



# CURRENT

the **Vineyard** church

MAY & JUNE 2022  
DULUTHVINEYARD.ORG

Artwork by Molly Ovenden

# WELCOME!

The Vineyard is a community of all kinds of people looking to be more like Jesus. We want to love and experience God, love one another, and partner with Christ to bring his hope and healing to the Twin Ports (and the whole world)!

There are lots of ways to get connected, grow, and serve at the Vineyard. Whether you've just started coming to the Vineyard or you've been here a while, there's always something God is inviting you into.

## First Steps ▶

Try any of these out to get to know us better:

- Attend our weekend services
- Try out a Small Group
- Learn all about the Vineyard's history and values at Welcome to the Vineyard
- Volunteer with us and serve our community

## Next Steps ▶

Continue growing closer to God and explore all he has for you:

- Attend one of our Bible-based classes
- Commit to a Small Group
- Begin tithing regularly

## Leadership Steps ▶

If you want to explore what leadership is like at Vineyard try these:

- Take the Leadership Basics classes
- Attend Small Group Leader Training

## Serving Our City Steps ▶

We want everyone to know how much God loves them (even in really practical ways). Help people feel the love of God in real tangible ways:

- Volunteer in our Fruit of the Vine Food Shelf
- Help send letters with our Prison Ministry
- Bake or handout yummy treats with our Muffin Ministry
- Donate or volunteer with the clothing closet

the **Vineyard** church  
*Love God. Love people. Period.*

# ABOUT THE ARTIST

As a visual artist, author, and creative writing coach, Molly Ovenden is thrilled to support writers and artists along their creative journeys. Her "Scrapings" are acrylic experiments in freedom-from-control in which she hopes viewers experience the joy she felt while making them. Molly loves circles, coffee, tea, Jesus, running, and making creativity a habit. She's married to her bearded furniture-making Englishman, Max (of whom she says, "yes, he has a delicious accent and yes, that's part of what won me over to be his wife!") and they live in Duluth, MN.

The Ovendens have been part of the wider Vineyard Church family since 2007 (some of that time while in England) and back to Duluth Vineyard since August 2017. If you're interested in finding out more about Molly's art, writing, or coaching, check out: [www.mollyovenden.com](http://www.mollyovenden.com) or find her on Facebook or Instagram @mollyovenden or @mollyovendencreativity

## CONTACT US

**Michael Gatlin** - Senior Pastor - [jmgatlin@duluthvineyard.org](mailto:jmgatlin@duluthvineyard.org)

**Brian Brinkert** - Associate Pastor - [bbrinkert@duluthvineyard.org](mailto:bbrinkert@duluthvineyard.org)

**John Kliewer** - Associate Pastor - [jkliewer@duluthvineyard.org](mailto:jkliewer@duluthvineyard.org)

**Casey LaCore** - Associate Pastor - [clacore@duluthvineyard.org](mailto:clacore@duluthvineyard.org)

## MINISTRY AREAS

**Church Planting** - Michael Gatlin - [jmgatlin@duluthvineyard.org](mailto:jmgatlin@duluthvineyard.org)

**College & Young Adults** - John Kliewer - [jkliewer@duluthvineyard.org](mailto:jkliewer@duluthvineyard.org)

**Eastside** Clint Considine - [cconsidine@duluthvineyard.org](mailto:cconsidine@duluthvineyard.org)

**Fruit of the Vine Food Shelf** - Barry Schull - [fotv@duluthvineyard.org](mailto:fotv@duluthvineyard.org)

**Marriages & Families** - Casey LaCore - [clacore@duluthvineyard.org](mailto:clacore@duluthvineyard.org)

**Men's Ministry** - Brian Brinkert - [bbrinkert@duluthvineyard.org](mailto:bbrinkert@duluthvineyard.org)

**Small Groups** - Brian Brinkert - [bbrinkert@duluthvineyard.org](mailto:bbrinkert@duluthvineyard.org)

**Prison Ministry** - Barry Schull - [prisonministry@duluthvineyard.org](mailto:prisonministry@duluthvineyard.org)

**Heroic Leadership Inst.** - Jackson Gatlin - [jgatlin@duluthvineyard.org](mailto:jgatlin@duluthvineyard.org)

**Student Ministries** -

Clint Considine - [cconsidine@duluthvineyard.org](mailto:cconsidine@duluthvineyard.org)

