

THE VILLAGE
A CHURCH *FOR* THE COMMUNITY

**WHO
WE ARE**

The "Get To Know Us" Handbook



Who We Are

Once upon a time, you would know just about everything you needed to know about a church by the sign on their lawn. The truth is, things aren't that simple anymore. In this day and age, it can seem impossible to find answers without simply making them up for yourself or finding them at the end of a Google search.

And that's exactly why you're here, reading this now. You want to know more about us, and we want to be clear and upfront about who we are. So, Hi, we're The Village, and it's very nice to meet you!

We don't want to assume that you know what makes us tick. The truth is, we might surprise you (God often surprises us!). So in this handbook, we hope to

introduce you to some of the key things that shape The Village. See, we're a church that believes it is on a particular mission. We have a particular vision. We have some clear ideas about the sort of community we aim to foster, believing that if we do this together faithfully, the world will be a better place. We have beliefs about God and the world. And though we don't have all the answers, we are committed to exploring God and those questions together. Why? We believe this can make our whole lives, and our community, better.

We hope you'll join us, but in the meantime, we're grateful that you're taking a few minutes to learn a little more about what makes us *us*. See you soon!

Our Founding Pastor

The Lead Pastor of The Village is Travis Garner. Travis has been active in ministry in some form for over 20 years. Travis was on staff at Brentwood United Methodist Church for over a decade, most recently as the Pastor of Discipleship and Missions, leading the team overseeing the work of the Children's Ministry, Youth Ministry, Adult Ministry, and Missions and outreach.

Travis graduated from Lambuth University and received his M.Div. from Vanderbilt Divinity School. He is married to Amanda, who he says is better than him in every way. Amanda is a Speech-Language Pathologist with her own practice in Nashville. They have three boys, Pax, Asher, and Jude.

It goes without saying that Travis loves Jesus and helping people encounter him. He also deeply loves drinking coffee, finding the best local restaurants on Yelp, reading, music, riding a bike, drinking more coffee way too late in the day, and passionately cheering for the Fighting Illini, the 2016 World Series Champion Chicago Cubs, and the Green Bay Packers.



TRAVIS GARNER
LEAD PASTOR

Our Story So Far

On February 19th, 2014, I woke up at 4am to watch the sunrise over the sea of Galilee before returning to my hotel, where I was unexpectedly invited to meet a leader and mentor, a bishop in the United Methodist Church, for breakfast. I'd only taken one bite of breakfast before he spoke.

“So, Travis, what do you think is the most significant thing God wants you to do in the next five years?”

I choked a little, trying not to cough my eggs across the table at him.

“Well, you're the Bishop,” I said with a laugh. “You tell me. What do you think is the most significant thing God wants me to do in the next five years?”

He answered, “Here's what I want you to do. I want you to pray, ‘God, if it's your desire that I would plant a new church, increase my desire to do just that.’”

I had mixed emotions if I'm honest, but I prayed that prayer anyway.



After a few days of praying this prayer, I walked down by the sea of Galilee to watch the sunset. There was a moment where I called out in frustration: “God, what do you want from me?!”

Just then I looked out at the Northern shore of the Sea of Galilee, where Jesus had called the first disciples. I remember distinctly hearing a voice that said, “Follow me”.

I thought, “God, could you be a little bit more specific?”

But God wasn't giving me a step-by-step plan. Instead, he was asking me to be faithful and take the next step in God's direction. But over the coming weeks, so-called coincidence after so-called coincidence made things abundantly clear: God was calling an inspiring group of us to plant a new church--a church that would be *for* the community--in the very neighborhood we called home. Thankfully, God didn't ask us to go it alone. A series of conversations between leaders at Brentwood United Methodist and other area church partners soon led to 60 people meeting in my home, dreaming together about the kind of church God was calling us to be.

The kind of church where people can find a home.

The kind of church where people experience life-changing transformation that only comes from an encounter with the living God.

The kind of church that equips and sends followers of Jesus to go, make disciples, and change the world instead of “leaving ministry to the professionals”.

The kind of church that would be missed if it were gone.

The kind of church that has the love of God on display in our very own community as we live it out through who we are and how we treat and interact with our neighbors.

