



February 2020

Vision Revisited

***At FBC, we desire to see Christ-centered, Kingdom-focused homes
on every block in the Lowell community.***

Nehemiah had a God-given vision that was implanted in his heart after hearing about the destruction of the city of Jerusalem. This news caused him to weep and mourn and led him to fast and pray for days. In that time God birthed a vision in his heart to rebuild the walls of the city that was uniquely identified with the glory of God. Not only did God give him this vision, but He paved the way for this vision to happen and gave Nehemiah the courage and wisdom to see it through. 52 days! That is how long this project took in spite of so many internal and external challenges. Nehemiah's example has always challenge me in my own journey to become a better leader.

Vision matters, but a God-given vision is critical for the church. What piece of God's kingdom plan is FBC uniquely positioned for in our community? This involves our location, culture, congregational make-up, and leadership, including God's call to me as your pastor. What has God placed in my heart for FBC and how did it come about? The first part of that question is stated in our vision statement.

1. I desire our people to be Christ-centered, meaning that Jesus is truly our central pursuit and greatest love.
2. I desire to see Christ-centered people to look beyond their own plans, dreams, and desires to engage in God's kingdom plans, dreams, and desires. I desire to see a people that live a life that truly demonstrates God's love for this world and His desire to restore the brokenness.
3. I desire to see Christ-centered, Kingdom-focused believers manifesting this kind of culture in their homes, which then becomes the primary place where faith is nurtured.

The second part of this question is a longer answer. There is a reason that God placed this vision in my heart and I would like to share that with you. There have been things that have broken my heart over the years that God has used to form clear convictions and desires for the church.

1. My heart aches when I see people's lives falling apart as a result of destructive choices they have made in their lives. This can manifest itself in things like addictions, sexual immorality, divorce, depression, suicide, etc. It just feels as if the enemy is winning sometimes and that is not okay.

2. My heart aches when I see believers interacting with one another with little evidence of the fruit of the Spirit. I long to see a people who show love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self control in the way they interact. Do we walk by the Spirit?
3. My heart aches when very little faith interactions happen outside the church, especially when it comes to the home. My heart aches when I see the statistics about how many high school students abandon their faith within the first couple of years out of high school. I long to see parents make the discipleship of their children the number one priority. I long to see parents engage in the faith formation of their kids and see it as something more important than even education and sports.
4. My heart aches when I hear statistics about the high percentage of people who regularly go to an evangelical church but seldom read their Bible outside of Sunday morning. I long to see God's people longing to know Him intimately and pursuing His heart through obedience to His Word.
5. My heart aches when I see a prevailing inward focus of churches. It breaks my heart to see so many believers in evangelical churches whose interactions seem more focused on telling people how wrong they are, then telling them about a gracious and benevolent God who loves them and gave Himself up for them. I long to see God's people feel the urgency of the Gospel and genuinely love lost souls.
6. My heart aches when I read the statistics about the average time an evangelical Christian spends praying each day. I long to see a dependency on God that expresses itself so pervasively through God's people, that seeing people praying together becomes a normal.

I could go on, but the bottom line is that I long to see Christ-centered, Kingdom-focused people who take the Great Commission (to make disciples) and the Great Commandment (to love God and love people) seriously in their own lives, in their homes, at their school or workplace, and in their church. It is a vision to move away from inward, passive, and self-seeking tendencies with a church culture, so that a greater, more powerful culture may prevail. A culture that seeks after the true God passionately, that pursues God's plan for this world with urgency, that sees their lives and homes as a conduit of God's glory, grace, and love to their neighbors.

That is our vision! How do we get there? How do we shift toward a church culture that reflects these longings? Our answer... the Pathway. When people experience a Christ-centered and authentic corporate worship, connect in a caring and loving community (Life Group) where the one-anothers in Scripture can be practically fulfilled, foster the spiritual disciplines that can bring about deep transformation in the context of accountability (D-Groups), and intentionally seek to reach those outside the church, we believe it will act as a catalyst to shift towards our vision. This is what God has placed on my heart for our church. I am not interested in a busy church. I long to see a beautiful church.

Blessings,
Pastor Jon

[Dis · ci · ple]

“Therefore, be imitators of God, as dearly loved children”

— Ephesians 5:1

Proverbs 14:4 says this: “Where there are no oxen, the manger is clean, but abundant crops come by the strength of the ox.” At first glance, this seems like a rather strange proverb. But I think it has something profound to say about discipleship.

This proverb teaches a very simple but basic truth: you can eat, or you can have a clean stable, but you can’t have both. We have similar proverbs today: “You can’t have your cake and eat it too.” “You have to spend money to make money.” The point is that if we want to be part of something significant, it will require something of us. In the days of ancient Israel, food did not magically appear. It came only because a person diligently sowed a crop, and that crop could not be sown efficiently without the strength of oxen. Caring for oxen brings its own difficulties, but those difficulties are worth it because they produce an abundant crop.

