

OCC CORE VALUES

The Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke and John) describe the life and ministry of Jesus primarily to 1st Century Jews. The rest of the New Testament expands on that ministry and describes what has become known as the theological foundation or framework for the Gospel. In particular, the book of Acts paints a picture of the impact of Jesus' life and ministry in the life of His followers and their new community, the church. Filled with the promised Holy Spirit, this community began to live out and declare Jesus' kingship and kingdom to the world. As it learned to live by Kingdom Values based on their relationship with and intimate knowledge of Christ, the church was able to live out a love and unity unheard of in the world.

At Orillia Community Church [OCC] the following kingdom focused values or priorities are both rooted in scripture and written in a way that is applicable to 21st Century Orillians. As we live these kingdom values, they will yield new life and blessing to people who purpose to live in and through them.

THE GOSPEL

All of the values below fit within what we call the gospel. Simply put, the Gospel is the “*good news*” of God's redemption of mankind.

While this is a simple statement, it is lived out in many different ways. There are an almost unending number of ways the gospel has been and is expressed. Some of these ways are individual, some are church community wide, and some are even wider. However we express it, the gospel is wider, deeper, longer, larger than any single denominational (or independent or network connected churches like OCC) or theological expression.

Too often, the gospel has been reduced to what Dallas Willard calls “*the gospel of sin management*.” The gospel is about much more than getting my sins forgiven so I can go to heaven when I die. The gospel cannot be reduced to what we believe about personal salvation or justification by faith. Under this mindset, the Gospels are little more than back story leading up to the cross, and Jesus is little more than a mechanism by which our salvation is gained. The cross is the only part of his story that really matters.

Much of modern evangelicalism seem to have confused the words *evangel* (Greek for gospel) and *soteria* (Greek for salvation), and in doing so, we actually minimize or reduce the gospel.

Scot McKnight, in his recent book “*The King Jesus Gospel*” [Zondervan, 2011], says that what the Gospel had in mind was “the story of Jesus of Nazareth as told as the climax of the long story of Israel, which in turn is the story of how the one true God is rescuing the world.” This means that:

1. The gospel is framed by Israel's story. The story of Jesus – his life, death, resurrection, exaltation, and return – is the completion of Israel's story.
2. The gospel centers on the lordship of Jesus. He is Messiah and King.
3. The gospel summons people to respond—to repent, to place faith in Jesus, and be baptized.
4. The gospel saves and redeems.

At OCC, we believe that Gospel culture is not limited to the salvation story or the atonement story (although this is certainly a major part of it). The gospel is driven by or rooted in the story of Israel culminating with the story of Jesus.

The gospel is not so much about “*making a decision*” as it is about a lifestyle of obedience or discipleship in the context of authentic community.

At OCC we encourage people to be connected to others in what we call LIFEGroups and ministry teams. We believe that being a gospel people means, among other things, being counter-cultural. Our

culture's over emphasis on individualism is countered by living in a way that is expressed in the real relationships of being community. This is where the rubber hits the road.

- we will not let the gospel be minimized;
- we will maintain a holistic understanding of people – people are more than “souls”;

Jesus went throughout Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom, and healing every disease and sickness among the people.

Matthew 4:23¹

The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor.

Luke 4:18-19

TRUTH & MEANING

God is True and has made his Truth known in his Word and in the person of Jesus Christ. For this reason, OCC seeks to know, live, and proclaim the Truth out of love for God.

God is eternal and gives meaning to every age, culture and world view. For this reason, OCC seeks to continually understand cultural and worldview shifts to effectively minister to new generations.

Truth is about more than facts. It is about a Person. In declaring himself the truth, Jesus echoes the insistence in the Old Testament that truth and meaning are intimately connected to each other in the nature and person of God and his purpose in creation. But Jesus does not simply echo this great scriptural theme – he declares that he is culmination. Jesus takes the long story of how God revealed his nature and purpose to the people of Israel and declares himself its key.