Steph Bremer - [sbremer@duluthvineyard.org](mailto:sbremer@duluthvineyard.org)

**Vineyard Kids** - Becca Eastvold - [beastvold@duluthvineyard.org](mailto:beastvold@duluthvineyard.org)

**Women's Ministry** - Steph Bremer - [sbremer@duluthvineyard.org](mailto:sbremer@duluthvineyard.org)

**Worship Ministry** - Rachel Riefenberg - [rriefenberg@duluthvineyard.org](mailto:rriefenberg@duluthvineyard.org)

## WORSHIP SERVICES

### In-person Services:

Sundays at 9 & 11am at 1533 W. Arrowhead Rd.

Sundays at 6:30pm at 3833 E. Superior St.

**Online Services:** Sundays at 9 & 11 at [duluthvineyard.org/livestream](http://duluthvineyard.org/livestream)

### Office:

Lobby Hours: Tuesdays - Thursdays 9am-5pm & Fridays 9am-1pm

1533 W. Arrowhead Rd., Duluth, MN 55811

218.525.3462 • [www.duluthvineyard.org](http://www.duluthvineyard.org)

[info@duluthvineyard.org](mailto:info@duluthvineyard.org)

[facebook.com/theduluthvineyardchurch](https://facebook.com/theduluthvineyardchurch)

[facebook.com/thevineyardwell](https://facebook.com/thevineyardwell) (Grades 6-8)

[instagram.com/emergevineyard](https://instagram.com/emergevineyard) (Grades 9-12)

# FIRST STEPS WITH GOD AND WITH PEOPLE

**ENGAGING IN THE KINGDOM WOMEN'S CONFERENCE** - Thursday, May 5 - Saturday, May 7 - There is something powerful that happens when women of all ages engage in God's kingdom together. At our annual Engaging in the Kingdom conference, we bring women together and empower them to become who God designed them to be. This conference is a mixture of powerful worship, deep biblical teaching, and spirit filled prayer ministry that is anchored in authentic relationships new and old. This year our guest speaker is Melanie Forsythe, lead pastor of LIFE Vineyard Church in Columbus, OH. Registration is \$65 and covers materials, coffee and beverages, breakfast each morning, and lunch on Saturday.

The conference kicks off on Thursday night, May 5, with a session for leaders. Main sessions for everyone begin Friday morning, and the conference concludes on Saturday at noon with a delicious lunch buffet. Childcare is not available; however, nursing mothers are welcome. Learn more at [www.duluthvineyard.org/eitk](http://www.duluthvineyard.org/eitk).

**CHILD DEDICATIONS** - Sunday, May 8 during the 11 am service - Child Dedications are a time for parents to publicly commit to collaborating with God in raising their children to become followers of Jesus. We will also be celebrating your families immediately after service in the lobby with refreshments, snacks, and a photo booth! Contact Becca Eastvold at [beastvold@duluthvineyard.org](mailto:beastvold@duluthvineyard.org) for more information or sign up online.

**HLI GRADUATION** - Saturday, May 14 at 10am - Five young adults from across the country have spent the past 9 months in Duluth learning about and living out a radical life of following Jesus at all costs. They have fully invested in healing, taking risks in the wider community, pursuing healthy and honest relationship, and loving the Lord with their all. Now they are graduating! Come celebrate what God has done in the students and bless them as they go back to their home communities to spread the love of Christ.

**WELCOME TO THE VINEYARD** - Sundays, May 15 & July 10 at 5:30pm - Welcome to the Vineyard is your opportunity to discover what our church is all about. We'll fire up the wood-fired oven and enjoy some delicious pizza together. We'll take an in-depth look at the Vineyard's history, vision, values - touching on lots of areas of ministry and ways you can get involved. If you choose, at the end of the class, there is an opportunity to become a member. Register online or at the Welcome Center. We look forward to meeting you!

