

# Executive Summary – Transformative Community Priority

This priority will focus on building transformative community ***in the Name of Jesus Christ*** by inviting people into authentic, Christ-centered community that will foster a believer's perpetual growth into Christlikeness (See appendix A).

Vision 2013 describes what transformative community can look like. It says,

“We believe spiritual growth and transformation happen when people participate in authentic community with others seeking to follow Jesus Christ...It is in this community that we best experience discipleship. It is in community that we not only focus on teaching to develop right thinking Christians but are accountable to each other and encourage each other to become right living Christians.” (Vision 2013, pg. 18)

The below strategies will tap into our strengths as a congregation and move us forward in our effort for everyone to experience and foster transformative community.

**Further, we invite every leader to be actively involved in transformative community.** “Effective leadership begins with an intimate relationship with God, resulting in Christ-like character and a clear sense of God's calling. Leaders equip, support, motivate, mentor, and coach individuals to become who God wants them to be.” (Vision 2013, pg. 23).

## STRATEGY STATEMENTS

**GUIDING PRINCIPLE:** *Leadership will message and model a culture of personal invitation*

**Strategy 1:** Leadership will model a ***culture of Christian hospitality.***

**Strategy 2:** We will create a ***sustainable, clear, and compelling prayer ministry structure*** that simultaneously creates new prayers initiatives and seeds prayer into every current ministry in the life of our congregation.

**Strategy 3:** We will emphasize the ***importance of service in all areas of a covenant partner's life,*** with specific attention to ***inviting, developing, and sending servant leaders*** into every ministry connected with FPC.

**Strategy 4:** We will ***develop appropriate mental health resources that will span across the generations.***

**Strategy 5:** We will create opportunities for the ***whole church body to fellowship regularly with each other.***

## NEXT STEPS

### **Personal Invitation and Hospitality:**

- Consistent pulpit reminders to invite others into the life of FPC
- Currently serving elders will share stories during session meetings of their conversations
- Preaching pastor has Q&A after worship for GUESTS. Key staff and elders will be present.
- We will identify the optimal number of greeters needed and increase the number of greeters
- Communicate Value: We are a congregation that looks for the stranger

### **Prayer:**

- Assess current facets of our prayer ministry. What is working, what isn't.
- Initiate and promote new opportunities for prayer (Monthly prayer nights, 3pm personal prayer.
- Seed prayer into every current ministry through education, testimonies, and practices using Rightnow media. Create resource page on web.
- Work with Worship department to explore ways to get "more people, praying more" during worship.

### **Mental Health:**

- Identify areas of need in children's, youth, and adult ministries related to mental health.
- Create system and structure of referral for individual needs that connect with counseling, Stephen Ministry, and support groups.
- Offer meaningful mental health awareness teaching and training.

### **Service (Here to Serve):**

- Monthly reminders to staff to invite covenant partners into their ministry through service.
- Each ministry department will create clear metrics (needs and follow through) by which we track servant leaders (recruit, train, mobilize, and release them).
- Associate Pastor of Community Life will work with all departments to highlight opportunities to serve.

### **All church fellowship:**

- Create frequent all church fellowship opportunities.

**By living into the above strategies, FPC will grow numerically and spiritually. This will only be effective if every elder, core leader, staff member, and covenant partner participates.**

## WHAT ARE THE PROBLEMS THAT THIS PRIORITY ADDRESSES?

These problems existed before the pandemic at FPC, but they have worsened because of the pandemic:

- Congregational Cliques – At times, we have lacked keen awareness of the newcomer and non-believer. We tend to have our own micro communities and relationships that are often difficult for newcomers to break into.
- Relational isolation – The pandemic has caused great pain and suffering relationally. The energy and effort to make the journey back to corporate worship, for example, is challenging for some.
- Neglect – Some continue to neglect choosing to be in transformative community. This notion was present prior to the pandemic. Displaying vulnerability is not easy for many in our congregation. Still others are not clear what “in the Name of Jesus” really means.
- Lone Ranger Christianity – Many believe that they can live out the Christian life on their own, without others. Cyprian, an early church father, once remarked that, “he cannot have God for his Father who has not the church for his mother.” (Evangelical Theology, Michael Bird, pg. 704). Further, “...one who seeks solitude without fellowship perishes in the abyss of vanity, self-infatuation, and despair.” (Life Together, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, pg. 78). Even if the motivation is spiritual in nature, the life of discipleship to Jesus always includes a life with other believers.
- Decline of Service – There has been a slow and steady decline in service in many areas of ministry. Why has there been a decline in people serving in ministry areas? Many factors include:
  - Many couples are dual income and have little free time
  - Families and individuals are overcommitted with too many activities.
  - There is a mentality that, “staff will do it.”
  - Numbers have decreased due to our long season of denominational challenges and the challenges of the ongoing pandemic.
  - Staff may not see the need for additional volunteers. Some have taken ministry upon themselves with little perspective in raising up new volunteers.
- Lack of all church fellowship – We are a scattered congregation. We often experience fellowship within our smaller groups but are limited in how we experience fellowship church wide on a regular basis.