

## **Our Vision for Faith Evangelical Free Church**

April 2008

It is our desire that in the next five years, by God's grace, we might *help more people come to faith in Christ and experience God more fully in all of life*. Therefore, we devote ourselves to these five critical areas of vision:

### **A Deepening of Prayer**

***We desire for every member to have a rich, growing life of prayer, and for every ministry of the church to begin in petition and end in praise.***

We join the original disciples in asking Jesus, "Lord, teach us to pray" (Luke 11:1). We believe that each of our members can have a deep experience of prayer, whereby they commune with their Heavenly Father, growing in their knowledge of God through conversation with Him. We believe that prayer can be more than just a petitionary listing of our needs before God. When our petitions grow out of prayers of worship and thanksgiving first, our faith grows accordingly. We desire a fuller expression of corporate prayer among us. We desire to provide leadership and appropriate structures in order to facilitate prayer. Finally, we desire that prayer permeates all the ministries of Faith—no matter how large or small—so that in all we do, we begin and end in thankful dependence on God.

### **A Plan for Spiritual Transformation**

***We desire to provide clear and effective structures and processes whereby all members can progress toward Christlike character, expressing their growing love for God and others through willing service to both fellow believers and unbelievers.***

Discipleship has a goal: that all believers, regardless of their situation in life, might be inwardly transformed so as to take on the likeness of Jesus himself, in all love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. We believe that even the most mature among us continue in this transformation, while our children, youth, and young believers experience *spiritual formation*, and the broken and hurting among us experience *spiritual re-formation*. Our vision is that Faith might develop clear and intentional structures and processes—involving corporate and personal spiritual disciplines—whereby any member (at any stage of formation, transformation, or re-formation) might effectively move forward into Christlikeness. A major measure of our success will be when service to fellow believers and unbelievers is willingly and joyfully undertaken, not only as an expression of individual gifting or training, but as an expression of a transformed love. In light of current needs and spiritual opportunities, we intend to give particular attention to our children—namely that many adults would serve in our children's ministries, and that our children, in turn, would be involved in serving others.

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## **A Lifestyle of Worship**

***We desire that meaningful corporate worship on Sunday mornings be simply an expression of, and stimulus for, a lifestyle of worship in all our hearts and homes.***

Before worship is an activity, it is an attitude. We envision worship encompassing the totality of our lives, as we respond to God daily with adoration and thanksgiving. We believe that our worship on Sunday mornings—at times quiet and intimate, at other times vibrant and joyful—can become simply a corporate expression of the satisfaction in Christ Jesus that has been true of us each individually throughout our week. Our vision for worship also includes a vision for developing “leadership in worship”—namely that through the structure of corporate worship, the staffing of worship teams or positions, and the teaching about worship—our congregation might not merely go through the motions, but be actually led to the very throne of Grace, encouraged (and trained) to stay there throughout the week.

## **A Culture of Welcome and Acceptance**

***We desire to welcome and accept fellow believers and non-believers—whatever their situation in life—and, more than just being friendly, actually cultivate true, growing friendships.***

Intentional Biblical hospitality welcomes people into our lives, and homes, and congregation. We have a particular vision for the warm welcome that visitors receive on a Sunday morning or in programs like Alpha, recognizing that visitors—whether fellow believers or unbelievers—are actually sent by God to us as a stewardship. Welcome grows into acceptance whereby, in an atmosphere of vulnerability and authenticity, we extend grace to each other, accepting each other regardless of situation in life, and coming alongside each other regardless of the brokenness. We desire Faith to be a “safe place” where we can bless what God is doing uniquely in each of our lives. Our vision extends to a better reaching out to, and integration of, those whom we may have neglected (e.g. singles, single parents, international students, etc.) Finally our vision is that more than just being friendly, each of our members might develop deep and growing friendships—not only among ourselves, but also with unbelievers and the marginalized.

## **An Active Compassion for those without Christ**

***We desire to cultivate a culture of outreach, whereby all members intentionally develop relationships with unbelievers, inviting them into the life of the church where, with a team approach, each of us plays a role in bringing people to faith in Christ.***

We want to become a church that lives the lifestyle here at home that we send our missionaries to live in other parts of the world. As we pattern ourselves after our missionaries, it will involve an intentionality toward unbelievers, whereby each member of Faith is aware of the relationships he or she already has with unbelievers, and then intentionally cultivates those friendships while developing new ones. A missionary pattern encourages us to design “forms” for our outreach that are culturally appropriate and effective. A missionary pattern encourages us to think strategically. Finally, a missionary

pattern encourages us to think in terms of teamwork, realizing that someone who comes to faith in Jesus Christ has invariably been influenced by numerous believers, and not just by the one evangelist. (For example, no doubt, some believer was this person's friend, someone else warmly welcomed them at the door, someone else set up the tables or cooked the meal for a program like Alpha, someone else prayed for this person by name, and someone else opened up God's healing Word and spoke the Gospel message.) A picture of the measure of this vision's success is when each of us at Faith would be able on a Sunday morning to look across the room and see someone for whom we could say, "I was part of the 'team' that brought that person to Jesus." A vision for a culture of outreach, patterned after our missionaries, will have one additional result—namely, we have a vision for a deeper participation in the lives and ministries of our missionaries, expecting that God will raise up others in our midst to serve in other cultures.

### **Statement on the Growth of our Church**

Ours is a vision of abundant life experienced within our church. Invariably, "where there is life, there is growth." While our vision is not primarily one of church growth, we recognize that numerical growth will in part be a measure of our vision's fulfillment. Consequently, we intend to bring a "visionary perspective" to issues of facilities, staffing, and ministries, asking God that we might wisely anticipate and manage the growth He gives us.