

Truth and Liberation Concern

**Faith Statement
Values and Ethos
Mission Statement
Vision Statement
October 2008**



Truth and Liberation Concern (TLC) is an organic community, responding to God's grace and the call to love.

In as much as the life of the TLC community is a 'work in progress', so is this statement. It represents a time in the journey of our community, aimed at giving clarity to what is evident within us, and creating energy for what is possible for the journey ahead.

This document is the best attempt of the current leadership to articulate those things, which give life and breath to the TLC community. We acknowledge the founding faith statements and mission statements which have underpinned our community for over 35 years.

A statement of our *values*
lived out as *mission*
which together inspire & shape our *vision*

Our Faith Statement

Truth and Liberation Concern
is a community of people who love God and one another.
We are committed to being a serving community,
responding under the guidance of the Holy Spirit,
to the grace and love of God in Jesus Christ
in our relationships, worship, teaching, life and mission.
We use our resources and our creative gifts for the salvation
and transformation of the world.

Our Values and Ethos

TLC is committed to the following values. These values reflect the fundamental spiritual characteristics of our culture, and the constant, passionate and core beliefs that drive our mission:

- **Inclusive and belonging**
We want to create a home where people can belong - warts and all.
- **The theology of journey**
We are committed to the ongoing journey of salvation and transformation.
- **Authenticity and integrity**
We seek to be honest and authentic about the realities of life and the human condition. We're not necessarily politically correct, and are willing to live with the mess and diversity that life throws up.
- **Christ centred**
We focus on the life and teachings of Jesus.
- **Respecting diversity**
We embrace the opportunity to learn from differences in experience, opinion, understanding and belief.
- **A biblical exploration**
We desire to explore the Bible together, engaging and grappling with the counter-cultural call to discipleship.
- **Equality in leadership**
We have a corporate leadership team, celebrating both an absence of hierarchy and the presence of a diversity of leadership gifts. We are committed to the "equality of voice" of each member of our leadership team.
- **Restoration and healing**
We sit with each other in our pain as we move towards healing and restoration.
- **Having fun**
We believe that life is to be lived to the full. We aren't afraid to laugh at its funny side.
- **An open and expanded worldview**
We seek to engage with issues beyond ourselves, our community and our country.

- **Embracing Creativity**
God has given us the gift of life, creation and creativity. We want to celebrate these gifts through our expression of community.
- **Active engagement**
Justice, care and concern are hallmarks of our endeavour.
- **Empowering**
We want to empower each other in taking initiative and offering our gifts.
- **Vocationally focused**
We call one another to seek and live out our God given vocation - living into the fullness of our true Self.
- **Transparent**
We are committed to a leadership model that is honesty and transparent in decision making.
- **Risk taking**
As a living, breathing, organic community we are prepared to take a few risks and live with a bit of mess.

Our Mission Statement

The functional questions that drive this mission statement are:

- What is our mission in life?
- What 'business' are we in?
- What are we called to do ... and who are we called to be?

TLC Mission Statement

Authentic Worship & Spirituality

We affirm worship as an all-of-life endeavour - expressed in the diverse ways we respond to God and each other. We therefore validate many expressions and attitudes of worship, and promote various settings which nurture faith and spirituality.

A Community of Loving Relationships

We offer people a home - a place to belong and find love and grace in relationship with Christ through Christ's people.

Mission & Community Engagement

We seek to encounter God as we reach out beyond our boundaries, exploring and sharing the love and justice of Jesus.

An Empowering Community

We want to cultivate an environment of ownership in which people embrace both the freedom and responsibility, of living out their expression of ministry and mission.

Offering Restoration & Healing

We aim to be a community who intentionally offers rest, healing and rejuvenation - an invitation and experience of the love of God. We provide opportunities for people to journey towards wholeness.

Our Vision Statement

This is a vision of what kind of church we would like to be and asks the question:

“What could we be and how will we achieve it?”

The focus areas in the mission statement given above are:

- ❖ Authentic Worship & Spirituality
- ❖ A Community of Loving Relationships
- ❖ Mission & Community Engagement
- ❖ An Empowering Community
- ❖ Offering Restoration & Healing

They provide focus and direction of where the church is going, while the vision paints a picture of what that will look like by outlining the **aims** and **actions** the community will focus on for the next few years.

