



On Mission

A Churchwide Journey:
Overview & Sermon Series Companion

 FPC HOUSTON

Dear Brothers & Sisters in Christ,

In the fall of 2023, a team of pastors, elders, and Covenant Partners was formed with the assignment to prayerfully propose a ministry plan that might guide First Presbyterian Church of Houston in continuing to fulfill God's plan for this community, serving this city, and remaining a beacon of hope and light for generations to come. Over the course of their work together, this team of twelve sought to discern and distill the best from our 185-year past, that it might speak into God's deepest desires for FPC to live faithfully into the future. This task was completed in late spring, and the mission framework that emerged has since been reviewed and approved by the Elders that comprised the 2023/2024 Session. The pages that follow provide an overview of this mission framework and the proposed shift in our priorities, rhythms, values, and ultimately, our vision through our 200th year.

We prayerfully submit it to you, the Covenant Partners of FPC Houston, that we might be unified in mission and galvanized by a common calling to do the work set before us.

Respectfully,

Your 2023/24 Vision Team

Curtis Bronzan

Jon Crantz

Emmanuel Paulpeter

Jane Champion

Cindy Cook

Kristin Foxley

Jamie Hampton

Michael Harada

Janet Lionberger

Susan Miclette

Mike Nichols

Fred Robertson



*For we are his workmanship,
created in Christ Jesus
for good works, which God
prepared beforehand, that
we should walk in them.*

EPHESIANS 2:10

Except the Lord Build

Like any organization with a long and rich history, First Presbyterian Church of Houston has embraced faithfully many goals and purposes, moved by God's leading, over its 185 years. With each season and cultural landscape, we have allowed the Holy Spirit to guide the form of our ministries and the focus of our programs so that we might serve the needs of those in and outside our walls while we remained fixed on our commitment to being a church rooted where God has placed us, shaped by His Word, and faithful to the work He has prepared for us.

1896

New building on Main and McKinney. Stained glass can be seen in Palm Court today.



FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF HOUSTON

ORGANIZED MARCH 31 (EASTER SUNDAY), 1839, IN SENATE CHAMBER, CAPITOL OF REPUBLIC OF TEXAS, MAIN AT THE CORNER OF MAIN AND CAPITOL, BY THE REV. WM. YOUEL ALLEN, MISSIONARY FROM THE UNITED STATES, AND ELEVEN MEMBERS. JAMES BURTON ELECTED RULING ELDER. SERVICES OF WORSHIP AND SUNDAY SCHOOL (BEGUN ON MAY 13, 1838) CONTINUED IN THE CAPITOL WHILE CHURCH BUILDING WAS BEING COMPLETED ON SITE (NW CORNER, MAIN AND CAPITOL) GIVEN TO THE ALLEN FAMILY WHICH HAD FOUNDED HOUSTON.

THIS CHURCH WAS THE FIRST HOUSE OF WORSHIP COMPLETED IN HOUSTON. DEDICATED ON FEB. 13, 1840, AND WAS USED FOR MEETINGS OF OTHER DENOMINATION GROUPS. HERE THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES MET IN THE SUMMER OF 1842, AND PRESIDENT SAM HOUSTON ADDRESSING THE JOINT SESSION OF CONGRESS. THUS THE COMPLETION OF THIS CHURCH WAS A TESTIMONY OF THE REPUBLIC'S HOSPITALITY OF THE FOREIGNER. CHURCH BURNED 1900.

1839

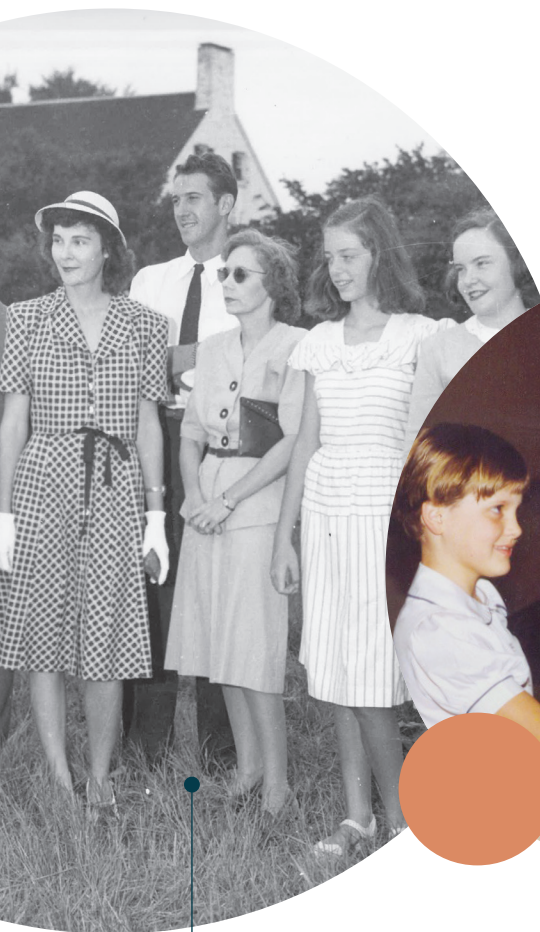
The formation of First Presbyterian Church of Houston by Rev. William Allen.



