

*Valley Baptist Church*  
*Joining God at Work in Appleton, Wisconsin*

Valley Baptist Church is a church on a mission. We state our purpose like this, Preparing People to Meet Jesus. There is a real sense in which that has always been the mission of the church. We have stated that concisely and worked at it diligently for the past 19 years.

As we study the New Testament and see the description of the early church, the way they functioned was through worship, outreach, discipleship, fellowship and ministry. These are the ways we seek to fulfill our purpose of preparing people to meet Jesus here at Valley.

As we have functioned in these areas, we have seen the Lord add to His church. In recent history that growth has challenged our physical facilities. After a few years of decline in the late 90's, some of which can be attributed to inadequate facilities, we saw significant growth until we again began to feel the pinch of our space. It was not until we built the 2008 addition that we were able to successfully break through the 200-attendance barrier.

Discipleship is a key factor to building a strong vibrant church. At Valley we have many different opportunities for discipleship. The anchor of this effort is our Sunday School and Bible study hour on Sunday mornings. Some time ago we decided that we would keep this hour as the mainstay of making disciples. Currently this is the place where we are seeing the greatest challenge. During that hour each Sunday, every classroom in the main church building and the Cove, which is the house next door is occupied. All but one room in the Wright House, the house on the end of the block is occupied as well.

Fellowship is another one of those key factors necessary to prepare people to meet Jesus. Of course, Christian fellowship goes far deeper than the times we gather at the church building. Yet, these are important times. We always try to branch over into outreach with these events as well. This is a place where we are also feeling significant limitation. We were overflowing a few months ago for our meal during the Vacation Bible School family night. Easter brunch and some of the events hosted by the ladies of the church for fellowship and outreach are limited by our current space. The expanded welcome center as well as the flexible space to be created in the current worship center will go a long way toward addressing this need.

We have made every effort to be good stewards of our space. One way we have done that is to have multiple worship services. We currently packed in several more chairs in our worship center to bring us to our legal capacity of 250. We have already hit 300 in worship a few times and averaged 247 in attendance in 2019.

Jesus went about much of His ministry ministering to the needs of people. Ministry is a vital part of any church. We often hear how in a church 20% of the people do 80% of the work. That is not true here at Valley. We have a culture here of understanding that every member of the body of Christ is a minister. One of the key ministries began years before I came here as pastor. In 1994 Valley Baptist Church was the beneficiary of the building missionaries who came to build what the church would not be able to build without them. We all know that one of the great contributions of Builders for Christ is that they help a church build in a more timely manner and often more extensively than would otherwise be possible. When Valley witnessed this firsthand in 1994 the people here formed a building team that has ministered to churches, often in conjunction with Builders for Christ, for 26 years under the faithful leadership of Charles Dunning. Interestingly, the very first off site trip for this group was to Friendship

*Valley Baptist Church*  
*Joining God at Work in Appleton, Wisconsin*

Baptist Church in Fort Atkinson, Wisconsin where I served as pastor at that time. We have even augmented our weeklong trips on several occasions by working with some churches on weekend projects. The Valley Baptist building team has developed into a team known for our hard work, flexibility and expert craftsmanship. It is an honor to bless others with these skills. And now a new group is beginning to form which will be called the Midwest Builders for Christ.

The scope of ministry here at Valley is deep and wide, including the ValleyConneX Biblical Counseling center which just celebrated 10 years of ministry where we have 12 trained and experienced biblical counselors engaging about 20 people per week. Thriving men's and women's ministries are building strong families. Young families are being equipped with the skills to rear children to be men and women who will bring glory to our Lord Jesus Christ.

We believe that all this was in God's heart in 1963 when a small group of people gathered here in a farm field by a new highway intersection to establish what would be the physical presence of the body of Christ known as Valley Baptist Church. Our desire is to carry on that vision of a vibrant church faithfully fulfilling the mission of preparing people to meet Jesus. We have full assurance that his next step of building will have as great an impact as that first unit established 56 years ago. Our desire is that people 50 years from now will be blessed by our faithfulness in following the Lord as we have been by those who have gone on before us.

We are so grateful to Builders for Christ for your partnership in this effort.