

PARTNERSHIP CLASS PACKET

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WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

Hi!

Thanks for deciding to take part in our Partnership Class! We hope that this class and packet will help you as you consider whether or not Veritas is “home” for you, a place where you can advance the gospel and be cared for as you seek to leverage your life to spread the fame of Jesus.

Getting plugged in/connected at a local church can be difficult, intimidating and frustrating, and we want to try to make things a little easier for you.

Here are steps that we think would be helpful (in no particular order).

ATTEND SUNDAY GATHERINGS

It's tough to know everything about a church in a week. We'd encourage you to gather with us on Sunday mornings for at least six weeks to figure out what Veritas is all about.

JOIN A COMMUNITY GROUP

We believe that the church isn't a building or an event, but a people. If all you experience at Veritas is our Sunday gathering, you're missing out on a significant part of the life of Veritas. Community groups are the primary avenue through which discipleship/fellowship/mission will flow. These are smaller groups of people who meet together to do life together, disciple and encourage one another, and serve their neighborhood and city together.

A side note about Community Groups: Give a few of them a try. If one group doesn't work out for some reason, another probably will. Group leaders aren't going to be offended if you find a different group. What's important to us is that you're “doing life” with a group of folks.

SERVE ON A SERVICE TEAM

Our passion is to equip the body (you) to fulfill the work of ministry (Eph. 4:12). It takes a lot of people to make Sundays work at Veritas and we need all hands on deck. We need folks who will help with parking, greet people as they walk in the door, help first time guests get connected, help set up before the service and tear down after, help to make sure production and audio/visual goes smoothly, help our kids meet Jesus, and folks who will ensure everything is done in a safe and secure way.

PRACTICE GENEROUS GIVING

Money is a sore subject in our society because so many church leaders talk about it in an unhealthy way. Giving is a way that we respond generously to the greatness of Jesus. As followers of Jesus, it is our joy to give generously to the mission of God so more people meet Jesus. You can find out more information about giving and how to set it up here: veritasfayetteville.com/give

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BECOME A PARTNER AT VERITAS

Our hope is that everyone who attends a Sunday Worship Gathering or Community Group at Veritas would move from being a first time attender to a fully involved Partner (what we call membership) at Veritas. Partnership is a huge deal for us. We believe that every follower of Jesus is called to belong to a local body of believers and partnership is how we carry that out at Veritas.

WE EXIST FOR THE FAME OF JESUS

You'll hear this all the time. This really is the goal of our church. Everything that we do is for the fame of Jesus and to come alongside each other as we love God, love people, and advance the gospel.

We have worked hard to make this Partnership packet as clear and as helpful as possible for you. We are praying for you and are grateful for you.

For the fame of Jesus,

The Staff and Elders of Veritas Church

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CONTACT INFORMATION AND LEADERSHIP AT VERITAS

VERITAS CHURCH

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DEACONS

- Anna Barnoski | Deacon of Women's Discipleship
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WHAT ARE COMMUNITY GROUPS?

Community Groups are smaller groups of 10-20 folks who meet during the week to do life together, to share meals together, to pray together, to study the Bible together, to confess sin together, and to be on mission together. Community Groups are a place to know others and to be known, a place to follow Jesus and help others follow Jesus. We hope that everyone who calls Veritas home will be a part of a Community Group.

Veritas Community Groups follow a rhythm of a three month term followed by a month of rest where groups take a break from the regular activities of the church to remember that God is in control. Our months of rest are April, August, and December. A sample meeting schedule would commonly look like this:

We desire that everyone who calls Veritas Church home would be known, be cared for, and grow as a follower of Jesus by being a part of a Community Group.

To see a full list of our Veritas Community Groups (and a google map of where they are), please visit veritasfayetteville.com/community-groups

SERVICE TEAMS

One of the things you'll hear over and over again as you continue to hang out at Veritas is that the gospel creates family. By the grace of God, we have been adopted into the family of God through the sacrificial life, death and resurrection of Jesus. The local church is an expression of that family. We want to operate as a family at Veritas.

In a household, everyone has chores. There is stuff that has to get done around the house for things to continue to operate smoothly. Veritas is no different and we need you as a part of the family to jump in and serve with us so that other folks can hear the life-changing message of the gospel: Jesus in our place.

Amazingly, aside from biblical church leadership, biblical preaching and practicing baptism and communion, there are very few direct instructions about how a church must be run in the New Testament. Instead, there is one pervasive theme: Christ-followers should be active, life-giving members of their local churches.

The goal of all of our Service Teams is simple: We want to remove barriers to people hearing about Jesus.

We want to challenge everyone who considers Veritas home to take a step and get involved in serving in some way. We've listed all of our service teams below and want to challenge you to begin serving on one of the teams. If you are interested in serving on one of the teams listed below, please email travis@veritasfayetteville.com.

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SETUP/TEARDOWN

This is a team of volunteers that work together as a unit to setup, manage, and teardown everything for the Sunday service. They arrive before the service starts to get everything ready for Sunday worship, stay afterward to breakdown all of our equipment, and store it away to do it again the next Sunday.

PRODUCTION

Are you more technically minded? Several people are behind the scenes at every gathering, adjusting the lighting, adjusting the sound, and advancing the slides. All of these are crucial roles that, if handled well, go almost completely unnoticed. We call these people the AVL Team (Audio, Visual, Lighting). Also, we have a plurality of bands at Veritas that serve the congregation by leading them in singing during corporate worship.

VERITAS BAND

The Veritas Band is made up of multiple bands that serve the congregation by leading them in music during corporate worship.

FIRST IMPRESSIONS TEAM

The very first faces that greet our new guests are those of our first impressions team volunteers. The First Impressions volunteers serve our new guests, by greeting them as they find their way to our corporate worship gatherings. Team members also open doors, answer questions, and all-in-all help newcomers and partners feel at home.

VERITASKIDS

Do you enjoy teaching the Gospel to kids? Or can you help keep kids from coloring on the walls? If that's you, we would love to invite you into pointing the kids to Jesus in VeritasKids! Our hope is that we can come alongside families to create a safe place for kids to be known, loved, and cared for while being trained to love God, love people, and to tell others about Jesus.

USHER TEAM

The Usher Team helps to run Sunday morning gatherings by overseeing seating, communion, and giving. Ushers help create a welcoming atmosphere in the worship gathering by welcoming guests and assisting with gathering needs.

PARKING TEAM

Parking Team volunteers are friendly faces who help newcomers and families safely park and enter the building.

SAFETY TEAM

This team helps to provide a safe, distraction-free environment for Sunday worship.

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LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS, CHURCH PLANTS, AND AFFILIATIONS

In Matthew 28, Jesus gave his disciples the great commission: Go tell everyone what I've done. The normal pattern of the early church was to plant churches. That is how they advanced the gospel. Paul said in Ephesians 3 that it was through the local church that God would make the gospel known to the world. The local church is God's plan A, there is no plan B.

We want to partner with others to plant churches all over the world as we seek to spread the fame of Jesus in Fayetteville, North Carolina, near other military bases, and to the ends of the earth. At least 10% of our budget goes to local partnerships who meet needs in our city, as well as church plants around the world.

We plant churches at Veritas. You know what's cool about that? If you go through partnership and become a part of the family at Veritas Church, that means YOU plant churches!

Below you can find a list of the local partnerships, church planting initiatives, and affiliations we have as a church.

LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS

We love this city and we demonstrate that by supporting, serving, and giving towards local efforts to reach others with the gospel. These organization have an excellent track record of not only serving the practical needs of this city, but also doing so for the fame of Jesus.

- Habitat for Humanity - <http://www.fayettevillenchabitat.org>
- Operation Inasmuch - <http://www.operationinasmuch.org>

CHURCH PLANTING INITIATIVES

We have a few church planting initiatives that we support globally. These families spend their time reaching others with the gospel with the aim of raising up church planters among unreached people groups. Below is the list of churches and church planters we pray for and financially support.

Agape Baptist Church, Dan Crane (commissioned and sent from Veritas), George, South Africa
Pillar Okinawa, John Ransom, Okinawa, Japan
Redeemer Al-Ain, John Norris, Al-Ain Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates

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PARTNERSHIP IN A LOCAL CHURCH

WHAT IS THE CHURCH?

