**Blatant Orthodoxy**

Found in the collective expression of faith found in our core values, mission, vision, priorities, distinctives, and identity, and statement of faith is the reality that we are blatantly orthodox. We are united

**Core Values**

Our Core Values give meaning to all that we do as the Vineyard Church in Billings, Montana. They drive our purpose, define what is central to us, position the Vineyard in the larger Body of Christ, and remove ambiguity in our mission. Core Values remind us of what we are for, and to what we give our time, energy, and resources, as a Church family.

In the Vineyard, we see Jesus’ teaching on the kingdom of God as the overarching and integrating theme of the Scriptures. We root our theology in these teaching on the kingdom of God, embracing an ‘inaugurated eschatology’ – where God’s beautiful future is breaking into our present experience. To that end;

**1) Everything is about Jesus**

Our lives are not our own. Everything is about Jesus. Very little, if any of it is about me, you or us. God’s plan, revealed in scripture, testifies to the reality that all things have and will work for the reconciliation of creation back to the Creator through the redeeming work of Jesus.

**Scripture:**

 15 Christ is the visible image of the invisible God. He existed before anything was created and is supreme over all creation,16 for through him God created everything in the heavenly realms and on earth. He made the things we can see and the things we can’t see- such as thrones, kingdoms, rulers, and authorities in the unseen world. Everything was created through him and for him.17 He existed before anything else, and he holds all creation together.18 Christ is also the head of the church, which is his body. He is the beginning, supreme over all who rise from the dead. So he is first in everything.19 For God in all his fullness was pleased to live in Christ,20 and through him God reconciled everything to himself. He made peace with everything in heaven and on earth by means of Christ’s blood on the cross. **Colossians 1:15-20 (NLT)**

**What this looks like in practice:**

* We keep your egos in check
* We purposely think “this isn’t about me”
* We pursue God’s vision, mission and direction over our own
* We are open to the promptings of the Holy Spirit
* We look for Jesus in other people

**2) Nothing will stop God’s plan, and we have a part in it**

As a community created by and for Jesus, our purpose and mission is what Jesus asked us to do—disciple the nations. Each of them and all of them, and yes, even here in Montana.

**Scripture:**

18Jesus came and told his disciples, “I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth. 19Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. 20Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” **Matthew 28:18-20 (NLT)**

**What this looks like in practice:**

* We know your neighbors
* We practice hospitality
* We operate with compassion
* We willingly talk with people about Jesus and what He is doing in your own life
* We go when called
* We invite and include people in the things we do, especially those who don’t know Jesus
* We remain teachable and engaged in the process of becoming like Jesus

**3) People are the Plan**

Every person matters to Jesus and to us. We want each person to have significant relationships in which they really know each other because no one is disposable. God pursues each of us with passion and persistence.

**Scripture:**

8But God showed his great love for us by sending Christ to die for us while we were still sinners. **Romans 5:8 (NLT)**

**What this looks like in practice:**

* We focus on belonging and becoming rather than behaving to belong
* We welcome people with hospitality and cheerfulness
* We take the initiative in meeting people
* We make time for people
* We pray for people
* We listen

**4) We respond to Jesus as he makes us more like Him**

Stepping into the missional call of Jesus includes being discipled by Him and by others. We work together to recognize selfishness and remove it from our lives as we seek to follow Jesus on the trail he blazed for us. This is a continuing action.

**Scripture:**

34Then, calling the crowd to join his disciples, he said, “If any of you wants to be my follower, you must give up your own way, take up your cross, and follow me. **Mark 8:34 (NLT)**

**What this looks like in practice:**

* We see the needs of other before our own
* We recognize that we are in process and so are others
* We don’t make comfort based decisions
* We remain teachable and are active in being discipled through relationships, classes, and service
* We practice spiritual disciplines to grow in our relationship with God

**5) Grace is reciprocal. We give and receive following the example of Jesus**

Grace is the emotion of like that God has for each of us. We want to like each other as well— cheering for, encouraging, being kind to and advocating for people.

