



startingpoint

bridge community church

Our Story, Vision, Values &
Emphasis on Membership
at Bridge Community Church

The Bridge Community Church Story

Bridge Community Church is a church that has been serving this community since 2017 and was started by a small group of people with a desire to see multiple cross-cultural churches started in Queens and send people out to the ends of the earth with the Good News of Jesus Christ.

In January 2017, Michael and his wife Shannon moved to New York City to be a part of a church that desired to reach the nations along the 7 train in Queens. After 6 months at this church, Michael was challenged to consider being a lead pastor and planter of a new church near Queensboro Plaza. After much prayer and counsel, Michael and Shannon knew that this was the direction that God was clearly leading them. By the start of 2019, there was a small core group of people that began to meet in Michael & Shannon's apartment for worship. Bridge Community Church was officially launched on Easter Sunday, April 21, 2019 and now has begun work in Sunnyside with the hopes of launching another church in the near future.

We currently have **Community Groups** (*think groups that meet in homes to study the Bible, do awesome things in and around NYC, and often enjoy a meal together*) and meet weekly for worship. We have a desire to **bridge** the diverse community here and create a safe place to **connect** people from all walks of life. We believe this is possible by looking to the example of how **Jesus** lived his life and spent time with **everyone** regardless of how they chose to live their life or the mistakes they had made in the past.

At Bridge Community Church, our desire is for people to find **authentic community** and family with Bridge. We want to see people **connect** with God, the Creator of the universe, experience **new life** in Jesus Christ, and be **equipped** to grow in their relationship with the Lord. We believe this will help people to discover their purpose and meaning in life as they **serve** the church and the community, as well as being **mobilized** to reach people in Queens, New York City, and the ends of the earth!

This class is all about what it means to **go all in** and be a **member** of Bridge Community Church!

BRIDGE COMMUNITY CHURCH VISION:

Bridge Community Church exists to to **CONNECT**, **EQUIP**, and **MOBILIZE** people with the gospel to the glory of God.

To put it simple, we aim to Bridge the Community and Connect people to one another and, more importantly, to God.

OUR STRATEGY:

CONNECT with one another to demonstrate and declare the gospel to the world by living life together, joining a Community Group, and worshipping on Sundays.

EQUIP followers of Christ for the work of ministry by teaching and discipling every individual to know the truth and disciple others who will disciple others.

MOBILIZE followers of Christ to serve here in New York City and in strategic cities and countries around the world by sending and empowering them to go.

OUR CORE VALUES

We will be a church that is committed to live according to the Bible and these core principles found within its pages:

The Great Commandment (*Matthew 22:37-40*)

1. Love God through regular prayer and pursuing holiness
2. Love People by serving with humility

The Great Commission (*Matthew 28:19-20*)

3. Missions Minded by engaging locally, nationally, and globally
4. Make Disciples who Makes Disciples
5. Teach the Scriptures as absolute truth

The Great Compassion (*Matthew 25:34-41, Micah 6:8, James 1:27*)

6. Serve the Oppressed, Marginalized, and Underprivileged

MISSION MEASURES:

1. Do I have a personal relationship with Christ?
2. Do I strive to spend time with Christ daily?
3. Am I connecting others to our community and Christ?
4. How am I using my talents and possessions in and for the church?
5. Who am I investing in currently (discipling)?
6. How am I actively involved in missions locally, nationally, and globally?

HOW BRIDGE COMMUNITY CHURCH WORKS:

- Our Lead Pastor casts the vision for where Bridge Community Church is headed and leads the staff.
- Our Elders oversee the administration and operations of the church.
- We don't have committees. We have teams that do ministry.
- We empower people to lead according to their gifts.
- We don't have formal "deacons." We raise up servant-leaders in our church and Community Groups.
- We only vote on a few, huge issues – calling a pastor or staff member, buying property, etc.
- We are consistently working to send small groups of people out to start new Community Groups and ultimately new churches.
- We are affiliated with the The Send Network with the North American Mission Board (NAMB - namb.org).