The Church is the true community of all true believers for all time. The church is made up of all the men and women who have been, are, or ever will be true believers in Jesus.

That means the Church is not a place or a building. It's not an event. It's not a service club or loose affiliation of people who hold roughly the same beliefs.

Paul makes this clear when he writes, "Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her" (Ephesians 5:25). Again, "the church" that Paul refers to isn't just the church or members of the church in Ephesus. It's everyone that Jesus died to redeem.

UNIVERSAL & LOCAL

This means Veritas Church isn't the only true church in the history of the church. It also means Veritas Church isn't the only true church in Fayetteville. All true believers, no matter when or where they lived, make up the true church.

Yet, we have local churches. This isn't anything new. When Jesus left earth for heaven, he gave the apostles a basic mission: Take the good news of the gospel to the ends of the earth. The book of Acts tells us the apostles carried out that mission by starting local churches everywhere they went.

Therefore, it's helpful to realize that when you talk about the church, you can talk about the universal church and the local church. The universal church is the community of all true believers for all time. The local church is a particular group of Christians who gather together.

Veritas Church is a local church.

VISIBLE & INVISIBLE

It's also helpful to realize when you talk about the church, you can also talk about both the visible and the invisible church.

Because we cannot see the spiritual condition of people's hearts, the true, universal church, in its spiritual reality as the true community of all true believers for all time, is invisible. Only God can see the condition of people's hearts. As Paul says in 2 Timothy 2:19, "The Lord knows who are his." The invisible church is the church as God sees it.

But the church is also visible. When you come to a Sunday gathering, you see people that make up Veritas, a local church. The visible church is the church as people see it.

Again, the Church is the true community of all true believers for all time. That community has always had local, visible expressions of what has always been a universal, invisible reality.

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JESUS'S CHURCH, JESUS'S RULES

The Apostle Paul said that Jesus obtained the church “with his own blood” (Acts 20:28). Jesus didn’t shed his blood for a building or a service club. He didn’t die for an event. He died for “a people for his own possession” (Titus 1:14).

The Church belongs to Jesus. Veritas Church is Jesus’ church. Therefore, Veritas Church must do everything it can to operate in accordance with Jesus’ commands.

Traditionally, many Church scholars have agreed that there are two major activities (or “marks”) that Jesus set for every church to exhibit in order to be considered a true, local church: correct preaching from the Bible and correct administration of the sacraments.

THE BIBLE

The first mark of a true church is the correct preaching from the Bible. This has less to do with the form of the sermons and more to do with the content of the sermons. The sermons need to consistently contain doctrine that is found in the Bible. It needs to clearly contain the true gospel message of salvation by faith alone. This isn’t to say that there is a checklist of things that need to be in every sermon, but instead that the sermons need to follow what the Bible clearly teaches.

Veritas Church is committed to teaching what is in the Bible in the sermons preached each Sunday and in the gospel message that is communicated. This is because we believe that the Old and New Testaments, in their entirety, constitute the written word of God and therefore are without error. They were written by men through the inspiration of the Holy Spirit and are fully authoritative in all matters for Jesus’ followers.

God speaks through Scripture. Through Scripture, God tells us who he is and what he wants us to do.

Veritas Church is committed to teaching what is in the Bible because we believe in the authority, clarity, necessity, and sufficiency of the Bible.

When we say we believe in the authority of the Bible, we mean that all the words in the Bible are God’s words. As we read in 2 Timothy 3:16, “all Scripture is breathed out by God.” Therefore, to believe them is to believe God himself. To obey them is to obey God himself. To disbelieve them is to disbelieve God himself. To disobey them is to disobey God himself.

If God claims the words of Scripture are his own, then there is ultimately no higher authority one can appeal to for proof of this claim than Scripture itself. There is no higher authority than God himself.

When we say we believe in the clarity of the Bible, we mean that the Bible is written in such a way that all things necessary to become a Christian, live as a Christian, and grow as a Christian are clear. Though there are some parts of the Bible that are harder to understand than others (2 Peter 3:16), that shouldn’t dissuade us from reading, studying, or listening to teaching on the

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Bible. For, “the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple” (Psalm 19:7) and “the unfolding” of God’s “words gives light; it imparts understanding to the simple” (Psalm 119:130).

When we say we believe in the necessity of the Bible, we mean that without the Bible we could not know what it means to become a Christian, live as a Christian, and grow as a Christian. We need to read the Bible and listen to others teach the Bible in order to know God and know what he wants us to do. Paul hints at this when he asks how anyone can hear about becoming a Christian “without someone preaching” (Romans 10:14). For, he writes, “faith comes from hearing, and hearing through the word of Christ” (Romans 10:17).

In addition, the Bible is our only source for clear and definite statements about God’s will. While God has not revealed all aspects of his will to us, there are many aspects of his will revealed to us through the Scriptures, “that we may do all the words of his law” (Deuteronomy 29:29).

When we say we believe in the sufficiency of the Bible, we mean that the Bible contains all the words of God that a person needs to become a Christian, live as a Christian, and grow as a Christian. In the Bible, God has given us instructions that equip us for “every good work” that he wants us to do (2 Timothy 3:16-17).

This should encourage us to search through the Bible to try to find what God would have us think about a certain issue or do in a certain situation. While the Bible will not directly answer every questions we can think up, it will provide us with the guidance we need “for every good work” (2 Timothy 3:17). When we don’t find the specific answer to a specific question in the Bible, we are not free to add to the commands of Scripture with what we believe might be helpful or pragmatically correct. We can’t consider our own preferences or convictions to have the same authority as Scripture. And we shouldn’t place any modern revelations, leadings, or other forms of guidance we believe to be from God on par with Scripture.

THE SACRAMENTS (ORDINANCES)

The second mark of a true church is the correct administration of the sacraments: baptism and the communion (sometimes called the Lord’s Supper). These ordinances are means of making our allegiance to Christ and his church visible through our symbolic action. To be baptized is to identify ourselves with the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, as well as to identify our union with Christ’s death and resurrection (Matt. 28:19; Rom. 6:3-5). To receive the Lord’s Supper is to proclaim his death and our membership in his body (1 Cor. 11:26-29; Matt. 26:26-29). God wants his people to be known and set apart. These ordinances serve as a visible reminder as a separation between Jesus’ church and the world.

The sacraments are means of grace—an outward means by which Jesus communicates to his people the truths of redemption. As St. Augustine wrote, a sacrament is a “visible form of an invisible grace.” Sacraments reinforce the content of the gospel, but people can be saved without sacraments. We believe there are two sacraments: baptism and the communion.

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BAPTISM

If you read the book of Acts, you will find baptism is the normal response to people becoming followers of Jesus. In the early church, baptism was a purification ritual. To be submerged in water and then brought back up was a sign that you were washed clean. It was also an act of repentance. When we are baptized today, it is symbolic repentance. We are saying that the work of Jesus to free humanity from sin has freed us as well. In actuality, we are being submerged with Jesus in His death and raised with Him in His life.

Baptism is also an outward confession of our beliefs—a sign of faith. It is a way to announce to the world that we are dedicated to God's will and to His ministry. This is the reason Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist, a mere man. Through this act, He demonstrated to the world in a practical way His commitment to God and our salvation. Therefore, we, too, are baptized as a sign to the world that we are followers of Jesus.

To become a partner at Veritas Church, you must be a baptized follower of Jesus. Veritas practices credo-baptism meaning that a person is baptized on the basis of his or her ability to articulate the Gospel and profess faith in Jesus Christ. Covenantal Baptism is an open-handed issue at Veritas. If you were baptized as a child and believe in Covenantal theology, there is no need to be baptized again to be a partner here.

COMMUNION (THE 'LORD'S SUPPER')

Before he died on the cross, Jesus instituted what we call the communion, or the Lord's Supper, as a way to prepare his disciples for his death and resurrection. He broke bread and gave it to them as a means of explaining that his body would be broken for their sin. He took a cup and gave it to them as a means of explaining that his blood would be shed for their sin.

He encouraged believers to continue to take this meal together to remember his death and resurrection. So when we eat the bread and drink from the cup we are reminded that Jesus' body was broken and his blood was shed for our sin.

Jesus loves us and gave himself for us. He invites us to remember this when we take communion together. We invite Jesus' followers to take communion together each week during our worship gatherings.

