



Strategy Team Monthly Newsletter #3

Hello to our GREFC family! We hope this letter finds you focused on Jesus during this Christmas season and finding ways to love and bless those around you.

This is the third newsletter from GREFC's Strategic Planning Team. In our first newsletter, we talked about our vision and our first steps in embarking on nudging our culture towards our vision. The second newsletter focused on what it means to be a mature disciple, an overview of our Discipleship Pathway, and what it means to "be" the church. If you missed the first two newsletters, you can find them on the brochure rack near the Welcome Center. In today's newsletter we'll talk about what our future church might look like if we are executing our mission, vision, and strategy successfully and what we need to do now to help us achieve that preferred future.

Future Church

The Strategy Team recently met with the Elders to brainstorm around this question: "What does our preferred future church look like?" When we are all-systems go on our vision and strategy, what would be the evidence of our success? What would be the fruit that we'd like to see? Here's what we came up with:

- We'd see people having an increasing hunger for Jesus, being captivated by Jesus, and delighting in Him.
- We'd see **many** people coming to faith in Jesus Christ, **many** being baptized and **many** becoming regular and faithful members of GREFC.
- We'd have so many people ready and willing to serve that we'd never have to ask for volunteers, we'd always have a ready supply of willing workers.
- We'd see high biblical fluency with many people thinking and acting biblically in their daily lives and behaving counter to the surrounding culture.
- We'd see a beautiful balance in the generations of our church from young adults, families with young kids, families with teens, empty nesters, and wise seniors.
- We'd see a growing love for God and a depth of spiritual maturity in our kids and students.
- We'd see a growing interest in being a leader in the church, with an active leadership pipeline.
- We'd see people valuing community with one another, with **most** people involved in groups (community groups, micro groups, and mentoring groups) across all generations, with healthy multiplication of groups on a regular basis.
- We'd see astounding generosity with ample resources for our church budget while increasing our giving to the community and to missions.
- We'd see more young people moving into full-time Christian ministry upon graduation.
- We'd see many families and individuals engaged in the culture, being missionaries in their neighborhoods and blessing and serving our community in many ways.
- We'd see a church that felt like a family, strongly unified, and on mission together, with people excited by what is happening in our church body.

- We'd see life transformation! Healthy and strong dating and marriage relationships, fewer people enslaved in addictions, fewer people encumbered by crippling anxiety and deep depression, and lives that exhibit joy, peace, gratitude, and love!

Doesn't that sound like a church you want to be a part of?! We desire this because it is God's best for us and we fervently pray that this is how God will work in our church. We realize that while He is the one that will do the changing, we have our part to play. We, as a church, are called to create the right environment for this preferred future to happen and intentionally prepare our hearts for what God has in store for us!

A Shift in Focus

Albert Einstein is quoted as saying, "Insanity is doing the same thing over and over and expecting different results." While many people would agree that they want the church that we just described, they tend to want it without having to change anything to get it, or they're okay with change if it doesn't affect them directly.

Non-intentionality, over time, won't work to produce the change we want to see. For true change to happen in our church and in people's lives, we need to make intentional, strategic choices about our ministries and how we function.

What does this mean for us moving forward?

- We must evaluate every current ministry area to see if it aligns with our mission, vision, strategy, and marks of maturity and make needed shifts to re-align them toward our goals. This has already happened in our Kids Ministry as we moved away from Kidz ROC and moved to Kid Groups. We will continue to evaluate all our ministries and make needed changes and shifts in priorities.
- We may need to eliminate things that we are currently doing that don't line up with our goals and that won't lead us to our preferred future. This doesn't mean that those things are bad or wrong, but they won't bring us where we want to go, no matter how much they are a tradition or "how we've always done it."
- We may also need to simplify our ministries to create time and space for our congregation to be disciple makers and blessings in their communities. If we have so many things happening at church, then we may not be allowing time that people could be using to build relationships and reach others for Christ.
- We need to consider if there are ministries, we need to add that will help us be more effective and efficient in reaching our goals.
- We will closely evaluate any new proposed ministry opportunities that come to us, being very discerning about how it may or may not align with our goals. We may need to say no or not yet to some great opportunities in order to say yes to what's best. If a new ministry will pull resources from an existing ministry that is effectively moving us toward our preferred future, then that may not be what we need at this time.

Change can be really uncomfortable, and many don't like the word "no." We are very aware that the changes we make may not "work" for everyone or be their first choice. We realize we won't be able to make everyone happy all the time.

But we sincerely hope that you will understand what we're trying to achieve with the choices and changes we make. We ask for patience, grace, and a willingness to do what's needed to be where God is calling us. We each may need to make sacrifices to support what's best-for-all over what's best-for-me. We hope and pray you will join us in making the necessary, hard choices that are coming.

We also invite you into the discussion. If you aren't happy with a decision, please come talk with us about it. We welcome the chance to discuss our decision-making process and the reasons behind it. We also encourage more people to move into membership and leadership so that you have the opportunity for input when it comes to important decisions that affect our church.

And finally, we ask that you continue to pray for our church leadership as we navigate the next steps. These are difficult and important decisions, and we desperately need the guidance of the Holy Spirit as we continue forward.

We are so grateful to be on this journey with you, our Christ following brothers and sisters on the greatest mission in the universe! It isn't always easy but it's always worth it.

We hope this Christmas you experience the joy of celebrating that God gave us a way to Himself and sent Jesus to rescue and transform us! Many blessings to you and your family this Christmas.

In His Name,

The Strategic Planning Team & Elder Board