



Community Guide

Preface

This guide describes some of the basics of Christianity as well as the vision and values of Oak Bridge Community Church. Regardless of your church background, or lack of church background, my hope is that this guide:

- ◆ Provides insight and answers for those who are new to our church or Christianity
- ◆ States the beliefs and values of our growing body of believers
- ◆ Serves as a sound reference tool to those wishing to share, defend, or clarify these beliefs and values with others.

Certainly, this guide cannot answer all questions or provide all that a believer wants to know to grow in Christ. We encourage you to refer to other biblical references and consult with the Oak Bridge Leadership Team on how we can help further your understanding.

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INTRODUCTION

OAK BRIDGE COMMUNITY CHURCH exists *to make followers who in turn make followers of Jesus Christ*. We pool our experience and efforts in keeping this “main thing” the “main thing”.

We desire to be a biblical community. That means we must grow in our knowledge of – and most importantly – our application of the Bible. To be a community, we must function as a body, support each other – in short, be Christ to each other.

To fulfill *The Great Commandment (Matthew 22:36-40)* and *The Great Commission (Matthew 28:19-20)*, we must be more than spectators, more than sideline cheerleaders. We must get on the playing field, become a part of the game. Only it's not a game – *it's our very reason for being on the earth*.

The Great Commandment

“Teacher which is the greatest commandment in the Law? Jesus replied: ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: Love your neighbor as yourself. All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.’” (Matthew 22:36-40)

The Great Commission

“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” (Matthew 28:19-20)

SECTION 1

Defining Oak Bridge

Chapter One – *The Vision and Values of Oak Bridge*

Chapter Two – *What We Believe*

Chapter Three – *A Strategy for Building the Church*

Scripture References – *follow at the end of each chapter*

Chapter One

The Vision and Values of Oak Bridge

“The Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.” Luke 19:10

A Mission, A Vision, A Plan

Jesus Christ had a mission. He came to earth from heaven knowing His purpose. Even at the age of 12, He told His parents, *“didn’t you know I had to be about My Father’s business?”* (Luke 2:49). His single-mindedness, determination, and reliance on His Heavenly Father’s guidance ensured that at the end of His ministry, He could pray confidently, *“I have accomplished the work which You gave me to do”* (John 17:4).

He also had a vision. He saw the preferable future, the new humanity His mission would make. He knew what He had to be like – and what His followers had to be like – if the world was to sit up and take notice. He built a community of believers – only twelve at first – that would be the foundation of a vast network of followers who would fulfill His vision. Knowing His disciples’ exciting potential but precarious position, Jesus prayed, *“as you sent Me into the world, I have sent them into the world”* (John 17:18).

Jesus had a plan. His ministry unfolded in stages, and He said “No” to many opportunities when they were the right things at the wrong time. With no shortage of need, He had to be selective about the people and possibilities in which He invested. Disciples had to be chosen from among many interested volunteers (and sometimes He called people right out of their

preoccupation with other interests!). Workers needed to be trained before being sent. Jesus sometimes moved on to new ministry opportunities even when people wanted Him to stay. He recognized that some “ministry growth” would be detrimental to His long-range plan, so He stifled it – He told certain people He’d just healed not to go public. The control He exercised in relation to His ministry was always in response to the leading of His Heavenly Father – and as the appropriate way to facilitate His mission and vision in accordance with His values.

THE MISSION, VISION AND VALUES OF OAKBRIDGE

OUR MISSION

“To make followers of Jesus Christ who in turn
make followers of Jesus Christ.”

Because Jesus came to seek and save the lost, we feel compelled to do the same. However, Jesus goes beyond rescuing people from hell to making them fit for heaven. So, what does “fit for heaven” mean? It means that the people He loves, who step towards Him in faith, begin to love Him in return and begin to grow in their faith. This type of faith becomes so personal they experience their very own relationship with Jesus. As they grow in their faith, they grow in their obedience; and as they grow in obedience, they become more like Him. Through the various small group Bible studies, the teaching and serving ministries of Oak Bridge, we desire people not only meet Jesus, but over time become more like Him.

OUR VISION

“To have 10,000+ people become followers of
Jesus in the areas we serve.”

As people grow in their relationship with Jesus, they find that this new life is exciting and rewarding. Naturally, they want

their friends and family to come to know this life-changing Jesus as well. Invitations happen. New guests arrive weekly. Some are serious seekers, some are simply curious. Amazing growth happens when excited people tell others about what is taking place in their lives.

Like Jesus, Oak Bridge welcomes everyone, no matter where they've been or what they've done.

Our vision of having 10,000+ people become followers of Jesus is a tall order...perhaps it sounds impossible. In fact, it would be impossible if the Oak Bridge community attempted this on their own. The only way it will happen is through the guidance and power of God Almighty. Keep in mind though, that this God we trust was powerful enough to raise people from the dead. We will rely on His resurrection power. We are 100% reliant on Him.

We cannot fulfill Christ's mission alone as individuals for two reasons. First, God WANTS us to rely on Him. Secondly, God WANTS us to join together, in unity, to represent Him to our neighbors, family and beyond our borders. He has given us diverse talents and together we strive to further His kingdom. Our work was not over when we became a Biblical community – we're a Biblical community so that we can succeed in loving and serving others in Jesus' name.

OUR CORE VALUES

Although we are a collection of diverse individuals, we agree to focus on and value ten characteristics that should always be present at Oak Bridge. These values are at the center of our efforts, and you may find these set us apart from churches you have known in the past.

1. **THE BIBLE** - is the authoritative Word of God, written by humans who were inspired by the Holy Spirit. We accept the Bible as the final authority for all matters of faith and practice.

2. **THE CHURCH** - is the hope of the world. Our church is self-governed and God alone is considered to be the Head of the church. Our desire is that within our church community every one can find a place to serve and be served.
3. **PRAYER** - is our lifeline to God, our source of guidance, wisdom, comfort, correction, strength, and provision. We seek two-way communication with our Maker.
4. **AUTHENTICITY** - is at the heart of what God teaches.
5. **JOY/FUN/CELEBRATE** - While not exempt from all of life's hardships, experiencing Christ's love and redemption brings us a joy-filled life worth celebrating!
6. **STORIES** - Everyone has a story about how God has worked and is working in their lives. We learn and receive encouragement by sharing our stories.
7. **SMALL GROUPS** - We gather weekly to worship in a large group and scatter daily to serve, study, and do life together in our small groups. True community happens when we are able to connect on this deeper level.
8. **FAMILY** - Whether biological or relational, families are a true gift to be nurtured and appreciated. Oak Bridge is a place where family members of all ages can worship and be fed.
9. **GIFTEDNESS** - God has equipped each of us with unique gifts to be used in His service. Oak Bridge is a place to develop and use those gifts.
10. **EXCELLENCE** – We strive to live, serve and give our best. While we sometimes fail, a heart that seeks excellence honors God and attracts people.