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LEADERSHIP IN THE LOCAL CHURCH

Veritas Church is Jesus' church. Therefore, we want our leadership structure to follow what Jesus laid out in the Scriptures. The primary elements of this structure include an understanding of the active leadership role of Jesus in the local church, qualified and competent male elders, and male and female deacons. To sum up everything below, at Veritas, we are Jesus-ruled, elder-led, deacon-served and congregationally responsible.

JESUS IS THE SENIOR PASTOR OF THE CHURCH

The key to understanding the church (Ecclesiology) is the Gospel (Christology). If who Jesus is and what He has done is not exceptionally clear and practically integrated into the church, then eventually the church will become very sick.

Jesus Christ is the senior pastor who leads the church.

"When the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away."

(1 Peter 5:4)

Jesus Christ is the head of the church.

"Jesus Christ is the Head, from whom the whole body, supported and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows as God causes it to grow."

(Colossians 2:19)

Jesus Christ grows and builds the church.

"I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it."

(Matthew 16:18)

Jesus Christ's presence leaves a church for becoming faithless and/or fruitless.

"Remember the height from which you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lamp stand from its place."

(Revelation 2:5)

ELDERS ARE THE SENIOR LEADERS UNDER JESUS

Anyone who is interested in the topic of elders would do well to read through the books of 1 & 2 Timothy and Titus, which Paul wrote to instruct these men on how to govern the church and appoint elders and deacons. In the book of Acts, we see the church beginning to form its structure, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit. In Acts 6, the apostles call out a group of men to oversee the distribution of food to the poor, because the apostles needed to be devoted to prayer and to the ministry of the word. This is the beginning of the structuring as elders and deacons. Elders would emerge as those called to the ministry of prayer and word, and deacons as the lead servants in the community.

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QUALIFICATION OF ELDERS

1 Timothy 3:1-7 lays out the expectations of elders:

“The saying is trustworthy: If anyone aspires to the office of overseer, he desires a noble task. Therefore an overseer must be above reproach, the husband of one wife, sober-minded, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not a drunkard, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own household well, with all dignity keeping his children submissive, for if someone does not know how to manage his own household, how will he care for God’s church? He must not be a recent convert, or he may become puffed up with conceit and fall into the condemnation of the devil. Moreover, he must be well thought of by outsiders, so that he may not fall into disgrace, into a snare of the devil.” (1 Timothy 3:1-7.)

The elder qualifications listed in 1 Timothy 3:1-7 and Titus 1:5-9 are virtually identical and are the basic criteria that should be expected of any man being considered for eldership. The following are taken from.

Relation to God:

- A man — masculine leader
- Above reproach — without any character defect
- Able to teach — effective Bible communicator
- Not a new convert — mature Christian

Relation to Family:

- Husband of one wife — one-woman man, sexually pure
- Creates Gospel environment — where children can find salvation
- Manages family well — provides for, leads, organizes, loves

Relation to Self:

- Temperate — mentally and emotionally stable
- Self-controlled — disciplined life of sound decision-making
- Not given to drunkenness — without addictions
- Not a lover of money — financially content and upright

Relation to Others:

- Respectable — worth following and imitating
- Hospitable — welcomes strangers, especially non-Christians for evangelism
- Not violent — even-tempered
- Gentle — kind, gracious, loving
- Not contentious — peaceable, not quarrelsome/divisive
- Good reputation with outsiders — respected by non-Christians
- Exemplary lifestyle

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DUTIES OF ELDERS

The duties of elders are many, according to Scripture, and include the following:

- Prayer and Scripture study (Acts 6:4)
- Ruling/leading the church (1 Timothy 5:17)
- Managing the church (1 Timothy 3:4-5)
- Caring for people in the church (1 Peter 5:2-3)
- Giving account to God for the church (Hebrews 13:17)
- Rightly using the authority God has given them (2 Corinthians 10:8, 13:10, Titus 2:5)
- Preaching (1 Timothy 5:17)
- Praying for the sick (James 5:13-15)
- Teaching sound doctrine and refuting false teachings (Ephesians 4:11, 1 Timothy 3:2, Titus 1:9)
- Working hard (1 Thessalonians 5:12)
- Rightly using money (1 Peter 5:1-3)
- Spiritually Disciplined (Matthew 18:15-20)

INSTALLATION OF ELDERS

The New Testament instructs churches to install elders and deacons who lead the church while allowing freedom to set up the functionality of leadership in the manner most helpful for that local body. At Veritas, our elders do not have specific term-limits of service nor are they voted in by a democratic system. We function in this manner because we believe the call of an elder is to pastor the church—not serve on a board of directors. Our elders are men called by God to be pastors of our body. For this reason, the training of an elder is lengthy in hopes to have properly called and empowered men, who love Jesus through His church.

What is the Relationship between Deacons and Elders?

- Deacons serve under the authority of the elders as the lead ministers of the community.
- Deacons are the front-line ministers under the elders/pastors.

As ministry work grows, elders call upon men and women to carry the ministry load. This allows the elders to focus on their primary responsibilities of preaching the Gospel and prayer, enabling them to better serve the local body of Jesus. From Acts 6:1-7, a simple model emerges; as the ministry loads of senior leaders increase, the leaders are free to appoint people to aid them however they see fit. Practically, deacons are helpers to the elders, leading by the works appointed to them. A deacon's responsibilities are not described in Scripture because deacons serve in whatever capacity is needed. However, the qualifications and rewards of deacons are provided in Scripture (1 Timothy 3:8-13). These qualifications are more about character than abilities, allowing deacons to care for and serve others just as Jesus, the greatest servant of all, did. Following the pattern of Acts 6, Veritas Church's elders appoint lead deacons to oversee ministries where they have the freedom to appoint deacons to assist the

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lead deacons. Adhering to Scripture (Romans 16:1-2, Philippians 4:2-3, Acts 6:1-7), deacons at Veritas are comprised of both godly men and godly women who love the Lord. The issue of women serving as deacons in the local church is often a debated topic. We see clear examples of women serving as deacons throughout Scripture (Romans 16:1-2, Philippians 4:2-3). Veritas has had and will always have vibrant, Godly women in the deacon and lead deacon roles.

QUALIFICATIONS OF DEACONS

1 Timothy 3:8-13 lays out the expectations of deacons:

“Deacons likewise must be dignified, not double-tongued, not addicted to much wine, not greedy for dishonest gain. They must hold the mystery of the faith with a clear conscience. And let them also be tested first; then let them serve as deacons if they prove themselves blameless. Their wives likewise must be dignified, not slanderers, but sober-minded, faithful in all things. Let deacons each be the husband of one wife, managing their children and their own households well. For those who serve well as deacons gain a good standing for themselves and also great confidence in the faith that is in Christ Jesus.”

- Worthy of respect — without any character defect, holy
- Sincere — heartfelt, earnest, honest, authentic
- Not indulging in much wine — without addictions, self-controlled
- Not pursuing dishonest gain — not greedy, financially content and upright
- Keeping hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience — sound biblical theology held with deep conviction
- Tested — proven worthy over time

DUTIES OF DEACONS

Jesus is the perfect servant and was servant to all. The word “deacon” simply means servant; those who take on the role of deacon should be prepared to serve in ways that meet needs and reveal the Gospel. We find joy and privilege when we serve like Jesus and people see him through our actions and behavior.

INSTALLATION OF DEACONS

Veritas will host deacon trainings. The trainings are designed to teach prospective deacons, about what the bible says about the role. This training is a prerequisite to becoming a deacon at Veritas. After the training, those interested in pursuing deaconship move into a time of investigation and testing. Once this time has been completed, the prospective deacon moves into the deacon role and is celebrated in a public installation ceremony.

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WHY JOIN A CHURCH?

"If the church is a building, then we must be bricks in it; if the church is a body, then we are its members; if the church is the household of faith, it presumes we are part of that household. Sheep are in a flock and branches are on a vine. Biblically, if one is a Christian, he must be a member of a church. Leaving aside the concrete particulars for a moment --whether membership lists are kept on white cards or on computer disks--we must not forsake our regular assembling (Hebrews 10:25). This membership is not simply the record of a statement we once made or of affection toward a familiar place. It must be a reflection of a living commitment or it is worthless, and worse than worthless, it is dangerous. Uninvolved members confuse both real members and non-Christian about what it means to be a Christian. And active members do the voluntarily inactive members no service when they allow them to remain members of the church, for membership is the church's corporate endorsement of a person's salvation. Again, this must be clearly understood: membership in a church is that church's corporate testimony to the individual member's salvation."