Area of Focus

Authentic Worship & Spirituality

Aim	Action
<p><i>We respect the diversity of worship and spiritual engagement and will offer a variety of models and congregational gatherings. We will offer the permission, space and avenues for this pursuit.</i></p> <p><i>We will ensure all ages have a place to express and experience informal and formal modes of worship.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By 2009 we will have created two new formal opportunities outside Sunday mornings to express and engage in worship and spirituality. • We will continue to cultivate this through four CLT services each year and celebrating key community activities during our regular gatherings.
<p><i>Sunday morning gatherings will be a key place to demonstrate what it means to be a 'priesthood of all believers'(1 Peter 2:1-10) by creating opportunities for a diverse involvement of age, culture and gender.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will actively approach new people to preach, lead and contribute items. An immediate goal is to find two new people, and offer training and support to that end. • The elders and pastors will provide an annual framework of communal reflection, ensuring an anchor in scripture as a formative framework. • We are committed to sharing communion weekly, with no exclusion on who can and cannot partake. • We will maintain our annual Thanksgiving service.
<p><i>We will see a consistent and cohesive approach to ministry across TLC ministry teams</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each ministry area will form vision and mission around the five areas of the mission statement
<p><i>We will explore creative alternative environments that enhance the experience of God and each other.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will explore the possibility of a further worship/spirituality space.
<p><i>People will be encouraged to live out their faith and to be ministers in whatever context they find themselves in their daily life. This is referred to within TLC as 'Monday church'.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People will be invited to share their experiences of 'Monday church' during a specific cluster each year. A prayer of commissioning will accompany this.
<p><i>We will encourage artistic expression as a means of worshipping God and celebrating life.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The gallery will continue to be a place where people's creativity can be celebrated and displayed. This space will be expanded and made more of a feature • There will be scheduled opportunities for creative expression - including festivals, days and workshops • Creative expression will be intentionally considered in the planning of services
<p><i>We offer resources and opportunities to encourage spiritual practise and meditation.</i></p>	<p>This may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating a network of opportunities for people to gather for meditation and contemplation at significant seasons as well as on a regular basis • A team of people invited to develop further opportunities

Area of Focus A Community of Loving Relationships

Aim	Action
<i>Our desire is that people will see TLC as a place of acceptance, equality and authenticity - where people will experience TLC as warm, inviting, real and earthy. It will be a place where people can genuinely experience the love of God.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This will be well reflected and modelled in the service style and by ministry leaders • The underlying value that everyone's important will be actively nurtured in preaching and service leading • Permission and invitation for spontaneity - such as prayer needs, will continue. • Visitors will be offered hospitality through deliberate welcome in service • We'll be attune to comments by new members whose feedback will indicate how well we achieve this
<i>There will be regular opportunities outside service times to meet with other community members. TLC is committed to offering and advertising extra curricular activities and groups. This role will be well supported and will have a team of people involved in this area.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Having a Community Events role • Picnics, community camps, working bees, men's days, women's days, dinner groups, social activities and various programs catering for different age groups. • Homegrown concerts and other celebrations of our skills and passions.
<i>Everyone at TLC should have the opportunity to be a part of a cell group or similar group that allows for relationship building and journeying together through the challenges of life and faith.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will prioritise promotion of existing places for people to engage, such as dinner groups, cell groups and ministry groups • Any member of the community will be invited to approach leadership for new opportunities to gather • We will challenge groups to reflect on their shape and form to help create opportunities for new participants
<i>The TLC community will be an active pastoral care network throughout the week, ensuring Church exists outside formal meeting times. In a person's faith and life journey, TLC can be a safe place - both in their coming & their going.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At least once a year we will hold a new comers lunch to help them connect with others in the community. • We will hold exit interviews for those who decide to move on. • As the need arises, community members will be called upon to assist in practical ways
<i>TLC currently has relationships with various external groups. We will seek cross fertilisation between these groups.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will meet with Glen Park community four times a year. • We valuing the strength of relationship with groups in which genuine friendship exists. • The Outdoor Christmas Carols service will be extended to include various local community groups
<i>There will be a formal and intentional pastoral care team and network, in which members of the community are trained and empowered to care for the TLC family.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A leadership hub will design and implement regular pastoral care training • A monthly prayer meeting specific to the needs of the community will be held • Expanding the current team to include community members with pastoral gifts
<i>We will network with other faith communities and Christian groups, with the aim of sharing resources and opportunities for ministry and mission</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pastors will continue links with the local ministers' fraternal. • Pastors, elders and office staff will attend other conferences to link with wider Christian

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> networks The youth will link with other youth groups
<i>We will continue to provide new, and support existing, initiatives that build relationships beyond the church community</i>	Programs such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Brink, Fresh Youth Theatre, The Gallery, Playgroup, Monkami and Bike Riding.