Finally, after many months of planning and praying, we began weekly services at Sunset Middle School on January 10th, 2016, and our brand new church quickly grew to over 600 worshipers each week, with hundreds of kids and teens hearing about learning about the love of Jesus and over 25 Village Groups meeting in neighborhoods across four counties. We’ve had the joy of helping over 100 people say “yes” to Jesus through baptism and/or professions of faith, and are incredibly excited for what’s next.

Because God’s far from done with us. In 2020, we broke ground and took a significant step forward in being the church for this community that God has called us to be, as we began construction on a permanent facility, a mission outpost, as we help ordinary people become disciples of Jesus, who make disciples, who make disciples, who change the world.

Travis Garner

PASTOR TRAVIS

LEAD PASTOR



Our Why [Vision]

Helping people who feel far from God or disconnected from the church connect to Jesus and a community of Jesus followers.

We started The Village with one number and one focus in mind: 60,000. There are 60,000 people within a 10-minute drive of our property at Nolensville and Old Burkitt Road who don't have a church home. Expand the radius, and the number only grows. Tens of thousands of people who may not know the love of God and don't know what it's like to be part of a healthy community of faith where people walk alongside you.

Today, our focus continues to be helping those who feel far from God or disconnected from the church connect to Jesus and a community of Jesus followers, and our hope is that everything we do serves this purpose.

Our What [Mission]

Leading ordinary people to become disciples of Jesus who make disciples who make disciples who change the world.

No, that's not a typo. We're on a mission to be a church that helps people become committed followers of Jesus, who in turn take it upon themselves to guide others to a life dedicated to Jesus, and so on and so forth. In doing this, we believe we are not only changing the lives of one another and our community, but the world itself for generations to come.

What's more, we believe that if we do this in God's power, we will see this play out in measurable ways, namely, impact and multiplication.

01 /

Impact

Sending disciple-making disciples into every neighborhood, every sphere of influence, every relational network in our community and beyond will have an impact for Christ such that we would be missed if we weren't here.

02 /

Multiplication

Replicating disciples at every level: individually, in our groups, on serving and leadership teams, and as a church. We believe that we will be making disciples who make disciples and a church plant that plants churches.

Our How [Strategies]

As you can see, we believe God's given us work to do, but how we go about doing that work can make a huge difference in how effective we are. So, there are two primary areas of action that make us us: the big picture things we do, our Strategies, and also the particular values that inform how we carry them out. Ultimately, we believe that disciple-making, world-changing followers of Jesus will always connect, grow, give, and go. What do we mean? Check it out.

01 / Connect

Disciples of Jesus connect to Jesus *and* a community of Jesus followers. We gather every weekend for worship and commit to study and devotion. A good example of this is our Daily Bible reading plan.

02 / Grow

A disciple of Jesus is committed to growing in their trust and understanding of who Jesus is and their willingness to follow him. A great example of this is the way we gather in relationship with other people through Village Groups and in smaller discipleship oriented groups we call 4x4s.

03 / Give

A disciple of Jesus will give generously of their gifts and resources to God's Kingdom work. We do this through sharing our financial resources to bless the community and by sharing the cost of being the church together.

04 / Go

A disciple of Jesus will go to reach and serve their neighbors with the love of Jesus. We do this by serving and loving the people within our spheres of influence and our relational networks, investing in them, sharing the love of God with them, and inviting them to join us on the journey to follow Jesus.



Our Way [Values]