(Mark Dever, Nine Marks of a Healthy Church)

In 2 Peter 2:10, Peter encourages every one of Jesus' followers to *"be all the more diligent to make your calling and election sure."* That means he wants us to do everything we can to assure ourselves and others that we are true followers of Jesus.

The way Jesus set up for his followers to do this is by partnership (what Veritas calls membership) in a local church. Again: *"Membership in a church is that church's corporate testimony to the individual member's salvation"* (Dever, Nine Marks of a Healthy Church).

When you join a local church, the leadership of that church affirms that they believe you are a true Christian. When you become a partner at Veritas Church, the pastors and other leaders are affirming that they believe you are a true Christian. That is why, if you haven't been baptized, you need to be baptized to join the church. For in baptism, you are publicly affirming you are a sinner and Jesus is your savior. It's why we encourage you to take communion each week. For when you take communion, you continue to proclaim that you are a sinner, and Jesus, through his life, death, and resurrection, is your only savior.

In addition, by joining a local church, you are able to obey the encouragement in Hebrews 13:17: *"Obey your leaders and submit to them, for they are keeping watch over your souls, as those who will have to give an account. Let them do this with joy and not with groaning, for that would be of no advantage to you."*

The elders at Veritas ("leaders" in Hebrews 13:17) don't consider that verse justification to be domineering or controlling, but instead as a reminder to both the elders and the partners at Veritas Church that partnership in a local church is affirmation of an individual's salvation. Therefore, the elders want to lead you in such a way that it encourages you to grow in your

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faith and continues to affirm that which we believe is true about you: You are a true follower of Jesus.

CHURCH DISCIPLINE

If you continue to unrepentantly live in a way out of line with how a true believer in Jesus is to live, the elders, as ones commanded by God to keep watch over your soul, will call you to repentance. If you are unrepentant in your sin, they will institute process of church discipline.

Church discipline has a negative connotation in our society because it has been portrayed as excommunication, but this is not the intention. We must look at the truth of Scripture and understand that the purpose of discipline has always been for renewal and restoration.

1 Corinthians 5:11-13 makes it clear that the process of accountability and discipline is to happen within the context of followers, and not those outside the church. In Matthew 18:15-17, Jesus gave us a process for addressing sin in a fellow follower's life:

"If your brother sins against you, go and tell him his fault, between you and him alone. If he listens to you, you have gained your brother. But if he does not listen, take one or two others along with you, that every charge may be established by the evidence of two or three witnesses. If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church. And if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector."

The goals of renewal and restoration must drive us to seek out the person with grace, patience, and love. The multi-step process that Jesus laid out in Matthew 18 shows us that when faced with sin, we are not to hastily write someone off, but rather pursue him or her with the love of Jesus.

This process typically starts with the person's community group leader meeting with them, and if the person needs further communication, the elders would step in to begin the gracious process of pursuing restoration. If the person is in a position of leadership, the elders will ask him or her to step down until the issue is resolved. We do this to insure that the person is able to focus on restoration and health, while we continue the mission of the church in health.

If after all efforts of renewal and restoration have been pursued the person refuses to return to a Gospel-centered life, then the elders prayerfully apply Scripture on a case by case basis to insure that they pursue the best option to maintain the health of the church and the health of that individual.

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WHAT VERITAS BELIEVES

Before joining a church, it's important to know what the church does and doesn't believe. We've summarized our beliefs below and will continue to discuss them in this class. Please read through this document before your partnership interview and let the pastor meeting with you know if you have any questions.

Why Bother With Doctrine?

We have a responsibility as the church to hold fast to the truth God revealed to us in Jesus, and to guard it from the subtle corruption of theological error.

"And from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them. Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish everyone with tears." (Acts 20:30-31)

"By the Holy Spirit who dwells within us, guard the good deposit entrusted to you." (2 Timothy 1:14)

"You therefore, beloved, knowing this beforehand, take care that you are not carried away with the error of lawless people and lose your own stability." (2 Peter 3:17)

"You shall not add to the word that I command you, nor take from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God that I command you." (Deuteronomy 4:2)

Those are simply a few examples of explicit statements within the Bible regarding guarding the truth and keeping it from error. The book of Galatians was written to guard the church from doctrinal error, and much of John's writings emphasize Jesus' nature as both fully human and fully God in response to doctrinal error. Therefore, clearly the New Testament writers themselves were concerned with doctrine in an effort to keep the church pure and to preserve the Gospel.

"But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed." (Galatians 1:8)

We are careful with doctrine because the Scriptures admonish us to be, and because we desire to guard the Gospel from being corrupted. This means that we turn to the Scriptures first and foremost, and that we trust them to be our reliable guide for salvation and for new life in Jesus. Our desire is to honor God in what He laid out in the Scriptures and not use the Gospel as a tool for manipulation.

A. We believe that God wrote the Bible, through men, without error.

The Old and New Testaments, in their entirety, constitute the written Word of God and are therefore without error in their original manuscripts. They were written by men through the

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inspiration of the Holy Spirit and are consequently fully authoritative in all matters for the follower of Jesus.

(2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21; Matthew 5:18; John 16:12-13)

B. We believe that God exists eternally in the Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

There is one God, infinite, eternal and unchangeable in His being, wisdom, power, holiness, love, justice, goodness and truth, eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. His desire is that we would know Him intimately and live a life of fulfillment through the pursuit of His glory. (Genesis 1:3, Genesis 1:26, 2 Corinthians 13:14, 1 John 1:1)

C. We believe that God the Father is the first person of the eternal, triune God.

God the Father, by means of the Son, is the creator of all things. He spoke the universe into existence, thereby creating the world out of nothing. Through His Word, He sustains all of creation. He is the king of the universe, and his sovereign purposes cannot be thwarted. He cannot lie, He keeps his covenant, and He works all things together for good for those who love Him. He is all-powerful, all-knowing, all-loving, and all wise. In His unfathomable grace, He gave his Son, Jesus Christ, in order that the world He loved might be saved. He made humanity for fellowship with Himself, and intended that all creation should live to the praise of his glory. God the Father is, therefore, the author of eternal salvation, having loved the world and having given His Son for its redemption. (Genesis 1:1, Colossians 1:16, Numbers 23:19, Deuteronomy 7:9, Romans 8:28, 1 Chronicles 29:11, Romans 11:33, John 3:16,17, 1 John 4:7-10, Ephesians 1:12)

D. We believe that Jesus Christ is the second person of the eternal, triune God who became a man, lived a sinless life, died on a cross, was buried, and physically rose from the grave to redeem sinful humanity.

He is True God of True God, begotten not made. He became human; conceived by the Holy Spirit, and born of the Virgin Mary. He made His dwelling among us, living a full life without sin. His life and His death on the cross provide the only atonement that fully satisfies the righteous requirements of God for the sinner. The death of Jesus was a full and final payment for sin – redemptive, substitutional and efficacious. The historic fact of Jesus' resurrection from the dead is a powerful witness to His deity and is humanity's ultimate hope in God. Jesus Christ will make a personal and imminent return to Earth. His return is a sanctifying "hope" which has vital bearing on the life of every Christian. (John 1:1-2, 14; Luke 1:35; Romans 3:24; 1 Peter 2:24; Ephesians 1:7; 1 Peter 1:3-5, Ephesians 2:1-10)

E. We believe that the Holy Spirit is the third person of the eternal, triune God; that the Holy Spirit is the supernatural agent in salvation, birthing all Christians into the Kingdom of God at conversion, thereby indwelling and sealing them until the day of Jesus' return.

