

Our mission is
to make, to mature and to multiply
fully-committed followers of Jesus Christ
in our community and beyond

**The Journey Continues...
The
Adventure
Begins!**

First Evangelical Free Church
May 6, 2007

MISSION

**To make, to mature and to multiply
fully-committed followers
of Jesus Christ
in our community and beyond**

The Joshua Project: From March 2006 through April 2007, more than 40 people representing the many key groups of our church met regularly and united in their commitment to pray and seek the face of God for the future of First Free. And the church body prayed with them.

These pages contain the documentation that came out of the Joshua Project:

**Mission Statement
Core Values
The Vision for First Free
Strategies
Goals/Action Plan**

Included as an integral part of this booklet and adopted from the doctrinal position of the Evangelical Free Church of America are the twelve Articles of Faith to which First Free has always held:

Our Beliefs

CORE VALUES

In dependence on our Lord Jesus Christ and His Spirit, we aspire to be a church community that:

Honors God

(Psalm 150; John 15:5-8)

We respond to God by expressing His supremacy and glory in every aspect of life. We value individual and congregational worship that engages us with our glorious God and includes the variety of responses and styles His glory deserves. We make prayer foundational to our lives, ministries and decisions because expressions of faith please God and demonstrate our dependence on Him.

Proclaims Life-transforming Truth

(2 Timothy 3:16, 17; 1 Corinthians 2:1-10)

We hold up the Bible as the source for all we preach and teach, and we seek heart change and a growing personal relationship with God as our ultimate goal. We guide people toward spiritual maturity through comprehensive Bible instruction.

Loves Well

(Genesis 2:15-25; John 13:34, 35; 1 John 4:7-11)

We provide safe communities that practice genuine openness and loving accountability. We encourage reconciliation and restoration for those whose relationships have been broken and provide a healing environment for those who are hurting. We honor God's design for the family as the basic building block of society and will equip men, women and children to pursue their God-given purposes in loving families.

Serves Sacrificially

(Mark 10:45; Romans 12:4-8; Ephesians 4:11-13)

We pursue a life of service, just as Jesus Himself came to serve. We expect our leaders to use their experience and training to equip, encourage and empower all of us to serve. We help our entire congregation discover their spiritual gifts and grow in using them.

Makes Christ Known

(2 Corinthians 5:14, 15; Acts 1:8)

We declare the good news of Christ and demonstrate it with our lives to all people. We use creative methods, tailored to our community and the world, to express the message and love of Christ.

VISION

A vision is a God-given dream of what could be. It is a call by God to join Him in a kingdom-building journey as individuals and as a body of believers. By God's grace and the guiding of the Holy Spirit, First Free will seek to make, mature and multiply fully-committed followers of Christ. Every First Free believer's spiritual gifts are vital in reaching out and engaging our community and world. We prayerfully rely on God to make this vision a reality and do abundantly more than we could ask or imagine.

Engaging the Lost

First Free will be a People who Build Relationships in Our Community and World

We actively invest in the lives of others in order to show God's love and point them to Christ. We look for ways to encourage and support our neighbors and those in the community who are struggling, hurt or burdened with life's problems. We share the Gospel message, the ultimate answer to the problems of human sin. As we address the needs of neighbors, the community and world, we confidently bring Christ into the center of our conversations and relationships. Because we believe each person is important to God, every encounter is an opportunity to build Christ's kingdom. As a result of our outreach, the majority of our growth in the future will come from new believers.

We desire to be ambassadors for Christ wherever we go, to whomever we meet.

Following After Christ

First Free will be a People of True Worship

Authentic worship is our response to a holy and sovereign God. In gratitude we glorify God for His work in our hearts and lives. We daily respond by living for His glory and service. A heart of worship grows in us, allowing us to take bold steps of faith in prayerful obedience and dependence on God as a body of believers and as individuals. As a result of our focus on a holy and awesome God and not on ourselves, we will be united as a church in our heart for worship.

We desire to be a people living lives of worship, glorifying God in everything we do.

Relating to Each Other

First Free will be a People in Life-Changing Communities

God made our hearts to yearn for relationship. In relationship God reveals Himself to us, and through relationships He allows us to love and care for one another. Thus, we are a people who celebrate fellowship in communities. We understand relationships develop and deepen through time spent together, and we create communities that allow individuals to connect with one another in a variety of ways. Spiritual growth, discipleship and accountability come as we risk being known by others. We want these communities to be safe places to live transparent lives, and we encourage others to join us in our discipleship journey. With humility and compassion for each other, we continue to challenge ourselves and others with biblical truths for practical living. As a result most of our congregation will be sharing their lives with others in midsized groups, small groups or one-on-one.

We desire to be known as a people who grow closer to Christ through our relationships with each other.

