

**A PLAN FOR RENEWAL
FAITH CHRISTIAN FELLOWSHIP
WALNUT CREEK, CALIFORNIA**

Introduction

How should we approach the future? Slowly, over decades, Faith Christian Fellowship has grown smaller. Will this continue to happen until the church is no longer viable? Or is there another and better future for the church we love? We believe there is. It's with this in mind that we present this plan.

Please note that there is much that is not here: details about who we should do this or that. In one sense the plan presented below is a plan for a plan. But it sets a direction. It gives us an agenda for the future.

As we work together in these areas we will surely discover things we had not anticipated. Surprises. Good surprises and surprises we would rather not face. But together we will work through them, and out of these efforts a new FCF will begin to emerge.

The Four Areas of Focus for Our Renewal

We have divided the tasks for renewing the ministries of FCF into four areas. These four areas are not separable. They work together to effect overall renewal. We will have to work on all of them at the same time.

The four are:

1. **Refresh** the church buildings and grounds.
2. **Re-present** the church to the neighborhood and the city.
3. **Refocus** the ministries of the congregation on spiritual growth and practice.
4. **Reconsider** our ministry practices, including worship, with visitors and new members in mind.

We will take up these four areas in the order presented above but this order does not mean that one area is more important than another. As we said, they go together.

1. **Refresh** the church's buildings and grounds.

The goal here is to refresh the look of our facilities so that they are inviting, and so that they facilitate our ministries. The church should be an oasis, a place where people want to come, and having come, want to stay.

In one sense this goal is the easiest to achieve. The grounds can be refreshed. The buildings can be repaired. It requires money, of course, and careful planning, but the present campus has much to offer. We know how to do this.

Key to the plan is the step listed last, although we will need to work on this step from the beginning. If we are to make changes to the buildings and grounds, we will not be able to do everything at once. Our efforts will need to be staged. We will need to create a sustainable financial plan and establish priorities among the various projects.

With that in mind, this area should include the following projects:

- a. Refresh the church's landscaping and grounds. A new landscaping plan should be created with an emphasis on sustainable plants. The sprinkler system should be fixed and adjusted so watering is effective and efficient. Old plants should be cut back and/or replaced with new plants. Areas where the grass has been worn off should be replanted or changed to a different surface. A plan should be put in place for regular maintenance.
- b. Refresh the worship building. New carpeting should be considered. The underlying floor should be repaired. Lights should be fixed. Etc.
- c. Modify the education buildings to meet the requirements of housing a school on our campus. An architect has already been retained to review the buildings and make recommendations for the purpose of securing an educational use permit.
- d. As we come to the time of calling a new pastor, the pastor's study should be refreshed with new carpeting and other installations to make it a more hospitable space.
- e. Also, as we come to the time of call to a new pastor, we should refresh the parsonage to make it attractive for his or her family.
- f. For the purpose of addressing the steps above, we should create an overall plan with clear priorities, budgets, and how to financially manage these projects.

2. **Re-present** the church to the neighborhood and the city.

As the church has grown older, it has become less visible to the neighborhood and the cities that surround it. People drive by on Bancroft without really seeing the church anymore. As we work towards renewal, it will be important for us to say to the people of our neighborhood and cities that something new and exciting is going on at FCF. Some steps that we should take in this regard are:

- a. Replacing the church sign.
- b. We should create other ways to attract the eyes of those going by. These could include banners for special events and services and, perhaps, banners that announce messages the church wishes to convey.
- c. The website is another place that newcomers first look for a church. The website should be carefully reviewed and updated to best present the message of the church to those who are encountering it for the first time.
- d. Other ways to reach out to the neighborhood should be considered, including mailers and ads on social media.
- e. Events should be scheduled to bring new people on campus.
- f. A group should be set up to oversee and promote these efforts to bring the ministry of the church to our neighbors and friends.

3. **Refocus** the ministries of the congregation on spiritual growth and practice.

FCF is a small church. It can't do everything. We need to focus our ministries in ways that will permit us both to encourage the congregation as it now exists and to bring new life to those who may come in the future. Central to any church should be spiritual growth and practice. And our Reformed tradition gives us resources in this area that will bring our identity as a Reformed church to bear on how we proceed. Spiritual growth and practice applies to all ages, from children to aged adults. It includes teenagers as well as parents, single people as well as married, new Christians as well as long-time Christians.

We intend spiritual growth and practice to be the measure we place over all of our ministries, including worship, Bible studies, classes of various sorts, and more. With that mind, we offer the following specific goals:

- a. In our calling process focus on the ability of prospective pastors to lead the congregation in spiritual growth and practice.
- b. Establish a group that reports to the council and that will consider ways to tailor opportunities for spiritual growth to all ages in our congregation.
- c. Create event opportunities for spiritual growth, such as retreats, classes, and worship services.
- d. Create or adopt materials that will help people in these areas, including perhaps a weekly spiritual reflection to be distributed by email or other means.

4. **Reconsider** our ministry practices, including worship, with visitors and new members in mind.

For this purpose, we propose;

- a. Conducting a careful visitor audit to get a better idea of how our ministry might appear to those who first come to it. Such an audit would consider questions like:
 - How would a new person hear about FCF?
 - What would such a person likely be looking for?
 - How would they discover the information necessary for a visit to FCF?
 - When they first arrive at FCF, what would catch their attention?
 - What would attract them to come into the building?
 - What might persuade them otherwise.

And so forth, through the whole process of receiving visitors. The audit will help us to identify things that need to be changed to make our ministries more welcoming to newcomers.

- b. Review and monitor our worship for what includes newcomers and for what may put them off. Make our worship seeker and visitor friendly.
- c. Pursue excellence in every area of our ministry with the belief that we honor God best when we honor others and ourselves best.
- d. Create materials and visuals to invite visitors into our ministries. Make our ministries, worship, and other events accessible to those who come to us.
- e. Tear down barriers of culture and ethnicity that may stand in the way of visitors and newcomers becoming full members of the congregation.

- f. Create an intentional plan for reaching out to people who attend our worship services, inviting them into full participation in the congregation.
- g. Create classes and other means to introduce newcomers to the congregation and the congregation to them.

Finally:

As we said in the beginning, many of these items need for more thought and filling out. They are sketches for what should happen rather than concrete plans. But this is as it should be. If we adopt this approach to ministry, we will have our tasks set before us. And always, in all of this, we come praying that we may be blessed by the Spirit and open to learning what the Lord is calling us to be.