The Holy Spirit regenerates the lost through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit is personal and divine, the third member of the Godhead. He convicts the world of sin and its consequences. He brings repentance and faith to the believer. He indwells the believer with the radical life of Jesus Christ. He gives gifts to every believer for mutual service within the body of Jesus. He unites believers in the Body of Jesus and seals them in that relationship. He bears the fruit of Christian character in the life of every believer. He guides, instructs, and empowers the believer for Godly

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living and service. He is worshipped with the Father and the Son. (John 16:8-11; 2 Corinthians 3:6; 1 Corinthians 12:12-14; Romans 8:9; Titus 3:5)

F. We believe that God created all humans in His image. He created them uniquely, male and female.

All humans are created in God's image and as such, all human life is sacred. In creating humans as male and female, God communicated His image through harmonious interpersonal relationships, equality of persons, importance of individuals and the ability to distinguish roles and authority. (Genesis 1:27)

G. We believe that all humans are sinful and in need of salvation. Salvation is the gift of God, brought to humanity by grace alone and received by personal faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Christians are kept by God's power, forever.

God has created every person in the image of God, but we have fallen into sin, and are therefore lost, and only through the life-giving regeneration by the Holy Spirit can salvation and spiritual life be obtained. All humans are sinners and face the judgment of God. The shed blood of Jesus Christ and His resurrection provide the only ground for justification. Only those who place faith in Jesus will be delivered from the wrath of God toward sin. Those who receive Jesus Christ by faith are said by Holy Scripture to be justified, sanctified, and adopted into the family of God as heirs with Jesus. There are no other means of salvation for a person aside from repentance and an honest confession of Jesus Christ as Redeemer and King. We also believe that a true Christian will persevere to the end of their life, or until Jesus returns, meaning that you cannot lose your salvation if you were genuinely saved. (Genesis 1:26-27; John 1:12, 6:37-40, 10:27-30; Romans 3:22-23, 5:12, 8:1, 38-39; 1 Corinthians 1:4-8; Ephesians 1:7; Ephesians 2:1-3, 8-10, 12-13; 1 Peter 1:3-5, 18-19)

H. We believe that the church is a spiritual organism made up of all believers everywhere for all time.

All Christians in all times and in all places have been united into a single body by an operation of God. This resultant union is called the Body of Jesus, the Universal Church. Simply put, we're not the only true church; we recognize that all who have put their faith in Jesus throughout history are part of God's true Church. (Ephesians 1:22-23, 5:25-27; 1 Corinthians 12:12-14)

I. We believe that every follower of Jesus is called to be a member of the local church and is called to recognize baptism and communion (the Lord's Supper).

Scripture commands that all Christians band together in assembly for instruction, worship, service and fellowship. These assemblies are called local churches. As a local church, Veritas embraces the rich and vibrant traditions of the Universal Church. Only those who are members of the Universal Church are eligible for membership in the local church. Baptism of responsible believers and communion are the two sacraments to be observed by the local church in the present age. These ordinances are not to be regarded as means of salvation. (Matthew 28:19-20; Acts 2:41-42; Acts 13:1-4; Acts 15:19-31; Acts 18:8; 1 Corinthians 3:9; 1 Corinthians 11:23-34)

J. We believe that Jesus is returning to earth to judge all people and to rule and reign with His saints forever.

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All people will be resurrected to give account of their lives before God. The believer in Jesus will be resurrected to everlasting blessedness and joy in the presence of God. The non-believer will be resurrected to judgment and everlasting conscious punishment. What's significant in this statement is that we as a church do not necessarily affirm any single position on Jesus' return. We do affirm what is clear biblically: that Jesus is returning, that there is a resurrection of the dead to occur and that there will be a judgment after which the believers will live in the presence of God, and non-believers will be resurrected to eternal punishment and judgment. This means we believe in hell and that we believe that it is an eternal punishment. (Zechariah 14:4-11; 1 Thessalonians 1:10; 1 Thessalonians 4:13-18; 1 Thessalonians 5:9; Revelation 3:10-12; Revelation 19:11-16; 20:1-6)

WHAT WE BELIEVE ABOUT THE GOSPEL

The Gospel is "good news." The good news is that we have done nothing to merit God's favor and yet we have received everything in response. Through the life death and resurrection of Jesus, He has accomplished everything needed to reconcile us with God. The Gospel is His free gift to us received by faith through grace. This is good news!

For many people today, the Gospel has lost its beauty. The word Gospel itself has become a church word, a judgmental word, a dead word. It is the highest hope of Veritas Church to restore the meaning of the Gospel to people. The ironic thing is this; the Gospel is the most powerful force on the planet and in reality, it has not lost any beauty, any potency or any capacity to change men and women. The perceived dullness and religiosity of the Gospel has nothing to do with the Gospel itself. The issue is on our side as we've created a religion of morality and called it "Gospel." People hate religion and Jesus hates religion. The true Gospel of Jesus has nothing to do with quaint moralism, good ethics or religious duty.

Moralism and the Gospel deal with the same issue, the issue of sin. We see sin in every aspect of our world and in every part of our lives. Rape is sin. Genocide is sin. Gossip is sin. Pride is sin. Sin is the reason there is no world peace. Sin is the systemic issue of starvation, war and all human suffering. It may seem at first, that discussing sin is judgmental. We ask, then: why not just mind your own business? Why not just forgive and forget? The beauty of the Gospel starts with this: God loves us too much to just forget our sin.

The power of sin is immense (Romans 8). The Scriptures teach us (Genesis 3, Genesis 8, Mark) that sin is not just an action that we commit, but also a condition of the soul/heart. Our sin has killed us, it has separated us from God, it actively ruins all that is good in our lives, it oppresses those we love most and degrades all human life. Sin is ultimately death and it plagues every human who has ever lived.

The church is famous for implementing Moralism to deal with sin. Unfortunately we think that stipulating "good actions" will make "good people": don't cuss, don't drink, don't go to R rated movies, etc. Moralism unwittingly believes that if we can change the actions of men, then they will have the appearance of holiness and God will be forced to love us as we have earned His

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favor. Moralism fails to overcome sin as it only deals with surface level issues or the “actions of sin;” and never brings life to our dead hearts, which is the “condition of sin.”

The Gospel of Jesus deals with the “condition of sin.” Jesus entered into our “condition of life:” He left heaven, descended to earth, lived as a man, experienced life in every way we do, experienced all the temptations that we do, He was falsely tried in a mock court, was beaten and crucified. Jesus died a real death and in His death, He entered into our “condition of death.” A verse that we use often at Veritas Church to reflect the work of Jesus assuming our condition is 2 Corinthians 5:21: For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. The Gospel is the only thing that has the power to change our hearts, in that Jesus became what we were, overcoming our “sin condition of death” with His own death and now, in His resurrection, we can have life “in His resurrected condition.”

The Gospel says, you are more flawed and lost than you ever dared believe, yet you can be more accepted and loved than you ever dared hope because Jesus lived and died in your place. The Gospel says God first loved you and gave His son for you. The Gospel says there is nothing you can do to earn the favor of the Lord but He, in His sovereign beauty, has chosen to give you Life again. The Gospel says God has done everything for you and it costs you nothing—so believe in Jesus. So we, as a church family, invite you to the feet of Jesus. We invite you to a spiritual trade: Jesus’ life for your life! Simply believing that Jesus gave His life for you, that he traded his life for your life, your death for His death and now offers you His resurrected life as your new life is the ONLY way to eternal life. This is the beauty of the Gospel and it will never be tarnished.

WHAT WE BELIEVE ABOUT SCRIPTURE

A. How does God speak?

God speaks through Scripture. No one is born with a clear comprehension of who God is. So, in an effort to know about God, various philosophers and religious leaders have presented their speculations about God with seemingly endless and contradictory declarations. But God has chosen to lift the fog of human speculation with divine revelation. Whereas speculation is the human attempt to comprehend God, revelation is God’s communication to humanity with clarity that is otherwise impossible. The object of that revelation is the sixty-six books of Scripture.