**MEN'S BREAKFAST** - Saturday, May 21, 2022 at 9am - Can you imagine your life changing in a split second? That's what happened to Brok Hansmeyer in August 2019, when a mountain biking accident fractured his neck in two places. Rushed into emergency surgery, Brok was flooded with questions like: Will I survive? Will I ever walk again? What is really most important to me? You are invited to hear Brok's story at our next Men's Breakfast! You'll be inspired as you listen to Brok share about his difficult, but rewarding journey of physical rehabilitation and spiritual renewal over the past 2 1/2 years. And you'll be challenged to consider what matters most in your life today. This Men's Breakfast is free, but please register so we can plan ahead for food and seating.

**BLESSING OF THE BIKES** - Sunday, May 29 - We love connecting with God, and we really love to ride. So, fill up your tank, throw on your gear and join us for a free barbecue, some live music, and prayer for our safety this season. There will even be door prizes. You won't wanna miss out on this party! Find out more at [duluthvineyard.org/bofb](http://duluthvineyard.org/bofb).

**JR. + SR. HIGH SUMMER BEACH NIGHTS** - Wednesdays, June 1, July 6, & August 3 at 6:30pm - Summer is a time for friends and sunshine! Join us the first Wednesday of the month at the Park Point Beach house as we take time to enjoy the highlights of summer together: grilling, volleyball, swimming, and friends! Rides are available from the church at 7pm. For questions, contact Steph Bremer at [sbremer@duluthvineyard.org](mailto:sbremer@duluthvineyard.org).

**HIGH SCHOOL CAMPOUT** - Friday & Saturday June 24-25 (for those going into 9-12th grade) - Nothing builds friendship quite like the smell of bug spray, meals cooked on a campfire, and sleeping under the stars. Join us for a 24-hour campout! There will be hiking, fishing, swimming, and more. Bring your own camping gear (or let us know you need some) and a bag lunch. We will eat before we take off into the woods. And yes, there will be bathrooms. Cost is \$15. Meals will be included. Questions? Please contact Steph Bremer at [sbremer@duluthvineyard.org](mailto:sbremer@duluthvineyard.org).

**NIGHT OF WORSHIP** - Sunday, June 25 at 6pm - You're invited to participate in a new expression of our Night of Worship! Colossians 3:16 reminds us to..."Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts." Bring your voice or whatever other instrument you play, no matter how dusty it is! We'll gather in the lobby and we are going worship in the round. You can expect to hear some biblical teaching, to receive prayer, and have lots of time to just worship the living Christ through music or other artistic expressions. Sheet music and limited art supplies will be provided.

## GOD IS AT WORK IN OUR COMMUNITY!

This book is filled with stories of lives transformed by Jesus here at the Duluth Vineyard. God is doing amazing things in our community. What has God been doing in your life lately?

Whether it's a big or little thing, sharing your story of how God is at work will encourage others to trust him more too. Send us your story! [stories@duluthvineyard.org](mailto:stories@duluthvineyard.org).

Pick up this book in the lobby and visit our website to read more stories.

[duluthvineyard.org/hope](http://duluthvineyard.org/hope)



## STORIES OF HOPE *HOW GOD'S WORKING IN OUR LIVES*

### RECEIVING SERMONS IN THE MAIL AT THE PERFECT TIME

My name is Reuben. I'm on your sermon mailing list as I'm a prisoner at a correctional institution. You even sent me a birthday card last month! Due to our mail now being rerouted through a 3rd party company, it gets to us between 2 weeks to 2 months late. But it's all good; I always seem to get your sermons in God's perfect timing!

I've been locked up almost 20 years now and recently got an attorney to work on my case. Getting my hopes up has been very stressful and has had some adverse effects on my relationship with God, because I have expectations of God to act a certain way, along a certain timeline.