Equipping all Believers

First Free will be a People of Intentional Discipleship

God desires First Free to equip and train disciples for Christ's kingdom. Deepening our relationship with God requires discipline and training on our part. Therefore, we are committed to help each believer grow spiritually. Identifying and developing our God-given spiritual gifts and natural abilities will build up this body of believers into greater Christ-likeness, preparing us for His service. As a result, our people will be growing in their faith, becoming more Christ-like in their character, and renewed in their minds by the truth of God's Word.

We desire to be a people equipped to respond in obedience to Christ's calling on our lives.

VISION (Continued)

Engaged in Ministry

First Free will be a People of Passionate Service

Jesus Christ's love compels us to a lifestyle of humble service for Him within our own body of believers as well as in our community and world. As God reveals to us who we are and who He has created each of us to be, we understand God also creates unique places of service and ministry for each of us. We eagerly seek out those places in our lives where our spiritual giftedness and passions join together. As the body of Christ, we understand serving one another, our community and our world is a response to God's ownership of our lives. We humbly respond to the spiritual and physical needs as His hands and His feet, providing salt and light as He directs. As a result our church will be known as a people who serve our community, sharing Christ's love in practical ways.

We desire to be a people who humbly serve others.

Engage the Lost

Follow after Christ

Relate to Each Other

Equip all Believers

Engage in Ministry

STRATEGIES

Implementing the Vision of First Free

Overview

“Strategies” are the means or the “how” that the Body of First Free will pursue to realize the Vision God has given our local church. This document provides a high-level summary of the key ways in which we will carry out our mission “to make, to mature, and to multiply fully-committed followers of Jesus Christ.”

Making Fully-Committed Followers of Jesus Christ

Engaging the Lost & Making Christ Known

1. First Free will endeavor to have the majority of our church growth come from outreach to unbelievers.
 - a. First Free will equip and mobilize individuals and small groups to share the good news of Christ in our everyday lives by building bridges with our neighbors, friends and co-workers.
 - b. First Free will introduce people to Christ through equipping the congregation to organize and engage in ministries of community service.
 - c. First Free will organize inviting opportunities, such as seasonal events, seminars, and biblical teaching on life skills and principles that meet people’s felt needs.
 - d. First Free will organize care/support communities to serve and support those struggling, hurt or burdened with life’s problems.
2. As First Free engages in local outreach, we recognize that the first impressions individuals have of the church are crucial in building relationships between them, the church and ultimately to Christ. Therefore, we will strategically identify the places and the ways in which people come into initial contact with our church. These include our entire campus - parking lot, facilities and signage- as well as our ushers and greeters, our fellowship environments, and our website. We will work to create positive experiences and a welcoming and friendly environment in all of those settings.
3. First Free will strive to make disciples of the peoples of the world. This will include developing cross-cultural ministries in our neighborhood, our region and the world:
 - a. We will sustain our vision for and involvement in our strategic relationships:

STRATEGIES (Continued)

- i. First Free supported missionaries
 - ii. Regional church partnerships.
- b. We will shepherd, equip and encourage our congregation to carry out our church mission and values in new short and long-term cross-cultural work.
- c. We will support and initiate ministries that bridge cultural and racial diversity.

Maturing Fully-Committed Followers of Jesus Christ

Following after Christ, Relating to each other & Equipping all Believers

- 4. First Free will build a clear and comprehensive maturing process that:
 - a. Invites people to grow in their faith and in service to Christ.
 - b. Provides the teaching, nurturing and equipping for becoming more like Christ.
- 5. We believe that community is crucial for maturity in Christ. First Free will utilize the following communities as the key environment where discipleship takes place.
 - a. Worship services will be designed to inspire and teach our congregation and move them to follow Christ in a life of worship that is characterized by His Spirit and Truth. Multiple worship services will be offered to reach and accommodate people with different learning and worship styles, including remote locations if deemed appropriate.
 - b. Small groups will be our core community environment and will be utilized primarily for accountability, spiritual formation, encouragement and outreach.
 - c. Care Groups will be communities where we can love one another well by serving those in our congregation who are struggling, hurt or burdened with life's problems.
 - d. Midsize communities will support the small group ministry and focus on either assimilation and fellowship or teaching and training.
- 6. We will make strengthening all family units a priority, ranging from singles and single parents to traditional families. We will incorporate teaching, mentoring and training on parenting, marriage, and relationships as an integral part of our children's, youth and adult ministries.

