



VICTOR
BAPTIST CHURCH

— DISCOVER CLASS —

Student Edition

**DISCOVERING VBC:
Our Heart, Passion, and Aim...**

About Our Pastor's Family //////////////////////////////////////

Michael and Caitlyn Graham have been serving in ministry for over 17 years. They met in a ministry training program in Los Angeles, CA back in 2007. Michael was Caitlyn's leader, and long story short, through much prayer, married in 2008, and now have three children (Lily, Arabella, and Haddon). Michael and Caitlyn both share a deep passion to reach people far from God, make disciples, help the broken, and show the love of Christ in spreading the gospel. god called them to serve at VBC in February, 2023, where Michael now serves as Lead Pastor.

They have been passionate about God's *local church*, and see it as *God's game plan* to reach people far from God with the hope of Jesus Christ. We will be seeking to fulfill this in Victor, IA and the surrounding areas.

THE DNA OF VICTOR BAPTIST //////////////////////////////////////

>>> VBC is currently a North American Baptist (NAB) Church

We are affiliated with the North American Baptist Conference, with its headquarters in Oakbrook Terrace, Illinois. This is a partnership of over 400 like-minded Baptist churches in the US and Canada, that share a burden and desire to reach the lost and make disciples. This association is pressing forward to make churches healthier, revitalize dying ones, help churches take on a missional-identity, and also be a part of planting more churches in our joint efforts to reach the world for Jesus.

>>> WHAT KIND OF CHURCH IS VBC?

We are a _____ church.

In simplicity, this means that we hold to a couple important truths that make us distinct from other denominations of Christ-believing churches. We will cover just a couple...

First, we believe the Bible teaches that **baptism** should be done by _____ which means a person should be lowered beneath the water, and raised up out of it (the way Jesus was in Matthew 3:16). Furthermore, the Greek word used in the command to "baptize" people in obedience to the Great Commission is the word "**baptidzomai**" which means "to sink" in water. (Matthew 28:19)

We believe the New Testament teaches that **only those who** _____ **in Christ's work for them should be baptized.** This is why we don't baptize unbelieving children of believers. (Ezekiel 36 also highlights who would be "in" the new covenant, and shows it is only those who have been *born again by faith* in Jesus).

Another distinction in being Baptist is that we believe in the _____ of the local church. This means that we do not believe that each local church needs to submit to any religious hierarchical structure of authority, but **that God has given his Word (the Bible) and the Holy Spirit to be the only authority over the local church,** to hold her accountable, guide her, and make her fruitful in the world. This alone is the authority each church should submit to.

THE HEART OF VBC //

We are a _____ church, as this is the only true kind in Scripture.

“May **the God of hope** fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may **abound in hope.**“

ROMANS 15:13 (ESV)

“For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you **a future and a hope.**”

JEREMIAH 29:11 (ESV)

“But this I call to mind, and **therefore I have hope:** The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.”

LAMENTATIONS 3:21-23 (ESV)

“Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again **to a living hope** through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead...”

1 PETER 1:3 (ESV)

OUR VISION //

(What we exist for)

*“To see people from everyday life
experience the hope of knowing Christ.”*

We will do all we do as a church to bring glory to God, lift up and spread the gospel, and see people *find* and *grow* in the hope there is only found in Christ.

OUR MISSION //////////////////////////////////////

(How we will do it)

“By making and mobilizing followers of Jesus where we live, work, and play.”

We seek to reach people far from God as well as intentionally disciple our people who have already trusted in Christ, to grow in becoming more and more like Jesus and then learn to turn around and make disciples themselves as they mature in Christ. This is what we mean by “make and mobilize” followers of Jesus. And when disciples who live in the world start to grow and learn how to reach people in their everyday life (where they live, work, and play) and disciple them... this is when we see the true power of the local church as God’s plan to fulfill the Great Commission.

Our Vision & Mission come from what Jesus said the Church would exist for:

“Go and make disciples, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; teaching them to obey all that I have commanded you...”

– Matthew 28:19-20

OUR AIM //////////////////////////////////////

(What we seek to do *with newcomers*)

We want to give people...

