

NEXTGEN VISION SCRIPT



Welcome NextGen Fam! Isn't it such an honor and a privilege to be on this team? New Life is an amazing church to be a part of. As a multi-ethnic, multi-generational, movement of God expressed in 27 locations (as of today) throughout Chicagoland; the Lord has uniquely positioned us in a world-class city to reach all generations for His glory. As an organization, we also firmly believe that the Next Generation is not only important, but essential as we move forward into this new season of ministry and will serve as the springboard for UNITING Chicago for Jesus.

With this in mind, I've put together this "vision script" that will serve as a blueprint for where we are heading. As a team, we will be referring back to this regularly to make sure we are heading in the right direction. After spending time in prayer and before the Lord, I believe He has gifted us with this vision for moving forward in ministry to kids, youth, and their parents. So, welcome to OUR vision script. I say our vision script because this is not mine. This is the Lord's and is open for tweaking and new ideas at this early stage. We are all part of His church and therefore all have ideas to bring forward.

I believe the Lord has given this fresh vision to us as we seek to reach the Next Generation for Jesus throughout Chicagoland and BEYOND! Vision is an interesting thing isn't it? Vision exists in the non-physical world of our minds and even though it cannot be seen, it is very, very real. In fact the most important things in this world are the unseen things when they are recognized as real.

"If all you see is what you see, you do not see all there is to be seen."

-Tony Evans

"So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal..."

-The Apostle Paul (2 Corinthians 4:18)

"What is most essential is what is invisible to the eye."

-Fred Rogers

Faith. Hope. Love. Truth. God. These are all invisible things, but are the things that are most vital to life. Vision is like this. Much like our faith, while invisible, vision has a massive capacity to bring change. But, it must be understood and practiced in order for it to truly make an impact. We serve an invisible God, but His plans and purposes are made visible through the obedience of His people.

So, here it is. A vision for the Next Generation Ministries of New Life Community Church. This is a vision of where we will be 3-5 years from now. It is written in the present-tense, because we believe that the Lord will make this, or greater things happen. He is able to do exceedingly and immeasurably more than we can ask or even imagine, so this is actually just a launching pad for His plans and His glory. Do more, Lord!

Here's to a long obedience in the same direction...

-Pastor Jeff

PART 1 - OUR TEAM

Teams are the people that God gives us to fulfill the vision He has provided. A strong team is vital and we have the best! We firmly believe that one of the key things that makes New Life special is the people of New Life. In our context, we have pastoral and staff team members along with volunteer team members. All are key. While some may have more influence, none are more important than any other. We believe that it is important to qualify the characteristics of our team. So, all of our team members are...

ALL TEAM MEMBERS

PASSIONATE - We are passionate about Jesus. Passionate about kids, teenagers, and parents. Passionate about reaching people for Jesus.

FLEXIBLE - We are flexible in how we reach kids, teens, and parents for Jesus. Always ready to change something if we find a better way.

BALANCED - We want all of our team members, both staff and volunteer, to enjoy a balanced life of ministry and family. We hold each other accountable to rest and sabbath.

ENCOURAGING - We are people who encourage others. Who build them up. We always choose to compliment before we criticize. We choose curiosity over criticism.

CURIOUS - Speaking of that, we are people who ask questions and are curious about other people, our world, different cultures, and different methods. We never stop learning.

FAITHFUL - We spend time in the Word and growing in our church. We pour from a full cup.

HUMBLE - We recognize that the Lord does the work, we are simply obedient to His call. We are quick to give Him and others the credit first.

HONEST - We work very hard to create a culture of transparency, authenticity, and telling the truth. There is no need or pressure to be dishonest about anything.

TEAM-MINDED - We are a team and act as such. No one goes it alone. We have each other's backs.

DISCIPLE MAKERS - All of our team are expected to be discipled and be discipling others.

FULL-TIME PASTORAL STAFF

VISION CARRIERS - Our pastoral staff are not only visionary leaders, but are vision carriers.

ABOVE REPROACH - Our pastors have boundaries built into their lives to protect themselves and those they serve from the schemes of the enemy.

STUBBORN & OPEN-MINDED - Our pastoral staff are stubborn on the "why," and open-minded with the "how."

SERVANTS - We serve from the top down. Or, in reality, the bottom up. We are servant leaders.

LISTENERS - No one's opinion is unworthy of our ear. While we don't work to please man (Galatians 1:10), we do work to love all and sometimes the best way to love someone is to simply listen to them. Especially those on our teams.

