

## **SVBC Vision Story**

In the fall of 2021, in the midst of the Covid-19 pandemic, the SVBC leadership began to ask questions about our church. Where are we at as a church? Who is still with us? Who has left us? Who has joined us? Part of this reflection included where are we at in vision?

We began to seek the Lord and ask where we were at in the vision? We took a few months to discuss and pray about this. But we didn't seem to make much progress. We felt stalled. So we kind of stalled for awhile in debating all that.

But then the Lord gave us a verse. Habakkuk 2:3 - "For still the vision awaits its appointed time; it hastens to the end – it will not lie. If it seems slow, wait for it; it will surely come; it will not delay."

So we sensed an encouragement from the Lord to wait until it came. We believe it came to us this past May 2022. When presented to all the leadership – there was unified endorsement that this was something we could work with; it was inspiring; memorable and accessible.

The statement is 3, two-word phrases.

### **Phrase #1: Loving God**

When we love God and pursue that love relationship with Him, it helps in every other area of our lives. We're told in Luke 10:25, that a lawyer stood up to put Jesus to the test. He asks Jesus, "what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" Jesus asks him "What is written in the Law? How do you read it?" And the lawyer answered, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind and your neighbor as yourself." Jesus affirms this as the correct answer. The lawyer then asks, "who is my neighbor?" Jesus answers with the "Good Samaritan parable." Jesus calls Loving God the first commandment and loving your neighbor the second. So, if we start with loving God, the likelihood of loving others will flow from it.

We focus a fair bit on loving God already in this community. We love God through our worship. We love God by having a High View of His Word. We love God by teaching others about him whether it be our children, youth, or adults. We love God by engaging in Christian practices both individually and together. The vision statement invites us to ask ourselves about our passion for loving God. It invites to think about how our ministries foster a deeper love for God. We ask God, "How can we love you more? Where can we strengthen this?" Maybe what you need to do in your relationship with God at this point is to love God more. You take a step closer to the community for encouragement, teaching and support.

### **Phrase #2: Changing Lives**

This phrase reflects the leadership's passion to see lives changed because of Christ. Many lives have been changed throughout this church's history because people have encountered Christ within this community.

You may ask, Doesn't the Lord change lives? Since the Lord changes hearts through the work of the Spirit, shouldn't we say, "Changed lives?"

Yes – It is the Lord who ultimately changes hearts and lives. We depend on Him to do His life-changing ministry. Yet, we notice the Lord inviting the disciples to join Him. The Lord commissioned the disciples to carry out the ministry through the great commission. Remember what Jesus said to them. "Go into all the world and make disciples of every nation, baptizing them in the name of the

Father, Son and Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded. And surely, I am with you always to the end of the age.” It doesn’t say, “Watch me.” By the Lord’s empowering and Spirit, the disciples went out and participated in God’s heart transforming work of making disciples. As followers of Christ, you and I have the same commission. By the Spirit’s power and enabling, you and I are commanded to go and make disciples. Through our ministry, God can work to change lives.

We are the temple of the living God. We are being built up into a spiritual house as God’s people with Christ as our cornerstone. Remember 1<sup>st</sup> Peter 2:4-5 – As you come to him, a living stone rejected by men but in the sight of God chosen and precious, your yourselves like living stones are being built up as a spiritual house, to be a holy priesthood, to offer spiritual sacrifices accepted to God through Jesus Christ. One commentator puts it like this. *As the new temple of God, the church serves as the agent of life and renewal to a world that languishes under the curse of sin and death.* (1 Cor. 3:16; 2 Cor. 6:16–18).

What happens when God dwells with His people? Lives are changed. When we come together, the life of God happens among us. We minister to one another; talk through the Bible together and support one another through hard times. The Spirit joins us in all this to change and encourage hearts/.

Maybe the next step in your walk with God is to join us in opportunities to help change people’s lives.

### **Phrase #3: Serving Community**

By the word community, we mean those outside and those inside this community of believers. Sometimes, churches can get so focused on reaching the lost, that they neglect the community God has brought together. So, we certainly want to maintain and enhance our ministry within our community. Yet we also want to think and act on opportunities to serve those who are in our geographical community here in Woodlands and greater ST. Albert.

One of the most impactful ways you can grow in your relationship with God is through serving others. These phrases do not describe a process to follow but a life to be lived. You don’t have to Love God for a certain time. Then get your life changed for a certain time. And only then can you serve community. God changes our lives when we serve others. Our love for God grows when we join Him in serving others. So don’t think there is some sort of spiritual hierarchy here. One of the best ways to grow in your walk with God is by serving others.

So, this is our new vision statement.

### **Loving God • Changing Lives • Serving Community**

May God empower and encourage us to live this out in current and new ways.