- 1) A _____ to belong. (Community)
- 2) A _____ to walk in. (Commission)
- 3) A _____ for Jesus. (Christ)

OUR VALUES //////////////////////////////////////

These **six values** define the culture and heart of our church. We want all that we do to be saturated with these values, and adorning the gospel.

1 _____

We know life can be hard & people are sinful. We know we are all in need of God’s grace for us to be saved, to grow, to change, and to live out our God-given purpose in life. At VBC, our hope is that you won’t find a bunch of people who think they are awesome. You will only find sinners, saved by grace who know they need Jesus as much as anyone else. We value being a safe place where people can share about life, struggles, and issues, and be met with grace, love, encouragement, and help. We all can relate. You are not alone. You won’t have to “fake it” here.

2 _____

The ‘Gospel’ is the truth that Jesus (the Son of God) willingly came to earth, taking on flesh, and lived the perfect life you should have, died the death you deserved, and rose from the dead conquering sin and death in your place. This means that if you trust in Jesus (and all he did for you) you will be forgiven of all your sins, and find new life in Him. This is the universal testimony of God’s breath-taking love. We deserved to be condemned for our sins, yet God wanted to save and forgive us. We will live and die on this hill called ‘the Gospel’ because it is the “good news” of how we are saved, how we grow, and how we persevere in life. The Gospel is *everything*.

3 _____

At VBC, we value relationships as one of our main priorities. God himself exists in an eternal 3-in-1 relationship (between God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit called the ‘Trinity’). We were all created in His image with the inherent need and desire for relationship with God and others. This is why we will intentionally seek to cultivate real, genuine relationships, to see people go from visitors, to friends, to spiritual family. We will fight for relationship because we know we are all imperfect and all need grace from each other continually. We care about you, and want to know you.

4

We are devoted to multiplying Disciples, Leaders, Small Groups, & Churches. We are committed as a church to "Go + Grow" in these specific ways. We will intentionally set out to reach people far from God, and make disciples who make **disciples**. We will intentionally commit to raise up **leaders** for Kingdom impact. We will set out to be multiplying our **small groups** to better reach, engage, and disciple more people. We are also committed as a church to multiply **Churches**. This is simply a biblical call. This means that we desire to be actively involved in raising up and sending people to plant more disciple-making churches to reach more of the world for Jesus in the future.

5

Our entire Faith is built upon the firm foundation of God's Word (the Bible). We believe that God's Word is sufficient for all we need to live for, and glorify God in this life. We believe the Bible is the inerrant (no error in it) and inspired (God's actual divine Word revealed) book given to us from God to lead us into all of God's purposes for us as followers of Jesus. Through God's Word we come to know Jesus, grow in Him, and follow him. Our hope in Jesus is built upon the firm, perfect, unfailing, and unchanging foundation of God's Word and what it teaches. We believe it is eternal in application and relevant for every age and generation. It still speaks to us fully today.

6

The Bible refers to *all people who don't yet know Jesus* as "the Harvest." It's all too easy for Christians and churches to get inward focused and lose sight of the Great Commission that Jesus left the church with. We as a church are committing to always have an intentional pursuit of the harvest. We will be a people that grow in having an "eye for non-believers" and a heart that commits to pursue them in relationship and love. We will exist to answer God's call when he commanded His church to "Go and make disciples." We want to be an answer to the problem that Jesus told us to pray for when He said "the harvest is plenty, but the laborers are few". Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest that he would send out laborers." We want to be a church full of laborers, passionately pursuing to reach non-believers.

DISCIPLESHIP //////////////////////////////////////

We believe that Jesus has called churches to fulfill the Great Commission by making disciples. We take King Jesus very seriously, and seek to do this very *intentionally*.

And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. **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, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

MATTHEW 28:18-20

SO, WHAT IS A DISCIPLE?

In order for us to truly fulfill the great commission, **we must first define what a disciple is**, so we know what we are seeking to “make” people into as we obey Jesus’ orders.

And Jesus said to them, “**Follow me, and I will make you become fishers of men.**”

MARK 1:17

THE DEFINITION OF A DISCIPLE:

*According to Jesus, it is **someone who is...***

- 1) _____ Jesus
- 2) _____ by Jesus
- 3) _____ with Jesus.

WHAT DOES A DISCIPLE DO?