OUR LEADERSHIP AND STAFF:

Michael Hill - Pastor/Elder

Jesse Strickland - Music & Media Director

Savannah Hutto - Administration and Director of Missions & Outreach

Ryan O'Neal - Church Plant Catalyst (Sunnyside)

Bridge Community Church Statement of Faith

At Bridge Community, we emphasize intellectual and spiritual growth as the fuel for ministry and service. While we create a warm environment for spiritual explorers, we read, explain, and apply the Scriptures in our Community Groups and Worship Celebrations.

We believe in one perfect, loving, all-knowing God who exists, has always existed, and will always exist as the Father, His Son, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit, our Helper. We believe that They are equal in power and deserve from us equal worship, love, confidence, and obedience from us.

(See Genesis 1:1,26,27;3:22, Psalm 90:2, Matthew 28:19, I Peter 1:2 and 2 Corinthians 13:14)

We believe that God opens our eyes to who He is through creation, the Bible, and Jesus Christ. We believe that the Bible, all of it, is the very word of God. Written through human authors, the Bible is entirely true and the only unfailing guide to life – past, present, and future. Because of this, we choose to believe what it teaches, strive to obey what it commands, and determine to trust in all that it promises. *(See 2 Timothy 1:13; 3:16-17, 2 Peter 1:20-21, Psalm 119:105, 160; Psalm 12:6 and Proverbs 30:5)*

We believe that God created everything – all the heavens and all the earth – through his spoken word. We believe that He Himself created Adam and Eve in his own image, above all other living creatures, and that they are the parents of the entire human race. We believe that they were created, and for a time, lived in blamelessness and perfect relationship with God, but walked away from perfection by choosing disobedience when tempted by Satan. **We believe that because of this original disobedience, all mankind is by nature impure and separated from God. It is only through the saving work of Jesus Christ that we can be renewed and experience authentic joy and hope.**

(See Genesis 1:27, Psalm 8:3-6, Isaiah 53:6a, Romans 3:23, and Isaiah 59:1-2)

We believe that Jesus, born to Mary, a virgin, is both fully man and fully God. We believe that he lived a perfect life, free from disobedience or blame. We believe that he walked and lived on this Earth, loving people, performing miracles, and showing us the love of God. We believe that he died on a cross and that His shed blood covers our own disobedience and blame – all of it. We believe that Jesus, in bodily form, rose from the dead and now sits at the right hand of God, praying for us. *(See Matthew 1:22-23, Isaiah, 9:6, John 1:1-5; 14:10-3, Hebrews 4:14-15, I Corinthians 15:3-4, Romans 1:3-4, Acts 1:9-11, I Timothy 6:14-15, and Titus 2:13)*

We believe that the Holy Spirit is the very Spirit of God, that he points to Jesus in all that he does, that he lives within those who choose to follow Jesus – giving us new life, allowing us to better understand the mysteries of the Bible, and helping us be all that God created us to be. *(See John 16:7-13; 14:16-17, Acts 1:8, I Corinthians 2:12; 3:16, 2 Corinthians 3:17, Galatians 5:25 and Ephesians 1:13; 5:18)*

We believe that the invitation to follow Jesus, to be rescued by Him from our own disobedience and blame, and to live a new and different life is offered freely to every person. We believe that those who trust in Him alone to be made right before God immediately receive a new life here and now and for all eternity. We believe that those who say, "Yes," to Jesus no longer have to strive to be made good or right, but may rest in knowing that the Holy Spirit will work together with God's Word to make them more and more of who God intends them to be.

(See *John 1:12; 14:6, Romans 5:1; 6:23, Galatians 3:26 and Ephesians 2:8-9*)

We believe that Jesus is the Leader of the Church, which is made up of all who have truly accepted His invitation. This larger Church demonstrates itself in local churches, which should be made up of those who are truly committed to following Jesus with all of themselves. We believe that Jesus placed importance upon two acts: the public declaration of our faith in Him through baptism and the breaking of bread together as we remember and honor what He did for us on the cross.

(See *Ephesians 2:19-22, Hebrews 3:6, Matthew 28:19, Acts 2:38,42; Matthew 26:26-28, and I Corinthians 11:17-34*)

We believe that it is our responsibility, as followers of Jesus, to be an example of honest, transparent, loving community. We believe that we are to embody the love of Jesus by pointing to God with songs and words of praise, prayer, and declaration that He is right and loving all the time; by working to share the love of Jesus with everyone all over the world by what we say and what we do; by caring for everything God has created and actively seeking the good of everyone, by living out the realities of true Christianity with care for one another, and by showing compassion to the poor and justice for the oppressed.