PART-TIME STAFF

VISION CARRIERS - All staff are vision carriers, whether full-time or part-time. They all play a role in carrying the vision.

VOCAL - Our team speaks up about things they see. Ideas, suggestions, new directions are all welcome.

ALL-CHURCH CHAMPIONS - Our staff see the value and beauty in our diversity and size. Therefore, they champion it. No location is better than another. We are all New Life, therefore we champion and support one another.

VOLUNTEERS

VISION CARRIERS - Just like the staff, all volunteers help carry the vision forward.

PRACTICAL - Our volunteers see practical solutions to our problems and opportunities.

LOCATION CHAMPIONS - Our volunteers champion the culture and stories of their locations. They are storytellers.

OUR STAFF STRUCTURE

Just as we all need structure in our lives to thrive, we also need clear structure in our staffing organization. Here is the breakdown of our New Life NextGen staff structure; from the all-church level to the location level. *(See attached org chart for a visual representation).*

ALL CHURCH

ALL CHURCH NEXTGEN PASTOR (1)

This is Pastor Jeff. He works with his core lead teams to hear from the Lord, cast vision, and implement structures and systems to the whole team.

REGIONAL

REGIONAL NEXTGEN PASTORS (3)

We have a full-time NextGen Pastor for each of our regions. They lead the teams of leaders in Kids & OneYth ministries across their individual regions outlined below...

NORTHSIDE NEXTGEN PASTOR

SOUTHSIDE NEXTGEN PASTOR

FARSIDE NEXTGEN PASTOR

These pastors report to the All-Church NextGen Pastor and are part of the All-Church NextGen Executive Leadership Team. They are full-time pastoral staff.

REGIONAL KIDS ZONE DIRECTOR/PASTOR (3)

Each region employs 1 full-time regional kids director or pastor. They may also be a location kids director or pastor, but they are also the team lead and point of contact for kids ministry in their region.

REGIONAL ONEYTH /DIRECTORPASTOR (3)

Each region employs 1 full-time regional youth director or pastor. They may also be a location OneYth director or pastor, but they are also the team lead and point of contact for OneYth for their region.

LOCATION

LOCATION KIDS DIRECTOR/PASTOR (Based on Locations)

Each location where children are a part of the neighborhood they are reaching employs a part-time or full time kids director or pastor. This is most locations. They may also hold a dual role of Office Manager if giftings align and size of ministry warrants.

If we want to reach the kids and families of Chicago, we must place emphasis here.

LOCATION ONEYTH DIRECTOR/PASTOR (Based on Locations)

Each location where youth are a part of the neighborhood there are reaching employs a part-time or full-time OneYth director or pastor. This is most locations. They may also hold a dual role at the location if giftings align and size of ministry warrants.

If we want to reach the youth of Chicago, we must place emphasis here.

With this structure in place, based on our current number of locations, we employ between 50-60 staff members who are invested in the Next Generation. This structure is scalable to include the leap into other US cities in the near future.

PART 2 - OUR OFFERING

Our offering is simply the answer to the following question. **Who has God uniquely equipped and positioned our church to be for our community?** We recognize that the Lord has positioned us to reach a large, diverse group of people throughout all of Chicagoland. Our locations, while they are all distinctively New Life, they are also uniquely Oak Lawn...uniquely Homer Glen...uniquely Norwood Park...uniquely Midway...uniquely Little Village and so on. Distinctively New Life, Uniquely themselves. As such, the way we meet the needs of our communities varies from community to community. However, there are some areas that are universal.

We are a church that...

ALIGNS LEADERS

- We align staff and volunteer leaders within New Life to a common strategy and common value system.
- We also seek to align leaders within the city of Chicago from other churches to reach our city.

REFINES THE MESSAGE

- We are a church that refines the message of the gospel to be clear, concise, repeatable, and universal. The message of Jesus is for all cultures and races.
- We create or use system-wide curriculum that is refined for each location and culture.
- We also employ a system-wide discipleship plan across all locations.

ELEVATES COMMUNITY

- We are a movement and church that crafts structure, creates environments, and plans experiences that elevate community, facilitates a relationship with Jesus, and cultivates the right kind of relationship with others.

PARTNERS WITH PARENTS

- We are a church that places emphasis in partnering with parents. We, as church leaders, have an average of 40 hours per year with kids and teenagers. Parents and guardians have 3,000 hours a year. We seek lasting impact by partnering with the primary influencer in a kid and teenager's life & help resource them to be disciple makers at home.

INFLUENCES SERVICE

- We give kids and teenagers consistent opportunities to serve. Therefore, giving them ways to help see themselves and their world through the eyes of Jesus.

