



New PARTNERs class

Handbook

"Let them give glory to the LORD and proclaim his praise in the islands."

Isaiah 42:12

COURSE OUTLINE

*"So we, who are many, are one Body in Christ,
and individually members one of another. "*

ROMANS 12:5

VINEYARD ASSEMBLY OF GOD CHURCH IS A PLACE WHERE the message of Jesus Christ is proclaimed. But proclaiming the Gospel alone does not make us a church. What makes us a church, not just an evangelistic organization, is the degree to which we are a *community*. We have attendees and visitors but we also have members. People can *belong* to our fellowship. They can know they're *connected*.

SESSION 1: Introduction & History/Vision of Vineyard Assembly of God.

A look at the history and vision of Vineyard Assembly of God ~ we should remember where we came from to better understand where we're going.

SESSION 2: What We Believe – Part 1

An overview of the first 8 of the 16 core doctrines that all Assembly of God churches, ministers, and members must agree upon.

SESSION 3: What We Believe – Part 2

An overview of the second 8 of the 16 core doctrines that all Assembly of God churches, ministers, and members must agree upon.

SESSION 4: Qualifications & Responsibilities of Partnership.

Partnership is a serious decision, joining a church is not like joining a club or civic organization. Becoming a Partner of a church means making a commitment to maturity and ministry (as God leads).

CONTENTS OF YOUR PACKET

New Member's Class Handbook

Vineyard Assembly of God Constitution & Bylaws

Application for Partnership

!!! REMEMBER !!!

Since, as a Partner, you will be responsible for helping govern the church, the Vineyard Assembly of God Constitution & Bylaws is required reading.

Assemblies of God

Fellowship History

The General Council of the Assemblies of God (USA), one of the largest Pentecostal denominations in the United States, was organized in 1914 by a broad coalition of ministers who desired to work together to fulfill common objectives, such as sending missionaries and providing fellowship and accountability. Formed in the midst of the emerging worldwide Pentecostal revival, the Assemblies of God quickly took root in other countries and formed indigenous national organizations. The Assemblies of God (USA) is a constituent member of the World Assemblies of God Fellowship – one of the largest Pentecostal fellowships in the world.

Historical Roots

Throughout the latter half of the 19th century in the United States, Protestants from various backgrounds began to ask themselves why their churches did not seem to exhibit the same vibrant, faith-filled life as those in the New Testament. Many of these believers joined evangelical or Holiness churches, engaged in ardent prayer and personal sacrifice, and earnestly sought God. It was in this context that people began experiencing biblical spiritual gifts.

Pentecostal pioneers were hungry for authentic Christianity, and they looked to previous spiritual outpourings, such as the First Great Awakening (1730s-40s) and Second Great Awakening (1800s-30s), for inspiration and instruction. They identified themselves in the tradition of reformers and revivalists such as Martin Luther, John Wesley, and Dwight L. Moody.

The Pentecostal Revival

One of the focal points of the emerging Pentecostal movement was known as the Azusa Street revival (1906-09). It was an unlikely location for an event that would change the face of Christianity. In the summer of 1906, revival erupted in the newly-formed congregation meeting at the small, run-down Apostolic Faith Mission at 312 Azusa Street in Los Angeles, California. Critics attacked the congregation because its mild-mannered African-American Holiness preacher, William J. Seymour, preached racial reconciliation and the restoration of biblical spiritual gifts. The revival soon became a local sensation, then attracted thousands of curiosity seekers and pilgrims from around the world.

Seymour had been a student of Charles Parham, who provided the doctrinal framework for the young Pentecostal movement. Parham's identification in scripture of speaking in tongues as the "Bible evidence" (later called the "initial evidence") of Spirit baptism became a defining mark of the emerging Pentecostal movement. After students at his Bethel Bible School in Topeka, Kansas, began speaking in tongues at a prayer meeting on January 1, 1901, Parham, through his Apostolic Faith Movement, had some success in promoting the restoration of the gift of tongues. While the Apostolic Faith Movement was largely confined to the south central United States, the revival at Azusa Street catapulted Pentecostalism before a worldwide audience.

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Formation of the Assemblies of God

As the revival rapidly spread, many Pentecostals recognized the need for greater organization and accountability. The founding fathers and mothers of the Assemblies of God met in Hot Springs, Arkansas on April 2-12, 1914 to promote unity and doctrinal stability, establish legal standing, coordinate the mission enterprise, and establish a ministerial training school. These founders constituted the first General Council and elected two officers: Eudorus N. Bell as chairman (title later changed to general superintendent) and J. Roswell Flower as secretary, as well as the first executive presbytery.



The approximately 300 delegates to the first General Council represented a variety of independent churches and networks of churches, including the “Association of Christian Assemblies” in Indiana and the “Church of God in Christ and in Unity with the Apostolic Faith Movement” from Alabama, Arkansas, Mississippi, and Texas.