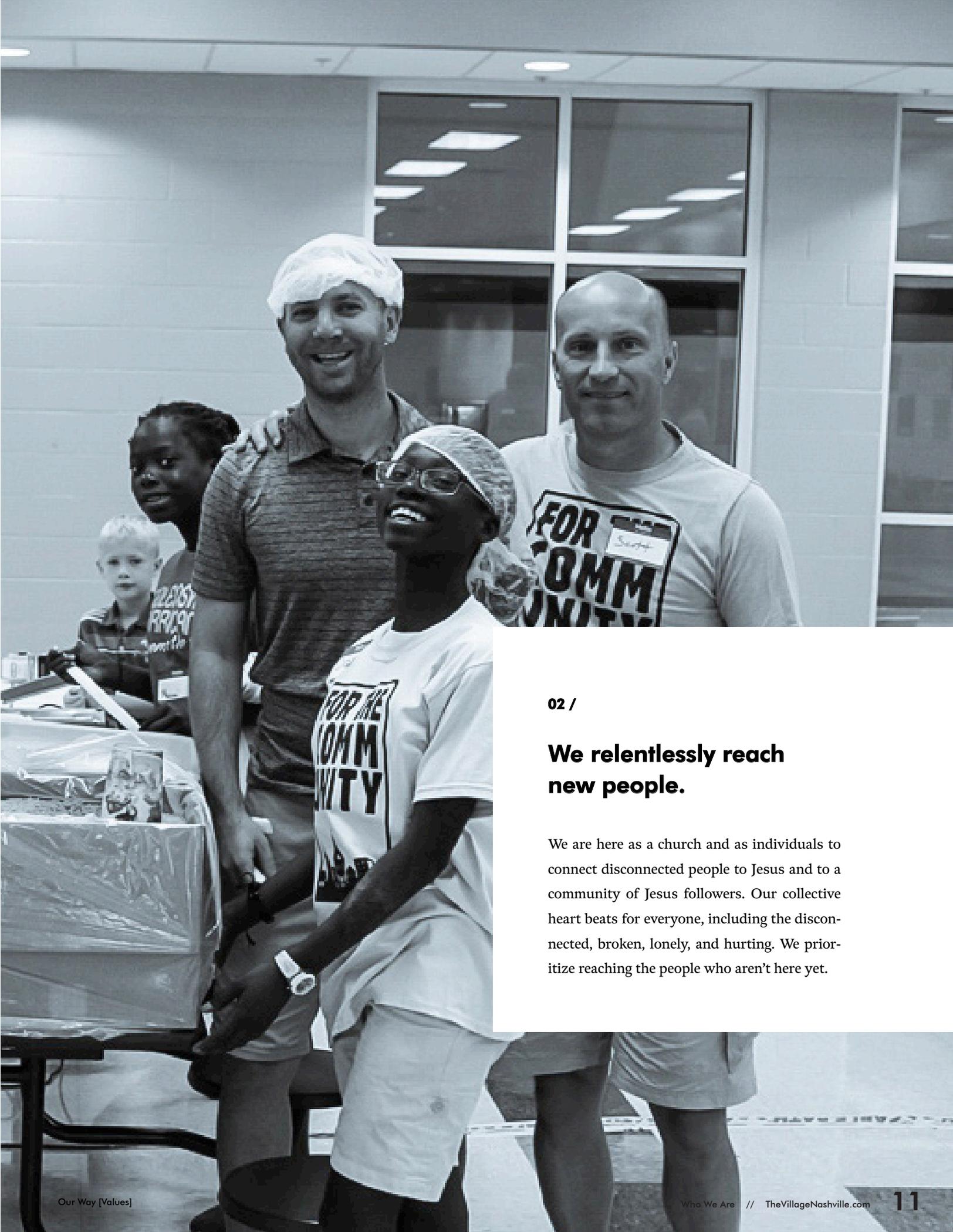
While we organize much of our work around our strategies--the four kinds of activities we think all disciples do--we also have a particular way of doing them. We call these our values. They help us know what makes us *us*, and help us remember what it takes to be a member of our team.



01 /

We passionately pursue Jesus.

It all starts and ends with our commitment to follow Jesus. As individuals, we are intentionally pursuing growth in our trust in Jesus and our willingness to follow him and to invite people to join us in following him. As a church, we keep Jesus at the center and we try our best to figure out what it means to follow him together.



02 /

We relentlessly reach new people.

We are here as a church and as individuals to connect disconnected people to Jesus and to a community of Jesus followers. Our collective heart beats for everyone, including the disconnected, broken, lonely, and hurting. We prioritize reaching the people who aren't here yet.

03 /

We expect God to show up.

We believe in a God who still works, acts, moves, and speaks. We are wide open and expectant for God to do that again and again and again. If we're able to do it on our own, we're probably not dreaming a God-sized dream.



I'll shower blessings on the pilgrims who come here,
and give supper to those who arrive hungry;
I'll dress my priests in salvation clothes;
the holy people will sing their hearts out!
And the people said: Lord, what's the good You want to do through me?

04 /

We are sold out for the mission over our own ministry.

We believe in and are all in on the mission of the church and the ministry of the whole over and above any of our own preferences or ministries. A win for the church is a win for everybody.