What needs exist in our community?

- Chicago's kids and teens need Jesus! They also need places where they can BELONG, understand IDENTITY, and find PURPOSE.
- Chicago's families need clear direction in those areas as well. Parents need help.

If our church were to no longer exist, what void would exist in our community?

- Lack of and untrained family-championed discipleship.
- Kids and teens lack of faith and direction.
- Other churches would be less resourced.
- At-risk youth in local schools would be less resourced and less developed as potential leaders.

Community members say we are a church that...

- Reaches whole families for Jesus.
- Resources and trains parents.
- Serves other churches.
- Helps kids and teenagers stay off the streets and live purposeful, impactful lives.

PART 3 - THE MISSION

The mission is the part of the vision script where the rubber meets the road. It basically answers 2 questions...

Who are we trying to reach?

How can we reach them?

Understanding the answer to these 2 questions are essential to reaching the Next Generation with the gospel of Jesus Christ. You ready...?

WHO ARE WE TRYING TO REACH?

- We seek to reach the kids, teenagers, and parents of Chicagoland and BEYOND! To the ends of the earth.
- Historically, we have tended to primarily reach hispanic and white communities. This is part of our history and DNA so we honor this moving forward. But we are also reaching thousands of people who come from black, indian, asian and other races.
- We want all kids and teenagers to find and follow Jesus. Because of and through Jesus, they can:
 - BELONG
 - DISCOVER IDENTITY
 - FIND PURPOSE
- We primarily seek to reach underprivileged and under-resourced kids, teenagers, and parents. They are part of our history and in many of the communities we do ministry in. However, we also seek to reach all kids, teenagers, and parents. Regardless of socio economic status.
- Historically, we have been a church in the city and for the city, but we are expanding to have locations in many of the Chicagoland suburbs. We want to reach all of Chicagoland for Jesus!

HOW ARE WE REACHING THEM?

We filter everything we do through our leadership lens of the 5 timeless truths; ***Align Leaders, Refine the Message, Elevate Community, Partner with Parents, and Influence Service.***

ALIGN LEADERS

All Church and Regional NextGen Pastors work to create alignment systems to train and build our staff and volunteers. Our structure looks like the following:

- Weekly one-on-one between the All Church NextGen Pastor and each Regional NextGen Pastor.
- Weekly Executive Leadership Team Meeting with the All Church NextGen Pastor and Regional NextGen Pastors.
- Monthly Virtual or In-Person Leader Meeting with each region team leads. Regional NextGen Pastor leads this with their region's location leads included.
- Regional NextGen Pastor one-on-ones with location leaders 1x a month. Can be virtual or in-person.
- Quarterly All-Church or Regional staff and volunteer trainings.
 - 1 for Kids Teams
 - 1 for OneYth Teams
- Annual conference or experience we invite other church leaders into.
- Annual "Plan Your Year" Retreat Day with Regional Leadership.
- Pastoral Residency Program with leaders being raised from graduated High School through YA. (Partnership with Moody and other colleges as well).

REFINE THE MESSAGE

- Our team provides a New Life wide curriculum to clearly communicate the message of the gospel of Jesus Christ.
 - All locations are offered this system and will customize and refine the content for their context.
- A clear scope and cycle for our messaging is available to families and our team is reminded regularly.
- We utilize the 5 perspectives to elevate the gospel and amplify it for the next generation. (*See attached document*)

ELEVATE COMMUNITY

Our ministries host 3 levels of events for kids and teenagers. Local, Regional, and All Church.

Local Tier (Weekly)

Each location is responsible for planning and hosting these weekly events. They fall into one or more of our four purposes; REACH, GROW, SERVE, & GIVE. Evangelism (REACH), Discipleship (GROW), Service (SERVE), Worship (GIVE). This can be a small group or a full youth group experience. Based on location's size.

Regional Tier (Quarterly)

Regional leadership teams plan and execute these events for all kids and teenagers from their region. The purpose is to build momentum and help them understand that they belong to something bigger.

All Church Tier (2x per Year)

Our All Church and Regional leadership teams plan these.

- OneYth - Summer Camp & Winter Retreat
- Kids (Summer Camp & DNow Weekend for 4th-6th Grades)
- NextGen Wknd - Once a year, we host a NextGen weekend across all locations where we share a message with the church on why we press into the Next Generation and how they can help.

PARTNER WITH PARENTS

We believe every parent wants to be a better parent. At New Life Parents, we curate & cultivate resources and craft experiences to help them thrive in their parenting. Like everything, we filter this through our 3-tiered system.

