

## VISION & VALUES

We believe that Sturbridge Worship Center is called to be an Antioch church in the New England region. We are called to be both a local church and a regional house of equipping and resource for the wider body of Christ. We believe that our mandate is to be a center of revival, discipleship and equipping. We are not defined by what other churches are doing. We are defined by the promises of God and the destiny over the house.

Our mandate is to explore and live in the fullness of all that God calls us to be as Spirit filled believers. We are called to build a breakthrough culture and to teach people to live in the victory of Christ.

As we journey together here are some of the values we espouse and hold to:

- We will proclaim God's word, allow it to transform our lives and walk it out. We will put a demand on our doctrine to produce an experience. We are learning to walk relationally with God both as a promise maker and a promise keeper. **(2 Tim 2:4; 2 Cor 1:20; Acts 20:32)**
- We are worshipers. To be extravagant worshippers is our highest call and our primary identity. We choose to worship like Mary of Bethany without limit, restraint or thought for the opinions of others. We believe that God's presence is something that we should experience within our church and carry to the world. **(John 4:23-24; John 12:1-8; Is 25:1)**
- We are new creations in Christ! We see our mission as helping each believer to walk out that new life, embrace the character and fruit of Jesus in equal measure to his power. We are called to enjoy the holiness of God and walk in purity, temperance and joy. We repent *towards* something rather than *from* something. We are called to see people the way God sees them and call them up to their identity, rather than calling them out on their behavior. **(2 Cor 5:17; Gal 6:15; Eph 4:23-24)**
- We are a house of favor and permission, not one of legalism and religion. We are blessers and builders. We believe that it is for freedom that Christ has set us free. We see grace as the empowering presence of God that enables us to change. **(Gal 5:1; Rom 5:1; 2 Cor 1:20)**
- We are an army, we are a family, we are pilgrims. We are not weekend warriors and chocolate soldiers. Our mission is not only to comfort the afflicted but to afflict the comfortable. We are called to be a dangerous church and a breakthrough culture. **(Mat 11:12; Ps 84; Mat 10:34)**

- We are a community on a journey. We are settlers in our hearts and pilgrims in our feet. We are not museum keepers or squatters. We love transition and the tension it brings, we allow that tension to stretch and teach us. Our mission is to follow Jesus, walk as he walked, to represent him in fullness to our generation. We have not arrived but we have departed. **(Ps 84; Josh 1:1-8; 1 Jn 2:6)**
- We are not ashamed of the power of God. We owe our generation more than a tract. We have a debt to demonstrate the power and presence of God on earth as it is in heaven. **(Rom 1:16; 1 Cor 9:16; Acts 1:8)**
- Revival is touching the earth. We purpose to embrace everything God is doing and to posture and position ourselves at the forefront of that move. We accept that being misunderstood, rejected and criticized is a normative part of revival. We love every expression of the body of Christ and every church that preaches salvation in Jesus. We seek to love, give, serve and partner with all of our brothers and sisters in the Lord. **(Joel 2:28; Ps 133:1; Jn 13:34)**
- We honor the past, we embrace the present and our eyes are on the future. We are thankful for our history but we refuse to let it define us or the measure of our calling. Our hope is greater than our memories. **(Phil 3:13; Jn 4:23; Jer 29:11)**
- We recognize that God uses prototypes, examples and models. We desire to have a large R & D department. We want to research all that we are in Christ and develop all that God has placed in each member of our body. We want others to learn from our examples and even our mistakes. **(1 Jn 2:6; 1 Cor 11:1; Rom 15:4)**
- We are a house of influence. We will not measure our success by how many people we can attract but by the reach of the influence of Jesus and his Kingdom that we can release. **(Mat 13:31; Mat 24:14; Mk 4)**
- We are a household of faith. We cherish bold, reckless faith in the word of God and risk takers. We desire to raise up the present day equivalent of David's mighty men. **(Gal 6:10; Pr 28:1; 2 Samuel 23:8-39)**
- We are called to experience God's outrageous love for us and give it away to our generation. We recognize that the measure of our influence is only as great as the measure of our sacrificial love. As a community we are as strong as our love for our weakest member. **(Jn 3:16; 1 Cor 13; Jn 13:34)**

## Commitment of leaders

Our church functions with 3 levels of leadership:

- Senior Pastor
- Elder team
- Department Leaders

As a church we strive to follow a biblical model of leadership. In Exodus God calls Moses and gives him a vision to lead his people into the promised land. Moses quickly encounters the struggles of one man leading a congregation of people. In response to this God tells Moses to select a team of elders who will work under him to help serve him and implement the vision that God has given him.