(See *Hebrews 10:24-25, Psalm 111:1, Colossians 3:16, Romans 12:5, Ephesians 2:19-22; 4:16, and James 5:14*)

We believe that Jesus will return to this earth in bodily form. This return, at a time that no one knows but God, is the reason we press into the love, hope, and commands of our God. We believe that He will return and fulfill every promise made in the Bible. We believe that every person that has lived or will live on this earth will stand before God and give answer for his or her life here. Those who have accepted the blood of Jesus as a gift and payment to God for all disobedience will be pardoned and will spend all of eternity in His presence while those who have rejected that same blood will spend eternity separated from that same presence.

(See *John 3:16, I John 2:25; 5:11-13,24; Luke 16:27-30, Romans 6:23, and Revelation 20:15*)

We follow the Baptist Faith & Message 2000.

10 Reasons Membership Matters

by Jonathan Leeman

- 1) **It's biblical.** Jesus established the local church and all the apostles did their ministry through it. The Christian life in the New Testament is church life. Christians today should expect and desire the same.
- 2) **The church is its members.** To be “a church” in the New Testament is to be one of its members (read through Acts). And you want to be part of the church because that’s who Jesus came to rescue and reconcile to himself.
- 3) **It's how to officially represent Jesus.** Membership is the church’s affirmation that you are a citizen of Christ’s kingdom and therefore a card-carrying Jesus Representative before the nations. And you want to be an official Jesus Representative. Closely related to this . . .
- 4) **It's how to declare one's highest allegiance.** Your membership on the team, which becomes visible when you wear the “jersey,” is a public testimony that your highest allegiance belongs to Jesus. Trials and persecution may come, but your only words are, “I am with Jesus.”
- 5) **It's how to embody and experience biblical images.** It's within the accountability structures of the local church that Christians live out or embody what it means to be the “body of Christ,” the “temple of the Spirit,” the “family of God,” and so on for all the biblical metaphors (see 1 Corinthians 12). And you want to experience the interconnectivity of his body, the spiritual fullness of his temple, and the safety and intimacy and shared identity of his family.
- 6) **It's how to serve other Christians.** Membership helps you to know which Christians on planet Earth you are specifically responsible to love, serve, warn, and encourage. It enables you to fulfill your biblical responsibilities to Christ’s body (for example, see Ephesians 4:11-16; 25-32).
- 7) **It's how to follow Christian leaders.** Membership helps you to know which Christian leaders on planet Earth you are called to obey and follow. Again, it allows you to fulfill your biblical responsibility to them (see Hebrews 13:7; 17).
- 8) **It helps Christian leaders lead.** Membership lets Christian leaders know which Christians on Planet Earth they will “give an account” for (Acts 20:28; 1 Peter 5:2).
- 9) **It enables accountability and church discipline.** It places an individual Christian’s claim to “obey” and “follow” Jesus into a real-life setting where authority is actually exercised over us (see John 14:15; 1 John 2:19; 4:20-21). It also gives you the biblically prescribed place to participate in the work of church discipline responsibly, wisely, and lovingly (1 Corinthians 5).
- 10) **It builds a witness and invites the nations.** Membership puts the alternative rule of Christ on display for the watching universe (see Matthew 5:13; John 13:34-35; Ephesians 3:10; 1 Peter 2:9-12). The very boundaries which are drawn around the membership of a church yields a society of people which invites the nations to something better.

8 Commitments of a MEMBER of Bridge Community Church

COMMITMENT #1:

I will follow Jesus as the Way, the Truth, and the Life.

Most people live their whole lives without ever knowing **why** they are alive.

We believe God has made it clear what his **purpose** for our lives is.

1. God made you to love you! (Jeremiah 31:3, Ephesians 1:4-5)
2. God wants to have a personal relationship with you. (John 10:10)
3. You have sinned and lived your life apart from God's rule. (Isaiah 53:6)
4. Jesus has paid for your sins with his death and resurrection. (Romans 5:8)

1 Timothy 2:5 MSG

"God is on one side and all people are on the other side, and Christ Jesus is between them to bring them together, by giving His life for all mankind."

