

## BVBC Vision, Spring 2019

At BVBC, we passionately believe that a relationship with Jesus Christ transforms lives. 2 Corinthians 5:17 *Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old is gone and the new has come.*

Jesus can transform a life, a career and purpose, a marriage, a home, a church, a neighborhood, a school, an entire community, Jesus throughout history has transformed entire countries. This is why our Mission at Brandywine is to INTRODUCE people to Jesus Christ and help them FOLLOW Him.

We say our mission a lot, but have you ever thought about why we chose that word, INTRODUCE? It's a powerfully, relational term. Some of you might be sitting next to a significant other because of a meaningful introduction. Some of you have a great business partnership or a great friendship because someone took the time to thoughtfully make an introduction, "There is a wonderful someone that I want you to meet." Our role as a church in our community is to make great introductions. To lovingly, passionately, personally, intentionally introduce people to the most wonderful person who ever lived, the one who redefines our lives and reality, who brings healing, brings freedom and power, brings joy and brings hope- Jesus Christ. This is why we exist and community is our mission.

I believe that most people in our community THINK they have already been introduced to Jesus...they were underwhelmed, or maybe turned off, disillusioned. Maybe their introduction to Jesus was in a church they grew up in that was lifeless, ritualistic and irrelevant and mind-numbingly boring. "Yawn, here's Jesus, he's important...for some reason." Or maybe someone whose introduction to Jesus was religion...all about guilt trips and bunch of rules to follow to avoid hell. "You want to meet Jesus? Well sorry, he's too important for you, before you meet Jesus you need to earn his favor." Maybe their introduction was coming into a church that felt like a club, people felt cold and unwelcoming, the music, the words that people said felt like a different language- Jesus seemed inaccessible. Maybe it's children whose introduction to Jesus was through parents who said they believed in Jesus but lived like complete hypocrites. There are many lost, lonely and left out in our community whose imagine of Jesus is uncaring, distant and condemning because they seem to go unnoticed by those who claim His name.

Most people in our community have not been properly introduced to the REAL Jesus and so we have a monumental task ahead of us. We have a BHAG. BIG, HAIRY, AUDACIOUS GOAL. To introduce every man, woman and child in our community to Jesus Christ and help them Follow Him. Now we accomplish this not by putting a tract on everyone one's car or Billy Graham style rallies. It is probably not through doing things the same way we have always done them. These methods may have been effective years ago in a God-fearing, Judeo-Christian culture when prayer and Bibles were in schools. In a post-Christian culture we must thoughtful, creative and discerning of the times. And this is why we have developed our CORE VALUES as a church that provide an unwavering guide for how we accomplish our mission. We strive, with every decision we make, every program and ministry we pursue, how we spend our time and direct

our leadership, staffing and volunteers, and every dollar we spend and budget we propose (like the one we are proposing today) to be guided by our core values. You will hear from some of our staff ministry leaders how their ministry areas are being guided by the core values, but let me share a few comments.

It is because we want to make a great introduction of Jesus to those coming through our doors that we are pursuing the value of excellence, relevance and innovation. This is why we are doing a series like Skeptical, designed to meet people where they are with the questions they are wrestling with. It is why we are pursuing various upgrades to décor, audio and video and online presence.

Our mission drives our value for meaningful membership and community: From the parking lot to the pew- we want people to experience a loving, welcoming community and feel like they belong, that it is a safe place to discover what they believe about Jesus. This is why we will be evaluating and developing a stronger connection process that relationally guides every person who enters our church, meeting them where they are at. And it is why we are developing more trained shepherds and lay ministers who care for the congregation with greater intentionality.

Our mission drives our value of Gospel Partnerships for our City and our World. Our mission success is not individual, it's not bigger church and bigger budgets. Success is for all the churches in greater Wilmington uniting together to introduce Jesus Christ to our community. There are exciting opportunities on the horizon, but it is our goal to free up more resources to support and engage in gospel partnerships in Wilmington where it is needed the most: under-resourced communities, children and youth, addiction recovery.

In January we will be celebrating 50 years as a church. Amazing. And God has been faithful and thousands of lives have been transformed over the years because of the dedication of this church. If we are going to continue and be even more effective the next 50 years, we must be unwavering in our core beliefs and faith handed down for centuries, but courageous, visionary and creative in how we accomplish this mission. And if we are going to be effective...

**We need you!** We need everyone to excel at our mission. We need our time, talents and treasures. We need your financial support (You will hear Kevin talk about that shortly) but more importantly, we need your hands! We have a saying here that we strive for 100% spiritual employment. All of you have gifts and talents and you are all needed. Can you help make an introduction to Jesus for someone coming through these doors? Maybe you can help in the parking lot so that when people see your smiling face they see something about Jesus! Or maybe you can help by leading a small group, making meals, helping with our A/V needs, looking out for those who seem on the margins or might feel disconnected, serving in the community?