Almost immediately, leaders were faced with a doctrinal dispute – whether to abandon traditional Trinitarian theology in favor of a modal monarchian view of the godhead (also called the “New Issue” or Oneness theology). In 1916 the General Council approved a Statement of Fundamental Truths, which affirmed Trinitarian orthodoxy.

From the beginning, evangelism and missions have been central to the identity of the Assemblies of God and have resulted in a continuing growth at home and abroad. In 2007, the Assemblies of God claimed a constituency in the United States of 2,836,174 adherents; 12,311 churches; and 33,622 ministers. The General Council supported 2,691 foreign missionaries and associates working with the broader World Assemblies of God Fellowship, whose adherents numbered more than 57 million.

The aggressive missions programs of the church are designed to establish self-supporting and self-propagating national church bodies in every country. Ministers and leaders are trained in 1,891 foreign Bible schools. The Assemblies of God has 19 endorsed Bible colleges, universities, and a seminary in the United States.

The national headquarters of the Assemblies of God is located in Springfield, Missouri. The headquarters includes an administration building, the Gospel Publishing House, and the International Distribution Center. The Gospel Publishing House, the printing arm of the church, turns out more than 12 tons of gospel literature each day.

Vineyard Assembly of God

Church History

Vineyard Assembly of God was established on October 16, 1979 when a New Bedford fisherman was sent to Martha's Vineyard as a missionary under the auspices of the Southern New England District of the Assemblies of God. Rev. Kurt Birkeland, who had been a medic in the army, started the church in a bus at the Lobster Hatchery. That congregation actually died out, and the church later resurfaced in the building across from John's Fish Market on State Road, with Kurt Birkeland still the pastor. Donna Paulson, who has been a member of Vineyard Assembly the longest, attended that congregation with just four other people, one of whom is now a missionary to the Czech Republic (Tom Lilliendahl).

Rev. Kurt Birkeland left in May of 1986 and later began pastoring a church elsewhere. Vineyard AG was without a pastor for approximately six months, and the members took turns preaching on Sunday mornings.

In November of 1986, Rev. Greg Bar arrived, with his wife Karin and their daughter Bethany, to pastor the church. After land was donated in 1989, a foundation was laid for the present building, but nothing more was done until 1992, when there was a push to get the building up. Between volunteer labor from the church, assistance from the community, and help from the district (including workers from other churches), the building was completed in late 1993 and the congregation held a Christmas Eve service there.

Rev. Greg Bar continued as the pastor until May 31, 2004. At that time he moved to Cape Cod as a church planter. Vineyard Assembly was without a pastor for five months, then Rev. Walter Rogero moved from Tulsa, Oklahoma, to serve as pastor. Rev. Rogero was the pastor for a bit over a year, and then, due to consequences of wrong choices, had to step aside from serving as pastor. His wife, Heather, was an ordained pastor also, and the church elected to accept her as pastor for a year, until Walter could return to the pulpit. Walter was reinstated as pastor in March of 2007 and a year later, in May of 2008, announced his resignation from the church. Heather was in a difficult pregnancy and it was decided that she would be better off back in Oklahoma near her family. Pastor Walter preached his last sermon on Father's Day, and Pastor Bob Hallquist took over as the interim pastor the following week.

The process of building a parsonage on the property had begun during the three and a half years that the Rogeros were at the church. By the time they left, the parsonage was more than halfway done. The parsonage was finally completed in the summer of 2009, and dedicated on July 12th.

Rev. Bob Hallquist served as interim pastor until October 20th 2009, when he was taken home to be with our wonderful Lord.

As God's timing would have it, the church membership had already affirmed the Pastoral Search Committee's recommendation of Rev. Joseph Dockter to serve as pastor. Rev. Dockter began to

serve as pastor on November 1, 2009 accompanied by his wife Carol and children Daniel and Christiana. During his ministry, Pastor Joseph led the church into a period of healthy growth as the church grew to include more of the Island community. Pastor Joseph announced his resignation in August, 2016 as he had accepted the pastorate of an Assembly of God church in Springfield, Massachusetts. Although this was a sad blow the church, the Pulpit Committee and the congregation rallied together in prayer for God's leading to God's choice for a new pastor.

Following the leading of the Holy Spirit, the Pulpit Committee chose to recognize God's call on Rev. Matthew Splittgerber who was elected pastor on November 20, 2016. Pastor Matthew (along with his wife Elizabeth and their children Sean, Nathan, and Madelyn) relocated to the Island on December 19, 2016 from upstate New York where he had previously pastored the same church for 15 years. It is interesting to note that Pastor Matthew and Liz had actually spent part of their honeymoon in October 2000 here on Martha's Vineyard!

And so continues the story of Vineyard Assembly of God...