This is how this proverb applies to discipleship: we can have neat, clean, tidy lives and not make disciples. Or we can see an abundant harvest of spiritual growth, but it will be a messy process. The mess is necessary because discipleship is a *relational* process between people who are all in the process of working out their salvation. That means discipleship will require things like granting forgiveness, receiving forgiveness, longsuffering, conflict resolution, and confession of sin. It can be sort of a mess.

And most of us would prefer to skip out on the mess....





The 5 Love Languages

"Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself'" Matthew 22:37-39

God has called us to not only love Him but to love others as well. This can sometimes be difficult and confusing. We use the word love to mean very different ideas. We say; "I love ice cream", and "I love you". We certainly do not love ice cream and the person the same. The world would like to make us think that what we love is what makes us happy or that we should only love what does make us happy. But the Bible has a different definition of love.

"Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others." Phillipians 2:3-4

We should love in humility placing a higher value on others than ourselves. Jesus is the ultimate example of this kind of love for us. He chose to suffer and die so that we could be forgiven and have life. So how do we show this kind of love to others?

God has made each person unique and different, that includes the way that we need to be loved. Showing love in each person's unique way takes time and intentionality. You must first find out in what way the person likes to be shown love - we call that their love language. Then you must find ways to show that person love in ways that speak their language. This may be a tough task, since not all people speak the same love language.

This month at the Faith @ Home center we have some tools to help your family not only discover each others love language but also some tools to help you begin to speak their language and to show love to others. There are many resources available for everyone, in every stage of life. Come check out the Faith @ Home center and see how you can begin to show love to those closest to you.

FBC Youth

Ignited by Change - Fueled by Faith - Led by Passion

Hello church,

We have a few very exciting events coming up this year! Here are the details. Please contact Pastor Andrew if you have any questions.

- **Lake Effect:** We will be going to Lincoln Lake again this year for our annual Winter Retreat. We will be there from Friday afternoon, February 21 to Sunday, February 23. We typically get back around 12pm. The cost for this event is \$95, and this includes all costs associated with the trip, including food, lodging, and transportation.
- **Student Life Camp:** FBC's high schoolers will be participating in the Mission track of Student Life Camp at Cedarville University. We will leave early on the morning of Monday, July 13th and get back on the evening of Friday, July 17th. The cost for the trip is \$495, which includes all costs associated with the trip, including food, lodging, and transportation. This will be an excellent opportunity for your student to both grow spiritually as they serve alongside one another. Pastor Jon has a connection with the Dayton Gospel Mission, which is where the group will be serving every day of the trip.
- **Immersion:** FBC's middle schoolers will be attending Immersion, which is a program developed by Bridge Street Ministries in Grand Rapids. The purpose of Immersion is to teach students about living life in relationship with God and participating in his mission. The trip concludes with time building relationships in the neighborhoods on the west side of Grand Rapids and serving the community. This trip will be June 15-17, and the cost is \$225, which includes all costs associated with the trip, including food, lodging, and transportation.

You can find more details and register for all of these events at the following link:

<https://fbclowell.churchcenter.com/registrations/events>

If you have a student, I hope that they will be able to participate in this opportunities. I know that each of them will be spiritually formative for them. If you do not have a student, I would ask that you pray for our students on a regular basis. Pray that all that we do as a student ministry would show the students the love of Christ and create relationships that will support and sustain them.

-Pastor Andrew

FUTURE GROWTH OPPORTUNITIES



Church Ministries Conference: It is March 6th and 7th. We would love to see you there for powerful worship services, great equipping workshops, and exposure to great resources through the exhibitors. You can sign up at the Welcome Center. This event will only cost you \$10 because FBC will cover the rest. We want to invest in opportunities like this to equip you for more effective ministry. Sign-up deadline is Feb. 16th.



Financial Peace University: It's time to stop worrying about money! The nine-lesson *Financial Peace University* (FPU) course is the proven plan to help you keep a budget, beat debt, and build wealth! Dave Ramsey and his team of financial experts teaches every lesson with biblical wisdom, and you'll get support and encouragement along the way. FPU includes your workbook and a one year Financial Peace Membership, an online tool kit to support your journey. Join us at Lowell First Baptist Church

starting Monday, March 2, 2020 at 6:30pm. Feel free to message us your questions or sign up at fpu.com/1112645! Additionally, Pastor Jon will host a preview class on Feb. 16th during the Life Group Hour for those interested in knowing more about the class before they sign up. The cost of the course is \$99. You can register online or at the preview meeting. There are scholarship help available for those who need it.