Setting a New Path

As we look ahead, prayerfully seeking to remain an anchor at the literal intersection of innovation, healthcare, education, art, and business, we once again face the question of how we will remain resolute in our Reformed faith and the timeless Word of God while serving a people and a city whose needs and challenges will take us off any map we've seen before.

We begin this journey with a new Mission Statement to anchor us as we look toward year 200.



1946

Ground breaking ceremony at 5300 Main St.

1989

Presbyterian School opens.



2020

Here to Serve: Upgrades to Children's Ministry spaces resulting from capital campaign.

Called to a New Purpose

This new mission statement is a three-part reflection of who we believe God is leading us to be now and in the future.

Building on the legacy of the past, it resonates with our foundation of being rooted in God's Word, motivated by the example of Jesus, and faithful to serve for the good of the Gospel wherever we are. Leaning into the future, it embraces values that are central to our future: the importance of community to developing faith, both in ourselves and those we are called to reach, and the mandate to meet the needs of those within our reach.

When coupled with the supporting values, rhythms, and characteristics of our community, our prayer is that by 2040, we see a vibrant congregation of all ages and backgrounds, deeply formed in the way of Jesus Christ, who have been equipped and empowered to lead in their networks and neighborhoods.

Central to this vision is raising up, reproducing, and releasing leaders in order to reach the city. By helping our Covenant Partners discover their spiritual gifts, then fanning the flame of who God created them to be and how God created them to lead, we aim to renew the church.

Our desire to renovate the church is not a simple or self-serving desire to perpetuate our own institution, but rather to return the church to all that it was ordained to be, leading the nations in the way of Jesus, empowered by the Spirit, to the glory of God.

Cultivating *community*
in the way of *Jesus*
for the *flourishing* of the *city*



CULTIVATING *Community*

Honoring our call to unite in faith, engage in the spiritual practices that form us, and spur one another on to our unique purposes.



FOR THE
Flourishing
OF THE CITY

Faithful to serve the needs of our city
and pointing to the heavenly city.



IN THE WAY
OF *Jesus*

Following in the rhythms Jesus
modeled, that we might be formed
increasingly in His image.

Missional Values

In light of our new mission, we realign our focus to embrace values and motivations that prompt us toward this purpose.

GOSPEL GROWTH

We dedicate our hearts not to mere religion, but rather the good news of God, as revealed by the ministry of Jesus, in the power of the Holy Spirit.

CONTINUAL CURIOSITY

We devote our minds to lifelong learning, digging into the depths of all that God seeks to reveal to us in His Word.

RELATIONAL ROOTS

We strengthen our souls in committed community, because Jesus has joined us together as His people.

INTENTIONAL INVITATION

We extend our hands to welcome others to church in the same way we have been welcomed in God's Spirit.

Rhythms

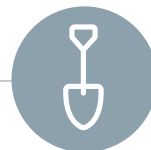
As we clarify our values, we find our way in the rhythms modeled by Jesus.



Gather
FOR WORSHIP



Equip
IN
COMMUNITY



Serve
ON MISSION

Characteristics of Our Community

Instead of measuring ourselves on quantifiable measures, we choose to seek evidence that we are a community growing in Christ-likeness.

PRAYERFUL IN A CULTURE OF INDEPENDENCE

My soul finds rest in God alone; my salvation comes from him, He alone is my rock and my salvation.

— *Psalm 61*

JOYFUL IN A CULTURE OF DISTRACTION

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that by the power of the Holy Spirit you may abound in hope. — *Romans 15:13*

AUTHENTIC IN A CULTURE OF IMITATION

I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.

— *Psalm 139:14*

ENGAGED IN A CULTURE OF APATHY

As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world.

— *John 17:18*

SELFLESS IN A CULTURE OF EXPECTATION

Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others. — *Philippians 2:4*

UNIFIED IN A CULTURE OF DIVISION

Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.

— *Ephesians 4:2-3*

Milestones



BY 2025 WE WILL...