**Scripture:**

35Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples.” **John 13:35 (NLT)**

6So we praise God for the glorious grace he has poured out on us who belong to his dear Son. 7He is so rich in kindness and grace that he purchased our freedom with the blood of his Son and forgave our sins. 8He has showered his kindness on us, along with all wisdom and understanding. **Ephesians 1:6-8 (NLT)**

9Don’t just pretend to love others. Really love them. Hate what is wrong. Hold tightly to what is good. 10Love each other with genuine affection, and take delight in honoring each other. **Romans 12:9-10 (NLT)**

**What this looks like in practice**:

* We are kind
* We withhold judgement and think the best of others
* We are thoughtful and think about what others are going through
* We encourage each other.
* We are quick to forgive
* We work to not take offense
* We kill our egos

**6) Generosity reflects God**

The economy of God reflects that we get to give. As we seek to align our will with his, we recognize that all that we have is from Him and has a missional role in the Kingdom.

**Scripture:**

3For I can testify that they gave not only what they could afford, but far more. And they did it of their own free will. 4They begged us again and again for the privilege of sharing in the gift for the believers in Jerusalem. 5They even did more than we had hoped, for their first action was to give themselves to the Lord and to us, just as God wanted them to do. **2 Corinthians 8:3-5 (NLT)**

8Heal the sick, raise the dead, cure those with leprosy, and cast out demons. Give as freely as you have received! **Matthew 10:8 (NLT)**

**What this looks like in practice:**

* We seek the Holy Spirit to direct our resources
* We understand that all we have came from Jesus, and therefore belongs to him
* We give cheerfully and sacrificially to the Church and to people in need

**7) Our presence with each other matters**

Faith is a community endeavor, and the Body of Christ works when all parts of the body are working in concert with each other. Our presence worshiping together and participation in the life of the Church matters.

**Scripture:**

24Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. 25And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near. **Hebrews 10:24-25 (NLT)**

**What this looks like in practice:**

* Sundays together are a priority
* We engage in the life of the Church by being with the Church
* We use Small Groups and serving together in ministry to grow as a Body

**Our Mission and Vision**

**Our Mission**

We believe that Jesus told the church exactly what the church is supposed to be doing, and that in the book of Matthew we have the clearest picture of what he said:

Jesus came and told his disciples, “I have been given complete authority in heaven and on earth. Therefore, go and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. Teach these new disciples to obey all the commands I have given you. And be sure of this: I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:18-20)

• We are to go to every type of people, every nation on our planet;

• Leading them to become disciples or students or apprentices of Jesus;

• Baptizing them in water, and immersing them in the reality of the Trinitarian God;

• Teaching these new disciples to obey everything Jesus gave us to do.

• And Jesus gave us two promises as we go about this task:

• That he has been given complete authority throughout the entire universe,

• That he will be with us until the job is completely finished.

**Our Values**

Every house is built upon a foundation. Vineyard is built upon the foundation of the Bible and our theology— how we think about God—and our values, the kinds of ideas and attitudes that we feel are important. Values concern what a church feels like, the atmosphere of the church, the ethos. It is possible for two churches to believe exactly the same doctrine, but to feel very different because the two churches have different value systems.

**We are a people of the kingdom of God who…**

The Vineyard is committed to the theology and practice of the kingdom of God—rooted in the vision of the Hebrew prophets and fulfilled in the life and ministry of Jesus of Nazareth. We view the kingdom of God as the overarching and integrating theme of the Bible.

**Partner with the Holy Spirit**

We believe that Jesus is our Head and the Holy Spirit our Counselor. We seek to be responsive to the leading of the Holy Spirit in every area of the church’s life and ministry. We believe that all ministry is Jesus' ministry, and we are invited to be a part of what he is doing in the world today. As part of our responsiveness, we are committed to “give away our best”, whether people or resources, in order to expand God’s kingdom.