05 /

We bring our very best to the table.

We believe that God deserves the best of our effort, our creativity, and our imagination, so we are determined in bringing the very best of ourselves to the table. We also expect the best from each other, trusting in each other to bring our best.

06 /

We work together to get “the stuff” done, respect each other, and care for each other.

We are a team and we operate in teams. We do what needs to be done together, we hustle, we help each other, we understand that no task is below our pay grade, we roll up our sleeves together, and we don't stop until “the stuff” is done for everyone.





07 /

We constantly make it better.

We are teachable. We are perpetual learners and growers and innovators and improvers. We look first in the mirror to find ways to make our ministries more effective, we ask for feedback, we graciously offer feedback to each other, and we gracefully receive it when it's given, always looking for ways to learn and grow.

A black and white photograph of a person ziplining through a forest. The person is wearing a helmet and a harness, and is smiling as they hold onto the zipline. The background is a dense forest of tall trees, with sunlight filtering through the leaves, creating a dappled light effect. The image is oriented vertically, with the person positioned in the lower half of the frame.

08 /

We are flexible and we adapt quickly.

We know that it's the flexible who can never get bent out of shape. We accept that the nature of this work is that it's always in flux. We are willing and able to adapt and improvise and be flexible in the moment. We invite the Holy Spirit to do things in our lives and our ministries that we couldn't predict or plan.



09 /

We risk big and we fail forward.

We recognize that there is no such thing as “missional complacency” in God’s church. (We’ve looked for it all over the New Testament, and we can’t find it anywhere.) If we’re not failing, we’re not trying hard enough. We would rather risk and fail and learn from our mistakes than stay safe, become content, and slowly decline and die.





10 /

We don't do anything ourselves that we can empower someone to do with us.

We are disciples who make disciples who make disciples. This means we freely give away leadership and ownership and any other ship we can think to give away. We recognize that in the end, it's our responsibility to raise up the church to do ministry, not just to do ministry for the church.



P.S. We love and laugh hard.

In all of this, we enjoy life, care for one another, have fun together, and don't take ourselves too seriously.



Our Essential Beliefs:

Like all Christians around the world, we wholeheartedly affirm the “ecumenical creeds”, The Apostle’s Creed and the Nicene Creed. These are essential Christian beliefs

anchored in the ancient Church and passed on to us through the Apostles. We stand united with Christians across time and the globe in these beliefs.

*“In Essentials Unity,
In Non-Essentials Liberty,
In All Things Charity”*

The Apostle’s Creed

*I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.*

*I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,*

born of the Virgin Mary,

suffered under Pontius Pilate,

was crucified, died, and was buried;

he descended to the dead.

On the third day he rose again;

he ascended into heaven,

is seated at the right hand of the Father,

and will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,

the holy catholic church,

the communion of saints,

the forgiveness of sins,

the resurrection of the body,

and the life everlasting. Amen.





The Nicene Creed

*We believe in one God,
the Father, the Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth,
of all that is, seen and unseen.
We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,
the only Son of God,
eternally begotten of the Father,
God from God, Light from Light,
true God from true God,
begotten, not made,
of one Being with the Father;
Through him all things were made.
For us and for our salvation
he came down from heaven,
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit
and the Virgin Mary*

*and became truly human.
For our sake he was crucified under
Pontius Pilate;
he suffered death and was buried.
On the third day he rose again
in accordance with the Scriptures;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of
the Father.
He will come again in glory to judge
the living and the dead,
and his kingdom will have no end.
We believe in the Holy Spirit, the
Lord, the giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and*

*the Son,
who with the Father and the Son is
worshiped and glorified,
who has spoken through the
prophets.
We believe in one holy catholic and
apostolic church.
We acknowledge one baptism
for the forgiveness of sins.
We look for the resurrection of the
dead,
and the life of the world to come.
Amen.*

Doing Theology

When we think about and study our faith, we are doing theology. All of us, from all walks of life, are called to participate in this work as part of the Christian community. To help us faithfully carry out this task, our tradition of heritage identified four helpful tools we call our theological guidelines. They are Scripture, tradition, experience, and reason. Let's look at each of these.

Scripture

The Bible is our primary source for learning about and understanding God. We believe that the Holy Scripture contains “all things necessary to salvation”, and feel spurred to answer the founder of Methodism John Wesley's call to “search the Scriptures,” what we more commonly call studying the Bible.

