

LEADERSHIP HANDBOOK

*Your guide to creating and multiplying simple
expressions of church where disciple-making
disciples emerge.*

Table Of Contents

Introduction 4-12

| | |
|---|----|
| <u>Introduction</u> | 4 |
| <u>How to Get the Most Out of This Handbook</u> | 5 |
| <u>Mission & Vision</u> | 6 |
| <u>Core Identity & History</u> | 7 |
| <u>Prophetic Words</u> | 8 |
| <u>Microchurch</u> | 9 |
| <u>Leadership Structure</u> | 10 |
| <u>Church Structure</u> | 11 |
| <u>What It Means to Be Vineyard</u> | 12 |

Microchurch & Leaders 14-25

| | |
|---|----|
| <u>Picture of a Microchurch</u> | 14 |
| <u>When Is It a Microchurch?</u> | 15 |
| <u>Church Gatherings</u> | 16 |
| <u>Microchurch vs. Traditional Small Groups</u> | 17 |
| <u>Types of Microchurches</u> | 18 |
| <u>Picture of a Leader</u> | 19 |
| <u>Multiplication & Apprenticeship</u> | 20 |
| <u>Microchurch Leader Commitments</u> | 21 |
| <u>MVVC Microchurch Leader Commitment Document</u> | 22 |
| <u>Partner Microchurch Leader Commitment Document</u> | 23 |

Introduction

Introduction

Contributor(s):



Wade Coffey, Cameron Godfrey

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We want to thank you for committing to advance the Kingdom of God as a part of Muskingum Valley Vineyard Church. Because microchurch communities are our primary means of discipleship, our church depends on the health and well-being of each microchurch. You help form the backbone of this church family. We are proud of you and are praying for you and your journey towards growth, maturity, and fruitfulness!

Our goal is to help you make disciples as you envision the kind of community you hope to develop. While there are many values and mechanics that are common across all microchurches, there are also specific situations and nuances that each microchurch will face. This handbook is aimed at addressing many of those challenges and opportunities you will face along the way. We hope this field guide will be filled with the good things we all learn along the way.

Meet Wade and Cameron

Wade and Cameron are the Network Leader and the Associate Network Leader. This means that they serve the microchurches by strengthening and equipping the network. To do this, they draw on experience, research, and good friends who know a lot about this stuff!

From Cameron

Hello! I am the primary architect of this handbook. I want you to help me! If you have something to offer or something you have learned, please let me know! I want this to be a collection of what the network has learned about leading microchurches.

Email me at cameron@muskingumvineyard.org

How to Get the Most Out of This Handbook

Contributor:



Cameron Godfrey



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This handbook is meant to be a practitioners field guide for those who are currently leading or are preparing to lead a microchurch. It is not exhaustive, nor is it designed to be read cover to cover, although you are welcome to do so.

This is living document. It is an ever-growing library of articles and accompanying videos. These pages contain the best we have found and the best we have to offer in the relevant content areas. In this guide, you will find info about who we are, helpful perspectives on how to lead a microchurch well, how to deal with common challenges, and much more! Many of these lessons come from those who are gifted in each specific content area. Much of the content comes from hard lessons learned over time from practice.

Using This Handbook

This is a desk reference and field guide.

This handbook's contents are not theoretical or philosophical approaches to microchurch life. Each section aims to deliver helpful content to people who are taking an active role in leading a microchurch. The goal is for this handbook to be helpful to someone who has a context to apply what they learn from its pages. You will find some theology as well as some ways to conceptualize and approach certain topics. But those frameworks serve to help you move towards the things you desire for your microchurch.

I encourage you to keep this handbook on your radar and familiarize yourself with its contents. Use it to help you in ways that are relevant to your needs and goals as a leader. And use it to help you apprentice and raise up future leaders.

Mission & Vision

Contributor:

Muskingum Valley
Vineyard Church

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Our Mission

Our mission is to obey the Great Commandment (*Matt. 22:36-40*) and fulfill the Great Commission (*Matt. 28:16-20*).

In other words, the mission of our church network is to:

**Love God, Love People,
and Make Disciples**

Our Vision

Our vision is how we aim to accomplish this mission.

