

WHAT IS GOD CALLING US TO BE AND DO?

The Vision of Faith

The vision of Faith is articulated in the expression “WINGS.” As followers of Jesus Christ, we celebrate God's grace and, by the power of the Holy Spirit, we commit ourselves to:

- Worship the living God and welcome our neighbors warmly
- Invite others to experience the gospel
- Nurture those in need and enjoy life together as God's people
- Grow as disciples
- Serve our community and the world as we dare to dream in Christ's name.

As part of a grant initiative sponsored by the Session and the Alban Institute, Faith established a task force called Life Together. The task force was charged with assessing the past, present, and future of Faith Presbyterian Church. The objective was to define a new vision for Faith's future. Several fact-finding and information gathering meetings were held with the congregation and staff. From the Life Together process, the “WINGS” vision was affirmed and four specific objectives for furthering Faith's vision were identified: befriending our neighbor, igniting potential for the future, weaving a web of care and conducting worship that inspires and calls us to reflect. The Life Together task force also developed several specific goals for each objective.

The objectives developed by the Life Together task force are at the heart of the church as it continues to move forward with its stated mission – cultivating faithful relationships. The objectives are intended to lay a course for the future, incorporating the strengths of the church. They will inspire ideas and will be used as a guide to discern the goals to be achieved. The vision for the future is one where tradition and transformation coexist. To achieve our mission, Faith will bridge generations and embrace diverse cultures. The core objectives with the goals emerging from the Life Together process are presented here. How Faith accomplishes these goals will be decided in the months and years to come. For now, here is a glimpse of the countless possibilities that lie ahead for Faith Presbyterian Church.

Befriending Our Neighbor

God calls us to live a life of love and serve our neighbor. Yet, as discovered in the Life Together process, “our neighbor” was usually a member of the church and Faith had little involvement in the surrounding community. Befriending our neighbor means loving and

serving our neighbor, reaching out both physically and spiritually to the community in which we live. To this end:

▣ The members of Faith will actively seek to meet, serve and invite our neighbors to join us in fellowship, worship, and servant ministries. *Some of the possibilities are to invite our neighbors to organized public events, such as health fairs or ice cream socials; to consider on-site community art programs for the summer; school supply giveaways; Friday Night Live (a weekly youth event); or family concert series.*

▣ Faith will form partnerships with organizations in the community to connect with the needs and the resources in the neighborhood and to engage our members in such service. *Some of the possibilities are to promote community blood drives; host luncheons with local agency representatives; provide adult volunteers for the neighboring schools; identify opportunities for ecumenical services; open a summer day camp for preschool children and unite efforts with sister churches.*

▣ Faith will reach out with a helping hand to the surrounding community when needs and opportunities arise. *Some of the possibilities are to provide assistance to neighboring families when flooding, fire or other natural disaster strikes; establish a neighborhood prayer line; host “general interest seminars” such as family communication or financial planning; provide a support system for neighbors in need.*

It is our hope that through the accomplishment of these goals, Faith will be known as a church that is willing to embrace the community in the name of Jesus Christ.

Igniting Potential for the Future

The future of the world is its children. The best gift we can leave them is a way to a loving and faithful relationship with Christ. Yet, every day, they are bombarded with so many distractions that would keep them from building a strong faith. Similarly, people of all ages are still walking their faith journey. Education is an essential compass to strengthening faith. Without faith, all of us are poorly equipped to deal with the challenges of today and the future. To ignite potential for the future, Faith Presbyterian Church provides spiritual nurture for children and youth that deepens their commitment to follow Jesus Christ. Faith also provides opportunities for every age group to discover and participate in His mission in the world and to grow in spiritual maturity. To this end:

▣ Faith Presbyterian Church will provide spiritual nurture for people throughout their faith journey, guiding them in the way of Christ. *Some of the possibilities are bold Christian education programs for adults and children that are challenging, exciting and*

relevant in today's world; additional facilities that enable the church to be a safe, functional and attractive meeting place for informal fellowship; exciting youth and adult leaders, youth and adult mentors, highly trained church staff and an energized congregation, all of whom encourage the community to view Faith as the gathering place for people of all ages.

▣ Education for children and youth will provide a solid grounding in Biblical teaching, with involvement in service projects and mission trips giving young and old alike a desire for a lifetime of active Christian discipleship. *Some of the possibilities include a significant expansion in youth programming to include children and youth from the surrounding neighborhoods; to partner with numerous local and regional missions for on-going service projects; enhance cross-generational activities; develop a teen mentoring program, and establish scholarships to train the next set of church educators.*

▣ Inviting youth facilities will provide teens with a safe and stimulating environment. *Some of the possibilities include after school programs for peer tutoring; an expansion of the youth program beyond the formal "youth group" to provide an informal place for kids to "hang out" in a safe, supervised environment; scheduled "movie nights" and other programs to give the youth a chance to see the church for more than just Sundays.*

Weaving a Web of Care

The members of Faith will become more intentional and active in forming strong and caring relationships with one another, while comforting and challenging one another as followers of Jesus Christ. Relying on God's spiritual guidance, the genuine love and concern Faith members have for one another binds them as brothers and sisters in Christ and will provide the basis for weaving a web of care in the future. To this end:

▣ All members will be encouraged to become actively engaged with others from the time they enter the fellowship of the church. *Some of the possibilities include development of intentional hospitality ministry; having member families reaching out to new families, offering supportive friendship and practical assistance, and creating fellowship opportunities for members to become acquainted with other members.*

▣ All members will be encouraged to make their particular skills and abilities available to others who might have a need for their assistance (writing, plumbing, maintenance services, etc.). *Some of the possibilities include development of a database of member skills and talents to access assistance when needed; actively assist members in identifying their skills and talents and encouraging them to find avenues for expression.*

▣ A variety of styles and channels of communication will be used to keep the whole family of Faith in touch with key events in the lives of our members. *Some of the possibilities include improved paper and electronic communication tools and expanding the current web site, enabling it to become a strong evangelism tool as well as a medium for informing the congregation and community of items of vital interest to the church.*

Worship That Inspires and Calls Us to Reflection

As reflected in our vision, worship has been and will continue to be the heart of our Christian life together as we praise the living God, hear God's word, and prepare to serve Jesus Christ in the world. We will continue to work hard to make our worship services a joyful and meaningful experience for all who participate. While challenging people to reflect, Faith Presbyterian Church will provide meaningful and inspiring worship experiences that will engage the un-churched as well as the faithful followers of Jesus Christ. To this end:

▣ Faith Presbyterian Church will offer a variety of worship opportunities using different musical and liturgical styles, expressing ancient traditions in fresh new ways, to provide meaningful and inspiring worship experiences that challenge people to reflect and grow spiritually. *Some of the possibilities include presenting opportunities to experience different worship styles, both contemporary and historical, that are significantly different from our current approaches (e.g. Taize service, worshiping on the weekdays, Sunday afternoon or evenings, interdenominational, and chapel services); expand transportation capabilities to enable greater participation in various worship services; and obtain the services of retired ministers, commissioned lay pastors, and other pastoral services to present worship services off-site.*

▣ Faith Presbyterian Church will honor the various expressions of worship as we seek to be one body of faith, serving Christ with one voice. *Some of the possibilities include encouraging personal and group expressions of faith and involving multi-generational groups in reader's theater, musicals, drama and testimonials.*

▣ Children and youth will learn the importance of worship through active participation. *Some of the possibilities include developing children's choirs; creating leadership roles for youth in worship; encouraging the youth to create their own service; providing opportunities for the youth to express their faith.*