Initiate 5000 Intentional Invitations to Cultivate Community

We aim to celebrate 5000 intentional invitations that cultivate community. These invitations may be as simple as summoning a fellow Covenant Partner to take their next strategic step (from Gather into Equip or Equip into Serve) or as relationally risky as beckoning someone close to us but far from God into a spiritual conversation at Alpha. All year long and throughout every facet of our church, we will pray for and celebrate stories of practicing gospel-centered hospitality in a culture of hostility.



BY 2027 WE WILL...

Clear a Discipleship Pathway

We will pave a clear discipleship pathway from the brush of overly programmatic ministry activity.

Build a Leadership Pipeline

We will construct a fully formed leadership pipeline to recruit, train, and deploy Covenant Partners into Kingdom ministry.

Reform Missional Integration

We will integrate and align our Missional Rhythms—Gather, Equip, Serve—into every facet of our congregation from welcoming first-time guests to longtime Covenant Partners.

Reengage Our Neighborhood

We will reengage our immediate neighborhood with the good news of the way of Jesus.



BY 2040 WE WILL...

Leadership Multiplication that leads to Institutional Renovation

We will see evidence of a vibrant congregation of all ages and backgrounds, deeply formed in the way of Jesus Christ, who have been equipped, encouraged, and empowered to lead in their networks and neighborhoods.

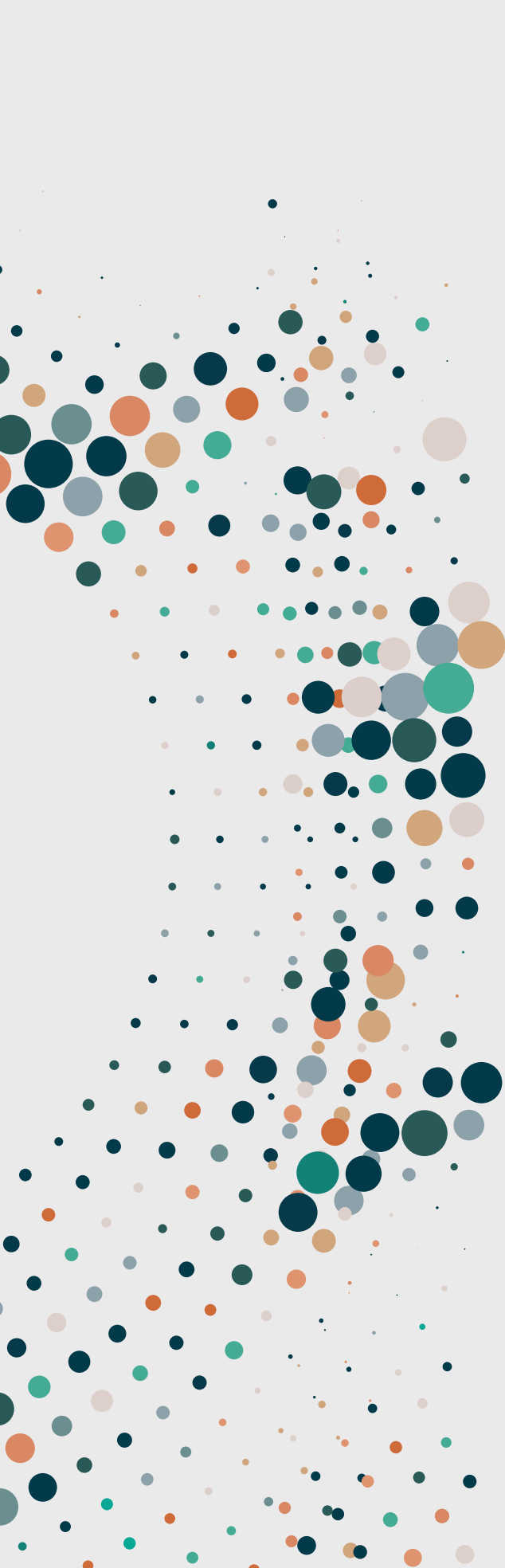
On Mission

SERMON SERIES

This series begins our ministry year, in which we will explore our mission, values, strategy, measures, and the vision for FPC's future.

Over five weeks, we will think together about our mission, which answers the question "What are we doing?" We are cultivating community (Sept 15) in the way of Jesus (Sept 29) for the flourishing of the city (Oct 6). This is our north star, the golden thread that weaves its way through everything we do.

Our one-year vision will equip and encourage our congregation toward 5000 invitations that cultivate community (Sept 22). Our 16-year vision will empower FPC Covenant Partners to grow in their leadership to bring about the renovation of the church (Oct 13).



5300 MAIN ST
HOUSTON, TX 77004

713.620.6500

FPCHOUSTON.ORG



FPC HOUSTON