God has recently made a way for some very unexpected people to speak wisdom into my life, and your sermons are a huge part of God's way of speaking to me. I don't speed-read your sermons; it usually takes me an average of 4 hours to get through one!

While reading a recent sermon entitled "The King And His Kingdom", I felt like the entire sermon was speaking directly to me! There were a couple things the pastor said, but the main one was, "When you read through the gospels, you begin to notice that there's somebody else in charge, completely in charge. And the very best thing for me to do is to submit, to surrender to the one who really has both the authority

and the power to accomplish what's necessary". I cannot overstate how precisely those words fit my current situation.

I looked up the words 'submit' and 'surrender' in the dictionary, and realized that my history with churches and religion have given those words negative connotations and given me a complete misunderstanding of what they mean. Surrendering something to God doesn't mean you're giving up on it! It just means you're giving it over to someone who can handle it infinitely better than you ever could.

My point is, I really love all your sermons. I love how you speak frankly and you don't hold back. I really like how all your pastors share personal stories to drive home their messages; it makes me feel less like "I'm the only one going through stuff".

I appreciate you all and appreciate your messages. Thank you for the sermon mailing service and thank you for allowing yourselves to be used by God. Thank you for everything, Duluth Vineyard. God bless and keep you all, always.

– *Reuben*



# NEXT STEPS *GO DEEPER INTO THE LIFE JESUS OFFERS*

## Leadership Basics

Wednesdays beginning May 4 at 6:30pm - We can be leaders in many different aspects in our lives, in our church, families, places of work, and our neighborhoods. That's why we offer our 5-week long Leadership Basics class, Character of a Leader.

**CHARACTER OF A LEADER** - Character of a Leader helps you explore your own leadership gifting and gives you all the tools you'll need to be a kingdom leader wherever you might lead. This class focuses on building a strong foundation for your leadership with topics like character, integrity, maturity, and testing under authority. Using an online hybrid teaching model, each week participants will view a short video talk online and read a few articles on that week's topic. Then we'll gather in person to engage in meaningful discussions and reflect on the material to see how it applies to our lives and to listen for how Jesus is speaking to us in these areas. Sign up online.

**BOOK CLUB WITH MICHAEL GATLIN** - Wednesdays May 4, June 1, and July 6 at 7pm - Join us for a monthly book club where we'll dive into some great shorter reads on the topics of interior life and how we can have a moment by moment, interactional relationship with God. We'll be learning from some classic Christian literature by reading *The Practice of the Presence of God* by Brother Lawrence and *The Sacrament of the Present Moment* by Jean-Pierre de Caussade. Then we'll dive into *Jesus Asked* by Conrad Gempf. In our moment by moment relationship with God, we often find that Jesus asks more questions than he answers. This book is a great look at the kinds of questions Jesus asked and how we can learn from them. The book club will get together online the first Wednesday of each month at 7pm. Sign up to receive the details to join online.

**LEARNING TO PRAY LIKE JESUS** - Thursday, May 12 at 6pm - Amazing things happened when Jesus prayed for others, and we can learn how to pray for people just as Jesus did. Join us in this class for an in-depth look at how to bring God's heart to others through prayer, and you'll receive practical steps that will enable you to pray for others in a very simple and natural way. This is also the first step to be trained to participate on our prayer ministry teams for our weekend services. Register online.

**SMALL GROUP LEADER TRAINING** - Tuesday, May 17 at 6:30pm - Small groups are a significant expression of our life together as a church. Small groups are often where people discover new friendships and experience real encouragement in following Jesus. Have you ever wondered what it might be like to lead a small group at the Vineyard? We want to invite you to come to the Small Group Leader Training. In this training, you'll experience the foundational philosophy, tools, and vision for how and why we have Small Groups. You'll have time to hear information, ask questions, and receive some prayer. If you're interested, email Brian at [bbrinkert@duluthvineyard.org](mailto:bbrinkert@duluthvineyard.org).

