

# VERVE CITY CHURCH

## FAITH EXPRESSIONS

**1. Jesus is Lord.** Everything about us starts and ends with Jesus, the key to understanding who God is and what God is like. Jesus showed us the heart of God by willingly laying down his life for the very people who nailed him to the cross. He taught us to love our enemies, to pray for those who persecute us, and to live our lives with purpose. Jesus is both fully God and fully human; he is our doorway to knowing, understanding, and experiencing God and our true humanity, and the model and means for our reunion with God. Jesus is the authoritative living God to us, and we submit to him as his lifelong apprentices, Kingdom citizens, commissioned ambassadors, and beloved friends. Through Jesus, we get to know the Father and the Spirit.

**2. God is Love.** The essence of the Creator and Sustainer of the universe is unconditional, selfless love. Because God is triune, three-in-one, he has existed as a perfect loving community, Father - Son - Holy Spirit, for all eternity. Everything God does is an expression of who God is, which is eternal infinite love. God does not love us because we are good; God loves us because he is good.

**3. The Spirit Empowers.** The Holy Spirit guides us toward Jesus, grows the fruit of love in our hearts, empowers us for ministry, and distributes spiritual gifts and talents among the Church to help build up the Body of Christ. Through the Spirit, we have the mind of Christ, and continue to experience the presence of God at all times for conviction, confirmation, and comfort.

**4. We are Valuable.** Humans are made by God for loving relationship with their Creator and with one another. The first word that the Scriptures say about us is that we are created in the image of God, crowned with glory and honor, sons and daughters of the Divine. The second word is the honest, unvarnished truth about how we all fall short, we all sin, we all disrupt the peace God intends for all things. As Jesus' parables of the lost coin, lost sheep, and lost son affirm, we have lost our way through our own sin and are unable to save ourselves. Jesus shows us a God who values us enough to pursue us, restore us to who we were made to be, and celebrate with us whenever we come home.

**5. Something is Wrong.** Jesus teaches, history demonstrates, and experience affirms that something is wrong with everything. This world is filled with both beauty and horror, and humans amplify experiences of both. Jesus calls the corrosive force that separates us from God, from each other, and from our better selves, "sin." Jesus came to heal our hearts, save us from sin, and show us a better way.

**6. Saved by Grace.** Through Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, God inaugurated the New Covenant (a new way of being in relationship with God and one another), and offers us eternal and abundant life now, all as a gift. In this New Covenant, God gives all believers a new heart, a new spirit, and God's own Spirit to change us from the inside out. This is pure grace, which we receive by simple faith, expressed in following Jesus.

**7. Faith is Following.** Biblical "faith" includes "faithfulness." Jesus calls us to follow him, through death, into new life. Christians choose to pledge their allegiance to Jesus as Lord, Savior, and Teacher. In doing so, they repent (turn away) from sin in every area of their lives. We are not just believers, but disciples of Jesus, learning together how to obey everything he commands. A disciple spends time with Jesus, learning from Jesus, how to be like Jesus.

**8. Scripture is Inspired.** Like John the Baptist and the star of Bethlehem, the Bible points people to Jesus. The Bible, Old and New Testaments, is our God-given window to see Jesus most clearly, and is useful to equip us for living as his disciples. We believe in the divine inspiration of all Scripture and we read and interpret the Bible together, with Jesus at the center. Most importantly, the Bible helps us know Jesus, and Jesus helps us interpret, understand, and apply the Bible.

**9. Peace is Pursued.** Because we see Jesus' life and teaching as God's authoritative Word to us, we take his teachings about all things – including peacemaking, reconciliation, and forgiveness – very seriously. We seek to live peaceful, reconciled lives, to encourage other believers to do the same, and to actively extend the peace of Jesus to the world.

**10. Citizens and Ambassadors.** Jesus came to establish his Kingdom and he invites us to live in it now. This is a Kingdom that transcends land and laws; a Kingdom of our hearts and relationships. This Kingdom defines for us a new culture and identity that stand in sweeping contrast to the kingdoms of this world. Christ-followers are ambassadors on behalf of the Kingdom of God to the people of all nations, with church communities functioning as embassies to experience a taste of what it means to live with Jesus as King. Our purpose every day is to accept God's invitation to partner with Jesus to experience, express, and extend the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth.