (singular) built on Jesus, but a network of communities (plural) that multiply through replicating Jesus’ DNA in our lives and our localities. Thus **we see different kinds of Gospel communities being created from families, Cornerstone community groups, smaller “fight clubs”, to networks for work, arts, and justice, and new churches.**

You know you are in New Hampshire, right? Good luck...

We know that sounds difficult, especially in a place like New Hampshire where it can be hard to do community because we are so spread out. But that is exactly why we believe New Hampshire needs this kind of Gospel ambition. As New Hampshireites, **we have succumbed to a mentality of “isolated independence”** (see “Behind Our Vision” on page 5) that is detrimental to New Hampshire’s future. On the one hand, we are increasingly seeking isolation as our rural populations grow and there is hardly any urban growth. It is obvious that **we tend to like trees more than we like people in New Hampshire.** On the other hand, our slogan betrays our worship of freedom and independence – “Live free or die”. While of course, no one wants to be oppressed, and freedom is something that we all want, **the dark side of freedom is self-sufficiency.** Self-sufficiency casts the illusion that we don’t need anybody, but the truth is that we all need each other.

So how can the Gospel help?

We believe that **the Gospel of Jesus connects and renews people by gathering us together to build, or more accurately, rebuild our lives on Him.** Our fundamental problem is that we have decided to build our lives on God-replacements or pseudo-gods. This has not only driven us away from God, but it has alienated us from each other and left us all broken. The good news is that **Jesus came as the incarnation of God to show us the beauty and glory of a life fully built on God and to suffer the consequences for us building our lives on everything but God.** It is through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus that God restores our identity through faith and connects all people groups by His Spirit into a replicating community of worshipping servants. **When Jesus renews us with this new DNA, He creates in His people eternal friendships, interdependent partnerships, and a vibrant and creative culture that makes our world more like heaven.** In other words, He brings spiritual renewal that leads to social renewal, which in turn leads to cultural renewal.

Who do you think you are?

We are certainly not perfect, nor do we have it all figured out, but **we believe that God is calling Cornerstone Church to be a missional Gospel hub in southern New Hampshire** with spokes that at least extend throughout Rockingham county and perhaps beyond. We want to be a nimble, simple, strategic, and focused church that can make a significant redemptive impact in our region. **We hope to raise up more leaders, multiply Gospel communities, partner with other churches, plant new churches, revitalize old churches, inspire Gospel-minded entrepreneurs and creatives, and stoke a growing culture of Gospel grace that will last generations.**

Behind Our Vision: Understanding “Isolated Independence”

We are describing the social and spiritual climate of New Hampshire as one of “isolated independence”. By “isolated,” we mean that the vast majority of the state lives in rural areas and people like to spread out from each other. By “independent,” we mean that many in New Hampshire highly value freedom from the government, from each other, and from God in the pursuit of self-sufficiency. This is what is breaking our hearts.

Isolating Ourselves

According to a 2012 study of the Carsey Institute at UNH, rural growth rates are exceeding urban growth rates in NH. This was measured by looking at the growth of the three metropolitan counties (Hillsborough, Rockingham, & Strafford) as compared to the other rural counties.¹ These three counties total roughly 62% of the state’s 1.3 million residents and they happen to be the most southern of NH’s counties. They are only growing at a rate of 6.3% compared to 6.9% growth in the other nonmetropolitan counties, which goes against the national trend:²

“Compared to other states, the percentage of New Hampshire’s population residing in rural areas is disproportionately large. Some 38 percent of its residents live in nonmetropolitan counties compared to just 16 percent nationally. New Hampshire is also unusual in that its rural population increased at a higher rate than its urban population.”

To put our local “ruralness” in perspective, the combined population of every town touching Plaistow (Atkinson, Hampstead, Danville, Kingston, & Newton), and including Plaistow itself, is just over 39,000. The population of Haverhill, MA is just over 60,000.

Give Me Freedom

Moreover, the culture of NH worships its independence. With a slogan like “live free or die” it is obvious that freedom/control is a root idol. This is evidenced by an attitude that is resistant to government interference (no sales or income tax) and aid (low on unemployment and welfare benefits relative to other states), which values land and property ownership, and that tends toward being rural and private.

This propensity toward self-sufficiency seems to be bleeding into the spiritual landscape of southern NH specifically. According to the recent US Censuses, the population of our area (Rockingham County) is increasing but the churches are declining:³

The population of Rockingham County, New Hampshire was 277,359 in 2000; in 1990 it was 245,845. The total population changed 12.8%. **The adherent totals of the religious groups listed above (150,252) included 54.2% of the total population in 2000.**

The population of Rockingham County, New Hampshire was 295,223 in 2010; in 2000 it was 277,359. The total population changed 6.4%. **The adherent totals of the religious groups listed above (114,915) included 38.9% of the total population in 2010.**

So, in the last 25 years, our area has grown by 20% but in the last 15 years the percentage of people who claim some religious affiliation has declined by 15%. This “rise of the nones” is not unique to NH and is part of a national trend.⁴ However, what is very troubling is that only 2.5% (7,456) of the 295,223 people in Rockingham County consider themselves Evangelical Protestants. In fact, more people consider themselves liberal or Mainline Protestant (6.5%) than Evangelical.

¹ It would seem that labeling these three counties as “metropolitan” is even an exaggeration, but it is a sociological classification since each of these counties has at least one “metropolitan” area: Manchester (Hillsborough), Nashua (Strafford), & Portsmouth (Rockingham).