Our Department leaders are those who oversee the main areas of the church and its functions.

Our Senior Pastor and elder team strive to talk through all the major decisions of the church and to work together in accountability, honor and integrity. **(1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-4).**

### As the leadership of Sturbridge Worship Center we commit to:

- To pray for our church body, to seek God's heart and direction. As leaders we will set the example in the worship and prayer life of our church. **(Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1-4)**
- To teach, train and equip. Our desire as leaders is to see every member of our church body grow into the fullness of the call that God has for them. **(Ephesians 4:11-16)**
- To care for the needs of each member. We recognize that we are as strong as our weakest member. We commit to value each person and their unique identity in the body of Christ. **(Matthew 28:16-20; Ephesians 4:15-16; Colossians 1:28; James 5:14; 1 Peter 5:1-4)**
- To lead with Humility. As leaders we are servants and stewards. We will lead with honor, respect and create a culture of esteeming each other above ourselves. **(Jam 4:10; Phil 2:3)**
- To preach and practice the word. We will always hold God's word higher than the opinion of any man. God's word will be the alpha and omega in all we do. **(Acts 20:27-28; 1 Timothy 4:16; 2 Timothy 4:1-5; Titus 2:1)**

- To lead with integrity, transparency and honor. We will be good stewards of the resources that God blesses this house with and govern with honesty, wisdom and grace. (**Prov 11:3; 1 Pet 3:16; 2 Cor 8:21; Heb 13:18**)
- To commit to hold the vision that God has given us. To not deviate from it, or take an easier path. We will contend for all the God has purposed for Sturbridge Worship Center (**Phil 3:13; Luke 9:51; Luke 2:49; 1 Cor 9:16**)
- To set an example and join members in fulfilling the obligations of church membership stated below (**Philippians 3:17; 1 Timothy 4:12; Titus 2:7-8; 1 Peter 5:3**)

**We see members of Sturbridge Worship Center as those who:**

COME  
COMMIT  
CALL  
COMMUNITY  
CONTRIBUTE

### **COME**

We become part of our church body by engaging in the life of the church. We encourage all church members to make it their normal default position to be in church each Sunday engaging with the presence, word and people of God. We know that at times life happens, vacations happen, and sometime we all just need a complete day of rest! Our members are those who know that they will be missed when they are not there, and that when a member of our family is absent from our gathering we are poorer as a church.

We encourage church members to pray about attending one of our small groups and to find a place in the prayer life of the church.

**(Luke 18:1; Acts 17:11; 1 Corinthians 9:24-27; Ephesians 5:1-21; 1 Thessalonians 5:12-22).**

### **COMMIT**

We live in a consumer society that tends to produce a consumer attitude towards church. We believe that God calls us out of surface convenience into real and meaningful relationships.

We believe that God has a local body for each Christian, a tribe of friends and pilgrims who unite and commit in the following areas:

- We commit to walk in love and honor with each other
- We commit to refuse the easy path of offense and fight to win relationships.
- We commit to speak words of life over our church and each of its members, to refuse criticism and gossip.
- We commit to live lives of holiness, temperance and purity
- We commit to the authority of the Word of God
- We commit to lead lives of risk where we explore all that God has for us.
- We commit to radical worship, celebration and joy

**(Psalm 119; 2 Timothy 3:14-17; 2 Peter 1:19-21). (1 Peter 1:13-16, 4:1-3)**

## COMMUNITY

We recognize that church is more than a series of meetings. We are called to be a community. Our church members are those who commit to our body as a community.