By the grace of God and the power of the Holy Spirit we will advance God's kingdom in the Muskingum Valley and beyond by proclaiming the good news and multiplying microchurches of Christ-following disciples.

Core Identity & History

Contributor:

Muskingum Valley
Vineyard Church

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Core Identity

At our core we are a network of microchurches. A church that consists of small groups of disciples. Our core identity is found both in our structure and in what fills it.

The Muskingum Valley Vineyard Church is an amazing family joining our limitless God on His epic mission! We place an emphasis on following Jesus in His words and His works and teaching others to do the same. We believe that as we put God's Word into practice in our lives, we will grow in passionate worship, otherworldly love, rich generosity, and the supernatural power of the Holy Spirit. We live this out together with God and with one another – sharing our lives as we join in God's adventure of reaching the Muskingum Valley, discipling nations, and changing the world!

Our History

In 2002, the Muskingum Valley Vineyard Church (MVVC) started in a living room. This small group hungered for real relationships with God and with each other. This group multiplied and began to share central gatherings on Sundays. With time, more and more energy and focus began going into these Sunday gatherings. As a result, we began to lose some of our core identity as a church of small groups.

As a church, we felt that God gave us an opportunity in the midst of the COVID-19 "global reset." God re-established our core identity as a church of small groups. He encouraged us to "break out of the box." And he gave us a fresh vision for planting microchurches throughout the Muskingum Valley and beyond.

Prophetic Words

Contributor:

Muskingum Valley
Vineyard Church

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MVVC has received several prophetic words about our church. These reveal God's plan for our church family as it relates to our mission and vision.

Bonanza Map

Two independent people at different times have shared the same picture with us. While praying for our church, they saw a picture of a map. This map had the city of Zanesville at the center. And like the title sequence of the TV show "Bonanza," a fire started in the middle of the map and spread outward. We believe that this means that God is starting something here in Zanesville. Its effects will have a multiplicative impact. We eagerly desire to see discipleship and revival spread outward in all directions.

Isaiah 26:2-3

God spoke to Wade Coffey through a passage at an important time in our church's history.

*'Sing about a fruitful vineyard: I, the Lord, watch over it;
I water it continually.
I guard it day and night
so that no one may harm it.'* (Isaiah 26:2-3)

The Lord affirmed Wade that He (God) is the leader of this church and that He is taking care of it day and night. Wade also pictured grape clusters on a vine throughout the Muskingum Valley. These grape clusters represented small groups, which we call microchurches.

With our core identity, our history, and these prophetic words, we are confident in who we are and what we do. We believe that God wants us to make disciple-makers and plant microchurches. In doing so, we can see his fire spread as his leadership and care expand into every corner of society.

Microchurch

Contributor:

Muskingum Valley
Vineyard Church

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Microchurches are simple, God-filled expressions of church.



In these supernatural communities disciple-making disciples and microchurch leaders emerge as people share life, do mission, and pursue freedom together in God's presence.

A microchurch is an ecosystem where discipleship happens and disciple-makers emerge. They are simple and reproducible. New microchurches naturally emerge as disciples multiply. At MVVC, microchurches are the primary gatherings, and microchurch leaders are the primary leaders of the church. We aim to support and strengthen the network of microchurches toward multiplication.

The network's relationship with microchurches is based on shared values and a commitment to journey together. We enjoy unity in mission and purpose. We do not achieve unity based on controlling your discipleship efforts. Microchurch leaders are the owners of their discipleship ministry. God has uniquely called them to faithfully lead and serve their communities. Because of this, each microchurch is one of a kind. They will all have a unique focus, context, and mix of people with diverse gifts.

Despite their differences and uniqueness, they all feel like home. There are common threads that run through each microchurch (core values, primary practices, MVVC culture, etc.).

Leadership Structure

Contributor:  Muskingum Valley Vineyard Church |  Watch or Share


Leadership Structure and Roles


Our leadership structure is an inverted pyramid. The lower levels exist to serve, equip, and strengthen those above them.