Chapter Two

What We Believe

“Anyone who runs ahead and does not continue in the teaching of Christ does not have God; whoever continues in the teaching has both the Father and the Son.” II John 9

THE OAK BRIDGE STATEMENT OF FAITH is based on God’s Word as found in the Bible rather than speculation or tradition. We try not to be strict about matters on which Bible-based believers hold differing views. Our core beliefs are centered in Christ and His message as found in and supported by the clearest passages of Scripture. Other beliefs that are secondary, in that they have less scriptural support, are left to individuals to sort out on their own – we take no official position in these areas. Ask yourself though, “What difference does this truth make in my life? If I didn’t know or believe this, would it matter?”

Oak Bridge Statement of Faith

The Bible

The sole basis of our belief is the Bible, composed of the 66 books of the Old and New Testament. We believe that Scripture in its entirety originated with God and that it was given through the guidance of the Holy Spirit to human authors for recording. It then speaks with the authority of God and reflects the backgrounds, styles, and vocabularies of these chosen men. We firmly believe that the Scriptures are without error, in the original manuscripts, and because of this, they are completely trustworthy.

Our understanding of man, God, and the salvation He offers us through Christ depends on our belief and knowledge of the Bible. The Bible is unique, full, and final authority on all matters of faith and practice, and there are no other writings similarly inspired by God. All that we believe is supported archaeologically, scientifically, historically, sociologically, and prophetically.

(II Timothy 3:16; II Peter 1:20-21; II Timothy 1:13; Psalm 119:105- 106, 12:6; Proverbs 30:5)

Some Practical Applications

- ◆ We strive to study the Bible regularly as individuals and in groups to understand its message.
- ◆ We reject claims that any human go-between is necessary for us to know and relate to God – we have His Word, and we are each individually responsible to learn what it says.
- ◆ All aspects of our life and conduct must be submitted to what the Bible teaches about that area – we strive to obey what we discover God has commanded.
- ◆ Messages given by Oak Bridge teachers must provide teaching supported by Scripture.
- ◆ We do not accept doctrines, regardless of their source, if they do not square with what the Bible says; supposed “modern prophets”, “new revelation”, or any message – even if apparently given miraculously – must be tested by the Bible.

God

We believe that there is one true God, eternally existing in three persons – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (the Trinity) – each of whom possesses equally all the attributes of deity and the characteristics of personality. In the beginning God created the world and everything in it out of nothing. This ability reveals the glory of His power, wisdom, and goodness. By His power He continues to sustain His creation fulfilling His purpose to save mankind.

(Genesis 1:1, 26-27; 3:22; Psalm 90:2; Matthew 28:19; I Peter 1:2; II Corinthians 13:14)

Some Practical Applications

- ◆ Knowing God is our highest priority – substituting any activity or allowing any passion to become stronger is idolatry.
- ◆ We treat creation as something wonderful that God has made for our use and enjoyment. We don't abuse it, yet we don't worship creation in itself. It is our responsibility to be good stewards and we want to use what he gives us to further His work in this world. We must preserve life and nature without it becoming more important than the people for whom it was all created.
- ◆ We cannot agree with any teacher or religious group which rejects God's revelation of Himself as Trinity.
- ◆ We can count on God to be active throughout our lifetime. As he works in us and through us a deep trust develops. Our relationship with Him becomes vital to our lives and we trust Him above all others.

Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ is the second person of the Trinity (the Son) who came to earth as a true human through a miraculous virgin birth. He lived a life of perfect obedience to the Father and voluntarily atoned for the sins of all by dying on the cross as their substitute, thus satisfying divine justice and accomplishing salvation for all who trust in Him. He rose from the dead in the same body, though glorified, in which He lived and died. He ascended into heaven, and sits at the right hand of the Father, where He, the only Mediator between God and man, continually makes intercession for His own. He shall come again to earth, personally and visibly, to consummate history and the eternal plan of God.

(Matthew 1:22-23; Isaiah 9:6; John 1:1-5, 14:10-30; Hebrews 4:14-15; I Corinthians 15:3-4; Romans 1:3-4; Acts 1:9-11; I Timothy 6:14-15; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 7:23-25; I Timothy 2:5)

Some Practical Applications

- ◆ We are Christians because our message is about Christ – His work, His divinity, and our need to follow Him. Any message that does not center on Christ, including His full humanity

and deity as well as His forgiveness for all sin, is not the Gospel.

- ◆ We live knowing that we are totally and unconditionally forgiven from sin now, rather than hoping we will be forgiven at some future point. Christ's death and resurrection were the perfect sacrifice and complete payment for our sin. We are secure in the grace of God through Christ.
- ◆ Knowing that Jesus will return some day, we hold on loosely to the things of this world, counting on the new heaven and earth to be our permanent home.

The Holy Spirit

The third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit was sent into the world by the Father and the Son to reside within us. He opens the eyes of sinners to their need of a savior, drawing them toward a decision to accept Christ's gift of forgiveness. It is the Holy Spirit who places faith into our hearts so that we will make that move towards God. At the point of salvation, He permanently enters the heart of the believer. The Holy Spirit teaches, comforts and strengthens us. It is His power that allows us to understand and apply Scripture to our lives. He deposits special talents or gifts to each believer to be used in service to the Father. Having the Holy Spirit living within us helps us desire a life of holiness and obedience.

(II Corinthians 3:17; John 16:7-13; 14:16-17; Acts 1:8; I Corinthians 2:12, 3:16; Ephesians 1:13; Galatians 5:25; Ephesians 5:18)

Some Practical Applications

- ◆ As saved people, we are continually striving to be more like the One who saved us; we are not content just to be forgiven; we want to exemplify Christ-like behavior in every area of life – we will never give up the fight to resist sin and be like Him in our thoughts, words, and actions.

- ◆ The Christian life is more than just “being good” – we need the Holy Spirit to be present in us; therefore, our daily lives must be yielded to the Spirit in a moment-by-moment surrender.
- ◆ When we share Christ with others, the message we give is effective, not because of our superior reasoning or irresistible presentation, but because the Spirit is free to work through us and in the heart of the person receiving our message. We depend on His invisible activity, not on our limited understanding of what will reach the person.
- ◆ Because the Spirit resides in us, we will listen for His prompting, He will direct us if we are open to Him.

Salvation

God created us to be in close relationship with Him, but by choosing to go his independent way man alienated himself from God. We became sinful in our very nature and unable to please God. The fall of man took place with Adam at the beginning of human history. Ever since, all mankind has suffered the effects of sin and are in need of the saving grace of God.

The Good News (Gospel) is that He has provided a way out of our dilemma. When we turn from our self-ruled life and turn to Jesus in faith, we are saved through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, that paid the penalty of our sins. Salvation is a free gift of God’s grace. Our personal response to that grace is belief, repentance, and baptism. We are keenly aware of what He has done and continues to do in our lives. This brings gratitude and a growing love for Him in return. It shows in our desire to live a lifestyle pleasing to Him.

(Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:8-9; John 14:6, 1:12; Titus 3:4-7; Galatians 3:26-27; Romans 5:1; Acts 2:38)

Some Practical Applications

- ◆ Our message to seekers is to stop the useless attempts to earn God’s favor and to surrender themselves completely to God’s will and plan for their lives.