What does God expect me to do in response to what he has done for me?

1. Admit that God has not been first place in your life and that you have sin.
2. Believe that Jesus died to pay for your sins and rose again. (Romans 10:9)
3. Surrender your life to God & accept His free gift of salvation. (Ephesians 2:8, 9)

If you truly desire to know Jesus as your Lord and Savior, there will be a cost. This cost, however, is nothing compared to the riches of knowing Christ! If you desire to accept God's free gift of salvation, you must repent and place your faith in Jesus Christ as the sinless Son of God. If you have truly repented of your sin (been disgusted with your sin and turned from it) and surrendered your life to Christ in faith, you are saved! We are now brothers/sisters in Christ!

While many times a "sinner's prayer" is used, this is not necessary for salvation. However, if you desire to tell God of the decision you have made, you can do so now. Just talk to Him as you would a loving parent and tell Him the decision you have made! He will love to hear from you! Understand, this prayer does NOT save you but is merely a reflection of what has happened in your heart!

COMMITMENT #2:

I will be baptized by immersion in water as a believer, if I haven't already been.

The first big step of obedience every new believer in Jesus should take is being baptized by immersion in water.

Why should I be baptized?

1. To follow the example set by Jesus. (Mark 1:9)
2. Because Jesus commands it. (Matthew 28:19-20)
3. It demonstrates that I really am a believer. (Acts 18:8, 1 John 2:3)

What does baptism mean?

1. It illustrates Christ's death and resurrection. (Colossians 2:12)
2. It illustrates my new life as a Christian. (Romans 6:4)

Why baptism by immersion?

1. Jesus was baptized that way. (Matthew 3:16)
2. Every baptism in the Bible was by immersion. (Acts 8:38-39)
3. The Greek word baptizo means to dip under water.
4. It best symbolizes a burial and resurrection.

We believe that everyone who has personally received Christ should be baptized after receiving him. We speak honorably of the commitment parents make when they have their children baptized, but we see it as similar to child dedication. So we ask that those who were baptized only as infants to be baptized as believers.

We baptize as often as the need arises for 2-3 people to be baptized. We invite believing friends and family members to participate in baptisms, especially when a parent has helped their child receive Jesus.

People who are baptized at Bridge Community Church are not required to share their faith story, but we would love to capture your story on video to show later.

Special Topic: Communion *(The Lord's Supper)*

Jesus never asked His disciples to remember His birth. But He did instruct them to remember His death and resurrection. He gave the church two visible symbols (called “ordinances”) as reminders of His death. These two ordinances are: Baptism and The Lord’s Supper.

The Lord’s Supper is an object lesson that represents a great spiritual truth for believers.

According to 1 Corinthians 11:23-26...

What is the Lord's Supper?

1. It is a simple act. (v. 23)
2. It is a reminder. (v. 24)
3. It is a symbol. (v. 25)
4. It is a statement of faith. (v. 26)

Who should take the Lord's Supper?

All believers. (v. 29)

How do I prepare myself for the Lord's Supper?

1. Self-examination. (v. 27)
2. Recommitment. (Romans 12:1)
3. Confession of sin. (1 John 1:9)
4. Restoring relationships. (Matthew 5:23-24)

When and how often should we observe the Lord's Supper?

Jesus never said when or how often believers should observe The Lord’s Supper.

At Bridge Community Church, our desire is that the Lord's Supper be a teaching and learning moment in addition to being a worship moment. So, we observe communion the first Sunday of almost every month.

COMMITMENT #3:

I will join a Community Group.

Our primary way of helping people find freedom and grow spiritually is through **Community Groups**.

Andy Stanley says, "Life change happens in circles, not in rows." Real life change happens in the context of relationships – small groups. In the Bible, they worshipped in the temple but ministry happened house to house.

"You know that I have not hesitated to preach anything that would be helpful to you but have taught you publicly and from house to house." Acts 20:20

Community Groups Provide Three Things...

1. A place to connect. (1 Corinthians 9:22)

2. A place to protect. (1 John 3:16)

3. A place to grow. (Proverbs 27:17) **How**

Community Groups Work

Our small groups meet weekly in places all around NYC where we have pockets of attenders and provide a place for you to connect, grow, and discuss the issues and challenges of life.