**Experience and worship God**

The triune God: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—is eager to be known and experienced by all. We believe that God is searching for the lost and longs to draw us into loving, intimate relationship with him. We welcome God’s personal presence, we seek to be attentive to his presence, and we value the passionate pursuit of his presence in order to respond in obedience to his initiatives.

We understand God’s presence as a palpable reality. As we become increasingly sensitive and responsive to the Spirit’s presence, we too can learn to “see what the Father is doing” and support his work with our lives. We value an approach to God’s presence that is respectful both of God and others. We eschew hype and other efforts to manipulate either God’s presence or the response of others to his presence. We distinguish between the Holy Spirit and the human response to the Holy Spirit, which shares in all the beauty and brokenness of our humanity.

**Reconcile people with God and all creation**

The apostle Paul writes, “Here is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance: Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners…” (1 Timothy 1:15). We value being a part of what God is doing to reconcile people to himself, to each other and to the entire creation. He breaks down divisions between Jew and Gentile, slave and free, male, and female. Therefore, we are committed to being communities of healing, engaged in the work of reconciliation wherever sin and evil hold sway.

We also seek to be diverse communities of hope that realize the power of the cross to reconcile what has been separated by sin. This requires that we move beyond our personal preferences and engage those whom we perceive to be unlike us. We must actively work to break down barriers of race, culture, gender, social class, and ethnicity. We are convinced that the church—locally, nationally, and globally—is meant to be a diverse community precisely because Jesus is Lord over every nation, tribe, and tongue. We are not satisfied with the status quo when it doesn’t reflect this kingdom reality. Instead, we pray eagerly for the coming of God’s kingdom here and now and hope to see the reconciliation that is evidence that kingdom in our midst.

**Engage in compassionate ministry**

We lean toward the lost, the poor, the outcast, and the outsider with the compassion of Jesus, knowing we are sinners whose standing before God is utterly dependent on his mercy. This mercy can only be truly received inasmuch as we are willing to give it away.

We believe that ministry in Jesus’ name should be expressed in concrete ways through the local church. The poor are to be served as though we serve Jesus himself. This is one of the distinguishing characteristics of a church expressing the love of Christ in a local community.

In fact, in all forms of ministry, compassion is a hallmark of the One who was “moved with compassion” in the face of human need. This being the age of grace—and “the year of the Lord’s favor”—compassion should constitute the leading edge of our service to God, each other, and our broken world. With humility, we seek to avoid unauthorized judgments of others, realizing that we suffer and struggle along with the rest of humanity.

**Pursue culturally relevant mission in the world**

The church exists for the sake of those who are exiled from God. We are called to bring the gospel of the kingdom to every nook and cranny of creation, faithfully translating the message of Jesus in language and forms that are relevant to diverse peoples and cultures. We seek to plant churches that are culturally relevant in a wide variety of settings, both locally and internationally. We are working to reach those in our community not already reached by existing churches. To this end, we promote a creative, entrepreneurial, and innovative approach to ministry that is faithful to Jesus and expressive of his desire to reach those who are far away from God.

**Our Priorities**

Priorities describe how we spend our time, energy, and money. They are the things we do. Priorities grow out of the things we value and believe in. Our priorities are based on the Bible, which is the Word of God and is the standard for all that we do at the Vineyard. In other words, nothing that we do should ever be opposed to the Bible's teaching. We aim to do all that the Bible teaches.

We have a particular approach to the Bible. We think that it was given not only to give us insight and understanding but also to equip us to do God's work. Thus, we emphasize training, which is doing the truth, in addition to knowing the truth. Because we stress doing, our teaching and preaching are intended to be practical and relevant. We aim, through expository preaching, to call people to decision and to engage the whole person.

Our priorities are expressed in our worship, ministry, fellowship, discipleship, evangelism, church planting, and world missions.