- ◆ We live secure in the knowledge that the Christian life we live is a “thank you” to God for the salvation He has fully provided. Living in obedience blesses our lives but it does not secure our salvation. We could not add one thing to the work He has already done for us on the cross. We also attempt to never treat his grace lightly or this security as an excuse to live sinfully.
- ◆ Knowing we all have this sin nature, we will never naively assume we’re immune to temptation or evil. Though confident of being rescued from the penalty of sin we realize that sin still has the potential to ruin our lives and relationships.

Human Destiny

People are made in the image of God, to be like Him in character, thought, and action. Although every person has tremendous potential for good, we are all marred by an attitude, and often willful act, of disobedience toward God, which is called “sin”. This attitude separates us from God and causes problems in each of our lives.

Eventually, humans die and there is a judgment that determines the fate of each individual. Unbelievers will be separated from God into condemnation. Believers will be received into God’s presence for eternity and will be rewarded for works done in this life.

(Genesis 1:27; Psalm 8:3-6; Isaiah 53:6a; Romans 3:23; Isaiah 59:1-2; Romans 5:12-21, 6:23; Acts 24:15; John 5:24; Hebrews 9:27; II Timothy 4:1,8; Revelation 20:15)

Some Practical Applications

There are no “second chances” after we die. Our relationship to God for eternity is set by how we respond to Him in this life. The only hope for spending eternity with God will be to accept Christ’s gift of forgiveness. Since we don’t know if we’ll be here tomorrow, now is the time to respond to Christ.

- ◆ Our time on earth is a blink compared to eternity. Knowing this, we live with an eternal perspective. We choose our activities, relationships and priorities based on His will and plan for our lives. We learn from experience that seeking His approval and pleasure first is the true key to peace.
- ◆ Though good works can't earn us a place in heaven, we know that obedience pleases God and He rewards those who obey His teaching. We serve Him faithfully because it brings Him glory and because He has assured us that our difficulties on earth will fade in comparison to the awesomeness of heaven..
- ◆ The message of the Gospel brings life to those who would, without Christ, be separated from God forever. The urgency of this truth compels us to share His saving message whenever and wherever we can.
- ◆ Everyone matters to God; there are no exceptions. As we allow Christ to live in and through us, we are able to see others through His eyes. Love and respect naturally develop within us as we relate to people throughout life.

The Church

Globally, all believers in Jesus Christ become members of His body known as the Church. Locally, believers should gather as a church supervised by elders and/or other supportive leadership. We are to work together in love and unity, with a common purpose of glorifying Christ.

Scripture commands us to meet regularly for worship, prayer, the teaching of scripture, fellowship, and the observance of Communion. We also develop and use the talents and gifts He has given us to serve others and to reach a lost and dying world with His Good News of redemption.

(Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 2:42-47; Colossians 1:24; Ephesians 5:25; Hebrews 10:25; Acts 11:26; Acts 14:23; I Timothy 5:17; Titus 1:5)

Some Practical Applications

- ◆ We are an independent Christian church, emphasizing the oneness in Christ of all obedient believers. Non-Christians can belong to an organization, but making us members of the Church is something Christ does.
- ◆ Every gathering of believers is a gathering of the Church; every small group is in fact the Church meeting together in its smallest unit.
- ◆ Our desire is to assist all believers in developing their God-given talents and gifts so that everyone can participate in some aspect of service to the church and the world.
- ◆ Broken unity hurts the body of Christ and His cause. We guard our unity and diligently seek to honestly confront and work through differences in God-honoring ways that both respect the individual and preserve our oneness in Christ.

Our Statement of Faith is an accurate summary of what Scripture teaches. We ask that all members avoid advocating doctrines that are not included in the Statement of Faith. While we are free to express our own opinions among our brothers and sisters, we don't want to ever harm the Church by gathering a following around ourselves (or an interpretation of a controversial issue) to create a splinter group. The unity and well-being of Christ's body comes first before our desire for self-expression.

The responsibility of every member of Oak Bridge is to participate in the life of the Church by simply following Christ. We are to do as He would do, live as He would live.

Scripture References--What We Believe

The Bible

II Timothy 3:16 “All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness...”

II Peter 1:20-21 “Above all, you must understand that no prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet’s own interpretation. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit.”

II Timothy 1:13 “What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus.”

Psalms 119:105 “Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.”

Psalms 119:160 “All your words are true; all your righteous laws are eternal.”

Psalms 12:6 “And the words of the Lord are flawless, like silver refined in a furnace of clay, purified seven times.”

Proverbs 30:5 “Every word of God is flawless; He is a shield to those who take refuge in Him.”

God

Genesis 1:1 “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”

Genesis 1:26-27 “Then God said, ‘let Us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground. So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.’”

Genesis 3:22 “And the Lord God said, ‘the man has now become like one of Us, knowing good and evil. He must not be allowed to reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever.’”

Psalms 90:2 “Before the mountains were born or You brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting You are God.”

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

I Peter 1:2 “...who have been chosen according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, for obedience to Jesus Christ and sprinkling by His blood: Grace and peace be yours in abundance.”

II Corinthians 13:14 “May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.”

Jesus Christ

Matthew 1:22-23 “All this took place to fulfill what the Lord had said through the prophet: ‘The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel’ – which means, ‘God with us.’”

Isaiah 9:6 “For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on His shoulders. And He will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace.”

John 1:1-5 “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through Him all things were made; without Him nothing was made that has been made. In Him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.”

John 14:10-30 “Don’t you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in Me? The words I say to you are not just My own. Rather, it is the Father, living in Me, who is doing His work. Believe Me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in Me; or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves. I tell you the truth, anyone who has faith in Me will do what I have been doing. He will do even greater things than these, because I am going to the Father. And I will do whatever you ask in My name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask Me for anything in My name, and I will do it.

If you love Me, you will obey what I command. And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Counselor to be with you forever – the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept Him, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him. But you know Him, for He lives with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Before long, the world will not see Me anymore, but you will see Me. Because I live, you also will live.

On that day you will realize that I am in My Father, and you are in Me, and I am in you. Whoever has my commands and obeys them, he is the one who loves Me. He who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I too will love him and show Myself to him.

Then Judas (not Judas Iscariot) said, ‘but, Lord, why do You intend to show Yourself to us and not to the world?’

Jesus replied, ‘If anyone loves Me, He will obey My teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to Him and make our home with Him. He who does not love Me will not obey My teaching. These words you hear are not My own; they belong to the Father who sent Me. All this I have spoken while still with you. But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in My name, will teach you all things and will remind you of everything I have said to you. Peace I leave with you; My peace I give you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled and do not be afraid. You heard Me say, “I am going away and I am coming back to you.” If you loved Me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I. I have told you now before it happens, so that when it does happen you will believe. I will not speak with you much longer, for the prince of this world is coming. He has no hold on Me...’”

Hebrews 4:14-15 “Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are – yet was without sin.”

I Corinthians 15:3-4 “For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that He was buried, that He was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures...”

