

# A Vision Statement for Your Congregation/Ministry

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Imagine starting out on a road trip without a map! It is possible that you will get to your destination, but the trip will be more complicated and have lots of side trips and dead ends, and you will use a great deal of gasoline. An old saying reminds us that, when you don't know where you are going, any road will take you there.

Having mission/vision/value/motto statements for your congregation gives everyone a sense of where the church is headed and how it plans to get there. These statements give overall direction and focus. Decisions and actions in the church are all made and done in light of these beliefs.

**What is the difference between mission, vision and value statements?**

**What is a motto?**

To illustrate the difference among these statements we can look to the history and practice of farming. The mission of farming (the reason for a farmer's existence) has not changed significantly in thousands of years. It is to grow crops and take them to market. However, the vision of farmers (how farmers actually farm) has changed greatly. Farmers now use machines, have irrigation, use heated greenhouses. The changing values of farmers may also prompt them to grow organic products, be pesticide-free and choose legal workers who are paid a fair wage. The farm's name may be the motto.

**Mission statements** are a concise one sentence statement of what the church does. Some people use the term "purpose statement." This statement expresses the basic reason for being the Christian church which has not changed in 2,000 years. It is a version of "knowing Jesus Christ and making him known," or "Every person a minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, or "To live, love and share together through the teachings of Jesus Christ." Laurie Beth Jones, author of *The Path*, Hyperson Press, 1998, believes that these statements need to be inspiring, exciting, clear, true and engaging. A good mission statement, she says, is one sentence long, able to be understood by a 12-year-old child, and able to be repeated from memory. A mission statement explains in one sentence what a church does.

**Vision statements** explain how individual churches know Christ and make him known. They can be 3-5 points or in a single paragraph. A vision statement explains in a paragraph or two how a church makes disciples.

**Value statements** outline the concepts and principles from which the congregation seeks to live out its mission and vision. They are core ideals and are often listed in point form. A value statement sets the boundaries in which people are free to live out their gifts for the well-being of the whole congregation.

A motto is a "snippet" of the mission statement and is useful on an outside board, in a newspaper ad, on radio/TV spots or in the Sunday worship bulletin. A motto might sound like this: "The little church with a big heart", "A community of faith and care," "Living and growing together."

## The Process of Arriving at a Mission Statement

How do you do the process of visioning? And once it is finished, how is the “result” used?

Both the process and the results of the visioning process are as varied as the congregations in which they were created, but, in general, congregations seem to use this procedure:

1. There is an initial gathering of minister and church leaders (often with a guest facilitator) to explore the strengths and dreams of the congregation and the environment/community in which the congregation is housed. (This may be a retreat or a half day event.)
2. This meeting usually results in having a smaller task group work on some or all of these: a mission statement, a vision statement, value statements and a motto.
3. These statements are taken back to session for suggestions and refinements.
4. The task group finishes their draft and invites congregational table groups (with coffee and donuts) to comment on the statements.
5. The statements are voted on at an annual meeting or at an informal congregational meeting following worship.
6. The mission statement and, in some cases, the motto are used repetitively and often—as a benediction, as a call to worship, as a response in worship, on banners—until a new statement or statements are needed. These statements must be revised as ministry and times change.

Some congregations find that a simpler process works well for the direction of their congregation. For instance, the congregation at St. Giles Church, Prince George, B. C., used to have a single mission statement but now they go through a yearly “mission and ministry process” and select a specific goal for the coming year. They work toward implementing and establishing it before moving on to another goal. In the past, these goals have included Stephen Ministry, the Children and Worship program, projects in Ethiopia and Cambodia, Stewards by Design and a major renovation to the church.

### Some examples

It is always a bit risky to give examples of mission/vision/value/motto statements because the value of creating these statements is in the process of having congregational members struggle to arrive at “their own.” However, the people who shared these examples freely admitted to us that they often borrowed and adapted from others as the process continued. So, with these reservations in mind, we share these examples from congregations across Canada.

## Mission statements from...

### Dayspring, Edmonton, Alberta

As people of Dayspring Presbyterian Church we are called and challenged to worship God, grow in Christian faith and share our gifts with a broken and hurting world.

### St. Andrew's, Newmarket, Ontario

We are a caring congregation, seeking to share, show and speak about the love and joy of God.

### Oakridge Church, London, Ontario

Oakridge Presbyterian Church is a congregation of caring people, prayerfully seeking to further the Kingdom of God, through sharing the love and salvation found in Jesus Christ.

### Keswick Church, Keswick, Ontario

We are ordinary people learning together what it means to follow Jesus in our time.

### Haney Presbyterian Church, Maple Ridge, BC

Our purpose is to glorify God and to be His Servants in our Church, community and beyond.