**Worship.** The highest priority of God's people is to worship Him. Worship is to be giving to God what is rightly His-adoration and praise for being God. Our worship services reflect this through music, where we thank God for what He's done and praise Him for who He is. Another part of worship is giving God ourselves- surrendering all that we are to Him. As creatures, we are His because He made us. As Christians we are His by virtue of Jesus' death for us on the cross. So, worship at the Vineyard becomes a time when we not only praise and thank God, but we also draw near to Him in a personal, intimate way. We allow Him to "have" us and "take" us just as we are, in all our brokenness. It is during these times of personal self-disclosure in worship that God through His Spirit often draws near to us, touching our pain, healing our wounds, and making us whole. This is why at the Vineyard you may see people crying or raising their hands or laughing or even just being completely silent. God is meeting them! Worship is never always quite the same because our needs are never always quite the same and God responds accordingly.

**Ministry.** Ministry at the Vineyard flows from two basic assumptions. First, it is based on the compassion and mercy of God. Jesus was the embodiment of God's compassion and mercy toward those in need. Thus, through the imitation of Christ in the power of the Holy Spirit, we seek to minister out of hearts which are filled with Christ's mercy and compassion. Second, Jesus Christ as the Messiah came to establish the kingdom of God -that is, God's right to rule in the world (Mt. 9:35 - 10:10). This kingdom rule and reign of God is extended through the world in, among other things, the following ways:

• Preaching the gospel with the aim of making disciples

• Healing the sick

• Teaching believers to follow Christ

• Feeding the poor

• Counseling those in need of God's wisdom

• Giving to the work of Christ

• Building up families

• Social and community action

**Community.** Small groups are important at Vineyard for the simple reason that community is important. We believe community is basic to what it means to be a Christian. As believers, we are not only reconciled to God, but we are also relationally united with other believers in what's called the body of Christ. (Romans 12:4,5) The most frequently used words to describe believers in the New Testament are "brother and sister," illustrating that we are to be like family to each other. Numerous verses provide guidelines on relationships and the phrase "one another" appears over 50 times (e.g., "love one another," "forgive one another," etc.). It seems obvious that the Christian life is meant to be lived in the context of relationship. Unfortunately, it's hard to experience real relationship at a large worship service. Meeting "face-to-back-of-head" once a week for an hour and a half with 1000+ people is not relationship! While worship gatherings are a very important part of our church life, it's at our small group meetings during the week that we experience real community.

**Discipleship.** The New Testament calls Christians to a radical commitment. We are called to the unconditional surrender of our whole lives to Christ. We do not do this in a legalistic way and we do not do it to impress or judge one another. Rather, our surrender to God springs from a response of love and thanksgiving to God who loved us and gave Himself for us. As a church we encourage one another toward discipleship. One meaning of disciple is pupil or learner. It involves binding oneself to another so that the disciple does what the master does. In Christian discipleship our aim is to be bound to Christ and imitate Him. We believe we are to imitate Jesus in all that He did-preaching, healing, praying, delivering the demonized, and caring for the poor.

**Evangelism, Church Planting, and World Missions**. Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners (1 Timothy 1:15). He accomplishes that salvation through the witness of His people accompanied by signs and wonders (Mk. 16:20). We believe that God has called us to be a large enough church to have the ability to impact the greater Yellowstone regional area for Christ. In addition, we are committed to planting other Vineyard churches throughout the Big Sky Region and all around the world.

**Our Distinctives**

As a global movement, Vineyard churches do life together distinctively in many ways. Several short statements sum these up well:

**The main and the plain.** The bible is our plumbline. We want to focus on believing and learning to do what the scriptures say.

**The already and the not yet.** We are unashamed and unembarrassed that the power of suffering of the kingdom of God go hand in hand. And we will encourage a lifestyle that expects and yet does not demand that the kingdom of God is demonstrated everywhere we are.

**Come Holy Spirit.** While we believe that God is present in our lives without this prayer, the deepest cry of our heart is that we need his tangible presence right now. This is the central pray of our liturgy.