Romans 1:3-4 “Regarding His Son, who as to His human nature was a descendant of David, and who through the Spirit of holiness was declared with power to be the Son of God by His resurrection from the dead: Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Acts 1:9-11 “After He said this, He was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid Him from their sight. They were looking intently up into the sky as He was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them. ‘Men of Galilee,’ they said, ‘why do you stand here looking into the sky? This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen Him go into heaven.’ ”

I Timothy 6:14-15 “To keep this command without spot or blame until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, which God will bring about in His own time – God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords...”

Titus 2:13 “While we wait for the blessed hope – the glorious appearing of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ...”

Hebrews 7:23-25 “Now there have been many of those priests, since death prevented them from continuing in office; but because Jesus lives forever, He has a permanent priesthood. Therefore He is able to save completely those who come to God through Him, because he always lives to intercede for them.”

I Timothy 2:5 “For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus...”

Holy Spirit

II Corinthians 3:17 “Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.”

John 16:7-13 “But I tell you the truth: it is for your good that I am going away. Unless I go away, the Counselor will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you. When He comes, He will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgment: in regard to sin, because men do not believe in Me; in regard to righteousness, because I am going to the Father, where you can see Me no longer; and in regard to judgment, because the prince of this world now stands condemned. I have much more to say to you, more than you can now bear. But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all truth. He will not speak on His own; He will speak only what He hears, and He will tell you what is yet to come.”

John 14:16-17 “And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Counselor to be with you forever – the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept Him, because it neither sees Him nor knows Him. But you know Him, for He lives with you and will be in you.”

Acts 1:8 “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

I Corinthians 2:12 “We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us.”

I Corinthians 3:16 “Don’t you know that you yourselves are God’s temple and that God’s Spirit lives in you?”

Ephesians 1:13 “And you also were included in Christ when you heard the word of truth, the Gospel of your salvation. Having believed, you were marked in Him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit...”

Galatians 5:25 “Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.”

Ephesians 5:18 “Do not get drunk on wine, which leads to debauchery. Instead, be filled with the Spirit.”

Salvation

Romans 6:23 “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Romans 10:9 “That if you confess with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved.”

Ephesians 2:8-9 “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast.”

John 14:6 “Jesus answered, ‘I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.’”

John 1:12 “Yet to all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God.”

Titus 3:4-7 “But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of His mercy. He saved us through the washing and rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by His grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.”

Galatians 3:26-27 “You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.”

Romans 5:1 “Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Acts 2:38 “Peter replied, ‘Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’”

Human Destiny

Genesis 1:27 “So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.”

Psalm 8:3-6 “When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have set in place, what is man that You are mindful of Him, the Son of Man that you care for him? You made Him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned Him with glory and honor. You made Him ruler over the works of Your hands; You put everything under His feet.”

Isaiah 53:6a “We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way.”

Romans 3:23 “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God...”

Isaiah 59:1-2 “Surely the arm of the Lord is not too short to save, nor His ear too dull to hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; your sins have hidden His face from you, so that He will not hear.”

Romans 5:12-21 “Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned – for before the law was given, sin was in the world. But sin is not taken into account when there is no law. Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who was a pattern of the One to come.

But the gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died by the trespass of the one man, how much more did God’s grace and the gift that came by the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, overflow to the many! Again, the gift of God is not like the result of the one man’s sin: The judgment followed one sin and brought condemnation, but the gift followed many trespasses and brought justification. For if, by the trespass of the one man, death reigned through that one man, how much more will those who receive God’s abundant provision of grace and of the gift of righteousness reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ.

Consequently, just as the result of one trespass was condemnation for all men, so also the result of one act of righteousness was justification that brings life for all men. For just as through the disobedience of the one man the many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one man the many will be made righteous. The law was added so that the trespass might increase.

But where sin increased, grace increased all the more, so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.”

Romans 6:23 “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Acts 24:15 “And I have the same hope in God as these men, that there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked.”

John 5:24 “I tell you the truth, whoever hears My Word and believes Him who sent Me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.”

Hebrews 9:27 “Just as man is destined to die once, and after that to face judgment.”

I Timothy 4:1, 8 “The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits, and things taught by demons...For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come.”

Revelation 20:15 “If anyone’s name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.”

The Church

Matthew 28:19-20 “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I will be with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Acts 2:42-47 “They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe, and many wonders and miraculous signs were done by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.”

Colossians 1:24 “Now rejoice in what was suffered for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ’s afflictions, for the sake of His body, which is the church.”

Ephesians 5:25 “Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her...”

Hebrews 10:25 “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.”

Acts 11:26 “...and when he found him, he brought him to Antioch. So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.”

Acts 14:23 “Paul and Barnabas appointed elders for them in each church and, with prayer and fasting, committed them to the Lord, in whom they had put their trust.”

I Timothy 5:17 “The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching.”

Titus 1:5 “The reason I left you in Crete was that you might straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you.”

Chapter Three

A Strategy for Building The Church

JESUS ONCE EXPLAINED an important aspect of how His church was going to develop. He said new wine should be put in new wineskins instead of trying to reuse the old ones. Through this metaphor, He taught about the distinction between the eternal, unchanging aspects of His work (that is, the wine) and the outward packaging of that activity (the wineskin). We are not free to re-prioritize the work of God, but His work *can* be done in a variety of ways through a variety of means supported by a variety of structures.

The Spirit who worked in the Old Covenant times is the same Spirit who is working in the New, but He's doing fresh things in fresh ways. The old "wineskins" of the past must give way to new ones. While grounded in the Word of God, ministry must be adapted to stay relevant. Gospel truths never change but they must be shared in the language familiar to the people we're trying to reach. Part of the love we express to the lost is to "*become all things to all men so that by all possible means I might save some*" as Paul put it in I Corinthians 9:22.

No one method will ever work in every culture or even within the same society. A variety of ministry approaches will be necessary for every person to hear God's Word so they understand.

A Timeless Message for Our Times

Oak Bridge is not preaching a new message. Unwrap the contemporary packaging and you will find the rich treasure of Jesus' 2000 year old Gospel. We have no desire to alter (as if we could improve!) our Savior's message. We only want to translate it into today's language. For those who are considering joining Oak Bridge, it is important to know this truth: Oak Bridge's new way of doing church is not our theology. We stand firmly in the historic Christian faith "*once for all delivered*" to the church (Jude 3). Christ's teaching contained in the Bible governs our individual beliefs and conduct. It is our full and final authority.

Jesus Had a Purpose

Jesus was certainly 'purpose driven' while He walked the earth. His purpose was to serve as a substitute for us, taking on the punishment for our sins, as a sacrifice on the cross.

We read in John 12:27-28, Jesus saying "*Now My heart is troubled, and what shall I say? 'Father, save Me from this hour'? No, it was for this very purpose I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name!*"

Nothing in Jesus' life happened by chance. Where lived, who He walked with, who He taught, what He said, where and when He performed miracles, all had a purpose. God wants us to know His Son, and then grow in maturity to be like His Son. "*And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose. For those God foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brothers*" (Romans 8:28-29)

God's Vision for Every Believer

Accepting Jesus as your Savior is the first step God wants you to take. Growing in maturity toward Christ are the steps He wants you to take the rest of your life.