Church Structure

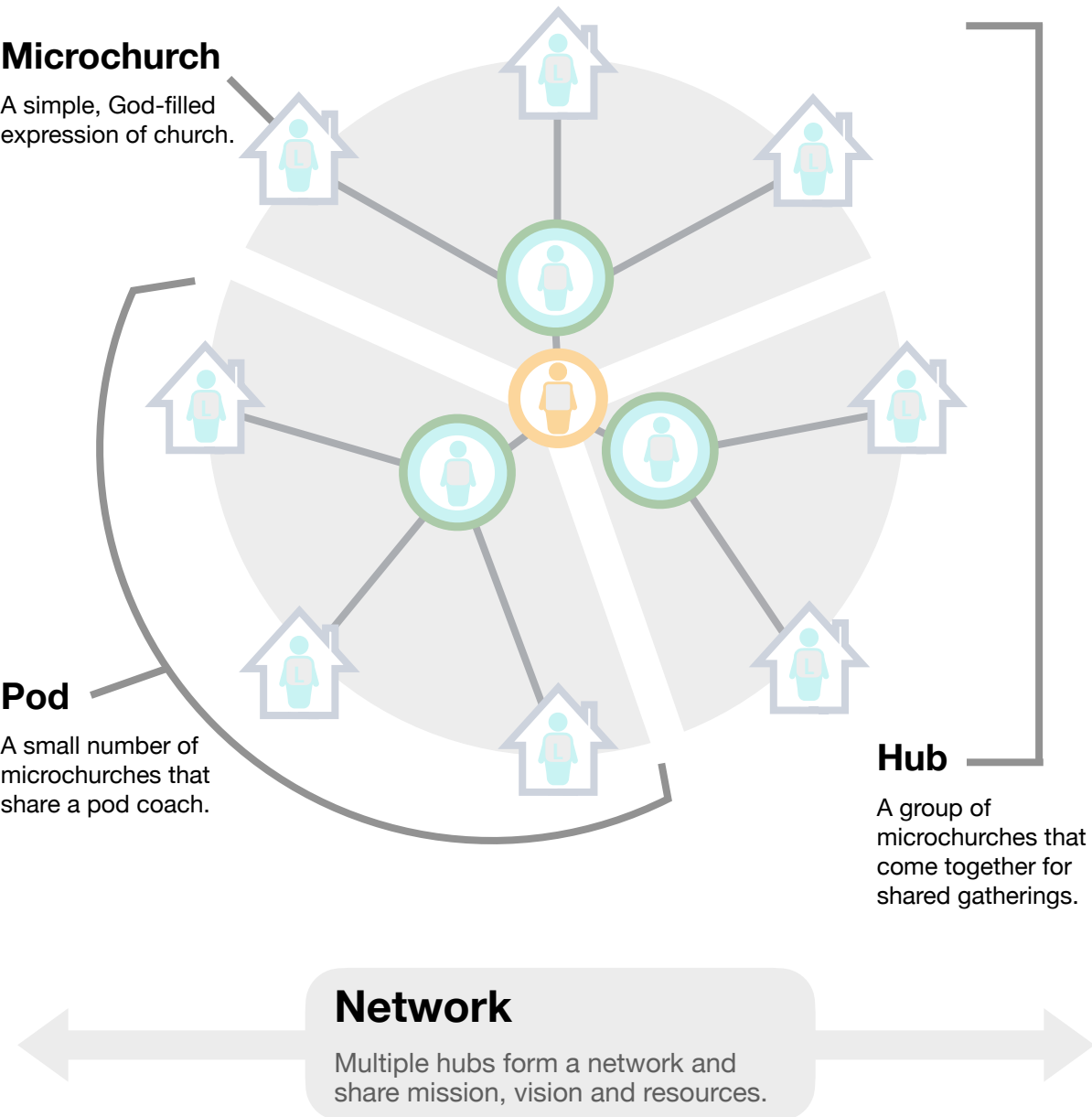
Contributor:

 Muskingum Valley Vineyard Church

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Microchurches, Pods, and Hubs, and the Network

Our network is subdivided to make sure the leaders are receiving the support and care they need.



What It Means to Be Vineyard

Contributor(s):



Vineyard USA, MVVC



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There is so much we love about the Vineyard. It is a joy to be a part of a movement that cares for its leaders and churches so well. Vineyard values and theology are core to who we are as a church. We also love the relationships we enjoy with fellow Vineyards.