**Worshippers of God and rescuers of people.** We are given to expression of worship and compassion in every part of our lives. This is our expression of loving God and loving our neighbor.

**Everyone gets to play.** We refuse to have an elite group. Everyone gets to participate in doing the works of Jesus.

**Come as you are, but don’t stay as you are.** We love to create environments where people can belong before they believe. God welcomes us just as we are, but he is never content to leave us as he found us.

**Naturally supernatural.** We embrace an absence of hype or manipulation, and simply want to allow the Holy Spirit to lead us. We want to get out of God’s way, to understate our involvement and humbly allow God to work in other’s lives.

**Equipping the saints.** We will continually invest ourselves in training and equipping God’s people to do what Jesus did.

**Leaders who walk with a limp.** We want leaders who know their own weaknesses and failures, who never try to pretend that they are above those they lead.

**Plant churches that will plant churches.** The very nature of the gospel and the church leads to reproduction, the planting of new churches. We want to continue this within our own culture and to every other people group God might lead us to.

**We are Orthodox.** Vineyard stands firmly in the center of orthodox Christian teaching. We adhere to the historic creeds of the Christian Church.

**We are Both/And.** We seek to live in the tension of being a both/and church in many areas of life and ministry.

**We are Border Blenders.** For over 2,000 years of Christian history there have been four primary streams or expressions of the church: Evangelical, Charismatic, Liturgical, and Social Justice. Each stream has specific strengths and weaknesses, and we want to blend these boundaries, encompassing the best of all of what each stream has to offer.

**Statement of Faith**

Out of loyalty to Christ and the gospel, we have come to a number of convictions concerning the clear teaching of the Bible. At the same time, we have not included in our statement of faith much that can be legitimately debated by orthodox Christians. In other words, we do have boundaries, but our boundaries are broad and inclusive.

**God the King and the Holy Trinity**

WE BELIEVE that God is the Eternal King. He is an infinite, unchangeable Spirit, perfect in holiness, wisdom, goodness, justice, power, and love. From all eternity He exists as the One Living and True God in three persons of one substance, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, equal in power and glory.

**God the King: The Creator and Ruler of All Things**

WE BELIEVE that God's kingdom is everlasting. From His throne, through His Son, His eternal Word, God created, upholds, and governs all that exists: the heavenly places, the angelic hosts, the universe, the earth, every living thing, and mankind. God created all things very good.

**Counterfeit Kingdom: Satan and Demonic Hosts**

WE BELIEVE that Satan, originally a great, good angel, rebelled against God, taking a host of angels with him. He was cast out of God's presence and, as a usurper of God's rule, established a counter-kingdom of darkness and evil on the earth.

**The Kingdom in the Creation of Man, the Fall and The Doctrine of Original Sin**

WE BELIEVE that God created mankind in His own image, male and female, for relationship with Himself and to govern the earth. Under the temptation of Satan, our original parents fell from grace, bringing sin, sickness, and God's judgment of death to the earth. Through the fall, Satan and his demonic hosts gained access to God's good creation. Creation now experiences the consequences and effects of Adam's original sin. Human beings are born in sin, subject to God's judgment of death and captive to Satan's kingdom of darkness.

**God's Providence, Kingdom Law and Covenants**

WE BELIEVE that God did not abandon His rule over the earth which He continues to uphold by His providence. In order to bring redemption, God established covenants which revealed His grace to sinful people. In the covenant with Abraham, God bound Himself to His people Israel, promising to deliver them from bondage to sin and Satan and to bless all the nations through them.

WE BELIEVE that as King, God later redeemed His people by His mighty acts from bondage in Egypt and established His covenant through Moses, revealing His perfect will and our obligation to fulfill it. The law's purpose is to order our fallen race and to make us conscious of our moral responsibility. By the work of God's Spirit, it convicts us of our sin and God's righteous judgment against us and brings us to Christ alone for salvation.