### Beaches Presbyterian Church, Toronto, Ontario

Beaches Presbyterian Church is a community of followers of Jesus Christ, committed to glorifying God, growing in understanding of Christ's message, embodying Christ's love for all, and sharing Christ's good news with the world around us.



### **Haney Presbyterian Church, Maple Ridge, BC**

Our vision is to help equip our church family to live and serve God day by day as we seek to fulfill the needs of others.

## **Vision statements from...**

### **Keswick Church, Keswick, Ontario**

We will develop a more balanced church by focusing on the following purposes:

- Stronger through worship
- Deeper through discipleship
- Warmer through fellowship
- Broader through ministry
- Larger through evangelism

### **Westwood Church, Winnipeg, Manitoba**

We will:

- Develop a variety of programs and ministries in order to address the spiritual, social, and service needs and opportunities of all ages
- Visibly be a congregation that invites people to faith in Christ, and uses our resources to benefit others
- Develop leaders who will enable our members to become committed to seeking first the Kingdom of God
- Openly promote and intentionally provide the means by which each member and adherent can experience spiritual growth

### **St. John's Church, Bradford, Ontario**

We will:

- Include all ages in the worship life of St. John's
  - Develop and implement the Leading with Care policy
  - Offer an annual conference for people in the community
  - Insure St. John's new building has exposure in the community
- Note: This is a yearly vision statement. This congregation then defined several strategies under each of these statements to say how they will achieve these goals.*

### **Summerside Church, Summerside, PEI**

On our journey forward we will:

- Become more intentional in living out our mission and values; we will "walk the talk"
- Embrace changes and take risks to live by our values and principles
- Promote stewardship of accumulated resources
- Ensure that God's house is safeguarded and sustained
- Foster communication between session, committees and the congregation
- Provide ongoing faith development opportunities for all ages
- Encourage and equip individuals and groups for shared leadership
- Invite the participation of all in our church programs and activities

## **Beaches Presbyterian Church, Toronto, Ontario**

As a community of followers of Jesus Christ:

- o We will provide a place of sanctuary, peace, prayer, healing, fellowship.
- o We will be open and accessible to all who desire to worship with us.

We are committed to:

glorifying God

We will worship God according to the Reformed tradition of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

We will administer the sacraments and celebrate the rites of passage (birth, marriage, death).

We will discern and develop the spiritual gifts present in all members.

growing in understanding Christ's message

We will interpret the scripture as the Word of God for our day.

We will educate adults and children in biblical knowledge and contemporary moral and social issues.

embodying Christ's love for all

We will accept all persons as created in God's image regardless of gender, race, age, handicap, cultural heritage, or social and economic status.

We will provide spiritual, moral and emotional support through visitation and counseling.

We will support the caring ministries of our members in the community.

sharing Christ's Good News with the world around us

We will express God's unconditional welcome to all who come to us.

We desire to grow and to welcome change in the church.

We will encourage the growth of God's family in the Beach community.

We will share the facilities with which God has blessed us for the spiritual, physical, intellectual and moral development of children and

adults in the Beach.

We will support the world-wide mission of The Presbyterian Church in Canada.

## **Value statements from...**

### **Oakridges Church, London, Ontario**

We value:

- The involvement of members, adherents and children
- The use of our spiritual gifts in Christ's service
- Interdependency and caring for one another
- Sharing the good news of the gospel
- Personal growth in faith
- Meeting the physical and spiritual needs of people
- The power of prayer
- Trust and integrity

### **Summerside Presbyterian Church, Summerside, PEI**

We value:

- A warm and inviting church community built on mutual trust and integrity
- Sharing the good news of the gospel
- Accessibility to meet the spiritual and physical needs of all people
- Spiritual growth - individually and in a community of faith
- The promotion of mission and outreach
- The power of prayer

## **Mottos from...**

### **Keswick Church, Keswick, Ontario**

Asking why? Learning how!

### **Knox Church, Stratford, Ontario**

With God we find a way

### **Church Offices, Toronto, Ontario**

A thinking Church with a tender heart

### **Knox Church, Wallaceburg, Ontario**

Here we grow in Christ

### **Armour Heights, North York, Ontario**

Discover the vitality of faith

For a resource to assist congregational leaders discern their mission, vision and values go to: [www.presbyterian.ca/evangelism/congregationalawarenessstudies.pdf](http://www.presbyterian.ca/evangelism/congregationalawarenessstudies.pdf).

For an annotated list of resources to assist congregations in the planning process go to: [www.presbytcan.ca/documents/calledtocovenant.pdf](http://www.presbytcan.ca/documents/calledtocovenant.pdf).