Reaching the un-churched is our primary responsibility and many of Oak Bridge's strategies and programs center around this group. Some have never heard about Jesus and His church, some have been wounded or let down by "organized religion" in the past. All of them matter to God, and therefore should matter greatly to us.

If an unbeliever makes a commitment to regular attendance at Oak Bridge, we believe it will be just a matter of time until he/she accepts Christ as Lord and Savior. Once a person has received Christ, our goal is to move them toward obedience in Baptism.

Fellowship was important to the early church. Not just hand shaking, "how are you doing?" fellowship – but intimate, caring, sharing fellowship (*Acts 2:42*). It is this type of fellowship that allows for growth in Christ to take place. We believe small groups are the best place for this to happen so we make every effort to see that a new believer is plugged in with a group of fellow Christ-followers. We can be "Christ" to one another by sharing our lives, our love, and our compassion for one another.

Growing, maturing members of Christ' body develop spiritual disciplines or habits. They want to pray like Jesus, know and memorize Scripture like Jesus, have "quiet" time with God like Jesus, fellowship with others like Jesus, and give like Jesus. It is the responsibility of Oak Bridge to help everyone develop these necessary habits for growth.

Spiritual growth takes time, and people grow at different rates. There are four facts about spiritual growth:

1. It's not automatic (*Hebrews 5:12-13*),
2. It is a process (*II Peter 3:18*),
3. It takes discipline (*I Timothy 4:7b*),
4. It takes fellowship (*John 13:34-35*).

God calls all followers to grow up in every way like Christ (*Ephesians 4:15*), so our best efforts are required to see that no one remains a spiritual baby, unable to feed others.

The church is incredibly powerful when its body is using its talents, resources, creativity, energy, and love. God expects every Christian to use his or her gifts and talents in ministry (*Ephesians 2:10, 4:12*).

Oak Bridge Church has a system for uncovering, mobilizing, and supporting the giftedness of our members. Our ministry workers and leaders are committed to serving as teachers, musicians, youth leaders, administrators, etc. Without this leadership and deep level of commitment our church would come to a standstill.

Scripture References

A Strategy for Building the Church

(Please refer to your Bible for the references marked with an * asterisk.)

I Corinthians 9:22 “To the weak I became weak, to win the weak. I have become all things to all men so that (we) by all possible means I might save some.”

A Timeless Message for Our Times

Jude 3 *

Jesus Had a Purpose

John 12:27 “Now my heart is troubled, and what shall I say? ‘Father, save Me from this hour’? No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour.”

Romans 8:28-29 “And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love Him, who have been called according to His purpose. For those God foreknew He also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of His Son, that He might be firstborn among many brothers.”

Hebrews 5:12-13 “In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God’s Word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness.”

God's Vision for Every Person

Matthew 28:19-20 “Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Acts 2:42 “They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.”

II Peter 3:18 “But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”

I Timothy 4:7b “Train yourself to be Godly.”

John 13:34-35 “A new command I give to you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another. By this all men will know that you are My disciples, if you love one another.”

Ephesians 4:15 “Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into Him who is the Head, that is, Christ.”

Ephesians 2:10 “For we are God’s workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.”

Ephesians 4:12 “To prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up...”

Romans 12:1-8 “Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God – this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is – His good, pleasing and perfect will.

For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the measure of faith God has given you. Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts,

according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully."

SECTION 2

Oak Bridge Statements

Chapter Four — *Statement on Oak Bridge Leadership*

Chapter Five — *Statement on Baptism*

Chapter Six — *Statement on Communion*

Chapter Seven — *Statement on Christian Giving*

Chapter Eight — *Statement on Divorce and Remarriage*

Scripture References — *follow at the end of each chapter*

Chapter 4

Statement on Oak Bridge Leadership

“Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into Him who is the Head, that is Christ. From Him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.”
Ephesians 4:15-16

On a spiritual level, the head of Oak Bridge Community Church is Jesus Christ. As an organization, we seek to reflect His priorities in all we do. No decision is ever made that would knowingly contradict any of Jesus’ teaching. In addition, through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we strive to understand God’s program for us as a church. Whenever we implement a plan, we keep one eye on our effectiveness, and the other on the next step God seems to be showing us.

On a human level, Oak Bridge is led by Senior Pastor, Tom Noblitt, and a diverse leadership team. This leadership team provides general watch care and oversight. Together they are able to keep “the main thing”, the “main thing”. Many volunteer ministry leaders are to be credited for the various ministry successes of the church.

The Role of Leadership

Leadership Team

Scripture indicates that the ultimate decision-making authority in the church rests with its leaders (*I Peter 5:1-2; Hebrews 13:17; Acts 20:28*).

The New Testament is clear that the church is to be led by more than one leader. Oak Bridge has a Senior Pastor and a leadership team that work closely together, continually evaluating the teaching ministry of the church and reviewing major ministry decisions and strategic planning.

The team concept provides accountability for personal and financial integrity and for the best use of team member's diverse backgrounds and areas of expertise.

These leaders are given responsibility and authority to see that the church remains on a true course Biblically. Its members must be appropriately shepherded and fed through insightful and accurate Biblical teaching. Team oversight ensures that the life of the church is being well managed with the assistance of other volunteer ministry leaders and workers.

Church leaders guard the body against harmful influences and confront those who are contradicting Biblical truth or who are continuing in a pattern of sinful behavior. In doing so, they are to close all potential entrances for Satan's destructive attempts so that the truth of Christ will remain credible to both the congregation and the community.

Senior Pastor

Like any member of the body, senior pastors are uniquely gifted and should seek to minister primarily within their areas of giftedness. They are primarily responsible to teach of the Word of God and to provide strategic leadership and vision to the body. Their goal is to help believers mature through relevant and accurate presentation of Biblical truth, equipping them for their ministry in the body. They must strive to teach and lead by word and example, and they must stress both the understanding and the application of God's truth.

Senior pastors should not be required to consistently minister in areas unrelated to their primary function . To burden them with other roles is to rob them of planning time, study time, and devotion to the Word. This can lead to watered down inaccurate teaching or ineffective leadership, both of which in turn weaken the body.

Teaching within the body should not be limited to the senior pastors. The New Testament emphasizes the use of other members who are gifted in this area, which provides a variety of input and role models.

Ministry Leaders

As in *Acts 6*, our servant leaders assume responsibility for numerous ministry tasks throughout the life of the church. An incredible amount of ministry work is accomplished through faithful, hard-working volunteers, allowing Oak Bridge to accomplish it's mission and ministry efforts.

Serving in Unity

What makes Oak Bridge work smoothly is the humble, servant-like spirit of these three groups of people. Leaders at all levels do not see it as their role to "lord it over" those under their charge, but desire to serve the body with their gifts (*I Peter 5:3*). Whether a leader or a follower, everyone in the church is submitted to Jesus Christ, and we all should consider others as more important than ourselves (*Philippians 2:3*). This spirit of cooperation and appreciation is a prominent feature of Oak Bridge, and a great blessing to our church body that should be valued and protected by its members.