From Vineyard USA

In the Vineyard, we see Jesus' teaching on the kingdom of God as the overarching and integrating theme of the Scriptures. From our beginnings, the Vineyard has been committed to the proclamation of the kingdom of God, and to bearing witness to the deeds of the kingdom through healing (physical, emotional, and social), doing justice, and delivering those held captive by evil.

[Visit Vineyard USA's Core Values Page](#)

Learn More About the Vineyard, Its Heritage Its Theology

These two teaching series are a part of MVVC's "Vineyard Digital Membership". If you are a microchurch leader or apprentice, we can provide you with account info to access this content.



Kingdom of God

Vineyard founder, John Wimber, teaches about the Kingdom of God



Celebrating the Tensions of the Kingdom

Vineyard theologians, Morpheu and Nicholson, teach on the kingdom.

"We Are Vineyard" Podcast

Perhaps the best way to understand the Vineyard is through the stories of its leaders. This podcast features newer and founding leaders in the Vineyard. They tell their stories and communicate vineyard values, distinctives, and culture from their perspective and experience. Available on most podcast platforms.



Microchurch & Leaders

Microchurch Experience

Contributor:

Muskingum Valley
Vineyard Church

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You are at your best when sharing life through genuine relationships in God's family. In these communities, love, forgiveness, generosity, and commitment are most powerful. You celebrate together, cry together, encourage one another, and challenge one another. A high value is placed on family, fellowship, and fun. People of all ages and stages are welcome in microchurches. These are places to know and be known in ways that are not quite possible in larger gatherings.

Wherever a microchurch meets, there is no need for a stage or elaborate production. All they need is the family of God loving Him and linking arms in His mission. As you do this together, you will see people saved, healed, and delivered as they fall more in love with Him.

A microchurch offers Holy Spirit-filled environments. God is on the move in these settings, as He is welcomed through worship and prayer, and lives are transformed. A hallmark of microchurches is that you not only learn God's word but obey it as well. It is a safe place to step out and take risks. The group encourages one another to grow in spiritual gifts and in maturity in Christ.

As you grow in Christ's love, it overflows beyond microchurch gatherings. There is a constant awareness of God's mission as you share "God stories" and testimonies. Heartfelt prayers are offered for the lost and unchurched. Microchurch communities are compelled to raise up new leaders and plant more microchurches, because your experience of God and His family are too good to keep to yourselves. In this way, God's family will organically grow throughout the Muskingum Valley. Invitations to "come and see" will branch out with the desire for more people to experience life with God.

When Is It a Microchurch?

Contributor:

Muskingum Valley
Vineyard Church

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When Is a Group a Microchurch?

You can start as a microchurch from day one, or a microchurch can be formed over time. If God is developing a microchurch from an existing group, how do you know when a group is a microchurch?

A group is best considered a microchurch under the following conditions:

- *It is a simple and complete expression of "church" that is reproducible*
- *3+ households are consistently represented*
- *The group gathers regularly*
- *There is a microchurch leader*
- *It expresses the core values and primary practices of microchurches*
- *Christ-following disciples and future microchurch leaders emerge*
- *Disciples grow by practicing spiritual gifts & exploring personal calling*
- *There is a relational connection to a larger network for strength, knowledge, and accountability (resources, coaching, fellowship, etc.)*

Church Gatherings

Contributor:

Muskingum Valley
Vineyard Church

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Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. Acts 2:46-47a

In Acts, disciples gathered in the temple courts and in homes. We value both types of gatherings and recognize the unique strengths of each. These gatherings should complement one another, not compete. They increase the network's potential to make and multiply disciples when working in harmony together.

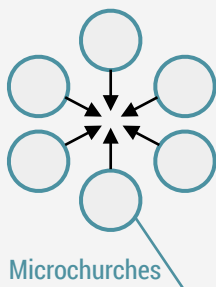
Microchurch



A simple, God-filled expression of church

Strengths: This gathering provides a context to learn and apply God's word with accountability (applying the "one another" passages of the Bible, for example). It also provides a context to identify and grow in spiritual gifts. There is built-in support and care for each of its members. This is a great context to make disciples and raise up leaders.