Local Tier

Location Leaders are Responsible

- **Parent Cue** - A Weekly/Monthly parent communication on what their kid/teenager is being taught and helpful cues for having meaningful conversations around it.
- **Resources** - A parent resource wall at their location or resources that are easily available in physical or digital format.
- **Groups** - Parent Life Groups are available at all locations.

Regional Tier

Regional NextGen & Phase (OneYth & Kids) Leaders Responsible

- New Life Parent Events (2x per Year)
 - Topical Parenting Help - These are events designed to help parents practically. Topics may include, but not limited to:
 - *Parenting with Mental Health in Mind*
 - *Parenting in a Tech World*
 - *Parenting through the Phases*
 - *Parenting an Authentic Faith*
 - Family Experience - This is a super fun worship experience designed for kids and parents to enjoy and participate together. This may also be paired with a seasonal event like a Fall Festival or Christmas or Easter event.

All Church Tier

All-Church and Regional Leaders Responsible

- **New Life Parents eNews** - A monthly communication from our All-Church team designed specifically for parents.
- **Podcasts** - An annual podcast series for parents.
- **All Church One-Day Conference Experience** - All parents from all locations and regions are invited to an annual parenting conference hosting by our All Church team. This could include expert guest teachers, video driven experiences, and group time.

- **All-Church Family Experience** - Some years we gather all kids and parents together for one massive Family Experience.

INFLUENCE SERVICE

We desire to give kids and teenagers consistent opportunities to serve so they can see themselves and others through the eyes of Jesus and experience a bigger world. We do this through our 3-tiered system.

Local Tier

Location Leaders are Responsible

Each location provides serving opportunities at church and in their local community. Each location may look different, but all have opportunities.

Regional Tier

Regional NextGen & Phase Leaders Responsible

We offer 1-2 serving opportunities per year for each region.

- 1 for Kids
- 1 for OneYth
- Possibly 1 for Families.

All Church Tier

All-Church and Regional Leaders Responsible

- **Mission Trips** - We partner with New Life Cities to offer mission trip experiences for teens and their parents.
- **Serve Weekend** - One weekend a year, all New Life locations participate in Serve Weekend where we replace weekend services with serving in our communities.
- **All-Church Systems** - We have a New Life wide model for serving in NextGen Ministry. Crossover YA Ministry serving in OneYth, OneYth HS serving in Preteen, OneYth MS serving in Elementary. This means all locations need to think through their schedule of ministries so as not to be competing with opportunities to serve.

PART 4 - IMPACT

Impact is simply what is different in our community because of our ministries. We can quantify this by asking some questions.

What will be different at our church in 3-5 years?

- We have a growing and thriving kids ministry at each location with a designated staff member in place.
 - At least 1 staff (part-time) at each location.
- We have a growing and thriving youth ministry at each location with a designated staff member in place.
 - At least 1 staff (part-time) at each location.
- We have 3 Regional NextGen Pastors.
- We have a model in place that is scalable to beyond Chicagoland and heading into new US cities.
- We have a Kids & OneYth intern and residency program in place in partnership with our pastoral residency and other Christian universities (Moody, Trinity, Wheaton, etc)

How is our community different?

- Our community of kids and teens have a place where they can feel a sense of belonging, identity, and purpose. Found in Christ!
- Our church is invested in one public school per each of our locations.
 - Kids - Partnership with local elementary school by supporting administration's main initiatives.
 - OneYth - Partnership with Rescue A Generation by providing coaching, empowerment and the Gospel.

How have lived been changed?

- We've seen over 1,500 kids and teenagers come to faith in Christ and have been baptized since 2023.
- We see upwards of 5,000 kids and teenagers impacted by our ministries each month.
- We serve over 5,000 parents across all of our locations each month.

What metrics can we use to measure?

- Attendance of kids at locations on the weekend.
- Involvement & engagement of youth throughout the week. How many?
- Attendance of parents at Regional and All Church events.
- Parents reached weekly via eNews and location communications.
- Salvations & baptisms.
- Kids Leaders growth. Number of volunteers.
- OneYth Leaders growth. Number of volunteers.
- Kids Interns in place.
- OneYth Interns in place.
- NextGen Pastoral Residency in place.

What am I, the leader, free to do with my time/role?

- Championing the vision!
- Leadership Development.
- Creative Dreaming (Brainstorming)
 - Expansion into other cities
 - Residency & Internship Partnerships
- Investment in Relationships