**BAPTISM CLASS** - Thursday, May 19 at 6:30pm - Join us in this class to learn more about how we baptize folks here at the Vineyard and to hear God's heart for you as you consider this step forward in obedience to him. We'll go through the baptism statements of faith, share stories of what God is doing in us as he leads us into baptism, and talk through a bit of the logistics of baptism day, too. Although not required prior to baptism, it is highly recommended.

**VINEYARD KIDS BAPTISM CLASS** - Thursday, May 19 at 6:30pm - Kids can get so excited about getting baptized, but do they actually understand what it's about and why we do it? This class is a chance for parents and kids to learn more about why we get baptized and to equip families to decide together whether your child is ready to take the next step in their faith and get baptized. If your child is thinking about getting baptized or has questions about baptism, bring them to the class with you! Parents and guardians are encouraged to attend with their child. Contact Becca Eastvold at [beastvold@duluthvineyard.org](mailto:beastvold@duluthvineyard.org) for more information or sign up online.

**BAPTISM CELEBRATIONS!** - Sunday, May 22 at 9 & 11am services - In the Bible there are lots of stories of folks who have surrendered their lives to Jesus and then get baptized, often immediately following their surrender. Not only is getting baptized an important next step in our obedience to Christ, but it's also a public proclamation of your decision to follow Jesus and a celebration of your joining God's family. God often does amazing things in response to our obedience, and as people have baptized we've seen them experience freedom, healing, and a deeper understanding and assurance of what Jesus is doing in their lives. If you're a new follower of Jesus, we would love to celebrate and support you in your baptism! For more information go to [www.duluthvineyard.org/baptism](http://www.duluthvineyard.org/baptism).

**EMOTIONALLY FOCUSED: FOUNDATION** - June 3 and 4 from 8:30am to 5pm - This two-day intensive helps us dive into our journey of personal transformation. Sometimes we don't understand why we struggle to show up and be the authentic person that God wants us to be in our family and day to day relationships. Emotionally Focused: Foundation helps us look at times and places in our lives that have shaped us and still affect us years later. As we grow in self-awareness we can learn to turn off some of the automatic responses that lead to fear, anger, habitual sin, anxiety, and so much more. Learning that we've developed self-protection as a way to feel safe in so many situations, allows us the opportunity to trust God more. Believing who he says we are made to be and receiving his love and acceptance changes us forever to become a calm peaceful presence in all our interactions. Join us for Emotionally Focused: Foundation to begin your transformation journey of a lifetime! Sign up online.

**5TH GRADE GRADUATION** - Sunday, June 5 at 3pm at Adventure Zone - We are having a party to celebrate 5th graders making the move from Club45 to our junior high ministry, the Well. We'll have pizza, talk about the transition from Vineyard Kids to the Well, pray for each of the students, and play so much laser tag. Graduating 5th graders will play games with their Club45 teachers while parents/guardians will have a chance to chat about our junior high ministry with Well leaders. Parents/guardians, you're invited to come to this event with your student. Register online. Contact Becca if you have questions at 218.525.3462 or [beastvold@duluthvineyard.org](mailto:beastvold@duluthvineyard.org).

# SERVING OUR CITY STEPS

BRINGING THE KINGDOM OF GOD

**BLESSING OF THE BIKES** - Sunday, May 29 - We're throwing a big party and praying for safety for the bikers in our community at our Blessing of the Bikes event! Do you want to get involved and be a part of it all? Come make some delicious barbecue as part of our kitchen team, help direct traffic on the parking team, or pray for the riders, if you've been trained as part of our prayer team. Want to do something else? We're sure we can find a good fit for you. If you're interested, reach out to us at [info@duluthvineyard.org](mailto:info@duluthvineyard.org) or 218.525.3462.

**OPEN CALL FOR A SUMMER SHOW** - Deadline June 1 - The past couple of years have been quite difficult, to say the least, for many, if not all of us. We're inviting our artists to give us a glimpse of how their own processes of engaging and expressing creativity have helped them throughout this pandemic. How has your work, your creative expression helped you to process what you were going through; we'd love to see how making art has helped you connect to God and to one another during the past couple of years.