We believe our church should be as eclectic as our society. We encourage all our members to work at getting to know each other, to build friendships and welcome and encourage new people. We commit to serve and bless each other. We recognize that no leader or program will meet the needs of our body. We seek to live out the truth that

*“every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.”*

**(Acts 2:42-47; Hebrews 10:23-25; Titus 3:14).**

## CALL

As members we are committed to sharing Jesus with our local community and the wider world. We commit to engage the call to proclaim Jesus in the following ways:

- We commit to .....invite, invite, invite! Our members are those who regularly pray: Lord who can I bring?
- We commit to pray for salvation and growth in our body
- We commit to welcome without condition those who the Lord adds.
- We will live in such a way that our lives point to Jesus
- We commit to live lives of Kingdom risk and boldness that our generation might see Jesus
- We are committed to seeing God’s power and presence manifested inside and outside of our church walls.

**(Mark 16:15-18; Romans 15:7; Luke 14:23-24; 1 Thessalonians 1:2)**

## CONTRIBUTE

The church is the sum total of all that each member brings to the table. Our members are those who view giving not as an obligation but a joyful privilege.

We encourage members to engage in the following areas of giving:

- Tithes and offerings. We believe that we should worship God in a way that is honorable with our income. We do not see tithing as something we must do to please God but as a part of our worship to him.

- Service. Like all churches we encourage everyone, according to their means, to give of their time and talents for the work of the church.
- Ministry and calling. We believe that God has placed areas of gifting in each member of our community. We recognize that as a church we need each member to stand in the fullness of their calling.

**(Matthew 25:14-30; Romans 12:1-2; 2 Corinthians 8-9; 1 Peter 4:10-11)**

## STATEMENT OF FAITH

As a church we are not interested in arguing over theological obscurities but in common with all evangelical we unite around a statement of faith that sets out the core, non negotiable of the Christian faith

We believe the entire Bible to be the inspired, infallible Word of God, the revelation of God's will for man and the divine and final authority for the Christian life.

**2 Timothy 3:16-17**

We believe in one God, the Creator of all things, who is revealed in three Persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

**Deuteronomy 6:4; John 15:26**

We acknowledge Jesus Christ as true God and true man – conceived of the Holy Spirit, born of a virgin, crucified, and resurrected – our High Priest and Advocate now seated at the right hand of God the Father.

**Matthew 1:18; Hebrews 12:2**

We believe in personal salvation and forgiveness of sins through the shed blood of Jesus Christ, acknowledging every person's need for the grace and mercy of God.

**Romans 3:23-24; Ephesians 1:7; 1 Peter 1:3; 1 John 1:9**

We believe in the eventual resurrection of the dead, the eternal happiness of the saved, and the eternal punishment of the lost.

**John 14:1-3; 1 John 5:11; Revelation 20:15**

We baptize in water all those who have placed their faith in Jesus Christ and who desire to publicly identify with Him, in accordance with the Bible's command.

**Matthew 28:19; Acts 8:36-39; Romans 6:4**

We believe in the present supernatural ministry of the Holy Spirit, whose purpose is to glorify Jesus Christ and instruct and empower every believer for godly living and service.

**John 16:13-14; 1 Corinthians 12:1-11**

We believe that the baptism with the Holy Spirit is a promise from the Father for every believer and is distinct and subsequent to the experience of the new birth. Speaking in tongues, as the Holy Spirit gives utterance, is a physical indication of the baptism with the Holy Spirit.

**Matthew 3:11; Acts 2:4, 38-39, 19:4-6**

We serve the Lord's Supper and, according to Scripture, remember Jesus' sacrifice on the Cross and celebrate His resurrection power.

Luke 22:19-20; 1 Corinthians 11:23-26

We believe in the second coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and that His appearance will be accompanied by a bodily resurrection of those who have died in Christ.

**Matthew 24:29-31; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**

We believe that Jesus is the Healer.

**Isaiah 53:5; Matthew 8:16-17; James 5:14-15; 1 Peter 2:24**

We believe in the power and effectiveness of prayer.

**Philippians 4:6-7; James 5:15-16**

We believe in God's terrific plan for each of His followers to honor God and help people.

**Matthew 5:16, 25:40; Jeremiah 29:11**