Community Groups are also where we pray, care for one another, and are missed if we don't show up!

How to Join a Group

There are three ways to join a Community Group:

1. Talk to one of our team leaders at church on Sunday and they will be happy to connect you to one of our Community Group leaders.
2. Go online or on our app and fill out a form to join a group at the location, day and time that works for you.
3. Email info@bridgecommunitychurch.com for more information.

You can START a Group!

We believe that everyone has areas of strength and gifting that could benefit others. You'll discover that it's easier than you think.

If you have spent at least one semester in a Community Group and want to talk about starting your own group, start a conversation with Pastor Michael,
michael@bridgecommunitynyc.com.

COMMITMENT #4:

I will grow in grace (by being Spirit-filled) and knowledge (by having a quiet time).

Attending worship services and being part of a Community Group are a great start, but there are at least two personal habits you need to develop in your daily life.

1. Developing a quiet time for prayer and Bible reading.

- Hearing God's Word. (Romans 10:17)
- Reading God's Word. (Revelation 1:3)
- Studying God's Word. (Acts 17:11)
- Memorizing God's Word. (Proverbs 7:2-3)
- Meditating on God's Word. (Psalm 1:2-3)

In my daily prayer time, I am:

- Giving devotion to God. (2 Chronicles 31:21)
- Getting direction from God. (Psalm 25:4-5)

2. Living under the influence of the Holy Spirit continually.

The Holy Spirit isn't a substance or a mystical, cosmic force. The Holy Spirit is God – our personal God. He's the third member of the Trinity.

The New Testament talks about believers being "filled with" the Holy Spirit, which has to do with being under his influence.

How do we live under the Spirit's influence?

- Remove all the barriers. (Acts 2:38)
- Relate to Him daily. (2 Corinthians 13:14)
- Remain under his influence. (Ephesians 5:18)

If you desire to learn more about growing deeper in your relationship with the Lord, the best way to do this is by entering into a **discipleship relationship** with someone at Bridge Community Church and go through our **Discipleship Journey**.

You will learn and see how to exercise the 5 pillars of a healthy Christian life and experience the encouragement and accountability of someone who wants to see you grow and succeed in your walk with the Lord. Get ready to go deep!

COMMITMENT #5:

I will develop my gifts and serve alongside a team.

Did you know that God gave you a unique **SHAPE** to give you significance? He has gifted you and made you uniquely you so that you can serve him according to his purposes. The reality is that saved people will use these gifts to serve others.

The greatest way to serve God on earth is to **serve people**, whom God loves.

SHAPE stands for...

- Spiritual Gifts.
- Heart
- Abilities
- Personality
- Experiences

God has given you a unique mix of these characteristics. When you decided to follow Jesus, you were given **spiritual gifts** to use to serve others within the body of Christ. Your **heart** is passionate about certain things. You have some natural **abilities** – areas you're just good at. You have a unique **personality** that was given to you by God. And you've been through a unique set of **experiences**.

God wants to use a mix of all of these characteristics to help you know how and where to serve him within the body.

For now, we hope you'll **try out** one of these ministry teams:

- Community Group Host
- Park Outreach
- Community Service Projects
- Set-up
- Tear Down
- Children's Ministry
- Sound & Media
- Special Events

Every few months we offer a **SHAPE class** where you will go through a spiritual gifts inventory and other information to help you better discern how to find your role at Bridge Community Church. Afterwards, someone from our team will help you to know where to plug in more deeply.

COMMITMENT #6:

I will practice generosity and give regularly.

The Bible says in Matthew 6:24 that the top competitor for our commitment to Jesus is money. Giving allows us to demonstrate that He is more important to us than material things. Not having cash or check on hand doesn't have to hold you back from giving, you can be obedient today by giving online. There is no organization with more potential to change the world than the local church!

GENEROSITY changes lives – ours and the people to whom we give. At Bridge Community Church, taking action on your generosity is simple.

The Bible teaches us about a baseline standard for giving: the **tithe** (a word that literally means a “tenth”). When we give the first 10% of our income through the local church, we put God first in our lives. Tithing is an act of worship that expresses our gratitude, faith, and love for others. It also strengthens our trust in Him to continue to provide for us!