Connecting with God through the experiences of creative artistic expression have always been a high value for us at the Vineyard. We love having our gallery space filled with inspiring and challenging work from artists in our community throughout the year. We often offer classes and workshops designed to help you connect with God and others while learning artistic skills. You can submit your pieces for consideration by dropping them off during weekend services or regular office hours by June 1. Your art should be ready to hang and come with a short description of how encountering God through creativity has helped you during this season. Have questions or want more information? Email us at [info@duluthvineyard.org](mailto:info@duluthvineyard.org).

**PROJECT TIMOTHY** - July 21-24 - The apostle Paul wrote to a young pastor named Timothy and instructed him, "Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in conduct, in love, in faith and in purity." Project Timothy is a four day event designed to invest, train, and equip High School students in the Midwest North region for a life of leadership empowered by God's Holy Spirit. Student applications are now being accepted. Apply at [Vineyardusa.org](http://Vineyardusa.org). If you're interested in partnering with the vision of equipping students through Project Timothy, we invite you to help by preparing meals over the week or by offering up some space in your home for students and youth leaders to stay. Contact Steph Bremer at [sbremer@duluthvineyard.org](mailto:sbremer@duluthvineyard.org) for more information.

**PRISON MINISTRY** - Looking for a meaningful way to serve in ministry from home? We're looking for a few more folks to serve as sermon transcribers for our prison mailing ministry team! Each week this team transcribes the weekend's message and mails it out to over 300 inmates who have requested weekly sermons for their encouragement and spiritual growth. Transcribing the weekend's sermon is a great way to dive even deeper into the message as you transcribe it while also getting to make the sermon accessible to the inmates we get to serve! Transcription volunteers transcribe about one sermon per month and can do it all from home by accessing the sermon audio online or through our podcast app. Interested? Email us at [prisonministry@duluthvineyard.org](mailto:prisonministry@duluthvineyard.org) for more info!

**FRUIT OF THE VINE FOOD SHELF** - Worship and Compassion are two foundational pillars of our church. The Fruit of the Vine food shelf is one way that we as a church get to express the beautiful compassion of Jesus. We value creating a warm and hospitable environment where everyone is welcome. If you are in need of food or know someone who is, please direct them to our food shelf!

We would love to have you join us in this ministry. We distribute about a week's worth of food at each visit including fresh produce, dairy, meat, canned items, hygiene products, and more. We also have a free Clothing Closet and Women's Hygiene Closet open at the same time as the food shelf.

Our volunteers assist with shopping, providing a friendly smile, and often get to pray for guest needs. In addition, other volunteer opportunities include food home deliveries, restocking, unloading food delivery trucks, and our prison ministries. Distributions are Saturdays from 9:30-11:30am and Tuesdays from 6-8pm for in-person shopping and Produce Giveaways on the 4th Friday of the month from 9:30-10:30am. Interested in learning more or serving with Fruit of the Vine? Contact us at [fotv@duluthvineyard.org](mailto:fotv@duluthvineyard.org) or 218.525.3462.

**SOUND & TECH** - Each week, we're able to reach people all over the world with the love of Jesus through our online and in-person services and our connection and discipleship events. This means we have tons of behind the scenes opportunities to serve through running the sound board, controlling slides, operating our recording camera, and leading production of our livestream services. If this sounds like something you'd be good at or if it's an area you'd like to learn more about, we'd love to train you and have you join our sound and tech team! Email Rachel at [rriefenberg@duluthvineyard.org](mailto:rriefenberg@duluthvineyard.org) or call 218.525.3462 to learn more.



There's nothing more satisfying than doing something that comes naturally to us, even if it might be a little bit of work. At times, it's like we're playing.

Find ways to volunteer in our Volunteer Guide or online.

[duluthvineyard.org/serve](http://duluthvineyard.org/serve)



Everything we do at the Vineyard church, all of our activities are centered around one thing: making disciples of Jesus. It's the last thing he told his disciples to do. Each of the gospels records this a bit differently, but they all aim towards this point; each of us are to be students of Jesus, learning from him how to live the lives he has given to us. So for us, everything we do is aimed at this one goal. This one not-so-simple goal of discipleship.