Scripture References--

I Peter 5:1-2 “To all the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder, a witness of Christ’s sufferings and one who also will share in the glory to be revealed: Be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care, serving as overseers—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be.”

Philippians 2:3 “Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit, but in humility consider others better than yourselves.”

Serving in Unity

I Peter 5:3 “eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock.”

Hebrews 13:17 “Obey your leaders and submit to their authority.”

Acts 20:28 “Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood.”

Chapter Five

Statement on Baptism

When people consider the topic of baptism, three questions are normally asked. At Oak Bridge, the Bible is the source of our beliefs, and the Word of God supports our answers to the questions.

Why Should I Be Baptized?

1. To follow the example set by Jesus.

“At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan.” Mark 1:9

2. Because Jesus commanded it.

“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey every thing I have commanded you.” Matthew 28:18-20

3. It is an act of obedience that clearly identifies you as a believer.

“We know that we have come to know Him if we obey His commands.” I John 2:3

“Those who accepted His message (believers in Jesus) were baptized.” Acts 2:41

“We were therefore buried with Him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may have new life.” Romans 6:4

Why Be Baptized Again When I Was Baptized as a Baby?

1. Scriptures teach us that baptism only follows the process of believing, and repenting (turning to God.) These actions and the decision to be baptized require a level of maturity. There are no recorded Scriptures found on infant baptism in the Bible.

“Then Philip began with the Scripture and told Him the Good News about Jesus. As they traveled along the road, they came to some water, and the man said, ‘Look here is water! Why shouldn’t I be baptized?’ Philip said, ‘if you believe with all your heart, you may.’ The man answered, ‘I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.’ So they went down into the water and Philip baptized him.” Acts 8:35-38

“Simon himself believed and was baptized...” Acts 8:13

“But when they believed Philip as he preached the Good News of the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they were baptized, both men and women.” Acts 8:12

Those who accepted His message, (believers in Jesus) were baptized.” Acts 2:41

2. Infant baptism is a tradition that disagrees with God’s Word.

“See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ.” Colossians 2:8

Scriptural teaching on baptism may be summarized as follows:

- ◆ Baptism is an act of obedience to Christ by individuals who have surrendered themselves to His will.

- ◆ Baptism should be provided to someone who is old enough to recognize their sinfulness, mature enough to understand the death of Christ on their behalf, and responsible enough to make a solid decision to trust Christ and follow him the rest of their life.
- ◆ Baptism symbolizes the spiritual cleansing through divine forgiveness and newness of life experienced by believers through their identification with Christ in His death, burial, and resurrection.
- ◆ Baptism provides an opportunity for believers to make a formal profession of their faith publicly before the church.
- ◆ As a Biblical rite of initiation into the body of Christ, baptism of believers is considered a prerequisite for joining the membership of Oak Bridge.

Scripture References--Statement on Baptism

Why Should I Be Baptized?

Acts 2:38 “Peter replied, ‘Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’”

Acts 22:14-16 “Then he said: ‘The God of our fathers has chosen you to know his will and to see the Righteous One and to hear words from his mouth. You will be his witness to all men of what you have seen and heard. And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name, you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.’”

Romans 6:1-11 “What shall we say, then? Shall we go on sinning so that grace may increase? By no means! We died to sin, how can we live in it any longer? Or don’t you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away

with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin--because anyone who has died has been freed from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. In the same way, count yourselves dead to sin but alive to God in Christ Jesus.”

Colossians 2:11-12 “In him you were also circumcised, in the putting off of the sinful nature, not with a circumcision done by the hands of men but with the circumcision done by Christ, having been buried with him in baptism and raised with him through your faith in the power of God, who raised him from the dead.”

I Corinthians 12:12-13 “The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one Spirit into one body--whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free--and we were all given the one Spirit to drink.”

Ephesians 4:3-6 “Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit--just as you were called to one hope when you were called--one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.”

Galatians 3:26-27 “You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.”

I Peter 3:21-22 “And this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also--not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at God’s right hand--with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him.”

Chapter Six

Statement on Communion

Jesus never asked His disciples to remember His birth. But He did instruct them to remember His death and resurrection. He gave the church two visible symbols as reminders of this. These are baptism and Communion (The Lord's Supper).

What is Communion?

1 Corinthians 11:23-26

1. It is a simple act.

“The Lord Jesus, on the night He was betrayed, took bread...” vs. 23

2. It is a reminder.

“...and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, ‘This is My body which is for you; do this in remembrance of Me.’” vs. 24

3. It is a symbol.

“In the same way, after supper He took the cup, saying ‘This cup is the new covenant in My blood; do this, whenever you drink it, in remembrance of Me.’” vs. 25

4. It is a statement of faith.

“For whenever you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until He comes.” vs. 26

Just as our Lord's sacrifice on the cross was a serious matter, so is the remembrance of it. As we take Communion in our observance of the supper, we must each examine ourselves. Where would I be without Christ? Am I growing in the likeness of Christ? Where am I falling short? Am I using my gifts to serve Him? How great is His love for me, that He would give His life as a sacrifice for mine? In this time of reflection and celebration, we recognize Christ as our savior who willingly provided the way for our salvation.

We recognize communion as an ordinance open to all believers. Therefore all believers in Christ, (whether a member of Oak Bridge or not) are welcome to participate in the Lord's Supper when offered at our worship services.

Jesus' instruction to the church regarding the Lord's Supper is simply, "*Do this in remembrance of me*" (Luke 22:19). He did not say how often it should be done.

Scripture References--Statement on Communion

What is Communion?

Luke 22:19 "*And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, 'This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.'*"

Acts 2:42 "*They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread, and to prayer.*"

Chapter Seven

Statement on Christian Giving

During Old Testament times, prior to Christ coming to earth, God's people were required to contribute at least a tenth of their income to God's work. This tenth is commonly referred to as a tithe.

The New Testament goes beyond the original tithe to state that all we possess really belongs to God and that we are simply the caretakers or stewards of our possessions. We are taught to give our tithe but in addition to that we give offerings as we are able. Offerings and financial gifts are sometimes given to ministries other than our home church, while the tithe is intended to go back into the church where we are being served.

When we learn to regard the total sum of our possessions as belonging not to ourselves, but to God, we develop a joyful sense of freedom from the instincts of greed and possessiveness. As a result, our giving is not based on legalistic calculations. It becomes a cheerful, heartfelt, generous response to God's love, given for the purpose of building and sustaining ministry.

The Biblical measure for giving is to be found in a grateful heart, not in a calculator. As Jesus himself said, "*it is more blessed to give than to receive.*" *Acts 20:35b*

Oak Bridge's position on giving is based on Christ's words as recorded in the New Testament:

"Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man's life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions."
Luke 12:15

“The ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop. He thought to himself, ‘what shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.’ Then he said, ‘this is what I’ll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store all my grain and my goods. And I’ll say to myself, “you have plenty of good things laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink, and be merry.”’ But God said to him, ‘you fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?’ This is how it will be with anyone who stores up things for himself but is not rich toward God.” Luke 12:16-21

“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on the earth, where moth and rust destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moth and rust do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” Matthew 6:19-21

“For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” Our treasure should be in God’s kingdom (the Church, Christian ministries, social and political organizations with Christian values). Let’s see how the early church in the book of Acts regarded giving.

