

New Wineskins for Fresh Wine - part 4 – Our new wineskin

September 24, 2023

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BIG IDEA – Our new mission and vision for the future.

scripture focus - Luke 5:38 NLT “New wine must be stored in new wineskins.”

I was listening to **Dr. David Hoyle** read from Revelation at Queen Elizabeth II funeral. Monday, September 19th, 2022. **Revelation 21:3** NLT “I heard a loud shout from the throne, saying, “**Look, God’s home is now among his people! He will live with them, and they will be his people. God himself will be with them.**”

It was the moment I had been looking for and praying for. What was God going to do in 2023?

When I arrived in October 2020, our church had gone through **triple tragedies**.

- **One**, our **previous Senior Pastor resigned** under difficult circumstances. There was no sin, no secret to cover up. It’s just that things were not right, and a change had to be made.
- **Two**, a month later **the global pandemic hit** causing fear, panic, and national division. **This accelerated a trend for us to become the “Divided States of America.”** Trust in all sectors of our society, our culture had evaporated into distrust. **Politics and politicians, Healthcare and health providers, Police and protection, Education and our learning institutions, Businesses, and corporations** and finally the **Church and our Pastors** – all came under scrutiny!
- **Three**, soon our nation descended into chaos, our people all scattered like sheep without shepherds. We became hoarders, cynical, and isolated from one another. Anyone and everyone might unknowingly give us a death sentence with the Covid Virus.

Through death, uncertainty, and unimaginable circumstances, I knew this was the **biggest reset the country had seen since the great depression**. We would never be the same.

I asked God for a word to help me lead our congregation in 2021. **The word was communication**. We needed to find a way to talk about what was happening without tearing each other apart. So, we worked on

communicating to each other. Much of it meant we needed to use more digital tools to do so. That change was difficult for a lot of folks.

I asked God for another word for 2022. God gave me two, **care and connection**. Pastor Emily at one point counted how many funerals we were a part of – **in 2021 we had 13 funerals!** They were not all from our current members, but they were all family in the body of Christ! **We focused on caring, and Pastor Emily led the way in reaching out to people who were not able to attend in person or had serious health concerns.**

But caring was only part of the problem. I spoke with so many people that felt like they had been abandoned, forgotten, and disconnected. And even though we were reaching out, they were not able to connect with folks here at the church building. **Trying to get people connected with each other** proved much harder than just checking in with them.

Finally, I asked God for a word for 2023. God gave me the word, **clarity**. **I knew at that point that we had to not only change, but that I had to lead with clear and bold vision to be a part of what I believe God is doing in our nation.**

I also knew that **Life Center Church had to become something new**. We had to go for an extraordinary, outrageous, crazy vision that would take great faith and sustained passion to accomplish.

I knew we had to become a startup church and reinvent ourselves to become what God would need for the future.

Ah, but BIG plans require BIG people with BIG faith!

We have:

- a great core of multigenerational adults.
- a solid KidMin ministry
- a thriving youth and young adult group that had to be completely rebuilt!
- a staff of committed leaders that are called to lead.
- 40 volunteer ministry leaders
- Generous people, so we have money in the bank and are above budget so far this year.
- And finally, we have a building that we own without ever having a mortgage!

How could we NOT grow and do something great in the City of Lakewood?

I want to introduce you to our new mission and vision for the next five years.

To accomplish this mission and vision we must change our wineskin! I also want to introduce our new church name that will launch on January 7, 2024.



Candlewood Church

Mission

Disciple: Be One, Make One

Vision

Ready for Reunion

Motto:

Doing life together, we live,
love and coach like Christ.

MISSION

Disciple: Be One, Make One.

This is the basic mission of the Church, and it's not new at all.

Jesus told us this is the Church's (which IS the followers of and the body of Christ) mission.

It just so happens that Jesus last command in Matthew 28:19 contains a very specific word for "Disciples."

"Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit." Matthew 28:19 NLT

Jesus uses the word, mathéteuó, which has a dual meaning built into the word itself - to be a disciple, to make a disciple.

Jesus was very specific about letting us know that each one that follows him has been called to first **be** a disciple, but then also **make** a disciple.

I would say that many of you understand that we are supposed to grow up and mature in Christ as a follower, a disciple.

But I would guess that most of us (me included) have a much harder time thinking or seeing ourselves as **making** a disciple. There are probably dozens of reasons and really good excuses as to why that is true. Yet, it is still a fact!

One of the reasons I believe that we have made it harder to make rather than just be is this – we think we are responsible to save people! Are you responsible to save people?

Another reason we've made it harder is that we think we need to have all the answers to people's questions about faith, spirituality, hell, death and heaven! We are afraid someone is going to ask us

the mysteries of the book of Revelation or something. **Do you have all the answers to every question asked?**

A third reason, and this one is the best, **we think making a disciple is so complicated that we should leave it to the professionals, the pastors, teachers, theologians, and apologists. Why would Jesus ask us to do something we can't do? Because he didn't!**

In your handout today and online here, we have a list of Rhythms and movements of discipleship.