In Jesus' love relationship with the Father and the Spirit, God's Triune relational nature is demonstrated. In Christ's journey to the cross, God's passionate purpose to include humanity in his eternal communion is demonstrated. These two themes provide context for beginning to grasp what it means to call the Bible God's revealed truth – that Scripture not only gives reliable historical knowledge about how God acts in the daily world; it gives unique theological knowledge about what God is like and why He acts.

OCC shares a commitment to hold Jesus Christ as the key to understanding truth and meaning. And unless these are united, truth will be empty and meaning blind. Since the Bible alone accurately represents the person and work of Jesus, OCC treats it as God's ultimate tool for directing the church to know Christ and be transformed into His image.

Truth is a loaded word in our culture. But for truth to be truth at OCC, and indeed anywhere, it must serve nothing less than the holistic meaning found in the Triune God's active love for the world.

The word for a person who studies truth and meaning from a biblical perspective is theologian [“the·o·lo·gi·an” n. A person who is well versed in the study of the nature of God and inquires into religious questions].

We strive to keep a culture or ethos of Scriptural study and discussion in our community in order to help us grow in our love for God and people. We examine life through the lens of viewing both the world and culture through the story of the Bible. We realize that we must become thinkers and theologians if we are serious about being disciples and being missional in today's culture.

¹ All Scripture references are from the NIV, unless otherwise noted.

To grow as people of **TRUTH & MEANING:**

- we will offer seasonal OCC “School of Theology” classes to help the community dig deeper into the Scriptures;
- we will teach through sections of the Bible in our worship gatherings;
- LIFEGroupsⁱ will discuss and study the Scriptures together on a weekly basis;
- we will have periodic Think-Tanks, open forums, special learning events, Book Clubs, film nights and other ongoing activities that encourage thinking and discussion.

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 all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. There was a man sent from God whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. The true light that gives light to everyone was coming into the world. He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God – children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God. The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

John 1:1-14

...and how from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that all God’s people may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

2 Timothy 3:15-17

WORSHIP & BEAUTY

God is worthy of worship. At OCC we encourage both the individual lifestyle of worship and the gathered celebrationⁱⁱ of worship.

God is beautiful and His creation reflects His beauty. God created man and woman in His image and likeness to also create works of beauty. For this reason, OCC values the arts, expression, and creativity. Made in God’s image, people are most human when we too delight to give and beautifyⁱⁱⁱ. As people salvaged by Christ from selfish waste and adopted into a family of thankful makers, OCC recognizes that all things true and beautiful and good find their completion only when they are offered to the Giver in worship.

Instead of compartmentalizing life, then, OCC strives to integrate all of human experience into expressions of worship. Whether dedicating a novel, a song, or a newborn child, the community recognizes that the powers of creativity and beauty find source and destination in God. In joy, God gives these powers that He might receive their fruits back with joy – because only through such exchange may His children join in His eternal delight. For this reason, OCC values the arts and their expressions of beauty as vital to a life of holistic worship.

“Worship” is the act of adoring, praising and ascribing worth to God; offering our service to God

At the core of who we are, we are to be worshipers of God. Our desire, as individuals and as a church, is to grow in our love for God and worship Him with all we do and with all we are. We want to see our worship expressed holistically through our day to day living and lifestyle. We desire our worship to be expressed in creativity and in beauty, since God is the ultimate creator.

To grow in our **WORSHIP**:

- we seek to be worshipers wherever we are, creating a culture and atmosphere of worship;
- we will continue to learn how to enter into and experience worship during our gatherings and move into variety of ways that express our love for God;
- we will use the arts as a creative expression of worship because we are created in the image of God, who is the ultimate Creator;
- we will look to the historical church^{iv} for inspiration and practice spiritual worship, blending the ancient with present;
- we seek to incorporate prayer everywhere in our community, as prayer demonstrates our dependency upon God;
- we desperately look for the Holy Spirit's leading and direction for the church and do not only rely on human methodologies for ministry;
- we will develop communities for those interested in art, music, theatre and film.