B. What does Scripture say about Scripture?

Before arriving at a conclusive position about Scripture, it is fitting to first investigate what Scripture says about itself. If Scripture does not declare itself to be from God, without error or helpful, then it is foolish to assign attributes to Scripture that it does not claim for itself. The following is a brief selection of some of the statements Scripture makes about itself:

- Nothing to be taken from or added to (Deuteronomy 4:2; 12:32; Proverbs 30:6)

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- Effective (Isaiah 55:11)
- Pure (Psalms 12:6; 119:140)
- Perfect (Psalm 19:7)
- Precious (Psalm 19:10)
- True (Psalm 119:160; John 17:17)
- Helpful (Proverbs 6:23)
- Flawless (Proverbs 30:5)
- To be obeyed (Luke 8:21; James 1:22)
- The standard by which all teaching is to be tested (Acts 17:11)
- Faith-building (Romans 10:17)
- For everyone (Romans 16:26)
- Sin-cleansing (Ephesians 5:26; James 1:21)
- The very words of God (1 Thessalonians 2:13)
- Divinely inspired (2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:19-21)

C. Why does our view of Scripture matter?

The opening line of Scripture introduces us to its hero, God. Throughout its pages, Scripture reveals this God. In the closing line of Scripture, we are reminded that the God who is the hero of the true story of Scripture is Jesus Christ. Thus, the written Word of God reveals to us the incarnate Word of God, Jesus Christ. And without the written Word, we cannot rightly know the incarnate Word. Therefore, our view of Scripture matters because without a proper understanding of Scripture, we cannot truly know and love the real Jesus.

D. What is the purpose of Scripture?

The purpose of Scripture is to declare the story of God to his people in order that they may be saved. The apostle John explains the purpose of his own writing:

“Now Jesus did many other signs in the presence of the disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.” (John 20:30-31)

The story of God begins with God creating the universe out of nothing, and creating humanity in his image. It then tells of the fall of humankind into sin and spiritual death. However, even in Genesis, the first book of the Bible, there is a hint of what God intends to do to redeem fallen humanity. God makes a covering for Adam and Eve from the skin of an animal, foreshadowing the sacrifice that Jesus would ultimately make to cloth his people in righteousness (Genesis 3:21).

God, by His grace, did not forsake the human race, choosing instead to bring salvation through Jesus Christ, and the rest of the Bible unfolds this story of redemption. This story comes to its climax in the New Testament, with the life, death, and resurrection of the Son of God. The Old Testament declares the promises of God, and in the New Testament, Jesus fulfills the promises of God (Romans 15:4, Hebrews 1:1-2).

E. Jesus and Scripture

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One of the reasons Veritas Church loves the Scriptures and desires to relent to them in their entirety is that Jesus loved the Scriptures. All through Jesus' ministry, the Scriptures were the cornerstone of His teaching and were the authoritative support He rested on for His claim as the Christ. We follow Jesus' lead. We love what He loves. We want to deal with the Scriptures in the same manner Jesus did—we love them, we teach from them and we will relent to the scriptures constantly by putting our lives under their authority. Here are some examples from Scripture on how Jesus dealt with the word of God:

- Jesus summarized the Old Testament Scripture as existing in three parts: the Law, the prophets and the Psalms (Luke 24:44)
- He accepted the Old Testament Canon as it exists today, without any modifications, and He came to fulfill it (Matthew 5:17)
- Jesus treated the Old Testament narratives as straightforward facts:
 - Genesis 1 and 2 (Matthew 19:4-5; Mark 10:6-8)
 - Abel (Luke 11:51)
 - Noah (Matthew 24:37-39; Luke 17:26-27)
 - Abraham (John 8:56)
 - Sodom and Gomorrah (Matthew 10:15; 11:23-24; Luke 10:12)
 - Lot (Luke 17:28-32)
 - Isaac and Jacob (Matthew 8:11; Luke 13:28)
 - the manna (John 6:31, 49, 58)
 - the wilderness serpent (John 3:14)
 - Moses as Lawgiver (Matthew 8:4; 19:8; Mark 1:44; 7:10; 10:5; 12:26; Luke 5:14; 20:37; John 5:46; 7:19)
 - false prophets (Luke 6:26)
 - Jonah (Matthew 12:40).
- Regarding authorship, Jesus said Scripture was given by Moses (Mark 7:10), Isaiah (Matthew 13:14; Mark 7:6), David (Mark 12:36), and Daniel (Matthew 24:15).
- In matters of controversy, Jesus used the Old Testament as His court of appeals (Matthew 5:17-20; 22:29; 23:23; Mark 12:24).
- In times of crisis, Jesus quoted Scripture (Matthew 4:1-11 cf. Deuteronomy 8:3, 6:13, 6:16; Matthew 27:46 cf. Psalms 22:1; Luke 23:46 cf. Psalms 31:5).
- Jesus repeatedly taught that Old Testament prophecy had been fulfilled because it was true (Matthew 11:10; 26:24, 31, 53-56; Mark 9:12-13; 14:21, 49; Luke 4:21; 18:31-33; 21:22; 22:37; 24:25-27, 44-47; John 5:39-47; 13:18; 15:25; 17:12).
- Jesus taught that the Scriptures could not be broken (Matthew 5:18; Luke 16:17; John 10:35).
- Jesus claimed that all Scripture, including the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms, was fulfilled in Him (Matthew 5:17-20; Luke 24:25-47).
- Jesus also said the primary purpose of the Old Testament was to reveal Himself (John 5:39).

F. Jesus and the New Testament

Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would inspire the writing of the Gospels and Epistles (John 14:25-26; 16:13).

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- He said that His people would recognize His teaching (John 10:4, 27; 18:37). This is possible because the Holy Spirit who inspired the writing of Scripture also teaches it to God's people in whom He dwells (1 Corinthians 2:13-14).
- Following His return to heaven, Jesus' students wrote the remaining books of Scripture and likewise upheld Scripture as God's unique, perfect, authoritative, helpful and powerful revelation to humanity. The New Testament writers claim that the Old Testament is sacred Scripture (Matthew 21:42; 22:29; 26:54, 56; Luke 24:25-32, 44-45; John 10:35; Acts 17:2, 11; 18:28; Romans 1:2; 4:3; 9:17; 10:11; 11:2; 15:4; 16:26; 1 Corinthians 15:3-4; Galatians 3:8, 22; 4:30; 1 Timothy 5:18; 2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Peter 1:20-21; 3:15-16).
- Furthermore, New Testament authors quote the Old Testament roughly 300 times. Paul used "Scripture" and "God's spoken word" interchangeably (Genesis 12:3 cf. Galatians 3:8; Exodus 9:16 cf. Romans 9:17).
- The New Testament teaches that what the Bible says is what God says (Genesis 2:24 cf. Matthew 19:4-5; Psalms 2:1 cf. Acts 4:24-25; Psalms 2:7 cf. Hebrews 1:5; Psalms 16:10 cf. Acts 13:35; Psalms 95:7-8 cf. Hebrew 3:7-8; Psalms 104:4 cf. Hebrews 1:7; Isaiah 55:3 cf. Acts 13:34).
- Peter and Paul claimed that Scripture has dual authorship by both men and God (1 Corinthians 2:12-13; 1 Peter 1:10-12).
- Most New Testament writers were eyewitnesses of Jesus (Luke 1:1-3; John 20:30-31; Acts 1:1-3, 9; 10:39-42; 1 Corinthians 15:6-8; 1 Peter 5:1; 2 Peter 1:16; 1 John 1:1-3). Others received firsthand information from other reliable witnesses. Luke received his information from Paul (2 Timothy 4:11) and numerous eyewitnesses, (Luke 1:1-4) Mark received his information from Peter, (Luke 1:1-4) and James and Jude were closely associated with the apostles and were probably Jesus' brothers.
- Paul claimed that Jesus was speaking through him (1 Corinthians 14:37; 2 Corinthians 13:3).
- Paul quotes Luke as Scripture (1 Timothy 5:18 cf. Deuteronomy 25:4; Luke 10:7).
- New Testament writers claimed that their writings were Holy (2 Timothy 3:15). They said that their writings were the very words of God (1 Corinthians 14:37; 2 Corinthians 13:3).
- Peter called Paul's writings "Scripture" (2 Peter 3:15-16).
- Paul commanded that his letters be read in the churches and obeyed (Colossians 4:16; 2 Thessalonians 3:14) and the early church treated the apostles' teaching as authoritative (Acts 2:42; Ephesians 2:20; 1 John 4:6).
- Also, at the time of its writing, upwards of one-quarter of Scripture was prophetic in nature, promising future events hundreds, even a thousand, years in advance. These facts include Jesus' virgin mother (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18-23), His birth in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2; Luke 2:1-7), flight to Egypt (Hosea 11:1; Matt 2:13-15) entrance into the temple that was destroyed in AD 70 (Malachi 3:1; Luke 2:25-27), betrayal for thirty pieces of silver (Zechariah 11:12-13; Matthew 26:14-15), clothing divided by the casting of lots (Psalms 22:18; John 19:23-24), crucifixion (Psalms 22:16; Luke 23:33), death and burial in a rich man's tomb (Isaiah 53:8-9; Matthew 27:57-60; Luke 23:50-53) and resurrection from death (Psalms 16:10; Isaiah 53:10-12; Acts 2:25-32).

