

# Vision Statement

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## **Vision**

Encounter the life changing presence of God

## **Priorities**

This happens when:

- Jesus is the center of our lives.
- We love and accept people where they are.
- We provide opportunities for healing and restoration through experiencing the Father's love.
- We invest in purposeful relationships.
- We disciple people to be grounded in the Word and to walk in their purpose and giftings.
- We share the life and hope we have experienced through knowing Jesus Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit.

## **Declaration**

Willow is a growing congregation filled with people who are seeking and experiencing the Kingdom of God and all its fullness.

# Value Statements

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Values define who you are and prioritize what you will do. Values are our way of saying, "This is important to us and it identifies who we are." Doctrines define what we believe the Bible teaches on a given subject, i.e., salvation, Jesus, baptism. Values indicate our particular emphasis and help us make decisions regarding ministry expression.

## **Word & Spirit**

We believe in order to grow in our faith a person needs both the Word and Spirit. The Word of God is foundational for all spiritual growth (2 Tim.3.16-17), but without the Spirit of God giving understanding and application it will lead to death (2 Cor.3.6, John 16.13). The Spirit breathes life into God's Word (John 6.63), empowers the believer to be a bold witness (Acts 1.8), imparts spiritual gifts (1 Cor.12 & 14) and makes the miraculous possible for every Christian (1 Cor.2.4, Rom.15.19, John 14.12). We are to be both grounded in the Word and led by the Spirit.

## **The Kingdom of God**

Jesus brought the Kingdom of God to earth (Mark 1.15). The Kingdom is the dominion of Jesus reigning in every part of life in both Heaven and earth. He reigns perfectly in Heaven and it is

manifested in peace, hope, forgiveness, prosperity, health, truth, harmony and love. He wants the same realities on earth. The Kingdom is inside of us (Luke 17.21) and we are to pray and work towards “on earth as it is in Heaven” (Matt.6.10). This means every sphere of life - family, religion, education, government, business, arts, entertainment and media – is brought under His influence. When He returns, He will fully establish His Kingdom on earth.

### **Sonship**

The believer in Jesus stands before God as a dearly loved son (John 1.12). Nothing separates him from God’s love (Rom.8.31-39). Our shame and condemnation have been replaced with acceptance and worth (Col.1.22). We are “in Christ” (2 Cor.5.17) and we stand before God as loved and enjoyed as Jesus (John 17.23). God convicts and disciplines us with the purpose of bringing us into the full realization of who we are as His children. He is not angry or disappointed with us. God’s heart toward us is good and He treats us with tenderness and compassion (Ps.103.8-18).

### **Disciplemaking**

Jesus has called us to make disciples of all nations (Matt.28.19-20). Our desire is to build “Christ-centered” children, youth and adults. The behavioral characteristics of a *Christ-centered* person can be summarized in the acrostic **A.B.L.E.**

- **A**bides in Christ through participating in the spiritual practices of prayer, Bible study, worship, fasting, solitude, service, etc. John 15.5-8
- **B**ears the fruit of the Spirit. Gal.5.22-23
- **L**oves God with all his/her heart, soul, mind and strength and loves his/her neighbor as him/herself. Matt.22.37-39
- **E**xercises proper stewardship of time, God given resources and spiritual gifts and passions in order to build up the body of Christ. Matt.25.14-30

All disciplemaking ministries are reviewed on their ability to make ABLE disciples. Implicit in this is the willingness to try new approaches which may more effectively grow disciples.

### **Outreach**

Jesus said, “...the Son of Man came to seek and to save that which was lost.” (Luke 19.10) Our desire is to see the lost around us like Jesus. “When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd.”(Matt.9.36) Reaching people in our circle of influence, whether at home or abroad, is the responsibility of every follower of Christ. We demonstrate a dynamic and living obedience to the Holy Spirit by intentionally interacting with the lost as He both directs and provides opportunities. Understanding the evangelism process (planting, watering, cultivating and harvesting – 1 Cor.3.7-8) and our personal evangelistic style are important elements of outreach. The church’s

outreach will take many forms but at its core it includes these foundational practices: praying for the lost, engaging them on various levels and telling them about Jesus.