**Christ the Mediator and Eternal King**

WE BELIEVE that in the fullness of time, 67 God honored His covenants with Israel and His prophetic promises of salvation by sending His Son, Jesus, into the world. Conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary, as fully God and fully man in one person, He is humanity as God intended us to be. Jesus was anointed as God's Messiah and empowered by the Holy Spirit, inaugurating God's kingdom reign on earth, overpowering the reign of Satan by resisting temptation, preaching the good news of salvation, healing the sick, casting out demons and raising the dead. Gathering His disciples, He reconstituted God's people as His Church to be the instrument of His kingdom. After dying for the sins of the world, Jesus was raised from the dead on the third day, fulfilling the covenant of blessing given to Abraham. In His sinless, perfect life Jesus met the demands of the law and in His atoning death on the cross He took God's judgment for sin which we deserve as lawbreakers. By His death on the cross, He also disarmed the demonic powers. The covenant with David was fulfilled in Jesus' birth from David's house, His Messianic ministry, His glorious resurrection from the dead, His ascent into heaven and His present rule at the right hand of the Father. As God's Son and David's heir, He is the eternal Messiah- King, advancing God's reign throughout every generation and throughout the whole earth today.

**The Ministry of the Holy Spirit**

WE BELIEVE that the Holy Spirit was poured out on the Church at Pentecost in power, baptizing believers into the Body of Christ and releasing the gifts of the Spirit to them. The Spirit brings the permanent indwelling presence of God to us for spiritual worship, personal sanctification, building up the Church, gifting us for ministry, and driving back the kingdom of Satan by the evangelization of the world through proclaiming the word of Jesus and doing the works of Jesus.

WE BELIEVE that the Holy Spirit indwells every believer in Jesus Christ and that He is our abiding Helper, Teacher, and Guide. We believe in the filling or the empowering of the Holy Spirit, often a conscious experience, for ministry today. We believe in the present ministry of the Spirit and in the exercise of all of the biblical gifts of the Spirit. We practice the laying on of hands for the empowering of the Spirit, for healing, and for recognition and empowering of those whom God has ordained to lead and serve the Church.

**The Sufficiency of Scripture**

WE BELIEVE that the Holy Spirit inspired the human authors of Holy Scripture so that the Bible is without error in the original manuscripts. We receive the sixty-six books of the Old and New Testaments as our final, absolute authority, the only infallible rule of faith and practice.

**The Power of the Gospel Over the Kingdom of Darkness**

WE BELIEVE that the whole world is under the domination of Satan and that all people are sinners by nature and choice. All people therefore are under God's just judgment. Through the preaching of the Good News of Jesus and the kingdom of God and the work of the Holy Spirit, God regenerates, justifies, adopts, and sanctifies through Jesus by the Spirit all who repent of their sins and trust in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. By this they are released from Satan's domain and enter into God's kingdom reign.

**The Church: Instrument of the kingdom**

WE BELIEVE in the one, holy, universal Church. All who repent of their sins and confess Jesus as Lord and Savior are regenerated by the Holy Spirit and form the living Body of Christ, of which He is the head and of which we are all members.

**Baptism and the Lord's Supper**

WE BELIEVE that Jesus Christ committed two ordinances to the Church: water baptism and the Lord's Supper. Both are available to all believers.

**The Kingdom of God and the Final Judgment**

WE BELIEVE that God's kingdom has come in the ministry of our Lord Jesus Christ, that it continues to come in the ministry of the Spirit through the Church, and that it will be consummated in the glorious, visible, and triumphant appearing of Christ- His return to the earth as King. After Christ returns to reign, He will bring about the final defeat of Satan and all of his minions and works, the resurrection of the dead, the final judgment, and the eternal blessing of the righteous and eternal conscious punishment of the wicked. Finally, God will be all in all and His kingdom, His rule and reign, will be fulfilled in the new heavens and the new earth, recreated by His mighty power, in which righteousness dwells and in which He will forever be worshipped.