

The Village Church – 2022 Vision

Summary

Having weathered the challenges created by the Covid-19 Pandemic, The Village Church seeks to move forward on God's mission to bring people everywhere to the knowledge and faith of Jesus Christ. Our in-person attendance is down significantly from pre-pandemic levels. The make-up of our congregation continues to be weighted toward retirees while young families and young adults are underrepresented. The success of the Thrift Shop and the church's financial health have enabled us to significantly increase missional giving. Our Vision is to continue with this commitment to missions and the current successful approach to worship, fellowship, and community service, while increasing the level of activity in these areas as staff resources and volunteer availability permit. We have begun to increase our emphasis on families and children by hiring a Family Ministries Director, by increasing attendance at our Preschool as staffing allows, and by hosting a K-8 homeschool group. Our vision is to enable growth in these areas by adding space over the Fireside Room and using it to free up room for our Preschool and elementary school activities. During this construction, we will update and renovate the sanctuary, the narthex, the outdoor worship area, and the building interior.

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Introduction

The pandemic and the growing attractiveness of Lake Tahoe as a vacation destination are gradually changing the Incline Village Community. These changes include:

- An increase in the number of young professional families as remote work allows them to work from home in this beautiful place. We have no good data, but public school attendance appears to be up, we are aware of a number of homeschool groups, and private schools all have wait lists.
- Dissatisfaction among parents with the offerings at both public and private schools,
- An increase in the number of VRBO's, and a resulting increase in year-round tourism, especially during summer and winter peaks.
- Rapid increases in the cost of owning and renting, which has caused many to live in the Reno or Carson City areas and commute to their jobs here at the Lake.

Demographic studies in previous vision reports, most recently in 2017, have observed that we have preserved our membership at a relatively steady level as a continuous stream of retirees moves to the Tahoe area to replace those leaving due to death or age. These studies predicted a downward trend in church membership as post baby-boom generations attend church at much lower percentages. The last boomer reaches age 65 in 2029, so we may not have experienced this forecasted trend yet.

Our church is doing well, and this current Vision assessment seeks to identify activities as prompted by the Holy Spirit that will further God's kingdom in Incline Village. The Vision Committee tried to consider all ideas, ranging from sponsorship of church plants in the growing valleys, to simply maintaining the status quo. We investigated areas of potential cooperation or conflict with local churches. We started our process with input from a congregational meeting on December 5, 2021, and interviewed a range of church staff, committees, and community members. These interviews and sources are listed in the attachment.

This report is organized into five sections:

1. Staff and Infrastructure
2. Worship
3. Outreach and Missions
4. Education/Youth
5. Membership and Attendance

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Staff and Infrastructure

Objective:

Use the resources made available by our covenant partners to serve both the congregation and the community as guided by the Holy Spirit.

Background:

We have made significant investments in maintaining the church building and grounds in recent years. These include replacing our heating and control system, restoring and replacing structural members supporting the building, repairing dry rot, improving drainage systems and walkways at the back of the church, replacing windows, and periodically repainting. But the building is getting old and both interior and exterior features are in need of replacement or renewal.

In addition, as the section on Education/Youth indicates we feel a call to support the community through our Preschool and our new and still evolving K-8 program. These activities are an opportunity for both service and evangelism.

Initiatives

I. Staffing/technology

- a. Secure trained assistance/back-up for the church administrator, Anne Payne, and investigate, with her involvement, possible technology solutions to support her position.
- b. Broaden/deepen A/V training for staff and volunteers.

II. Update/renew

- a. Update/renovate the sanctuary/narthex/outdoor chapel following comprehensive evaluations, including audio-visual capabilities, lighting, carpeting, signage, visitor parking, etc.

III. Expansion

- a. Build a second floor over the Fireside Room and connect it by hallway over the Narthex to the West Wing of the church.
- b. Move offices over the Fireside Room.
- c. Expand Preschool to entire first floor of the Education Wing.
- d. Expand K-8 program to entire second floor of the Education Wing.

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Worship

Objective:

Worship is the inner core and the primary purpose for a congregation of believers, and so it is our intention to sustain and support the structure and format of our services, both at 8 a.m. and 10 a.m., while making occasional incremental improvements.

Background:

As in 2017, the congregation is very satisfied with our Sunday worship services, including our outdoor summer worship. The primary elements of our worship remain largely unchanged, including the opening songs, the reading of a bible text, the children's message, confession and assurance of forgiveness, pastoral prayer, a message/lesson from the bible, monthly practice of communion, a closing song, and then a benediction, including the musical congregational benediction response – a great lead-in to post-service fellowship. We have confidence that any changes can be assessed and managed by Session.

We recognize it will take continual effort to provide high quality praise music. At this time, the position of Music Leader remains unfilled but we continue to seek someone to fill this position. As in 2017 our goals are to continually improve the quality of our music at both services, including the ideas of adding other instruments and musicians as talent becomes available, and adding age diversity.