Here's one of the passages where Jesus lays this out for us...

Matthew 28:18-20 (NIV) — “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

He's the one with the authority, and he's directing us, as his disciples, to go to people of every ethnicity, every nationality, and actually help make them into students of himself. It's a pretty audacious request...an actual command, if you will. Based off of this we see ourselves as a community of disciples of Jesus who are all intent on helping others become disciples. The Vineyard isn't just a church that provides a cool weekend religious experience; we are a community of people committed to obeying everything Christ told us to do. Helping others become disciples of Jesus is a very big part of what he's told us to do. This is something for every follower of Christ, every single Christian; it's not just a command for a few of our leaders. I believe Jesus is inviting and empowering every one of us to be involved in helping others to follow Christ with our whole lives.

There are a few things that make this difficult for many of us, a few things we need to pay attention to. I'd like to highlight a couple of the difficulties and give us a few practical steps toward walking this out.

First of all, it's easy to find ourselves functioning from a place of theory rather than actual personal experience. Following Jesus is

meant to happen in our real, messier-than-expected everyday lives. In our culture, it's easier to get caught up with espousing sweet sounding theories about following Christ, then to become vulnerable with our real lives. I get it. We want to look like we've got at least a couple things figured out! Or we want to talk about different approaches to this for as long as possible before we actually begin to meet with and invest in someone's life. Keeping this in the theory stage may save us from the various fears we experience, but we'll also lose out on participating with what God is doing.

I'd encourage you to lean into your own relationship with God and just begin to meet with a couple people on a regular basis and talk about what God is doing in your life, what you're learning from the scriptures, and take time to pray for and encourage one another. It doesn't have to be too fancy. But you do have to simply begin if you want to take Jesus' command seriously. Who do you have in your life that might be willing to meet with you and dive into this?

The second thing that makes this difficult is that we often confuse information about God with an experience. It's often easy to structure our lives in a way that we make little room to actually experience the presence of God. We can get into a habit of only asking God to bless our plans, without ever consulting him about what our plans should include. Through the presence of the Holy Spirit, God makes himself personally present to each of us. Learning to adjust your day to make room to experience God's presence is key for each of us. For years I've used the practice of a spiritual examen interspersed throughout the day to make room in this way, pausing to ask myself a few questions in prayer, and to notice where and how I've been aware of God's presence. The pause, the repetition, and the curiosity has worked to increase my awareness significantly.

Here's a simple outline I've used for a few of the past years as I pause at the beginning, in the middle, and at the end of each day...

I transition into this time with God in the middle of my day: I become aware of the love with which God looks upon me as I begin this

examen. I slow down and notice my breathing, how my body feels, and what's going on around me.

**Step One - Gratitude.** I note the gifts that God's love has given me this day, and I give thanks to God for them. It could be a meal, or a friend, or even just the color of the sky.

**Step Two - Petition.** I ask God for an insight and a strength that will make this examen a work of grace, fruitful beyond my human capacity alone. I'm not trying to make something happen here in my own strength.

**Step Three - Review.** With my God, I review my day so far. I look for the stirrings in my heart and the thoughts that God has given me this day. I look also for those that have not been of God. I review my choices in response to both and throughout the day in general.

**Step Four - Forgiveness.** I ask for the healing touch of the forgiving God who, with love and respect for me, removes my heart's burdens.

**Step Five - Renewal.** I look to the following period or day and, with God, plan concretely how to live it in accord with God's loving desire for my life.

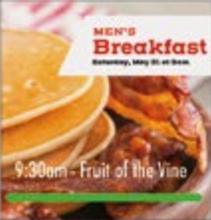
**Transition.** Aware of God's presence with me, I prayerfully conclude this examen.

This kind of examen is a way of being regularly available to God so that his divine presence and love can heal my darkness and point the way toward spiritual growth. So much can change when I am open every day to hearing God's voice in this way. In this simple way, I'm no longer just theorizing about my relationship with God, I'm actually practicing it throughout the day. I hope this is as helpful to you as it has been to me.