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The Bible is clearly a book of history and not just philosophy because it continually promises concrete historical events that, in time, come to pass exactly as promised. These fulfillments of prophetic promises show the divine inspiration of Scripture and prove that a sovereign God rules over human history and brings events to pass as He ordains them. Consequently, we can trust the internal consistency of the Bible to be a chorus of faithful witnesses who sing together in harmony. Nonetheless, not everyone accepts the teachings of Scripture.

G. What does Scripture offer?

(The following was taken from Paul Tripp's book *Lost in the Middle*)

1. A comprehensive worldview that addresses everything that is. Scripture is not exhaustive in that it directly addresses every subject, but it is comprehensive in that it gives information for understanding all aspects of reality.
2. Practical perspectives on every human problem. The Bible has something to say about everything that is important for human life. It gives us an essential understanding of these things and how we should respond to them.
3. Life before death. The Bible doesn't simply promise that some day in distant eternity we will know life. The Bible calls us to embrace a quality of life now that would otherwise be impossible without the person and work of the Lord Jesus.
4. Practical help for the deepest issues of the human experience. In the Bible I find the Creator who made me and therefore knows everything about me. I find a Savior who walked on earth in my shoes and understands everything about my experience. The Bible faces the deepest issues of human experience head-on, with bright hope and functional wisdom.
5. Real comfort. The more you read the Bible, the more you realize that no human experience is outside the scope of the Gospel. God understands it all, and His Son has covered it all. Every day we can allow ourselves to be comforted with the amazing biblical reality that provision has been made for everything we will face.

WHAT WE DON'T BELIEVE

To help clarify our beliefs, we believe it may also be helpful to declare what we do not believe. In stating what we are not, we do not seek to attack those who disagree with us, but rather distinguish ourselves so that it is clear who we are, as well as who we are not.

- We are not theologically liberal. We do not embrace culture without discernment. We will take the whole Gospel and make it accessible to culture without compromising any part of the message. As Christians, we believe the truths of the Bible are eternal and therefore, fitting for every time, place, and people.
- We are not cessationists who believe that the Charismatic Spiritual gifts ceased with the closing of the Canon of Scripture and/or the death of the last apostle. We do believe that all spiritual gifts mentioned in the New Testament are in effect today and are to be used according to the criteria clearly established in Scripture.

PARTNERSHIP CLASS PACKET

- We are not fundamentalists who retreat from cultural involvement and transformation. The people of God are missionaries, faithful both to the content of Scripture and context of ministry.
- We are not isolationists who shut out all other Christian churches and/or groups. Instead, we partner with like-minded Christians from various churches, denominations and organizations for the greater good of the Kingdom of God.
- We are not hyper-Calvinists who get mired down in secondary matters and theological speculation outside of what Scripture tells us. Rather we pray, evangelize, and do good works because we believe that the sovereign plan of God is accomplished through us, His people.
- We are not Open Theists who believe that God does not know the future. We do believe in the sovereignty and foreknowledge of God in all things.
- We are not nationalists seeking to simply improve one nation. Contrarily, we are ambassadors of the King of Kings commissioned to proclaim and demonstrate the coming of His Kingdom to all nations of the earth.
- We are not moralists seeking to help people live good lives. We are evangelists laboring that people would become new creations in Jesus Christ.
- We are not relativists. Rather, we gladly embrace Scripture as our highest authority above such things as culture, experience, philosophy, and other forms of revelation.
- We are not Universalists (i.e. all roads in life lead to heaven or after-life); there is no salvation apart from repentance of sin and faith in Jesus Christ alone.
- We are not Annihilationists (i.e. believe if you are not Christian then when you die you will no longer exist); many people will spend eternity in the torments of hell.
- We are not naturalists (i.e. believe only things that can be tested with the five senses are true). Satan and demons are real enemies at work in this world and are subject to God.
- We are not rationalists (i.e. truth is determined by reason alone), but we believe that not everything can be known, that God calls us to live by faith with mystery and partial knowledge regarding many things.
- We are not evangelical feminists. God reveals Himself as a Father and is to be honored by the names He reveals to us without apology.
- We are not embarrassed by the bloody death of Jesus Christ. We believe that Jesus Christ died as a substitute for the sins of His people in selfless love.
- We are not ashamed of the Gospel. We proclaim a loving Gospel of grace that sounds like foolishness and offensiveness to the unrepentant, and yet it is salvation to multitudes with ears to hear the good news.
- We are not polemicists who believe that it is our task to combat every false teaching today. We are passionate about preserving the integrity of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.
- In summary, we love the Jesus of the Bible and reject whatever is contrary to Him.

PARTNERSHIP CLASS PACKET

CLOSED-HANDED VS. OPEN-HANDED ISSUES

We will major on the majors of our faith and minor on the minor areas. We will hold complete unity in the partners of the church on the essentials of our faith (Closed-handed issues) and we will discuss and dialogue, but not divide, over the non-essentials of our faith (Open-handed issues).

CLOSED-HANDED ISSUES

To be a member at Veritas Church you must agree with the following:

- Scripture is inspired by God and we submit to the authority it has in our lives
- Everyone is born broken and sinful and is therefore born under God's judgment, but believers in Jesus Christ have been saved by God's grace
- Faith is a gift of God, provided under His grace through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus
- The Holy Spirit has been sent to all believers to regenerate and provide full justification, sanctification, and glorification; the Holy Spirit actively engages believers in progressive sanctification and empowers them with certain gifts to glorify the body of Jesus
- Jesus will return and we will stand before Him in judgment

OPEN-HANDED ISSUES

While the Elders of Veritas Church do hold to particular viewpoints on the open-handed issues, it is not required that you agree with our position regarding these biblical concepts. We do expect, however, that you will not be divisive on any of these issues and that you will actively study Scripture to understand these things more fully. The following are a few examples of open-handed issues at Veritas:

- Predestination/Election (limited vs. unlimited atonement)
- Extent of God's sovereignty (Arminian vs. Calvinist)
- Views on Eschatology (end times study)
- Views of Creation (literal days vs. periods of time; old-earth vs. young-earth)
- Ecclesiology (Philosophy of ministry and structure of church government)
- Gender roles (complementarian vs. egalitarian)
- Certain spiritual gifts (We believe every Christian has been gifted by the Holy Spirit to fulfill ministries and service in and through the church (1 Corinthians 12-14, Ephesians 4:7-13). All gifts of service are embraced by Veritas and should be exercised by each and every member. There is a diversity of opinion among Christian regarding the so-called "sign gifts" (i.e. tongues and prophecy) so we will remain open on this issue. Those who believe in the continuance of the gifts may practice them in private and for the good of the church when the gifts are practiced in obedience with 1 Corinthians 12-14.)

PARTNERSHIP CLASS PACKET

WHAT VERITAS IS CALLED TO DO

We exist for the fame of Jesus...

OUR VISION

To be a church for the city, for the military, for the fame of Jesus.

OUR MISSION

To glorify God by making disciples who Love God, Love People, and Advance the gospel

OUR VALUES

Truth

Through his word, God has made the truth known to us. In John 8 Jesus told his followers that they would know the truth and that the truth would set them free. In John 14 Jesus expressly states that he is the truth. Veritas will be all about the truth of Jesus. We will be a “pillar and buttress of the truth.” (John 8:31-32, John 14:6, John 17:17, 1 Tim. 3:15)

Worship

We all worship something. We all give our time, energy and resources to something. We believe that there is nothing more worthy of our lives than the passionate worship of Jesus. Veritas will seek to engage and equip people to worship Jesus with their entire lives. This is fostered by the corporate gathering of the body of Christ and this will happen primarily during the weekend gatherings. We will gather to celebrate the gospel through preaching, singing, celebrating baptism and communion, and the giving of offerings to support God’s work at Veritas. (1 Cor. 10:31, Col. 3:1-17)

Community

We were created by community for community; therefore we will intentionally gather in authentic community at Veritas. We will be a people who are transparent, who learn together, who celebrate together, who walk through trials and suffering together, who are on mission together. We will be a people who do life together for the glory of God. (Acts 4:32-36, 1 Cor. 12:12-31, Heb. 10:24)

Mission

Jesus commanded that we be a people on mission. God’s mission is to reconcile all things to himself through Jesus and Veritas will gladly join God in this mission. We will accomplish this primarily by equipping and planting people who are on mission in Fayetteville and across the world. (Mat. 28:18-20, 2 Cor. 5:16-21)

PARTNERSHIP CLASS PACKET

WHY THE NAME VERITAS?