All-Church Gatherings



A larger expression of church and a "family reunion" of microchurches

Strengths: This gathering provides a larger context for people to practice spiritual gifts in various ways. It allows the network to be strengthened through corporate worship and teaching. It also allows microchurches to strengthen one another. Large gatherings facilitate communication, community, and networking between microchurches.

Microchurch

vs.

Traditional Small Groups

Contributor:

Muskingum Valley
Vineyard Church

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How a Microchurch Differs From a Traditional Small Group

- Microchurches are the “main thing” in our network.
- They don’t support or serve a larger gathering.
- The large gatherings support and serve the microchurch gatherings.
- They meet the biblical DNA or definition of a church.
- They are designed to be simple and reproducible.
- Disciples and future leaders emerge from microchurches.

Microchurch

Microchurches are independent communities within a decentralized network of other microchurches. They are simple, but complete expressions of the church. They serve to provide everyday believers with contexts to grow as disciples, make disciples, take part in the body of Christ, and multiply God’s kingdom.

Microchurch leaders retain ownership of their discipleship initiatives. God called them and entrusted them with the leadership and care of their community. Microchurch leaders receive coaching, which is not a way to control microchurches. The coach comes alongside to provide care, accountability, encouragement and connect the leader to helpful oversight.

Microchurches are not franchises of a larger church ministry. They are contextualized and customized for each leader and community. Each microchurch carries its own specific calling or vision. Microchurches get the best of both worlds. They have autonomy and can operate in ways that make sense to them. And they enjoy the fellowship, encouragement, and strengthening that come from the network. Because of the shared values, there is a degree of consistency across all the unique microchurches. Despite their differences, they all feel like “home.”

Types of Microchurches

Contributor:

Muskingum Valley
Vineyard Church

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At MVVC, we recognize two types of microchurches, which are MVVC microchurches and partner microchurches. We also recognize groups and initiatives that are not microchurches as "Other Ministries".

MVVC Microchurch

These are microchurches that are fully connected to our network. Its leaders commit to connect with the network in various ways (see Leaders Commitment page). These commitments help the leader receive support and maintain connection with other leaders in the network. MVVC microchurches experience the full range of benefits of what the network has to offer.

Partner Microchurch

Partner microchurches are not part of the network, but they journey alongside the network and benefit from what we have to offer.

Not every leader will be able to commit to being an MVVC microchurch. That is okay! Someone may be unable to make it to leaders gatherings or All-Church Gatherings. They may live out of town or even be part of a different church. But if someone wants to lead a microchurch, we want to help! This is where the value of multiplying God's kingdom and church unity comes into play. If we are going to see the great commission fulfilled, it is going to take all of us. If someone wants to be on the same journey as us, we want to serve them. We offer coaching, encouragement, and support to partner microchurches.

Other Ministry

Other ministries are led by members of the network and are not trying to be complete expressions of church.

Various ministry initiatives will emerge as disciples step into their specific areas of calling. Without being a church community, they either equip the body of Christ in specific ways or they serve others they are called to reach. Other ministries could be book studies, prayer groups, groups that serve a specific population, etc. These groups are at their best when they receive support from a microchurch. Leaders of other ministries need the support and care of a community to lead their groups well.

These initiatives are exciting, and they serve to strengthen the network. They bring variety and diverse contexts for people to grow and serve without replacing the discipleship context of a microchurch.

Picture of a Leader

Contributor:

Muskingum Valley
Vineyard Church

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*What are the characteristics of a microchurch leader?
The following is a list of what we look for in a microchurch leader.*

Microchurch Leaders...

- Faithfully serve their microchurches by loving, empowering, praying for, and regularly gathering its members.
- Grow in knowledge and relationship with God and pursue Godly character.
- Love what they do as a leader and continually grow in their craft.
- Intentionally empower group members and disciple future leaders.
- Use the Bible to create a disciple-making culture.
- Connect to people and resources that help provide support, care, growth, and learning. (No Lone Ranger Microchurch Leaders!)
- Carry vision for growth and multiplication.
- Expect God to work in and through the microchurch and look for what the Holy Spirit is doing and create opportunities to partner with his work.

Multiplication & Apprenticeship

Contributor:

Muskingum Valley
Vineyard Church

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Multiplication

Working together, we can multiply God's kingdom!