We summarize the New Testament's teaching into *four main responsibilities* that every follower of Jesus has in life. We call these "The Four Priorities of a Disciple"

THE FOUR PRIORITIES OF A DISCIPLE:

1) **WE** _____.

Commit to being a humble learner. Grow in your knowledge of Jesus, His Word (the Bible), and plan for you. We want to learn, so that we can grow.

2) **WE** _____.

Commit to grow in who you are. This means that you are going to seek to let God transform you little by little to be more like Jesus, and to live out all that he has for you. Grow in your "character and passion" for Jesus. Grow in your abilities and gifts. We pursue growth.

3) **WE** _____.

Commit to being generous, **by sacrificially giving of our:**

1. _____ - by serving, and attending service/groups.
2. _____ - by using your gifts to serve the church/city.
3. _____ - by giving financially, joyfully, and sacrificially.

We seek to be percentage givers. (10% of our income – a "tithe").

>>> A "TITHE" means "a tenth" (10%)

Leviticus 27:30 says "A **tenth** (tithe) of the produce of the land, whether grain or fruit, is the Lord's, and is holy." And **Proverbs 3:9** says, "Honor the Lord with **your wealth**, with the **first fruits** of all your crops."

4) **WE** _____.

Commit to live with Jesus on mission by inviting, as well as living and sharing the hope of Jesus in everyday life.

1. **GO by** _____ people to **services, groups, & into our lives.**
2. **GO by building** _____ with those around you who are far from _____, but close to _____.

CHURCH STRUCTURE //////////////////////////////////////

The overall structure of our church is intentionally _____.

We make disciples in _____ main environments:

> OUR DISCIPLESHIP ENVIRONMENTS

1) _____ — Where we *celebrate and worship* together.

“Instead find the site that God, your God, will choose and mark it with his name as a common center for all the tribes of Israel. Assemble there. **Bring** to that place your Absolution-Offerings and sacrifices, **your tithes** and Tribute- Offerings, your Vow-Offerings, your Freewill-**Offerings**, and the firstborn of your herds and flocks. Feast there **in the Presence of God**, your God. **Celebrate everything** that you and your families have accomplished under the blessing of God, your God.”

Deuteronomy 12:5-7

Our Sunday service is one where we celebrate the love of God and the gospel — passionately. We come together and celebrate, because in Christ we are forgiven, loved, and fully accepted by God.

We use Sunday morning to enjoy the full expression of VBC, and worship our God through singing, giving, praying, and learning/applying God’s Word.

Our Goals for Sunday mornings **are two-fold**:

1. That _____ would be fed, encouraged, transformed, and stirred into greater obedience to Jesus.
2. That _____ would be present, feel loved and welcomed, and would be stirred by God to give their lives to Jesus, and experience the hope of knowing Him.

2) _____ — Where we **connect in real community**.

Small Groups are the heart of our church. We believe small groups are a big deal. Why? Because it is in small groups that we really see the church live out what it means to be a part of the body, knitted together, and experiencing real relationships. Small Groups are a place where we connect with a smaller circle of people, and where we are safe and free to be fully known, share struggles, celebrate victories, and love one another through prayer, getting into the Word of God, and fellowship. Groups are for you to belong, and for non-Christians to be invited into. Small group is the place intentional, relational discipleship happens and deepens.

Jesus had a small group (his 12 disciples). This was his plan to reach the world. We want to follow his example.

3) _____ — Where we serve **our church and our communities**.

SEVRE TEAMS are the aspect of our church where we break outside the " _____ " and " _____ " church mentality.

For too long, Christians in our country have lived their church life **sitting in the bleachers**, when **God's will** has always been for every believer to "get in the game."

This is why we have several SERVE TEAMS as well as MINISTRY opportunities at VBC, to help people of every age start to grow in likeness to Jesus through serving His local church and our community.

Serving Opportunities:

You can serve in many different areas, depending on giftings and desire:

- **Kids & Youth ministry** (Sunday School, Junior Church, Nursery, Kids4Truth, Youth Nights)
- **Welcome Team** (greeting & welcoming people on Sundays)
- **Hospitality Team** (preparing food for events and gatherings)
- **Impact Team** (that will find ways to love and bless our communities)
- **Celebrate Recovery Team** (set up, providing food, support)
- **Care Team** (serving the Widows & Elderly through projects)
- **Worship Team** (those who are gifted in singing or playing instruments)
- **Small Group Leadership Development** (Get trained in disciple-making)

THE BOTTOM LINE //////////////////////////////////////

This church exists...