Area of Focus Mission & Community Engagement

Aim	Action
<i>TLC will continue to seek partnerships with like-minded groups and organisations in furthering the kingdom of God both locally and throughout the world.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will continue to support and endorse the efforts of the Mutunga Partnership We will continue to support the developing relationships with the local Nepalese community
<i>We want to respond with compassion and generosity to people in need, considering the specific needs of those who live in our local community of Bayswater North.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continued emphasis on our Foodbank (including ongoing discussion with local businesses and Council) Develop partnerships to achieve those aims with groups such as Community Renewal, Glen Park Community Centre & Monkami We will instigating opportunities such as a community kitchen & life skills program in 2009
<i>We are well placed to invest in community development that identifies specific local needs. We will respond creatively in developing programs to meet these needs.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Within the next 18 months, we will explore the possibility of employing a community development worker for a minimum of two days per week.
<i>We are committed to social justice being a key emphasis in our formal gathering times and expressed through our ministry and mission</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We will have an active network of people who ensure a response to wider issues. They will assist the community in engaging with these concerns. We will explore opportunities for 2010 with Habitat for Humanity to assist in a local build
<i>We will explore opportunities to create partnerships with the local community.</i>	As we do this, we will look for three things: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shared values between partners The opportunity to form partnerships where both parties can fulfil their passion. We will identify gifted and skilled individuals within our community, and offer services relevant to the needs of the local community.
<i>We will continue to build relationships with other agencies in a deliberate and intentional manner</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting self-help groups such as AA. Supporting other groups who hold similar values to ourselves. By the end of 2008 we will have 'Myspace' using the premises - learning and sharing about trauma, abuse and healing.

Area of Focus An Empowering Community

Aim	Action
<i>We will cultivate an environment of empowerment and ownership where people are encouraged to take on leadership in the community and use their initiative.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The underlying value that everyone's contribution is important will be consistently reflected in preaching, service leading and other community forums • We will continue to take the opportunity to notice and celebrate new initiatives • We will continue to invite people to have the conversation to explore what's possible for their contribution in community life and service
<i>TLC will equip people to express their ministry and mission, and to live out their unique sense of ministry call and vocation.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will hold a retreat, discernment day or similar event. • We will holding a discernment day or weekend for VCE students
<i>We will encourage people to live out a sense of call in their lives. We will create avenues for people to use their gifts for the church and the local community.</i>	<p>This will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducting a survey which identifies ministries and gifts • On creating a match, we will look for avenues for expression • Various services will have this is a focus
<i>We are made in the image of God. Therefore we seek gender balance in all levels of our leadership structure.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We aim to have a female pastor by 2010
<i>We seek to create an environment for our children and youth which will give them confidence to reflect on and relate to God, others and themselves.</i>	<p>This may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion groups and Vetamorphus. • Encouraging youth to take a formal role in services. • Offering & creating internship positions.
<p><i>We will attend to the physical needs of the building. We will foster a sense of ownership and responsibility among our members.</i></p> <p><i>We will continue to improve the physical TLC environment (i.e. building and physical space), to fit with the new opportunities that align with our faith and mission. This is also another way in which we can give to God.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will provide the support and resource to community members and teams that have taken on the responsibility of working to improve TLC infrastructure and maintenance. • We will support and empower the Twenty-Twenty Group (20-20) who will coordinate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Community working bees ○ Maintenance ○ Longer term infrastructure projects They will involve as many of the broader community to achieve these objectives.

Area of Focus Offering Restoration and Healing

Aim	Action
<i>We will embrace and hold the struggle of life with one another, since we see this as the unfolding of salvation and ongoing conversion and transformation.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This will find emphasis within Sunday morning gatherings • The Living Stone contemplative service will offer a space for stillness, exploration and rejuvenation • Pastoral companioning/counselling will continue to be available from the pastoral team
<i>We will acknowledge the challenges of daily life and offer support with an emphasis on teaching, corporate prayer, and accessibility and availability of pastors.</i>	<p>In areas such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raising children, maintaining healthy relationships, dealing with physical and mental health issues, faith struggles and constructing belief and value systems. • Marriage enrichment, pre-marriage work and parenting resources once per year. • Parenting support and resources once per year.
<i>Leadership are committed to modelling healthy relationships and practises</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This involves a high level of mutuality, collaborative decision making and accountability. • Leadership is committed to external supervision and annual reviews. • The Pastoral team is committed to regular personal development and renewal.
<i>We will foster an active pastoral care network, and provide training for carers.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Pastors will provide annual training for the pastoral care team. • We will provide ongoing support and resources for community members and teams who take up responsibility to provide direction and leadership for this network of pastoral care
<i>We will have available a regularly updated folio of various local services & resources.</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The office will continue to collate and update this folio. • The office will continue to network and build awareness of relevant services • We will continue to ensure information about our services is made available
<i>Cell groups will continue to function as a primary pastoral care network and source of support within TLC</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There will be an annual pastoral visit to each cell group. • There will be an annual cell group co-ordinators meeting. • Cell groups will be supplied with relevant discussion material in relation to teaching themes and other issues.

We offer this document as our read on the values which have, and continue to guide us as a community. We hope to reflect our current circumstance and practise, as well as honouring history and similar documents that have guided us so far.

We seek that this document be embraced and trust that it will serve TLC in a dynamic way; enabling the broad range of our faith expression to coexist, and expand possibilities for growth in our journey together.

As we identify something of our core beliefs, common purpose and spiritual characteristics, we hope this will empower us to more fully be Christ and discover Christ in Bayswater North and beyond.