We value multiplication because God values multiplication. Throughout the New Testament, we see Jesus and other leaders charging disciples with the commission to make disciples who make disciples. The church is God's chosen vehicle to reach the world with the love of Jesus. Through multiplying disciples and churches, this commission may be fulfilled. Because of this, we aim to create more and more spaces for people to encounter God and his family and to be discipled. We believe we can see this happen if we keep things simple and reproducible as a network of microchurches.

This is why we keep the reproduction of disciples, leaders, and microchurches on our radar. It is easy to lose sight of these goals and become inwardly focused. It is important to maintain an outward focus because the church is its most authentic self when it is sending out disciples to reach the lost and multiplying churches.

Apprenticeship

We desire to see each microchurch have an apprentice leader.

The word "disciple" in the Bible may be translated to today's word for "apprentice." An apprentice is one who is learning the ways of their master. We want to help people learn the ways of their master, Jesus. As people follow Jesus, God will raise up disciple-makers and microchurch leaders. These leaders need apprenticed in how to lead a simple, God-filled expression of church.

The apprenticeship process is simply inviting a person in whom you see potential to walk alongside you to learn how you do what you do. Like learning any trade, it is important to learn from a practitioner and not just from a textbook. We offer future leaders a person instead of a curriculum. We provide helpful content to help with this journey, but the current leaders are our best leadership developers. We have much more to say and more resources in the Apprenticeship chapter of this handbook (when it is completed).

It is important to understand the kingdom value of multiplication and discipling disciple-makers (apprenticeship).

Microchurch Leader Commitments

Contributor:

Muskingum Valley
Vineyard Church[Watch or Share](#)

MVVC Microchurch Leader Commitment

MVVC Microchurch leaders commit to:

- **Faithfully serve their microchurch:** A microchurch leader's primary commitment is to lead well. This involves continuing to learn and grow as a leader.
- **Pursue Christ-like character:** No one arrives at complete maturity, but leaders must commit to setting their lives on a trajectory of growth and maturity in Christ.
- **Regular coaching and mentoring:** This ensures that microchurch leaders get consistent care, accountability, and support from a coach.
- **MVVC Involvement:** Microchurch leaders consistently attend All-Church Gatherings, they give generously to MVVC, and they support and honor the leadership of MVVC. In other words, their hearts and their lives are networked together with others at MVVC.
(To be a MVVC microchurch, the members of the microchurch do not have to commit to MVVC involvement, only the leader. We expect to reach many people beyond the connection and reach of the network and its large gatherings.)
- **Regularly attend Leaders Gatherings:** This is an important layer of support, networking, care, and equipping for leaders. This also facilitates the connection and formation of a relational network of microchurches.

Partner Microchurch

Partner Microchurches commit to:

- **Faithfully serving their microchurch:** (See above description)
- **Pursuing Christ-like character:** (See above description)
- **Regular coaching and mentoring:** (See above description)

(These leaders commit in all ways except for those that relate to being networked with the people and leaders of MVVC.)

The following pages are the Leaders Commitment Documents that we ask MVVC Microchurch Leaders and Partner Microchurch Leaders to sign.

MVVC Network Microchurch Leader Commitment

For the benefit of the microchurch and the MVVC network, Microchurch Leaders commit to...

Faithfully serve their microchurch.

This means loving, empowering, and regularly praying for their microchurch and its members. This is a commitment to facilitate regular microchurch gatherings built on the foundation of these *core values* and *primary practices*:

Core Values

- **Presence:** God's presence. Knowing and experiencing Him personally and corporately.
- **Family:** God's family, believers. Authentic Christian community that shares life together.
- **Mission:** Outward focus on the lost and unchurched. Planting new microchurches.
- **Freedom:** Cultivating an environment of freedom where people are saved, healed, and delivered.

Primary Practices

- *Learn & Apply God's Word*
- *Worship*
- *Prayer*
- *Discipleship*
- *Evangelism*
- *Generous Giving*
- *Sharing Life* (gather, fellowship, food, fun, share "God stories," communion, care, etc.)

Pursuing Christ-like character.