“All the believers were together and had everything in common. Selling their possessions and goods, they gave to anyone as he had need.” Acts 2:44-45

“All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of his possessions was his own, but they shared everything they had. With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and much grace was upon them all.

“There were no needy persons among them. From time to time those who owned lands or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles feet, and it was distributed to anyone as he had need.” Acts 4:32-35

“Make it your ambition to lead a quiet life, to mind your own business and to work with your hands, just as we told you, so that your daily life may win the respect of outsiders and so that you will not be dependent on anybody.” I Thessalonians 4:11-12

“If anyone does not provide for his relatives, and especially for his immediate family, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.” I Timothy 5:8

“Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.” I Timothy 6:17-19

“Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.” Galatians 6:10

Chapter Eight

Statement on Divorce and Remarriage

Marriage has been established by God as an earthly copy of the relationship between God and His people. It is meant to be permanent, honored, and respected. However, because of the fallenness of human nature, the Scriptures permit divorce in the following cases for the protection of the innocent party:

1. Divorce for the cause of marital unfaithfulness (Matthew 5:32)

2. Divorce for desertion (I Corinthians 7:15) – desertion being defined as behavior equivalent to the abandonment of the marriage relationship.

In such cases, the innocent spouse is free to remarry in the Lord (although repentance and reconciliation of the marriage be the first consideration).

Each case of divorce or remarriage has to be dealt with on an individual basis from the perspective of God's inexhaustible capacity to forgive human sin and restore broken lives.

SECTION 3

Membership at Oak Bridge

Chapter Nine – *Why Membership?*

Chapter Ten – *Steps To Become a Member*

Chapter Eleven – *Benefits of Membership*

Scripture References – *follow at the end of each chapter*

Chapter Nine

Why Membership?

“So in Christ we, who are many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.” Romans 12:5

Oak Bridge proclaims the Good News of Jesus Christ. But proclaiming the Gospel alone doesn't make us a church. What makes us a church – not just an evangelistic organization – is that we are a *community*. We have visitors and regular attendees, but we also have members. People *belong* to our fellowship, and through membership, know they're connected.

One might assume that, as long as you profess Christ, what is the need for any further identification with a local church? Isn't it enough simply to call yourself a Christian and attend services somewhere regularly? What is the point of formal membership?

Three Reasons to Become a Member . . .

We believe there are at least three reasons for having formal membership.

First, we believe the concept of membership is Biblical. While the term “church member” is never used in the Bible, the concept is clear throughout the New Testament. Believers identified themselves with a specific local body and were challenged to become devoted, active participants.

Second, formal membership is valuable to the leaders of the church as they fulfill their responsibility of shepherding. Oak Bridge, by design, attracts seekers, observers, and guests--we structure ministries for this to always be the case.

But at some point it is important to identify those who truly comprise the “flock” at Oak Bridge – the core that can be counted on to build and sustain the ministries of the church.

These are the committed “family members” who receive priority in the allocation of finite church resources (as commanded in *Galatians 6:10*).

Third, and perhaps most importantly, experience shows that membership benefits the individual (fellowship, relationships, opportunity to serve...). In a culture where commitment is no longer highly valued, recognizable membership is an important step that moves each of us out of the vague clouds and into the clear light of committed participation. It presents a challenge to “step out off the sidelines” and publicly affirm our commitment to Christ and to a specific local body. In this sense, membership can be a significant “defining moment” in one’s lifelong journey with Christ.

Positional and Participating Membership

But how exactly do you define a “member”? The Bible actually describes two kinds of membership:

POSITIONAL MEMBER- At the point of conversion you become a “positional member” in the Church at large, based solely on Christ’s merit and grace. .” Scripture is full of references to the union with Christ and His body, which happens at the instant of your conversion.

(*I Corinthians 12:12-13; Ephesians 2:13-22, 4:3-6; Colossians 1:13-23*).

PARTICIPATING MEMBER- The Bible urges us to continue our spiritual growth while joining with a local congregation. We are called to lay down roots and “participate” by contributing our time, talents and financial resources.

(*Romans 12:4-8; I Corinthians 12:25-31, 14:12, 26; Hebrews 10:24-25; I Timothy 3:14-15*).

Over a person’s lifetime they may move their membership to different local churches based on family relocation, etc. while maintaining a permanent “positional membership” in Christ’s Church.

Participating Members Covenant

Participating members share four general Biblical concepts, with specific actions associated with each.

◆ I will protect the unity of my church

...by acting in love toward other members.

...by refusing to gossip.

...by following our leaders.

*“So let us concentrate on the things which make for harmony, and on the growth of our fellowship together.”
Romans 15:19*

“May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you a spirit of unity among yourselves as you follow Christ Jesus.” Romans 15:5

“Have a sincere love for your fellow believers, love one another earnestly with all your heart.” 1 Peter 1:22

“Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs.” Ephesians 4:29

“Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as those who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you.” Hebrews 13:17

◆ I will share the responsibilities of my church

...by praying for its growth.

...by inviting the unchurched to attend.

...by warmly welcoming those who visit.

“To the church...we always thank God for all of you, mentioning you in our prayers.” 1 Thessalonians 1:2

“Go out into the country and make them come in, so that My house will be full.” Luke 14:23

“Accept one another then, just as Christ accepted you, in order to bring praise to God.” Romans 15:7

◆ **I will support the testimony of my church**

...by attending faithfully.

...by living a Godly life.

...by giving regularly.

“Let us not give up the habit of meeting together...but let us encourage one another.” Hebrews 10:25

“Whatever happens, conduct yourselves in a manner worthy of the Gospel of Christ.” Philippians 1:27

“On the first day of every week, each one of you, should set aside a sum of money in keeping with his income, saving it up, so that when I come no collections will have to be made.” 1 Corinthians 16:2

◆ **I will move toward ministry in my church**

...by discovering my gifts and talents.

...by being equipped to serve by my pastors.

...by developing a servant’s heart.

“Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others” 1 Peter 4:10

“It is He who gave...some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God’s people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up...” Ephesians 4:11-12

“Each of you should look not only to your own interests, but also to the interests of others. Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus...who took on the very nature of a servant...” Philippians 2:4-5, 7

Scripture References--Why Membership?

Galatians 6:10 “Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers.”

I Corinthians 12:12-13 “The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ. For we were all baptized by one spirit into one body – whether Jews or Greeks, slave or free – and we were all given the one spirit to drink.”

Ephesians 2:13-22 “But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near through the blood of Christ. For He Himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by abolishing in His flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in Himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace, and in this one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which He put to death their hostility. He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. For through Him we both have access to the Father by one spirit. Consequently you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God’s people and members of God’s household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus Himself as the chief cornerstone. In Him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in Him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by His Spirit.”

Ephesians 4:3-6 “Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit – just as you were called to one hope when you were called – one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.”