Multiplying Fully-Committed Followers of Jesus Christ

Engaged in Ministry

7. We will develop and implement a connecting ministry designed to help people discover and use their spiritual gifts. We will prepare and equip our congregation so they can fulfill the Scriptural mandate to be a “minister”.
8. First Free will develop and nurture communities as the main venue for people to be involved in ministry. Our ministries will emphasize both serving our own congregation as well as those outside the church.
9. We will simplify our church ministries as well as the lives of our congregation by holistically integrating multiple purposes into our community activities.
10. Organizational Overview: We are committed to oversee our ministries in a manner that properly balances strong accountability with simple, streamlined decision-making. We also are committed to open communication with the various First Free leaders and members so they have the understanding and training necessary to effectively carry out their respective roles. We will organize with the following concepts. First Free is:
 - a. Congregationally ruled – Congregation to carry out its oversight responsibility as described in the church’s constitution
 - b. Elder led – Elders will concentrate their efforts on setting the mission and vision of First Free and shepherding the congregation.
 - c. Staff managed – The Staff will primarily manage the ministries by shepherding and equipping lay leaders and the congregation for ministry.
 - d. Mobilized Congregation. We are committed to a fully engaged congregation that is equipped and mobilized for ministry, service and shepherding.

GOALS/ACTION PLAN

Top 6 Goals for 2007/2008

1. Organize our ministry settings so they complement each other for accomplishing key aspects of discipleship:
 - a. Developing several options of small groups' models that support our discipleship process of spiritual formation, accountability, encouragement and outreach. Significantly expand small group ministry by:
 1. Launching 50 small groups with trained leaders
 2. Identifying and training 10 coaches for small groups
 3. Identify and implement a training curriculum for coaches and leaders
 4. Developing some core curriculums to be used by small groups
 5. Align current small groups
 6. Develop several outreach opportunities
 - b. Development of clear model(s) for midsize groups (primarily small churches) and the best approach in accomplishing the discipleship role of teaching, fellowship, and assimilation.
 1. Consensus on models of small churches in the discipleship process
 2. Development and implementation of action plans as necessary to achieve roles more effectively
 3. Incorporation of a core discipleship curriculum into the small church teaching ministry
2. Development of discipleship program across all age groups
 - a. Identification of core teachings, biblical instruction, spiritual disciplines, biblically based life skills, and habits of life long spiritual growth, appropriate for each age and level of maturity,
 - b. Development and communication of clear pathways of growth.
3. Development of initial stages of an effective connecting ministry
 - a. Spiritual gift teaching implemented
 - b. Actively identifying ministry opportunities and needs and matching them to congregation members

4. Development of an enhanced First Impressions ministry
 - a. Development of clear roles and expectations for each phase of First Impressions
 - b. Initial action steps implemented to make our church more welcoming to visitors
 - c. Enhancement of our website so that it is clearer, a ready source of key information and easier to update.

5. Enhanced communication of our mission, vision and clarity of our discipleship process
 - a. Incorporation of our mission, vision and discipling process into our Meet First Free classes
 - b. Recurring meetings with our broader leadership community to cast vision
 - c. Integration of our mission and vision into our Sunday morning services and into our discipling communities
 - d. Updating of church brochures.

6. Support and expansion of care groups
 - a. Assignment of pastoral oversight and support of care groups
 - b. Expand support groups as outreach ministries to our neighborhood and friends as well as our congregation with several initiatives
 - c. Significantly grow our care groups by implementing specific action steps to increase awareness of our care groups as a resource to the needs of our congregation and neighborhood
 - d. Launch two or three new care groups as needed. For example- divorce care

WE BELIEVE

...The Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, to be the inspired Word of God, without error in the original writings, the complete revelation of His will for the salvation of men and the Divine and final authority for all Christian faith and life.

...In one God, Creator of all things, infinitely perfect and eternally existing in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

...That Jesus Christ is true God and true man, having been conceived of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He died on the cross, a sacrifice for our sins according to the Scriptures. Further, He arose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven, where, at the right hand of the Majesty on High, He is now our High Priest and Advocate.

...That the ministry of the Holy Spirit is to glorify the Lord Jesus Christ and, during this age, to convict men, regenerate the believing sinner, indwell, guide, instruct and empower the believer for godly living and service.

...That man was created in the image of God but fell into sin and is, therefore, lost, and only through regeneration by the Holy Spirit can salvation and spiritual life be obtained.

...That the shed blood of Jesus Christ and His Resurrection provide the only ground for justification and salvation for all who believe, and only such as receive Jesus Christ are born of the Holy Spirit and, thus, become children of God.

...That water baptism and the Lord's Supper are ordinances to be observed by the Church during the present age. They are, however, not to be regarded as a means of salvation.

...That the true Church is composed of all such persons who through saving faith in Jesus Christ have been regenerated by the Holy Spirit and are united together in the body of Christ, of which He is the Head.

...That only those who are, thus, members of the true Church shall be eligible for membership in the local Church.

...That Jesus Christ is the Lord and Head of the Church and that every local church has the right, under Christ, to decide and govern its own affairs.

...In the personal and premillennial and imminent coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and that this "Blessed Hope" has a vital bearing on the personal life and service of the believer.

...In the bodily resurrection of the dead: of the believer to everlasting blessedness and joy with the Lord; of the unbeliever to judgment and everlasting conscious punishment.