

LIVING OUR CHURCH'S PURPOSE

Our church, like every congregation throughout the world and throughout time, has a clear mission given to us by Jesus himself.

Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.

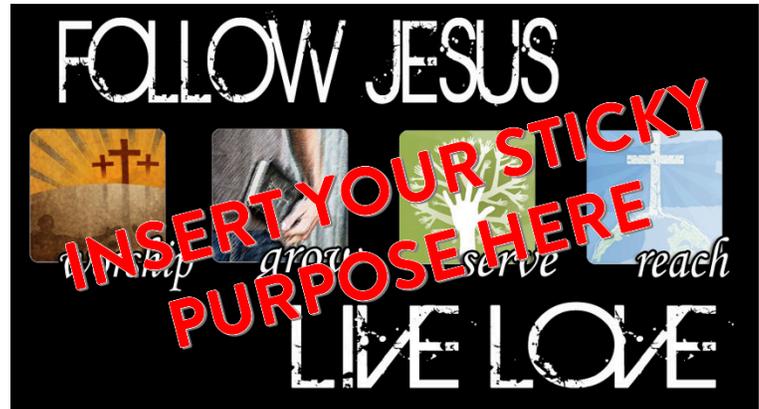
Therefore go and **make disciples** of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and **teaching them** to obey everything I have commanded you.

And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age." Matthew 28:18-20 (NIV)

How we use the unique gifts that God has given us, in this specific location and at this specific time, means we get to express our purpose – why our congregation exists – in a way that helps us focus on how we live – who we'll be – as God's chosen people here in **Dickinson, ND**.

Our purpose flows from who God has called us to be– and there are many, many sections in Scripture where God clarifies that for us. One such section is 1 Peter 2:1-12 (on the next page). Take a look at these verses – especially the **bolded** sections that describe actions on our part – and write down how these connect to our purpose:

- Worship
- Grow
- Serve
- Reach



We are described as a "holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices". We don't sacrifice any animals, so what is Peter talking about? How does this relate to our purpose in our unique situation?

Who is doing the building of us into a "spiritual house"? How? How does that fact impact how we go about living our purpose?

We've looked at how we act in response to God's great mercy, but these verses are also full of descriptions of how God is acting in our midst. What is it that God has done and is doing to build his church? Identify at least 10 things in these verses. (Hint: these will include what God has done for us, to us, and through us.)

List at least three things you personally – in response to God's great love for us and his incredible mercy – can do to fulfill our purpose. As you do so, make sure at least one of them is decidedly uncomfortable.

1 Peter 2:1-12 (NIV)

Therefore, **rid yourselves of all malice and all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and slander of every kind.** Like newborn babies, **crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation,** now that you have tasted that the Lord is good.

As you come to him, the living Stone — rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him — you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to **be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.** For in Scripture it says:

“See, I lay a stone in Zion,
a chosen and precious cornerstone,
and the one who trusts in him
will never be put to shame.”

Now to you who believe, this stone is precious. But to those who do not believe,

“The stone the builders rejected
has become the capstone,”

and,

“A stone that causes men to stumble
and a rock that makes them fall.”

They stumble because they disobey the message—which is also what they were destined for.

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may **declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.** Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to **abstain from sinful desires,** which war against your soul. **Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God** on the day he visits us.