In addition to their strong desire to play a role in God's kingdom advancement, they are F.A.S.T. leaders: Faithful, Available, Servant-hearted, and Teachable. While they do not need to be fully mature Christian leaders without struggles, they do need to be committed to growing as believers and leaders.

Regular coaching and mentoring.

- At least one designated leader per microchurch receives personal coaching from a Pod Coach at least once a month.
- Microchurch Leaders commit to intentionally mentor Apprentices and potential leaders who want to lead microchurches.

MVVC involvement.

- Consistently attending All-Church Gatherings for the hub of which their microchurch is a part.
- Giving generously to the Lord's work through MVVC by giving financially*, praying, and at times fasting.
- Honor, support, and follow MVVC's leadership.

Regularly attend Leaders Gatherings.

In addition to their own consistent attendance, they are encouraged to invite potential future leaders from their microchurch to join them. Other "Church Leaders" (Pod Coaches, Senior Servant Team, and possibly some other staff members) in their hub will also attend Leadership Gatherings.

Other responsibilities.

- At times Microchurch Leaders may be asked to join other Church Leaders to function as an advisory group to the Senior Servant Team (Elders). Occasionally there may be issues that require a vote. If this is the case, only current Church Leaders may vote (potential future leaders may not vote). For example, each year Church Leaders will vote on which non-MVVC ministries to financially support.
- Microchurch Leaders commit to contribute helpful information about their microchurch to MVVC. This would include any helpful data or other info the staff, Pod Coaches, or Senior Servant Team (Elders) might ask for. (I.e. attendance, names of microchurch members, those baptized, future leaders, etc.)

*A note about financial giving: We are convinced that a leader who loves the church network and its mission would want to financially support what they help lead. Matthew 6:21 says "where your treasure is, there your heart will be..." We believe a leader's heart should be in what the Lord has given them the privilege to help lead. We see these leaders as people whose hearts are invested in the MVVC network. If there is reluctance to give generously, that person should not be a MVVC network Microchurch Leader.

With excitement to embark on this new kingdom adventure, I understand and commit to the responsibilities of a Microchurch Leader in the MVVC network.

New Microchurch Leader(s)

(print name)_____ (signature)_____

(print name)_____ (signature)_____

Date_____

Sending Microchurch

(signature)_____ Date_____

Microchurch Leader's Pod Coach

(signature)_____ Date_____

Partner Microchurch Leader Commitment

Microchurch Leaders in partnership with MVVC commit to...

Faithfully serve their microchurch.

This means loving, empowering, and regularly praying for their microchurch and its members. This is a commitment to facilitate regular microchurch gatherings built on the foundation of these *core values* and *primary practices*:

Core Values

- **Presence:** God's presence. Knowing and experiencing Him personally and corporately.
- **Family:** God's family, believers. Authentic Christian community that shares life together.
- **Mission:** Outward focus on the lost and unchurched. Planting new microchurches.
- **Freedom:** Cultivating an environment of freedom where people are saved, healed, and delivered.

Primary Practices

- *Learn & Apply God's Word*
- *Worship*
- *Prayer*
- *Discipleship*
- *Evangelism*
- *Generous Giving*
- *Sharing Life* (gather, fellowship, food, fun, share "God stories," communion, care, etc.)

Pursuing Christ-like character.

In addition to their strong desire to play a role in God's kingdom advancement, they are F.A.S.T. leaders: Faithful, Available, Servant-hearted, and Teachable. While they do not need to be fully mature Christian leaders without struggles, they do need to be committed to growing as believers and leaders.

Regular coaching and mentoring.

- At least one designated leader per microchurch receives personal coaching from an MVVC Pod Coach or Microchurch Leader at least once a month.
- Microchurch Leaders commit to intentionally mentor Apprentices and potential leaders who want to lead microchurches.
- Partner Microchurch Leaders are encouraged to attend MVVC Leaders Gatherings and are welcome to attend All-Church Gatherings.

***With excitement to embark on this new kingdom adventure, I understand
and commit to the responsibilities of a Microchurch Leader partnered with the MVVC network.***

New Microchurch Leader(s)

(print name)_____ (signature)_____

(print name)_____ (signature)_____

Date_____

Microchurch Leader's Coach

(signature)_____ Date_____