This is how we are going to fulfill the mission of Candlewood Church.

Rhythms and movements of discipleship



Heart: Our individual and personal growth in Christ. This is our Christian walk; to be a disciple of Jesus and to make a disciple of Jesus.

Listen to Paul's prayer for the Church!

Ephesians 3:14-19 When I think of all this, I fall to my knees and pray to the Father, the Creator of everything in heaven and on earth. **I pray that from his glorious, unlimited resources he will empower you with inner strength through his Spirit. Then Christ will make his home in your hearts as you trust in him. Your roots will grow down into God's love and keep you strong. And may you have the power to understand, as all God's people should, how wide, how long, how high, and how deep his love is. May you experience the love of Christ, though it is too great to understand fully. Then you will be made complete with all the fullness of life and power that comes from God.**

It all starts here as we daily are transformed by the Word of God and being renewed by the Spirit of God to listen and obey. **This is our first priority and our primary place of commitment as a son or daughter of God.**

This is where discipleship begins in us, but it also helps us become a disciple-maker!



Home: Our second priority is to our own house and with our family.

Deuteronomy 6:6-9 And **you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your strength.** And you must **commit yourselves wholeheartedly to these commands** that I am giving you today. **Repeat them again and again to your children.** Talk about them when you are at home and when you are on the road, when you are going to bed and when you are getting up. Tie them to your hands and wear them on your forehead as reminders. Write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

Our biggest responsibility and most difficult challenges are often with those closest to us. This is where spirituality and commitment to live authentically are most important. Whether it's a couple, singles with roommates or husbands and wives with their children, **this is our first opportunity to learn how to love one another while we are being disciplined and making disciples.** This also extends to in-laws, out-laws, steps, siblings, aunts, and uncles as well as cousins. **These are the people who see us daily, whether we are up or down, happy, or sad. They watch and learn more by our behavior than just the words we speak.**



Hood: Neighborhood! **Where we live, sleep, eat, work and play.**

Mark 12:29-31 Jesus replied, "The most important commandment is this: 'Listen, O Israel! The Lord our God is the one and only Lord. **And you must love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, all your mind, and all your strength.**' The second is equally important: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' **No other commandment is greater than these.**"

Matthew 29:19-20 Therefore, **go and make disciples of all the nations**, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the

commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.

This is our physical neighborhood, our houses, apartments, condos, trailers, or duplexes. This is also our workplace, school, hobby group, sports team, places of business, where we eat or shop. Plus, this includes our global community as we travel, tour, or do mission and social work. For us, as a church, it is also our digital community, and online church, through our social media channels.



HUB: The physical gathering place of the people of God.

Hebrews 10:24-25 Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.

Our gatherings together are important as we corporately and cooperatively get together to worship, pray, fellowship, and hear God's word. We celebrate through communion, a sacrament Jesus commanded. We encourage and motivate each other by sharing joy filled stories of God's miracles as well as our struggles in moments of suffering and grief. Our little ones meet to play and learn about God together. Our children, similarly, learn and hear God stories and how they are important and valued to us and to God.

We recognize these four place settings where God will work and meet with us. These places are holy locations where we can anticipate joining with God.

HEART, HOME, HOOD & HUB

Our vision is simple: In five years we want to be Ready for Reunion

Our desire is to empower Candlewood Church to spiritually prepare and unite, so we may meet God at the **crossroads of His**

revolutionary reunion, a reunion for those who decide to believe truth over lies, coming into the light of Christ.

Our part is to **listen and obey, to love and lead them**. Like the prodigal's father, we will be **ready to run and embrace** them as they come home.

Looking forward to the **revolutionary reunion means that we commit to:**

- **prepare and unite** (John 17:21)
- **practice truth and BE a light** (John 14:6, John 8:12)
- **listen and obey God** (Luke 11:28)
- **love and lead them and** (John 13:34)
- **be ready to run and embrace** (Luke 15:20)

The individuals, yet to come, will be our own family, friends, neighbors, and coworkers. **This is personal because we believe that God will use us to help with His plans.**

Accomplishing these goals will not require some of us. No, it will take all of us!

NOTES

Scriptures

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Commentary

Strong's Concordance

3100 mathēteúō (from 3101 /mathētēs, "disciple") – to disciple, i.e. helping someone to progressively learn the Word of God to become a matured, growing disciple (literally, "a learner," a true Christ-follower); to train (develop) in the truths of Scripture and the lifestyle required, i.e. helping a believer learn to be a disciple of Christ in belief and practice. This word is only used four times compared to the regular word, **mathētēs**, which is used 261 times.