Initiatives:

- a. Hire a Music Leader.
- b. Continue live streaming of services, making them available for viewing after the fact on YouTube.
- c. Explore other options to YouTube, including hosting livestream on church website.
- d. Continue to post the pastor's weekly message on our website.
- e. Include personal testimony during the year, for example, lay preaching or testimony from elders, and testimony of service and mission activities, both local and international.

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Outreach and Missions

Objective:

Provide continuing substantial support to local, national, and international missions promoting the Great Commission and the growth of God's kingdom.

Background:

The Village Church is a mission-focused church and has created a Missions Committee to oversee Missional activities under the direction of Session. The Committee prays faithfully for the missionary efforts it supports and for others promoting the Great Commission. They encourage members of our congregation to pray for and individually support missionaries and mission organizations financially as well as participate in short term mission trips.

Participation in Christ-centered activity groups can augment an understanding of our faith, and there is currently a need for advocates to organize and sustain them.

Initiatives:

- a. Coordinate with local Christian churches and agencies to be part of short-term missions opportunities in order to have a greater impact with more volunteers, contributions, etc.
- b. Continue to implement programs such as Pray-and-Go and Alpha to increase our visibility and outreach to the unchurched.
- c. Continue and improve our outreach through advertisements, online and in print, emphasizing important opportunities and activities to become involved in the church community.
- d. Sponsor youth to attend Christian summer camps.
- e. Explore additional service opportunities and activities for families.
- f. Reach out to local bible-based congregations for partnership opportunities.
- g. Continue support for the Thrift Shop.

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Education/Youth

Objective:

Increase our emphasis on serving families to maintain a thriving and growing membership, to add vitality to our church family, and to bring the good news to the children in our community who might otherwise not hear it.

Background:

During the pandemic we hosted a small K-5 program attached to the Preschool to provide a home for about 10 children whose parents could not oversee an at-home, virtual learning program. Starting last year and continuing this year, we replaced this program by hosting a K-6 homeschool group which hires its own learning guides. We offer them the former Youth Group Room, Room A, and access to the Fireside Room and kitchen at no charge in return for the opportunity to teach the gospel in four, weekly, twenty-minute sessions. Some of the parents have attended church services, although so far on a sporadic basis. Many parents are looking for alternatives to the public schools. This is a national trend, and there has been rapid growth in homeschool groups seeking a more traditional education.

Several families, some new to our church, are attending services regularly and our Sunday School now hosts from 6 to 10 children weekly.

The majority of our community members do not go to church and their children are growing up without any introduction to the good news of the gospel. The ability to work remotely has allowed a significant number of families with young children to move to our town. The Vision Committee believes this offers us a great opportunity for evangelism and believes we should pursue initiatives to reach these children with the message of Jesus.

The Vision Committee Believes that focusing on youth should be a major area of emphasis.

Initiatives:

- a. Continue to support the Family Ministries Director with both funding and volunteers. This would continue the Great News Club, strengthen our Sunday School, and increase the number of family events we can offer the community.
- b. Continue to offer VBS.
- c. Offer expanded K-8 educational opportunities by adding classroom space through expansion and renovation of the church building and starting a church school run by church staff in a fashion analogous to the Preschool.
- d. Focus on discipling the kids in our grade school and Sunday School as they grow, by starting programs designed to draw teens to our church, e.g., tutoring and homework help, game nights, etc. Staffing and availability of volunteers provide the only obstacles.
- e. Continue to support our thriving Preschool through the expansion of our facilities and the hiring and retaining of teachers.

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Membership and Attendance

Objective:

Develop personal relationships with members of the community through service and missions, and within the congregation through small group and fellowship events. Use these relationships as the foundation for recapturing former members and to encourage newcomers to become members. We strive to raise awareness of The Village Church in the community to attract newcomers to Christ.

Background and Initiatives:

The ability to undertake new activities is constrained by the availability of volunteers. What is the effort required compared to current resource levels available? Do members of the congregation have the required enthusiasm for the activity?

- a. Build a discipleship program for adults to deepen the faith and commitment of Covenant Partners and attendees to Jesus Christ.
- b. Train Greeters to ensure visitors feel welcome from the moment they arrive until after worship service and fellowship.
- c. Place greeting cards welcoming visitors and providing basic information about the church in the pews.
- d. Promote small groups, including groups in Reno and with childcare.
- e. Promote fellowship opportunities like Music on the Beach, Church softball games (players and fans), Reno Aces Games, summer hikes, winter snowshoeing, etc.
- f. Encourage GriefShare and Alpha attendees to continue as small groups.

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Attachment A: Interviews, Visits

Completed:

Review preliminary Vision study documents from early-2021 through Jan 2022
Review 2012/2017 mission documents
Congregational Meeting in December
Debra Ornelas
Betsy Garfinkel
Sharon Sigler
Father Jorge
Tim Allen – Foursquare Church
Mission Committee
Tony Conragan
Nancy Leonard
Mario from Anchor Point Camp in Tahoe City
Thrift Shop Managers
Pastor Angel
Episcopal Church
Cornerstone Church
Leader of Fallon church-hosted K-8 program

To Complete:

Liberty Christian Academy