



### Faith Student Ministries SrHi Girls Coordinator

POSITION OVERVIEW





### Summary

### CHURCH MISSION

Faith Presbyterian seeks to exalt the King in **Worship**, exhibit the kingdom in **Community**, and extend the kingdom in **Mission**.

### CHURCH OVERVIEW

Faith Presbyerian Church (FPC) is a growing congregation in suburban Birmingham with an average worship attendance of 850 between two morning worship services (8:15 and 11:00) and a communing membership of 1,079 and non-communing of 266.

Our congregation meets in Kingdom Communities (KCs) at 9:45 each Sunday. There are eight KCs divided by age and stage of life. Faith also has 63 Grace Groups that meet throughout the week. Grace Groups can be co-ed or single gender and can cover a variety of topics. The Grace Group schedule follows the school calendar and new groups are formed every August.





# Viewpoints on Growth and Discipleship

BY JASON STERLING, SR. PASTOR

One of the goals of the Christian life is that we be conformed into the image of Christ (Rom. 8:29). All of us are far from showing forth the image of Christ (Rom. 8:29). All of us are far from showing forth the likeness of Christ. We are not what we ought to be. We all need change. Therefore, it is critical to understand how change takes place in our lives and in the lives of people around us.

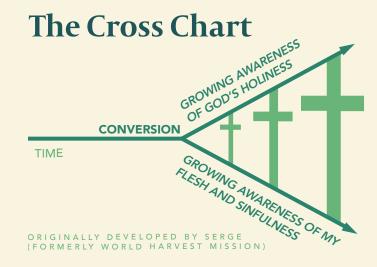
At Faith Presbyterian Church, we desire to help believers grow in Christlikeness, until the character of Christ is fully formed in all of us, which we believe the Bible teaches is a lifelong process until we are glorified with Him. Christlikeness is not something we can bring about ourselves. As the Scriptures teach, our salvation, from beginning to end, is a result of God working, as He is the only One who can change our hearts and lives. It is through the transforming grace of the gospel that we enter the kingdom, and it is through that same grace that we are changed to become more and more like our gracious Savior, Jesus. The gospel is not just the means of our salvation (justification), but the means of our transformation (sanctification). It is not simply deliverance from sin's penalty; it is release from its power.

## WHAT DOES GROWTH IN GRACE LOOK LIKE IN A PERSON'S LIFE?

The following chart has been helpful to many people in thinking about gospel change in a person's life.

The starting point of the Christian life (conversion) comes when I first become aware of the gap between God's holiness and my sinfulness. When I am converted, I trust and hope in Jesus, who has done what I could never do; He bridged

the gap between my sinfulness and God's holiness. He has taken God's holy wrath toward my sin upon Himself.



At the point of conversion, however, I have a very limited view of God's holiness and of my sin. The more I grow in my Christian life, the more I grow in my awareness of God's holiness and of my "flesh" and sinfulness. As I participate in the means of grace (Word, sacrament, prayer), experience the Holy Spirit's conviction, and live in community with other believers, the extent of God's holiness and the extent of my sin become increasingly clearer and more vivid. It is not that God is becoming more holy or that I am becoming more sinful, but my awareness of both is growing. I am increasingly seeing more of God as He actually is (Isa. 55:8-9) and myself as I actually am (Jer. 17:9-10). As my understanding of my sin and of God's holiness grows, something else also grows: my appreciation and love for Jesus, His sacrifice, His righteousness, and His gracious work on my behalf become increasingly sweet and powerful to me. The cross looms larger and more central in my life as I rejoice in the Savior who died upon it, resulting in the old affections and idols of my heart being replaced with the explosive power of a new and better affection - the love and beauty of Jesus.

Therefore, the consistent pattern of the Christian life is a continuing cycle of repentance and faith. We never stop needing to repent of sin and believe in Jesus. In the first of his Ninety-Five Theses, Martin Luther observed, "When our Lord and Master Jesus Christ said, 'Repent' . . . He willed the entire life of believers to be one of repentance." In repentance, we confess our sin and turn our affections away from false saviors and sources of righteousness and turn in faith to Jesus as our only hope.

### HOW DOES FAITH ENCOURAGE GROWTH IN GRACE?

At Faith Presbyterian Church, we believe that each person is an individual created in the image of God (Gen. 1:26). We believe there is unity among individuals in that there are struggles that are common to man (1 Cor. 10:13). However, we also want to honor the great diversity among individuals with respect to gifts, learning styles, ability, personality, spiritual states, and struggles. We want to acknowledge that each person brings a unique history, personality, and pattern of sin and idolatries to our church. This means there is no one-size-fits-all model for discipleship, but spiritual growth takes place in a variety of different avenues. At Faith, our hope is that we will increasingly experience the grace of Jesus and that it will change everything about us. Since we are living in an increasingly busy world, we have to be particularly purposeful regarding what we pour ourselves into.

We know how easy and natural it is to have our hearts grow cold toward Jesus. When one is cold and desiring to find warmth, he or she must get near the fire. We believe that placing ourselves in the vicinity of worship, community (small groups, such as KCs, Grace Groups, men's and women's Bible studies, and other special events, such as conferences, service, retreats, and other fellowship opportunities) and drawing near to Jesus personally through Word and prayer are crucial for warming our hearts to the gospel of grace. At FPC, our focus is on starting, sustaining, and drawing near to four fires to keep our hearts warm to Him.



#### THE BONFIRE (WORSHIP)

In weekly worship God sets a bonfire in the midst of His people. We often come weary, discouraged, and overwhelmed with our sin and our hurts. As we gather to lift our voices in corporate worship, we are confronted with the great grace of Jesus through the preached Word, the sacraments, and the liturgy. Together we rehearse the realities of the Scriptures, reminding ourselves and one another once again of how loved we are in Christ. Here we experience the comfort, hope, and nourishment to reorient our hearts to Him.



#### THE CAMPFIRE (COMMUNITY)

The context of our growth in Christ is community. Thus, small groups, Bible studies, and Kingdom Communities are an opportunity to gather with trusted friends and wrestle with what is going on in our hearts. In these small groups, we can build deep friendships, talk openly about how the gospel applies to our lives, and enjoy being cared for by others while extending care to others. These groups help us stay connected to the church and keep our hearts warm to Jesus amidst the busyness of everyday life.



#### THE CANDLE (PERSONALLY)

God also lights a candle for His people. Every day it's hard to believe that Jesus really does love us. God knows this. He has given us His Word and prayer to pursue Him relationally, so that we can remember how loved we are, and so that we are empowered to love Him and others out of that same love.



### THE TORCH (MISSION)

We also have the privilege of carrying the message of the gospel to others. The Good News we carry is the same Good News we have received and been warmed by. As we carry the message, we point people to the fire, not to ourselves.

We long to be transformed into a people who bask in the grace of Jesus and freely lavish that grace on others.

Let us join together in praying that God will warm our hearts and enflame our lives with His glorious grace.\*\*

\*\*ADAPTED FROM LOOKOUT MOUNTAIN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