“To see people from everyday life experience the hope of knowing Christ.”

We passionately long to push back darkness in rural Iowa, and impact lost-ness in our communities and towns, by being and making disciples in our everyday life.

- We want to _____ passionately.
- We want to _____ sacrificially.
- We want to _____ joyfully.
- We want to _____ deeply.

And all of this is because Jesus has rescued us, forgiven us, and loves us eternally.

BECOMING A MEMBER //////////////////////////////////////

We believe in

“MEANINGFUL MEMBERSHIP” >>> WHY BECOME A MEMBER?

1. Without membership, you are a hand _____ - _____ from the body.

First, when you do not commit yourself to a local church, you are functioning like a hand that is cut off from the body. The Bible teaches that believers are “part of the body” (1 Corinthians 12:12). As a believer, God says you are **a part** and **not a whole**. A hand cannot survive, let alone grow healthy, while separated from and uncommitted to a local church. We need God’s people, as we ourselves commit to attend, be a part of, and serve a local church.

Membership (committing to a local church) is a demonstration of our commitment to Christ and his people. We need each other, and need to commit to one faith-family.

2. Without membership, you are a sheep without spiritual _____.

When you don't commit to a local church, you are a sheep left to the wolves in very serious ways that the Bible warns about.

Hebrews 13:17 says,

"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."

- What local church pastor are you committing to submit to, so they can feed, guide, and protect you spiritually?
- What local church pastor knows your commitment, and therefore knows to keep watch over your soul as one committed to his flock?
- Membership shows the pastor of a church that you are committing to be a part of the flock, so he can commit to watch over you spiritually. Pastors need to know who are the ones committed as part of the flock, because he will have to give an account to god for their spiritual help and growth.

1 Peter 5:1-2 says,

"¹To the **elders** (pastors) among you, I appeal as a fellow elder (pastor) and a witness of Christ's sufferings who also will share in the glory to be revealed: ²**Be shepherds** of God's flock that is **under your care**, watching over **them**..."

- This assumes that the pastor knows who should be counted as "the flock" that is "under his care."
- The pastor is called to watch over "them" (those entrusted to his care)
- God's people were not made to live alone, struggle alone, suffer alone, or go your own way. God planned for there to be these "under-shepherds" to guide, lead, feed, and care for them.

NEXT STEPS //////////////////////////////////////

What do I do next?

1. Become a member of the VBC family.

What does it mean to be a member?

>>> *Members are committed to...*

1) **Being a disciple of Jesus** — We *follow* Him. We *live* for him.

2) **Living out the _____ of a Disciple** — **Learn, Grow, Give, Go**

- You commit to being a _____ **LEARNER**.
- You commit to intentionally _____ **GROWING** in likeness to Jesus.
- You commit to _____ **GIVE** of...
 - Your **TIME** (*in attending service & small groups*)
 - Your **TALENTS** (*in serving the church*)
 - Your **TREASURE** (*in tithing 10% of your income*)

1. You commit to **GO** by...

- _____ people to **services, groups, & into your life**.
- _____ with those around you **who are far from God but close to you**, with the intent of leading them toward Jesus.

3) **Being like Jesus toward each other** —

- _____: We *won't put up with* or *listen to* people talk negatively about other church members. **Shut it down!**
- _____ - _____: If we have an offense or problem with someone, *we don't talk to others about it*. We *only* talk to that person, **to resolve it**.

2. **Attend PART 2 of the DISCOVER CLASS.**

PART 2 — Discover Your Unique Design (Gifts, Passions, Bents).

- Take a *spiritual gifts assessment*
- Get plugged into *servicing* Jesus at VBC

3. **Meet with the Pastor & Deacons.**

- [Set up a Meeting with the Pastor & Deacons](#) to share your testimony of coming to Christ.
- Then you will be presented before the church to be affirmed as a member by *vote of affirmation!*