

# Vision Team Final Report to Session Faith Church Kingstowne

## *The Story of Faith*

The story of Faith Church began in 1987, when the founders of Faith felt compelled by God to leave their former church home at Fairlington Presbyterian Church (PCUSA) in Alexandria due to irreconcilable theological differences with the Presbyterian Church USA and the National Capital Presbytery over the authority of the Bible as the inerrant Word of God. In a congregational vote at Fairlington, the group that would become the founders of Faith came up one vote short of the required 2/3 majority that would have allowed them to withdraw from the PCUSA and retain the Fairlington Church property. Like Abraham, they obeyed the Lord and left, even though they didn't know where they were going (Hebrews 11:8).

In October 1987, the new church began meeting for Worship and Sunday School at Key Middle School in Springfield, and was officially chartered as a congregation of the Evangelical Presbyterian Church (EPC) in 1988. The congregation met at Key School for more than 8 ½ years, until May 1996.

In His providence, God provided land to build a new church facility in the community of Kingstowne. The congregation of Faith purchased the property and built a building that included a sanctuary, fellowship hall, kitchen, and nursery. The first service in the new church building was held in May 1996.

Founding pastor Dr. W. Graham Smith, who had previously been the pastor of the Fairlington congregation, retired in October 1996 at the age of 76. Rev. Neil Smith was called as the new pastor in April 1997 and began his ministry at Faith in July 1997.

The church's facilities were enlarged with the construction of a classroom wing (The W. Graham Smith Discipleship Center), a multi-purpose room, library, and church offices in 2002.

The people of Faith stepped out in faith in 2003 to plant a mission church in the Lorton-Woodbridge area. Originally known as Redeemer Presbyterian Church and later as The COVE (Church of the Occoquan Valley), the church-planting effort was led by Rev. Dan Rose (2003-2004) and then Rev. David Fischler (2006-2011). In God's providence, the daughter church did not grow to a self-sustainable size. The Session of Faith voted to dissolve the mission church and to reincorporate its core group into the congregation of Faith.

We are a church family of around 300 members, regular attenders, and children, who seek to love the Lord our God with our whole beings, to love each other as Jesus has loved us, and to love our community with the love of Jesus.

Among the things that make Faith Church special to those who are part of our church family are:

- A place of grace where we seek not only to proclaim the gospel of God's grace but to live it out in our relationships.
- Worship that seeks to glorify God and exalt the Lord Jesus Christ, creating an atmosphere in which every person can have a fresh encounter with God and respond to Him in worship with heart, soul, mind, and strength.

- Preaching and teaching that 1) are committed to the Bible as the inspired, authoritative, infallible, and unerring Word of God; and 2) seek to apply the message of God's Word to daily life.
- An outstanding music ministry: We have been blessed throughout the last 30 years by the excellent leadership and invaluable contributions of our music staff and musicians.
- A strong commitment to missions, including the sending of short-term mission teams to mission fields such as France, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, Mexico, Kentucky, and New York; and the support of local, national, and international missionaries and mission organizations.
- Active participation in the work of the Presbytery of the East and the EPC General Assembly, affirming our commitment to our connections and partnerships in the EPC.
- A warm, loving, intergenerational church family where Jesus is Lord and everybody counts.
- A multi-racial, multi-ethnic, multi-national church family with 18 nationalities (plus the US) currently represented in our congregation.

### Our Mission Field

Our church is located at the northern edge of Kingstowne, a residential community of more than 27,000 people, in the Fairfax County suburbs of Washington, DC. Our church facilities are easily accessible from the Capital Beltway (I-495), South Van Dorn Street, Franconia Road, and the Franconia-Springfield Parkway. In addition to Kingstowne, members and attenders come from Alexandria, Franconia, Springfield, Lorton, Fairfax Station, Arlington, and other communities in northern Virginia.

In the area closest to our church, 35-46% of residents indicate no significant faith involvement. Kingstowne is a highly-educated community, with more than 70% of adult residents having a bachelor's degree or higher. More than 50% of adults are married. Nearly 1 in 4 residents in the area closest to our church are under 18 years of age. Another 11-13% are 18-29 years old. Kingstowne is home to many young families and 'rising potential professionals' (millennials). The make-up of the local area is 43% white, 18% African-American, 17% Hispanic, and 20% Asian/other. (Source: Percept Ministry Area Profile, 2017, [www.percept.com](http://www.percept.com)).