² Kenneth M. Johnson, “New Hampshire Demographic Trends in the Twenty-First Century,” *Reports on New England* Number 4 (2012): 21,

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³ The Association of Religion Data Archives (http://www.thearda.com/rcms2010/r/c/33/rcms2010_33015_county_name_2000_ON.asp)

⁴ see “Nones on the Rise” (<http://www.pewforum.org/2012/10/09/nones-on-the-rise/>), “Losing Our Religion: The Growth of the ‘Nones’” (<http://www.npr.org/blogs/thetwo-way/2013/01/14/169164840/losing-our-religion-the-growth-of-the-nones>), and James Emery White, *The Rise of the Nones* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2014)

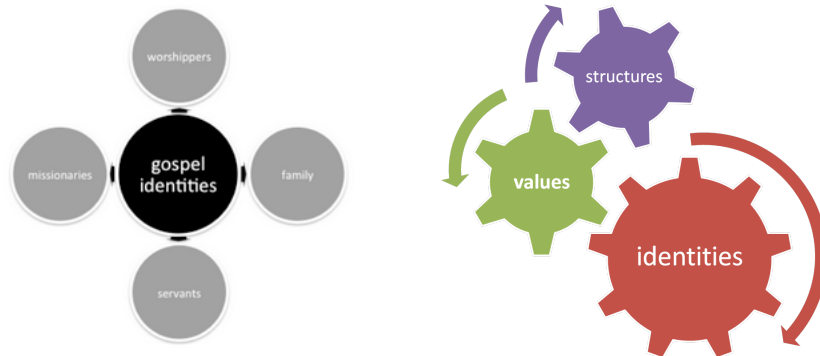
Our Core Values

What are we about? Our core values shape our culture as a church – they are our priorities. They provide the filters through which we can assess the health of our character as a church. Originally there were five guiding principles: 1. The Glory of God, 2. The Teaching of the Word, 3. The Life of Worship, 4. The Love of the Members, 5. The Ministry of Reconciliation. We have sought to condense these and tie them to who we are in Christ.

Values Statement: *we are a replicating community of worshipping servants*

GOSEPL IDENTITIES*	CORNERSTONE VALUES
<i>Worshippers</i>	Worship
<i>Family</i>	Community
<i>Servants</i>	Service
<i>Missionaries</i>	Replication

**Identity matters - who we are determines what is important to us, what is important to us determines what we do*



As WORSHIPPERS, we value WORSHIP (PHILIPPIANS 3:3)

- as creatures, we were made to relate to and image forth God
- we treasure Jesus above all else because He connects and renews us to God
- we worship as a lifestyle and in all contexts for the glory of God
- we believe that God is BIG and we are part of His story

As FAMILY, we value COMMUNITY (ROMANS 8:15-17)

- the community of the Godhead reached out to connect us and bring us into their fellowship
- the church is the children of God, the Bride of Christ, God's household, and Christ's body
- as Family, we embrace hardship and conflict together with love and forgiveness
- Gospel community gathers people from different backgrounds, nationalities, and walks of life

As SERVANTS, we value SERVICE (MARK 10:42-45)

- knowing that Jesus has served us, we are free to care for the needs of others
- stewarding our gifts and resources to meet relational and operational needs
- partnering with others to make our neighborhoods, towns, and region better
- developing leaders that shepherd and serve our growing culture of Gospel grace

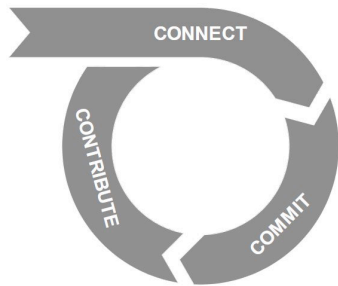
As MISSIONARIES, we value REPLICATION (MATTHEW 28:18-20)

- after Jesus accomplished His rescue mission, He sent us to represent Him & proclaim His victory
- by the Spirit, we want to see Jesus' DNA reproduced in us and others
- we are commissioned to replicate the life of Jesus in both individuals and communities
- supporting, sending, and participating in God's global mission

Our “Building” Strategy

What is the process? Our strategy lays out the steps as to how we go about accomplishing our mission and realizing our vision – this is our path. Structures and systems need to be developed out of our strategy so we can gain traction and not produce “sideways energy” (activity with no progress). We should be able to evaluate everyone in the church by what “step” they are on.

Building Strategy: *connect* with outsiders so that they **commit** to Jesus and **contribute** to His mission



1. CONNECT	2. COMMIT	3. CONTRIBUTE
- Sunday worship	- conversion/baptism	- teams
- community groups	- membership	- groups
- special events	- groups & fight clubs	- giving
- web & social media	- training & mentoring	- leadership

1. **Connect** – we invest in and invite outsiders into the life of the church

- we invite newcomers to corporate worship, community groups, service projects, & special events
- using our website and social media to engage & stay engaged with our community and networks
- using choice advertising in our region to invite outsiders into the life of the church at key moments

(measured by our invites, site traffic, and newcomers)

2. **Commit** – we disciple through preaching, community groups, and focused training

- bringing unbelievers to a place of faith in the Gospel of Jesus and see them baptized
- inviting believers to join the mission through membership
- providing training opportunities, smaller “Fight Clubs”, and personal mentoring

(measured by conversions, baptisms, new members, and attendance on Sundays and in groups)

3. **Contribute** – we deploy servants in our service teams and community mission

- giving people opportunities to use their gifts by serving on different teams and having roles in groups
- encouraging people to give and to invite their families, friends, neighbors, & co-workers
- empowering leaders to expand our vision and take us to the next level

(measured by volunteers, leaders, giving, groups involvement)