Psalm ??

Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, 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.

Romans 12:1

But you are a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, his own special people, that you may proclaim the praises of him who called you out of darkness into His marvelous light

1 Peter 2:9

AUTHENTIC COMMUNITY

God exists in the perfect community of Father, Son and Holy Spirit^v and has created us to live in community with him and each other. For this reason, OCC seeks to live in deep and personal faith by serving others in loving and authentic community. God – as Father, Son and Holy Spirit – exists in eternal community. OCC participates in that community through corporate worship, fellowship and service, following Jesus' great command to love both God and neighbour.

And because the gospel is ultimately about all of humanity being restored to God's community, only through practicing community will individuals grow fully in the grace and knowledge to be found in Jesus. And, it is through a redeemed community that a fragmented world can see the power of the gospel and the nature of God's work. As a culture of confession, transformation, friendship, forgiveness, justice, power, and love springs up in the lives of normal people, those who don't know Christ will be compelled to ask what is happening.

And the answer to their questions?

It is that the Spirit of God is living in Christ's people at OCC as a temple, transforming every person together into the image of a communal God whose nature overflows to the world with faith, hope, and love.

God exists in community, as Father, Son and Holy Spirit and we as people created in the image of God are also created to exist in community. The church is supposed to function as a family and a community; Jesus instructed His followers to love one another as the primary way others will know we are His disciples. The church should function as a family who encourages, prays, supports, and equips one another while on mission together. The church is not a meeting, nor a place, but a "family."

The primary function of Orillia Community Church's leadership is to focus on training and building into those serving in the community, so that it is not just the "pastors" caring for the community, but the community caring for and sustaining itself. We also value family and want to enable families to

worship together so that children and teenagers feel part of the church rather than a segment of the church.

Because of the complexity of being a growing church, we see “community” as being broken down into smaller settings, since that cannot happen in a large worship gathering once a week.

To grow in **AUTHENTIC COMMUNITY**:

- we have LIFEGroupsⁱ meeting mid-week in homes all over Orillia and area. The heart of these groups is to live out the model of the early Church and its practice of meeting in smaller groups to study, pray and do life together. We see the larger weekend worship gathering as a collection of these smaller communities;
- we will strive to create a sense of community among those who serve on ministry teams;
- we will develop affinity-communities within the larger community (i.e. outdoor adventures, ministry to women, artists, parents, men’s, college) as the need arises and leaders are raised up^{vi}.

A new command I give 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.

John 13:34-35

They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who 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.

Acts 2:42-47

Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. **1 Corinthian 12:27**

It was He who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and 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 4:11-13

Give my greetings to the brothers and sisters at Laodicea, and to Nympha and the church in her house.

Colossians 4:15

MISSIONAL JOURNEY

Jesus calls his followers to journey with him into this diverse world and to embrace it. This mission that he invites us to join him on means being the people of God, partnering with him, in his redemptive mission in the world. At OCC “*missional*” is more than a buzz word that is popular in some theological streams. We understand the Missional Church in this way: the people of God, partnering with him in his redemptive mission, in the world.

- **the people of God,**

We’ve been brought up in a world where church is a “what”, an “it”, something outside of me, something I go to, something I support, something I bring friends to. But “*missional*” is about who. Until we get this, we will never join God in the places where he is doing most of his work. Wherever we are, God is already at work. We simply join him in what he is doing.

- **partnering with him,**

It’s not our mission; it’s his. It’s not about trying to get God to fall in love with our dreams and efforts; we need to fall in love with his mission. He invites us to join him in what he is doing, both within the community of believers and among those who don’t yet know him. And so, for

example we honour Sunday school teachers as doing children's ministry; and we also honour school teachers and volunteers who do children's ministry in our neighbourhood.