We believe we are strategically located where the Lord wants us to be and that God wants us to impact the Kingstowne community and beyond for the kingdom of God.

### Five Years from Now: A Portrait of a Reached Community

We understand our calling as a church family to be a missional body committed to blessing our community in practical ways, sharing the saving love of Jesus with our neighbors in both word and action, and making new disciples who will become actively engaged members of the church and grow to become fully-devoted followers of Christ. To that end, by faith, we will:

1. Increasingly reflect the multi-generational, multi-racial, multi-ethnic, international make-up of our community.
2. Make our church ministries and facilities more visible and accessible to our neighbors.
3. Serve our neighbors in visible and practical ways through involvement at Edison High School and/or other schools in our area, children's and youth activities, and other opportunities in the Kingstowne-Franconia area.

4. Construct an attractive playground on our church grounds for use by our church family and neighbors alike.
5. Take practical steps to develop relationships with our unchurched neighbors.
6. See a tangible increase in our community from no faith involvement to active faith involvement.
7. Enhance our ministry and connect with our community through a purposeful and up-to-date integration of technology.
8. Seek to have every church member involved in ministry in the church or the community.
9. Train and empower younger leaders in all areas of ministry, including music ministry and other high-visibility ministries.
10. Engage the younger generation while still providing a place of meaningful involvement for our older members.
11. Be a loving, caring family for one another and especially for those who need a loving family.
12. Continually provide opportunities for our children and youth to hear and respond to the gospel, and to grow spiritually as disciples of Christ.
13. Continue a blended style of worship that incorporates both traditional and contemporary music.
14. Work with a network of churches in our community to collaborate in ministry.
15. Regularly send out mission teams to serve on national and international mission fields.

We will be a vibrant, authentic, Christ-centered fellowship of believers who embody our denomination's motto of unity in the essentials, liberty in non-essentials, and charity (love) in all things. We will proclaim the biblical gospel of God's grace and will make grace central in our relationships. We will strive to know Christ and to make Him known in all that we undertake as a church. We will commit ourselves to go out in our northern Virginia mission field to make Christ known and to make disciples in the name of Jesus. We will seek to be a 'city on a hill' (Matthew 5:14) and to make Jesus Christ the King of Kingstowne. In all we do, we will seek to fulfill the Great Commandment to love the Lord our God, to love each other, and to love our community in Jesus' name.

### ***Vision Synopsis:***

Building on the strong biblical foundation laid by the founders of Faith, we desire to be a Christ-centered, missionally-focused family of believers who embrace our calling to know Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, and to make Him known in our community and throughout the world. We desire to equip disciples of all ages to serve Christ in the church and the world. We desire to impact our community for the kingdom of God, so that Jesus will be king of our lives, our church, and our community. In all we do, we will seek to love God, each other, and our community in Jesus' name.

### ***Vision Slogan:***

Love God. Love each other. Love our community. In Jesus' name.

# Final Report

February 9, 2021

## **The Great Commission Matthew 28: 16-20 (NIV)**

*Then the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain where Jesus had told them to go. When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*

- I. Thank you for this opportunity to serve the church. This is not a task we've taken lightly -- it has required us to be honest about our church's strengths and weaknesses; required us to take a close look at modern culture and examine how we disseminate information outside of our church walls; required a change of thought in how we approach ministry.
- II. In November 2017, Session approved the current Vision of Faith Church. *Building on the strong biblical foundation laid by the founders of Faith, we desire to be a Christ-centered, missionally-focused family of believers who embrace our calling to know Jesus Christ as Savior and Lord, and to make Him known in our community and throughout the world. We desire to equip disciples of all ages to serve Christ in the church and the world. We desire to impact our community for the kingdom of God, so that Jesus will be king of our lives, our church, and our community. In all we do, we will seek to love God, each other, and our community in Jesus' name.* This document became our guide as we worked with individual ministries over the last few years. In particular, we have encouraged ministry areas to closely examine the fifteen points of a reached community to identify one or two points that align with their ministry area that can be focused on.
- III. Believing that success begets success, we have much to celebrate at Faith in the past two years. Upon closer inspection, you can see that our measure of "success" is closely tied to the fifteen points of a reached community.
  - Children's ministry changed the format of VBS to become an evening event, thus attracting individuals from our immediate community (2,5), providing opportunities for children to interact with the gospel (12) and engaging all members of our congregation in a common goal (8).
  - A small group of dedicated volunteers prepared and served breakfast to the teachers and staff at Edison High School, making it known to this community that Faith is in their backyard and we care about them. (2,3)
  - In September 2019, Properties and Facilities embarked on a home improvement project through Rebuilding Together that engaged 30 + members of our congregation in a service project. Because of our collective efforts, the family whose home we worked on was able to renew their certification as an in-home day care facility. (2,3,8,11) They have started to attend our church and are taking the new member's class.
  - **Right Now Media:** Upon the recommendation of the Vision Team, Faith chose to invest in a monthly subscription to RightNow Media close to the beginning of