Names are important. What they communicate is important and Veritas is no different. Veritas is the latin word for “truth.” The name Veritas is an integral part of the mission of the church for us and we would like to take the opportunity to answer the question: Why the name Veritas?

Our society is searching for truth. It’s no secret that our society is searching for truth. Men and women spend their lives and resources trying to find meaning, belonging and acceptance. There is truth and Jesus is the truth. We want to, from the name of the church to the preaching and teaching, communicate that Jesus is the truth people are searching for.

Jesus is the truth. In John 8, Jesus tells his followers that they will know the truth and that the truth will set them free. In John 14, he expressly states that he is the truth. There’s something unique going on in the language in John 14. Jesus doesn’t state that he is true (an adjective) he states that he is THE truth. He uses truth as a noun.

Tradition. Latin is an old language, it’s nothing new. We aren’t the next new thing. Our desire is to be a church rooted in traditional evangelical Christianity. We preach the same message that Jesus died for and commissioned the apostles to preach some 2000+ years ago. We just seek to communicate this traditional message in a way that is contextualized to our culture and that engages the culture in a relevant way.

PARTNERSHIP PROCESS

- Attend a Partnership Class — Visit veritasfayetteville.com/partnership to RSVP for an upcoming class
- Read the Partnership Packet, and ask questions. Email one of the pastors at Veritas to ask questions or set up a meeting.
- Get involved at Veritas Church. (Attend/Serve/Join a Community Group) If you aren’t sure how, email life@veritasfayetteville.com.
- Get baptized. If you have not yet been baptized, email life@veritasfayetteville.com to ask about being baptized during our next Baptism Sunday.
- Fill out the Partnership Request Form Online. Visit veritasfayetteville.com/partnership in order to find the linked request form. Once you have submitted the form, our office admin will be in contact with you to schedule a meeting with one of our pastors.
- Attend a Partnership Interview and Sign the Partnership Covenant

PARTNERSHIP CLASS PACKET

VERITAS CHURCH PARTNERSHIP COVENANT

"...Present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect." (Romans 12: 1-2)

As Christians, we are members of God's household (Eph. 2:19) who are called to function, participate, and minister in a particular place within the body of Christ. A healthy body requires that each member do its part well. A healthy church requires the same: partners who are sacrificially committed and well-equipped to do the works of service that God has prepared in advance for us to do (Eph. 2:10; 4:12). Veritas Church holds its partners in high regard; we expect them to lead as missionaries of the gospel to the culture. God, in his sovereignty, placed us in this city, among these people, in this century, for a reason (Acts 17:26-27).

"For by the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith that God has assigned. For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them..."

(Romans 12: 3-8)

Being a partner at Veritas Church is really about being part of a family. All partners are disciples of Jesus, unified by their identity in Christ. This unity is expressed in the way they collaborate in loving God, loving fellow Christians, and loving non-Christians. Partners who enter into a covenant with their local church are called to a higher degree of responsibility and service. At the same time, the elders and deacons are covenanted to assist partners first and foremost, to love and lead, provide counsel and aid, and pray for, teach, and guide them.

"Above all, keep loving one another earnestly, since love covers a multitude of sins. Show hospitality to one another without grumbling. As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace..." (1 Peter 4:8-10)

What is a Covenant?

A covenant is a promise by which we obligate ourselves to one another in such a way that the obligation of one party is not dependent on the faithfulness of the other (Ezek. 20:44; 36:22; Ps. 76:11; Hos. 2:19-20; 3:1; 2 Tim. 2:13). The Veritas Church Partnership Covenant includes a statement of faith, a statement of biblical doctrine, the obligations of Veritas Church to its partners, and the obligations of partners to Veritas Church. Though the covenant does define the relationship between partners and the church, it is first and foremost a promise made to God as a commitment to his glory and his bride, the Church (Eph. 5:25).

PARTNERSHIP CLASS PACKET

Commitments of the Veritas Church elders to its partners

- We covenant that your elders and deacons will meet the character qualifications required of them in the Scriptures (1 Tim. 3:1-13; 5:17-22; Titus 1:5-9; 1 Peter 5:1-4)
- We covenant to seek God's will for our church community to the best of our ability as we study the Scriptures and follow the Spirit (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:1-5).
- We covenant to care for you and seek your growth as a disciple of Christ, in part by equipping you for service (Eph. 4:11-13) and praying for you regularly, particularly when you are sick (James 5:14).
- We covenant to provide teaching and counsel from the whole of Scripture (Acts 20:27-28; Gal. 6:6; 1 Tim. 5:17-18).
- We covenant to be on guard against false teachers (Acts 20:28-31).
- We covenant to exercise church discipline when necessary (Matt. 18:15-20; 1 Cor. 5; Gal. 6:1).
- We covenant to set an example and join you in fulfilling the duties of church partners (1 Cor. 11:1; Phil. 3:17; 1 Tim. 4:12).

My commitment to Veritas Church as a partner

I have read and understood the Veritas doctrinal statement and will not be divisive to its teaching. I also understand the importance of submission to church leadership and will be diligent to preserve unity and peace (Eph. 4:1-3; Heb. 13:7, 17).

I will live a life of holiness

Acknowledging that every person is imperfect and that we will all blow it at one time or another, this commitment entails that we be honest about where we are and that when we sin, we come clean and trust the body of Christ to restore us to fellowship through the grace of God. As we often say, "It's ok to not be ok...it's just not ok to stay there."

"For I am the Lord your God. Consecrate yourselves therefore, and be holy, for I am holy."
(Leviticus 11:44)

I will live a life of serving

This is a commitment to transition from a spectator mentality to a participatory one.

Involvement is understood, on a minimum level, to be a faithful worshiper in communal celebration and to find a particular place of service in which to use gifts and talents.

"Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, in proportion to our faith; if service, in our serving; the one who teaches, in his teaching; the one who exhorts, in his exhortation; the one who contributes, in generosity; the one who leads, with zeal; the one who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness." (Romans 12:6-8)

I will live a life of giving

We ask every person of any means who feels called to be a part of Veritas to be a generous and sacrificial giver, and we challenge members to give from the abundance God has provided.

Giving of our finances is one way for us to respond generously to the greatness of Jesus.

PARTNERSHIP CLASS PACKET

“A tithe of everything from the land, whether grain from the soil or fruit from the trees, belongs to the Lord; it is holy to the Lord.” (Leviticus 27:30)

“For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability.” (2 Corinthians 8:3)

I will live a life in community

Following Jesus is much more than attending Sunday gatherings and serving where God has called you. We are the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:27) and are called to share our gifts, take on one another's burdens, and serve each other in love as we live life together. There are numerous Community Groups at Veritas, each one reflecting the lives in it and their calling to worship God.

“Now the full number of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one said that any of the things that belonged to him was his own, but they had everything in common. And with great power the apostles were giving their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. There was not a needy person among them, for as many as were owners of lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold and laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need.” (Acts 4:32-35)

I will live a life of mission

Partners commit to using their many gifts and unique personalities in building meaningful relationships with those who do not know Christ and, through a genuine expression of love, help others come to faith.

“Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you.” (Matthew 28:19-20)

My commitment to the mission and vision of Veritas Church

God wants you to be a stakeholder in His purposes. This document will serve as a public commitment of membership in Veritas Church. Take this commitment seriously. When we take steps of faith and commitment for Christ, He honors them. God promises to honor that step by using you as an integral part of His work. Join the cause of reaching our area with the love of God through Jesus Christ.

Signature of Applicant	Name	Date
Signature of Spouse (if applicable)	Name	Date
Signature of Veritas Elder/Deacon	Name	Date

PARTNERSHIP CLASS PACKET