In our reading and searching of Scripture, we learn the story of God, creation and humanity. We meet Jesus through whose life, death and resurrection, we receive the forgiveness of our sins. We encounter the Holy Spirit guiding and working in us in our lives today.

Tradition

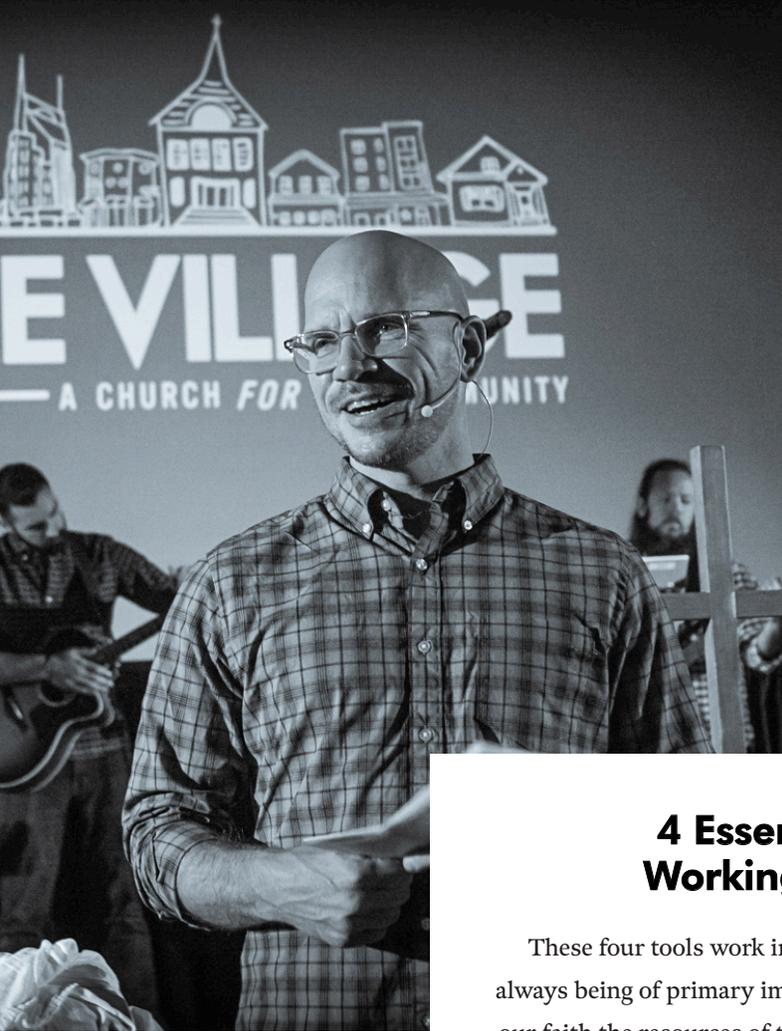
We understand that as Christians today, we are part of a long tradition of people who through the centuries have been in relationship with God. We take seriously the commentaries, creeds, hymns, worship, prayers, art, and actions of those who have gone before us in various times, places, and cultures. That long tradition informs us of who we are as the people of God and how God calls us to live in our time, place and culture. We do not read the Bible and perform our theological task in a vacuum, but as part of the Church through the ages and around the world.

Experience

We also understand that each of us has our own unique experience with God. We recognize that we bring our whole selves to our faith, including personal and group experiences that have shaped us. As we think about experience as a source of understanding, however, we aren't talking about individual, subjective experience, much less about such experiences or accounts of them as having any priority over scripture or tradition. Instead, we are talking about how our experiences function to confirm and bear witness to the ways God is working in our lives to save us from the power of sin and make us holy.