Covid-19. This streaming subscription of Bible studies and children's videos has helped both youth group and Sunday School classes to continue meeting in a virtual world. (7, 12)

- In order for these ministry opportunities to continue and for new ones to blossom, we encourage all ministry leaders to use the vision and mission as their guide in all that they do. Each ministry will continue to need a champion for their respective ministry initiatives.

IV. Where do we go now?

We encourage you to refer back to the vision document, specifically the "Portrait of a Reached Community" portion, as you work within your respective ministry areas. This needs to be owned by Session. We encourage Session to revisit the practice of Monthly Ministry Minute updates during Session meetings to keep the Mission and Vision at the forefront of their minds as they lead the church.

V. Measurable items for the future:

- **Carrying the Mission and Vision Forward**
  - Ordination and Installation Vows; Question 1:
    - *Will you seek to be faithful and diligent in the exercise of all your duties as a Christian and a Teaching Elder/Ruling Elder/Deacon, whether personal, or interpersonal, private or public; and to endeavor by the grace of God to adorn the profession of the gospel in your manner of life, and to walk with exemplary piety before the congregation of which God is making you overseer?*
  - As we move forward, the baton has now been passed to the Session. Since the Mission and Vision is now a living and breathing document, it needs to be nurtured and cared for by the Session and needs to continue to be at the forefront of the minds of the congregation. If we don't continue to fan the flames of success, the fire will burn out.
  - Everything we do as a church needs to be driven by the Mission and Vision that has been cast.
- **Website: Part II**

One area that has continually been identified and tossed around over the last three years of our tenure is that of communication outside the church walls. Whether good or bad, the method in which people seek information has changed. The internet, and in particular, social media is the "GO TO" to seek information for a large segment of the population. Because of this, we need to be proactive in our own electronic communications. The website needs to be updated on a regular basis.

  - Recommend the Communications Committee reach out to Landslide (our website creator) to get ideas for taking the website to the next level (goal 7)
    - All communications need to flow through the website
    - Landslide manages numerous websites and would be a valuable resource for us
    - Recommend finding a dedicated "Social Media" director (volunteer or paid) to manage and oversee our online presence. We need to reach people where they are, and many people are

online and looking online for information. Many people want information pushed to them through social media, and others want to be able to quickly get information online (research says it should be found within three clicks). People will come to it if it is relevant and fresh.

- **Vacation Bible School and Easter Eggstravaganza Part 2**
  - Children’s ministry is one of the most highly valued ministries of the church. If you get the children, you get the family.
  - Since Children, Youth and Family ministry is a “gateway ministry,” we recommend keeping the new format the same, understanding that these programs serve a valuable purpose and need for our families, and the families we are trying to reach.
  
- **Faith Groups (Adult Discipleship)**
  - The goal is to have every church member involved in a small group ministry in order to encourage their own discipleship, which will lead to outreach and evangelism. (goals 8&11) One opportunity we may explore as a post-Covid kick-off is to do a church wide, small group study, which can lead to new small groups being formed.
  
- **Ongoing Discipleship (9,12)**
  - Create a “scope and sequence” that outlines discipleship benchmarks across the ages as we seek to make new disciples who will become actively engaged members of the church and grow to become fully-devoted followers of Christ.

Submitted by Vision Team Members:

Stanley Crow

Allison Masson

Adam Rice

Aaron Shingler

Pastor Neil Smith

Marilyn White