- **in his redemptive mission**

We regularly go out to pray, in places where people are: streets, parks, Wal-Mart, Mariposa, etc. We invite OCC to pray: *"Lord, help me see what you see."* When we pray in this way we are recaptured by the heart of God for people.

- **in the world**

What if we asked if marriages in our neighbourhoods were better next year? If schools were better? What if we prayed for every single school teacher and sent a letter asking for any prayer requests? You get the idea, there are many ways in which we can touch our neighbourhoods.

OCC, following Christ, is committed to being friends with each other and our neighbourhoods through acts of compassion and service. Compelled by God's love to live out and proclaim the gospel of Jesus, we conspire to engage culture with hope on all fronts, to advocate for the defenceless, to seek justice for the downtrodden, to lift up the downcast, to embody the fearless love of the risen Christ.

OCC, celebrates the God who calls his people to start walking with him through frailty and brokenness. OCC practices turning the difficulties of the journey into sources of fellowship, joy, healing, and worship. Together, transparent in weakness and strengthened by hope, OCC aims to mature in her identity as the image of God to the world.

It is through this walk and worship – messy as they can be – that we strive to fulfill our mission to love as God loves, proclaiming the whole Gospel to the whole person in the whole world.

Missional means to be sent... making the kingdom of God visible... tangible. It is an extension of the incarnational ministry of Jesus who came and pitched his tent and "moved into the neighbourhood." John 1:14 The Message

God's intent for the church was never for it to be withdrawn, isolated or exist only to meet its own needs. Instead, the church is to be in the world, but not of the world (John 17). Being "missional" means that we will exist for the sake of inviting others into Kingdom living and eternal life. OCC doesn't have a missions department; we are on God's mission.

The Kingdom shows up in very tangible ways in life, especially in the lives of marginal people. Discipleship is about creating counter cultural people. This word discipleship has been misused, we maybe should consider using a different word like apprentice? The kingdom of God is not some high falutin', pie-in-the-sky idea, but the real, tangible life with God in the everyday, in the ordinary,

OCC is not simply about gathering as a group of individuals on a Sunday or any other day of the week for that matter. We believe the "come together" aspect of church/disciple life is vital; but the "come together" is linked to the "go into" the world.

We^{vii} have often reduced evangelism and the gospel to "come to us." But the "come to us" idea tends to promote the consumer model, even more so, when you meet in a renovated movie theatre.

We believe there is a rhythmic cycle: go / come to the gospel. Missional is about the kingdom breaking in, breaking through. Missional community gathers people who may not have any other touch points. Most small groups operate within the context of disciples, missional groups are about being serious about those who do not yet know Jesus.

To grow in the **MISSIONAL JOURNEY:**

- we will take the commands of Jesus seriously and do whatever it takes to see others experience the Kingdom of God and the good news of Jesus;
- we desire to be pure and holy, yet never disconnecting from the culture around us;
- we will passionately strive to see those who have rejected the Christian faith experience the light and love of Jesus through us;

- we will see mission as holistic – both local and global, compassionate and involved in social justice issues;
- we will continue to develop ministries and events around art, music, theatre, film in order to be a positive light in the area;
- we will partner with existing ministries for kingdom purposes and not have to have control over every event.

The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim freedom for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, to set the oppressed free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor. Luke 4:18-19

...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.

Acts 1:8

ⁱ These are also known as: Community Groups, cells, small groups, house groups/churches. These relational connections may be formal or informal.

ⁱⁱ We should consider using a different word. While celebration is the general attitude and approach of corporate worship, it is not the only way we worship when we are together.

ⁱⁱⁱ Make a clearer connection between beauty and how it leads into & is an expression of worship.

^{iv} Early church, not the 1950's ☺

^v Theologians call this the "trinitarian community".

^{vi} Our philosophy is to not start ministries apart from ministry leaders.

^{vii} The evangelical church in general, and if we are honest, OCC as well.