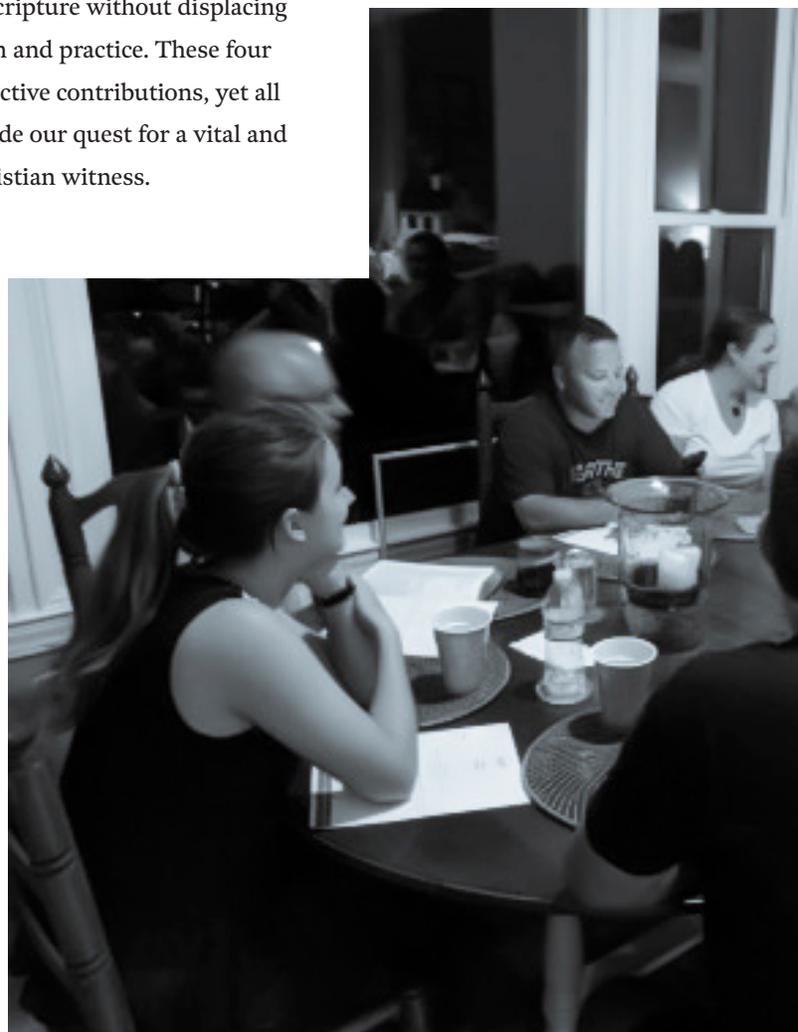
Reason

While we acknowledge that much of our faith is beyond reason, we believe that using our God-given gift of reason is a tool we are to bring to our faith. We do not discount our thinking as we read the Bible, share the Gospel, ask questions, and seek answers.



4 Essential Tools Working Together

These four tools work in conjunction, with Scripture always being of primary importance. As we seek to grow in our faith the resources of tradition, experience, and reason are integral to our study of Scripture without displacing Scripture's primacy for faith and practice. These four sources—each making distinctive contributions, yet all finally working together—guide our quest for a vital and appropriate Christian witness.



How We Practice

Like every church, we also practice the Christian faith in a particular way. For us, this means recognizing that we are a Church rooted in Wesleyan tradition (ask us about this if you're not sure what this means!). This informs how we practice things like Communion, Baptism, Worship, Spiritual Gifts, and more.

Of course, we recognize that there are other ways of doing Christianity and that a wide range of Christian

practices are carried out all around the world. So while we extend liberty to all believers to follow their conscience, trusting that God is honored through the various ways churches reflect God into the world, members of The Village submit to the particular ways we practice our faith together as a community, even if we disagree on something non-essential.

If you'd like more details, please don't hesitate to set up a time to talk! We love talking about Jesus.



Our Non-Essentials:

As you can probably tell, this leaves some big ideas open to conversation and “liberty”. Well, that’s probably a good thing. As we seek God together we trust that through the working of the Holy Spirit and our shared commitment to unity in practice, we can charitably encourage each other in truth and faithfulness as we grow as disciples who make disciples. We believe that because of Jesus our church can learn to model having meaningful conversations in love. That’s exactly the sort of community we aim to be.

What's Next?

By now, you've probably got a pretty good idea as to what we're about. Now we'd love to hear *your* story-
-we'd love to meet you! Join us for worship Sunday mornings at Sunset Middle School in Nolensville. We meet at 9am and 10:30am and would *love* to meet

you. Or, if you've been around a little while and are interested in taking the next step in faith, learning about becoming a member of our church, or simply have questions, join us for NEXT.

GET STARTED ONLINE

TheVillageNashville.com