

These are the Core Values that shape Gethsemane Church:

- We are Biblically based and Christ Centered
- We are called to serve the West Branch Area, the surrounding communities and the world
- We proclaim the unchanging Gospel to make new disciples of Jesus in changing ways in a continually changing world

By **Biblically Based**, we mean that we do our best to shape our lives by Scripture¹. It means that we wrestle with understanding the Bible—the breadth and depth of the Bible and not just our favorite passages. That doesn't mean that we will always agree with how we should apply ourselves to the Bible. We see a dim reflection now and we know only in part now². That doesn't mean that we can't be confident about our understanding of the Bible. It does mean that we must be ready for God to teach us something new and we cannot be arrogant about our understanding of the Bible.

By **Christ Centered**, we mean that we look at everything through the lens of our relationship with Christ. It means that the Bible points to Christ and not the other way around³. As we continue to be students of the Bible, our lives are shaped by 1) the Christ to whom the Bible witnesses, 2) how Jesus has responded to us personally and in the Biblical story, and 3) what Jesus asks us to do in response to what He's done for us. Being Christ Centered is another way of saying that Jesus is our Savior and Lord.

When we say that we are **called to serve the West Branch Area**, we mean that we have identified the School District—as an organization and as a geographical boundary—as a focus for our service in Jesus' Name. It's not that we serve here exclusively, because Jesus calls us to be witnesses to the whole world. However, West Branch is the place where we begin to follow Jesus' call to be witnesses in Jerusalem, Samaria, and to the ends of the world⁴.

We proclaim the unchanging Gospel to a changing world. The Gospel doesn't change. We proclaim that Gospel to each other, so that we are encouraged and challenged by it. If Christ is who we say He is, we *must* share Him with those who don't know Him. The way we share the Gospel of Jesus will necessarily change, because the world into which we proclaim it is constantly changing⁵. This means that we are always the first Christians to share Christ in the world as we know it. Sometimes we'll mess up. Sometimes we'll flat out fail. Sometimes, we'll be wildly successful. Just like the parable of the sower⁶ and the stories of the early Church, we must continually plant the seed of the Good News of Jesus.

¹ 2 Timothy 3:16

² 1 Corinthians 13:9-10, 12

³ John 1:1-14

⁴ Acts 1:8

⁵ 1 Corinthians 10:19-23

⁶ Matthew 13:3-9