### **Hearing from and following God**

God speaks to His people. As His sheep, we can hear Him (John 10.27). His words bring life and healing (John 6.63). His voice is heard clearly through His Word. The Scriptures also record that He communicates through many other means, such as prayer, circumstances, dreams, the spiritual gifts of the word of knowledge, wisdom, and prophecy. All revelation is evaluated according to Scripture. God will reveal Himself to anyone, regardless of age, who will seek after Him. Our desire, as individuals and a body of Christ, is to hear His voice. By obeying the Word and the Spirit, we will make necessary changes to follow God and reach our community.

### **Unity**

Jesus prayed that we would be one as He is one with the Father, so that the world would say that He had truly been sent by the Father (John 17.20-23). We desire to walk in love and unity, so the world will acknowledge who Jesus really is (John 13.35). Unity is not achieved by being alike, but by glorifying Christ and edifying others (1 Cor.12.12-26). This is demonstrated when we live out the \*"one another's" of Scripture. We agree on the core beliefs, mission, vision and values of WDBC. When conflicts arise, we will intentionally work through them while demonstrating an attitude of love, grace and respect towards each other. Since we are brothers and sisters in Christ, there is no place for a judgmental or critical spirit among us.

\*The "One Another's" are listed at the end.

### **Freedom In Worship**

Through the liberating power of the blood of Jesus we can enter into a joy filled relationship with God (Colossians 1:12-13). We are now free to give God the honor and praise He is due because of who He is and what He has done. (Gal.5.1) This freedom is expressed in our private and corporate worship. We value diversity and creativity of expression in worship. We are free to embrace forms of private and congregational worship that are Biblically sound. Although an order of worship is planned, the leaders are sensitive to the Spirit and follow His direction. We encourage everyone to enter wholeheartedly into God's presence.

### **Sabbath Rest**

The Sabbath as both a day and lifestyle are critical for our overall well being. In Gen.2, God made the Sabbath as a part of His created order. He commanded observance of it in Exodus 20.8-11. In Isaiah 58.13-14, He promises blessings upon those who keep it. Jesus said the Sabbath was made for humanity's benefit (Mark 2.27) and Hebrews 4.1-13 encourages us to daily enter into the rest of the Lord. .

The Sabbath as a day should not be defined in a list of do's and don'ts. Jesus is Lord of the Sabbath; all we do on the Sabbath must reflect His Lordship of the Sabbath. The Sabbath lifestyle is characterized by putting God's agenda at the foremost each day and includes an attitude of reflection upon and appreciation of God's work. In summary, God gifted mankind with the Sabbath day for the purpose of reflection, renewal, and restoration by spending quality time with Him along with family and friends in simplicity.

## The Healing and Restoration of Individuals

Jesus came to "preach good news to the poor...to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight to the blind [and] to release the oppressed."(Luke 4.18-19) We are called to help the whole person - body, soul and spirit - find freedom from sin and experience the abundant life (John 10.10). We love people as they are and demonstrate grace and empathy to them by ministering to their physical, financial, relational, emotional and spiritual needs. They are shown how to move forward in their walk with the Lord and we will continue to show grace when they struggle.

## The "One Another's"

- Be devoted to **one another** in brotherly love – Rom.12.10
- Honor **one another** above yourselves – Rom.12.10
- Live in harmony with **one another** – Rom.12.16
- Therefore let us stop passing judgment on **one another**. – Rom.14.13
- Accept **one another**, then, just as Christ accepted you. – Rom.15.7
- Serve **one another** in love. – Gal.5.13
- Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with **one another** in love. – Eph.4.2
- Be kind and compassionate to **one another**. – Eph.4.32
- Speak to **one another** with psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs. – Eph.5.19
- Submit to **one another** out of reverence for Christ. – Eph.5.21
- Bear with **each other** and forgive whatever grievances you may have against **one another**. – Col.3.13
- Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish **one another** will all wisdom. – Col.3.16
- Therefore encourage **one another** and build each other up. – 1 Thes.5.11, Heb.3.13
- Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage **one another** – and all the more as you see the Day approaching. – Heb.10.25
- Brothers, do not slander **one another**. – (James 4.11)
- Live in harmony with **one another**. – (1 Pet.3.8)
- Offer hospitality to **one another** without grumbling. – (1 Pet.4.9)
- All of you clothe yourselves with humility toward **one another**. – (1 Pet.5.5)
- Dear friends, let us love **one another**, for love comes from God. – (1 John 4.7, 3.11, 3.23, 4.11-12, 2 John 5)