God also encourages us to give offerings beyond our tithe to specific projects at our local church and to other organizations and causes that we personally believe in.

What happens with your gift?

We honor your gifts with faithful stewardship, ethical business practices, and full accountability so that the financial integrity of Bridge Community Church remains beyond reproach.

We believe in financial transparency. We send out regular spending reports for those who are interested where money at Bridge Community Church is spent. Bridge Community Church is officially a 501(c)3 status nonprofit organization registered with the Internal Revenue Service.

Whether you'd like to give a single gift, schedule recurring donations, or view your giving history, you can do it all online at bridgecommunitynyc.com/give.

COMMITMENT #7:

I will own the mission, living out the values of Bridge Community Church. (*The Great Commandment, The Great Commission, The Great Compassion*)

Every one of us can be part of the mission by following these four principles:

- 1. Accept personal responsibility.**
- 2. Build personal relationships.**
- 3. Share your personal story.**

4. Give a personal invitation.

POINTS OF PASSION (Local, National, and Global Outreach)

“You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.” - Acts 1:8

LOCAL: Long Island City, Queensboro Plaza, Queensbridge

- Fall Festival and Parties in the Park
- Coats for the City
- Queensbridge Family Day
- Cru Inner City
- Random acts of helping

NATIONAL: Queens, NYC, and North America

- North American Mission Board & The Send Network
- Sunnyside Church Plant Efforts
- Little Egypt & Flushing
- MORE to come!

GLOBAL: The Ends of the Earth

- International Mission Board
- Red Lights & Redemption
- Adopt an Unreached & Unengaged People Group
- MORE to come!

WHAT CAN I DO?

- Pray. (Matthew 9:37-38)
- Give. (Matthew 6:19-21)
- Go. (Isaiah 6:8-9)

John Piper says, “*You are either a zealous goer, a zealous giver, or disobedient.*”

Start by writing out your story and emailing it to us at info@bridgecommunitynyc.com. **Share** your story with others. **Share** Bridge Community Church' social media updates. And **INVITE** people to join you in **Community Groups** or on **Sunday**.

COMMITMENT #8:

I will sign the membership covenant and commit to the vision, values, and beliefs.

THE MEMBERSHIP COVENANT

Having received Christ as my Lord and Savior and following Christ's command in Scriptural baptism, and being in agreement with this church's statements, strategy, and structure, I now feel led by the Holy Spirit to unite with Bridge Community Church. In doing so, I commit myself to God and to the other members to do the following:

1. I will protect the unity of my church

- ...by praying for one another and the church
- ...by acting in love toward other members
- ...by speaking in a way to build others up and refusing to gossip
- ...by following the leaders chosen by the church

(1 Thessalonians 1:1-2, Romans 14:19, Ephesians 4:29, Hebrews 13:17)

2. I will share in the responsibility of my church

- ...by selflessly sharing myself with others
- ...by inviting the unchurched to join our community
- ...by warmly welcoming those who visit
- ...by following Christ's command to be a disciple maker

(1 Thessalonians 2:8, Luke 14:23, Romans 15:7, Matthew 28:19)

3. I will serve the ministry of my church

- ...by spending time with Jesus daily
- ...by discovering and exercising my gifts and talents
- ...by being equipped to serve by my pastor/elder(s) and leader(s)
- ...by developing a servant's heart.

(Mark 3:14, 1 Peter 4:10, Ephesians 4:11-12, Philippians 2:3-4, 7)

4. I will support the testimony of my church

- ...by advancing God's kingdom and not my own
- ...by attending faithfully
- ...by living a godly life and pursuing holiness
- ...by giving generously of my time and finances

(Matthew 6:33, Hebrews 10:25, Philippians 1:27, Romans 12:1, 1 Corinthians 16:2)

We will, when we move from this place, as soon as possible, unite with some other church where we can carry out the spirit of this covenant and the principles of God's Word.

If you are ready to become an official member of Bridge Community Church, complete the **MEMBERSHIP COVENANT** form and leave it with someone on the Bridge Leadership Team!



bridge community church
www.bridgecommunitynyc.com
info@bridgecommunitynyc.com