I'll cover a few more points here throughout the year. Stay tuned!

Peace to you,

Michael Gatlin, Senior Pastor

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
 <p>7pm - Fully Engaged</p> <p>2</p>	<p>6pm - Alpha 6pm - Fruit of the Vine</p> <p>3</p>	<p>6:30pm - Leadership Basics 7pm - Emerge (Sr. High) 7pm - Book Club with Michael Gotlin</p> <p>4</p>	 <p>9:30am - Fruit of the Vine</p> <p>5</p>		<p>7</p>	
<p>11am - Child Dedications</p> <p>8</p>	<p>7pm - Fully Engaged</p> <p>9</p>	<p>6pm - Alpha 6pm - Fruit of the Vine</p> <p>10</p>	<p>6:30pm - Leadership Basics 7pm - Emerge (Sr. High)</p> <p>11</p>	<p>6pm - Learning to Pray Like Jesus</p> <p>12</p>	<p>13</p>	<p>9:30am - Fruit of the Vine 10am - HLI Graduation</p> <p>14</p>
<p>5:30pm - Welcome to the Vineyard </p> <p>15</p>	<p>7pm - Fully Engaged</p> <p>16</p>	<p>6pm - Fruit of the Vine 6:30pm - Small Group Leader Training</p> <p>17</p>	<p>6:30pm - Leadership Basics 7pm - Emerge (Sr. High)</p> <p>18</p>	<p>6:30pm - Baptism Class 6:30pm - VineyardKids Baptism Class</p> <p>19</p>	<p>20</p>	 <p>9:30am - Fruit of the Vine</p>
<p><b>Baptism Celebrations</b></p>  <p>22</p>	<p>23</p>	<p>6pm - Fruit of the Vine</p> <p>24</p>	<p>6:30pm - Leadership Basics 7pm - Emerge (Sr. High)</p> <p>25</p>	<p>26</p>	<p>9:30am - FOTV Fresh Produce Giveaway</p> <p>27</p>	<p>9:30am - Fruit of the Vine</p> <p>28</p>
 <p>3pm - 5th Grade Graduation</p> <p>5</p>	<p>Vineyard Offices Closed</p> <p>30</p>	<p>6pm - Fruit of the Vine</p> <p>31</p>	<p>6:30pm - Jr &amp; Sr. High Summer Beach Night 6:30pm - Leadership Basics 7pm - Book Club with Michael Gotlin Summer Show Artwork Submission Deadline</p> <p>1</p>	<p>2</p>	 <p>9:30am - Fruit of the Vine</p> <p>4</p>	
<p>3pm - 5th Grade Graduation</p> <p>5</p>	<p>6</p>	<p>6pm - Fruit of the Vine</p> <p>7</p>	<p>7pm - Emerge (Sr. High)</p> <p>8</p>	<p>9</p>	<p>10</p>	<p>9:30am - Fruit of the Vine</p> <p>11</p>
<p>12</p>	<p>13</p>	<p>6pm - Fruit of the Vine</p> <p>14</p>	<p>7pm - Emerge (Sr. High)</p> <p>15</p>	<p>16</p>	<p>17</p>	<p>9:30am - Fruit of the Vine</p> <p>18</p>
<p>19</p>	<p>20</p>	<p>6pm - Fruit of the Vine</p> <p>21</p>	<p>7pm - Emerge (Sr. High)</p> <p>22</p>	<p>23</p>	 <p>9:30am - FOTV Fresh Produce Giveaway</p> <p>9:30am - Fruit of the Vine 6pm - Night of Worship</p> <p><b>HIGH SCHOOL CAMPOUT</b> FRIDAY, JUNE 24 &amp; SATURDAY, JUNE 25</p>	
<p>26</p>	<p>27</p>	<p>6pm - Fruit of the Vine</p> <p>28</p>	<p>7pm - Emerge (Sr. High)</p> <p>29</p>	<p>30</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>9:30am - Fruit of the Vine</p> <p>2</p>