Colossians 1:13-23 “For He has rescued us from the dominion of darkness and brought us into the kingdom of the Son He loves, in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by Him all things were created: things in heaven, and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities;

all things were created by Him and for Him. He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. And He is the head of the body, the church; He is the beginning and the firstborn from among the dead, so that in everything He might have the supremacy. For God was pleased to have all His fullness dwell in Him, and through Him to reconcile to Himself all things, whether things on earth or things in heaven, by making peace through His blood shed on the cross. Once you were alienated from God and were enemies in your minds because of your evil behavior. But now He has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in His sight, without blemish and free from accusation – if you continue in your faith, established and firm, not moved from the hope held out in the Gospel.”

Romans 12:4-8 “Just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given us. If a man's gift is prophesying, let him use it in proportion to his faith. If it is serving, let him serve; if it is teaching, let him teach; if it is encouraging, let him encourage; if it is contributing to the needs of others, let him give generously; if it is leadership, let him govern diligently; if it is showing mercy, let him do it cheerfully.”

I Corinthians 12:25-31 “So that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then workers of miracles, also those having gifts of healing, those able to help others, those with gifts of administration, and those speaking in different kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all have gifts of healing? Do all speak in tongues? Do all interpret? But eagerly desire the greater gifts.”

I Corinthians 14:12 “So it is with you. Since you are eager to have spiritual gifts, try to excel in gifts that build up the church.”

I Corinthians 14:26 “What then shall we say, brothers? When you come together, everyone has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. All of these must be done for the strengthening of the church.”

Hebrews 10:24-25 “And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. 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.”

I Timothy 3:14-15 “Although I hope to come to you soon, I am writing you these instructions so that, if I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God’s household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth.”

Chapter Ten

Steps To Become a Member

As we've seen in the previous chapter, believers are already full members of the body of Christ. We have an invisible bond that links us to Christ, and to each other. But participating membership is about making the invisible visible; the abstract concrete. The following graphic explains the four steps involved in formal affiliation with Oak Bridge when you become a member.

Acceptance of Christ Through Repentance



Salvation is God's free gift to us, but we must accept it. We can never make up for our sin by self-improvement or good works. Only by trusting in Jesus Christ as God's offer of forgiveness can anyone be saved from sin's penalty. We must

turn from our self-ruled life, admit that we are sinners, and turn to Jesus in faith. (*Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:8-9; John 14:6, 1:12; Titus 3:4-7; Galatians 3:26-27; Romans 5:1,3:23, 10:9; Acts 4:12, 20:21; John 5:24, 1:12*)

**Identification
with Christ
Through
Baptism**



Through baptism we acknowledge that Jesus Christ is God's only son, that he paid the penalty for our sin, and that He made it possible for a new type of life through his resurrection. As a statement of our faith and the commitment in our heart, we identify ourselves with Christ through Biblical baptism. (*Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 1:9; Acts 18:8; Romans 6:4; Matthew 3:16; Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38*)

**Investigation of
Oak Bridge
Through
What, Why,
and How Class**



The "What, Why, and How" Class – Discovering Oak Bridge – is a basic introduction to our church family. Since we have people coming to Oak Bridge from many different church and unchurched backgrounds, this class is designed to clearly explain what our church teaches and why. (*Matthew 28:20; I Timothy 4:6; Psalm 25:4-5; Acts 5:42; Colossians 1:28*)

**Agreement with
Oak Bridge
Membership
Covenant**

As a member, you agree with Oak Bridge's membership covenant, which addresses Biblical concepts on unity, responsibility, support, and ministry. (*I Corinthians 1:10; Ephesians 2:19; II Peter 3:18; I Peter 4:10; I Corinthians 12:5; Acts 1:8; I Peter 3:15*)

Celebration

The final step is to celebrate publicly your new participating membership. New members confirm the Sunday they would like to be welcomed into the family and we will publicly recognize them as new members to the congregation.

Scripture References--Steps to Become a Member

Repentance

Romans 6:23 “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

Ephesians 2:8-9 “For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith – and this not from yourselves, it is the gift of God – not by works, so that no one can boast.”

John 14:6 “Jesus answered, ‘I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.’”

John 1:12 “Yet to all who received Him, to those who believe His name, He gave the right to become children of God.”

Titus 3:4-7 “But when the kindness and love of God our Savior appeared, He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of His mercy. He saved us through the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom He poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by His grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.”

Galatians 3:26-27 “You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.”

Romans 5:1 “Therefore since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ.”

Romans 3:23 “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God...”

Romans 10:9 “That if you confess with your mouth, ‘Jesus is Lord’, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.”

Acts 4:12 “Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to men by which we must be saved.”

Acts 20:21 “I have declared to both Jews and Greeks that they must turn to God in repentance and have faith in our Lord Jesus.”

John 5:24 “I tell you the truth, whoever hears My Word and believes in Him who sent Me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.

John 1:12 “Yet to all who received Him, to those who believed in His name, He gave the right to become children of God.”

Baptism

Matthew 28:18-20 “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I will be with you always, to the very end of the age.”

Mark 1:9 “At that time Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan.”

Acts 18:8 “Crispus, the synagogue ruler, and his entire household believed in the Lord; and many of the Corinthians who heard him believed and were baptized.”

Romans 6:4 “We were therefore buried with Him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life.”

Matthew 3:16 “As soon as Jesus was baptized, He went up out of the water. At that moment heaven was opened, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and lighting on Him.”

Mark 16:16 “Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.”

Acts 2:38 “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.”

Investigation/Teaching

Matthew 28:20 “Teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you.”

I Timothy 4:6 “If you point these things out to the brothers, you will be a good minister of Christ Jesus, brought up in the truths of the faith and of the good teaching that you have followed.”

Psalms 25:4-5 “Show me your ways, O Lord, teach me your paths; guide me in Your truth and teach me, for you are God my Savior, and my hope is in You all day long.”

Acts 5:42 “Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Christ.”

Colossians 1:28 “We proclaim Him, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone perfect in Christ.”

Membership Covenant

I Corinthians 1:10 “I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought.”

Ephesians 2:19 “Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens but fellow citizens with God’s people and members of God’s household.”

II Peter 3:18 “But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.”

I Peter 4:10 “Each one should use whatever gift he has received to serve others, faithfully administering God’s grace in its various forms.”

I Corinthians 12:5 “There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord.”

Acts 1:8 “But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

I Peter 3:15 “But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.”

Chapter Eleven

Benefits of Membership

Just as the key word “participating” describes the responsibilities of members, that word also implies there are benefits. Specifically, being a participating member means that you receive priority for facility usage and staff members’ time (such as weddings, funerals, benevolence needs, personal support in your area of ministry, etc.). From time to time, meetings or other functions are held which are for “members only.” These events inform the core of the church of a concern or solicit input from the body on key decisions to be made (*Romans 12:4-5*). Finally, all leadership/teaching positions in the church require participating membership as a prerequisite. The primary reason to become a participating member is to identify ourselves with the characteristics, or marks, of Biblical maturity (*I Corinthians 12:27*).

Scripture References--Benefits of Membership

Romans 12:4-5 “Just as each of us has one body with many members and these members do not all have the same function, so in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.”

I Corinthians 12:27 “Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.”