



INCLINE INITIATIVE

What is the Incline Initiative?

In 2016, we invited a church leader named Ken Priddy to come consult with us on how to maintain our vitality as a church at the 50-year mark. It was a helpful time of self-reflection; some might even say pivotal.

First, Dr. Priddy challenged us **spiritually**. Dr. Priddy pointed us to the fact that, ultimately, every church has the same vision statement—Jesus himself wrote it and we call it the Great Commission. It is found in Matthew 28:18–20.

And Jesus came [to his disciples] and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And lo, I am with you always.”

Second, Dr. Priddy challenged us **organizationally**, namely that every congregation experiences the ebbs and flows of a “church life cycle.” Simply put, every church is either in a stage of incline, recline, or decline. A church on the incline is running on a strong, smooth engine; a church in recline is coasting on a recent season of momentum; and a church in decline is sputtering on fumes.

During the time with, Dr. Priddy, he helped us understand that a church on the incline exhibits these qualities:

- Its orientation is toward the future (not just the present or the past)
- It is driven by its vision (not just programming or structure)
- Its focus includes the community in which it is embedded (not just those already inside the congregation)
- Its use of resources allows people to be investors (not just providers or preservers)
- It is always folding in new leadership (not just relying on established or incumbent leaders)
- Its growth comes by conversion (not just transfer or stagnation)

Scan this code or visit thekirk.org/incline for more information about the Incline Initiative



Aspects of the Incline Initiative:

The Kirk Incline Initiative is a simple way to keep us as a congregation always coming back to the Great Commission and looking for ways to live as a vision-driven people. We want to be a future-oriented, community-focused church for the next 15–20 years and beyond. Any organizational guru will tell you that your strategy can't be too far reaching into the future because circumstances are always evolving. Your methodology has to be adaptable and flexible.

Practically speaking, the Incline Initiative is going to move forward in three-year spans. As we approach each three-year mark, we are going to pray for God to lead us in a renewed, strategic direction, upward and outward. This will establish a rhythm for us to regularly assess: "What do we need to turn our attention toward in this next span of time? Since we can't do everything at once we have to ask what's working, what's not, which opportunities are prime, which ones are still just theoretical?"

Your Role in the Incline Initiative:

How are we going to make all this work? Great question. Part of the Incline Initiative means every three years, at each incline point, we are going to invite you to increase your financial giving so that we can move further in our Great Commission ministry. We want to lay out a strategic vision that inspires you and responds to what you need. Financially, one way we encourage you to consider joining this Incline Initiative is to give 1% more of your income than you gave last year.



1% increase in giving



Every three years