Marriage is a big deal and investing in your marriage is so important to foster a healthier relationship. This retreat is designed to allow you a relaxing setting to invest in your marriage. Our speaker is Dr. Jonathan Mulder. He has been working with couples for many years. In the past, he worked on staff at Mars Hill Church and Calvary Church, but over the last 10 years or so, he has had his own practice (Freedom Counseling). The retreat will start on March 20th at the Shack Country Inn in White Cloud, MI. The first

event is a buffet style dinner at 6pm., but you may check in as early as 3pm that Friday and enjoy time at the facility. We have reserved the Granary and rooms in the East Livery, with hot tubs in each room. The retreat will end at 4pm on the 21st. The cost is \$210 per couple, which includes the room, 3 meals, and the program. Please register by Feb. 22nd. You can go to the front page of our website and click on the FBC Couple's Retreat picture to register.

MISSIONARY CORNER



Roy and JoAnne Schwarcz began with Chosen People Ministries in 1976 and in 1978 were sent to Chicago to attend the Jewish studies program at Moody Bible Institute graduating in 1980. While a student Roy became the founding pastor of Olive Tree Congregation which is now a thriving church located in Prospect Heights, IL. In 1982 he became the founding pastor of Rock of Israel, another Messianic Congregation in the Jewish suburb of Buffalo Grove IL. He received an M.A. in theology with an emphasis in Jewish studies at the Talbot Seminary of Biola University. He served as pastor of Evangelism at Moody Church in Chicago for eight years. He also served as Pastor of Adat Hatikvah Congregation, one of the oldest

Messianic Congregations in Chicago. Today he and JoAnne serve as the Midwest regional director overseeing their ministries in Chicago, Minneapolis, Indianapolis and Pittsburgh. Currently Roy leads a monthly outreach in the City and will begin a twice monthly gathering in March. They call this fellowship Beth Sar Shalom and it brings together both Jews and Christians to learn about their shared heritage with the God of Israel through her promised Messiah. Roy also leads a monthly Bible study in a home located in Highland Park with 10-12 unsaved Jewish people regularly attending along with Christians. Over the years they have seen scores of Jewish people come to faith and become fully devoted disciples of Jesus.



Newest Member of our Missions' Team

We want to welcome Rachel Degner as our newest missions' team member. Rachel grew up in Brazil and has lived in the US ever since college. She is married to Jeff and has two teenage daughters, Mady and Millie. She is also engaged in teaching ESL and has a love for missions. We look forward to having her on the team and for her vitale perspective as we continue to help our people at FBC become more engaged in missions.

Building and Grounds

Greetings!

As I am writing this I'm also looking at my phone app which tells me there are 50 days, 14 hours, 41 minutes and 37 seconds until Spring. The weather station tells me it has been 10 days since we have seen the sun. All of this can easily get me down in the dumps, but I sure am glad that we have some wonderful buildings that allow us to meet together, play together, and be the church together! When I stop and start to count the amount of people who come through our doors each week it is amazing. The Outreach Building has an average of 350 people utilizing it each week, at any time between 7 a.m. and 10 p.m. That's just one of our buildings! If you show up to use the gym on a morning around 9 a.m. and there is the unmistakable odor of exercise, count it all joy that you had a part in creating a building that brings various people together. Whether it's basketball, kids play date, or sewing ministry, may we always remember to be intentional and strive to reach our community.

As the buildings are used more frequently, there is also an increase of times that I need your help keeping spaces looking good and ready for the next scheduled use. Please remember to return rooms to the way you found them upon entering. If you move tables and chairs please return them to the original configuration. We also need to be good stewards of the funds God gives us. Please remember to turn lights off upon leaving an area, or confirm with others using the building that they will assume the responsibility.

Please remember to also clean up any food or drink that is spilled. It only takes a few moments and it eliminates unwanted pests. Remember to take home leftover food, including group snacks. This ensures that refrigerators and cabinets do not take on another life form altogether!

Thanks for reading!

Sincerely,

Russ Race – Building and Grounds.

February Memory Verse

27 "But I say to you who hear, Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, 28 bless those who curse you, pray for those who abuse you. 29 To one who strikes you on the cheek, offer the other also, and from one who takes away your cloak do not withhold your tunic either. 30 Give to everyone who begs from you, and from one who takes away your goods do not demand them back. 31 And as you wish that others would do to you, do so to them."

Luke 6:27-31 (ESV)

February Reading Plan

Week 1 Starting on Feb. 3	Week 2 Starting on Feb. 10	Week 3 Starting on Feb. 17	Week 4 Starting on Feb. 24
Day 1: Gal. 6	Day 1: 1 Thes. 3	Day 1: 2 Thes. 3	Day 1: 1 Cor. 4
Day 2: Acts 17	Day 2: 1 Thes. 4	Day 2: Acts 19	Day 2: 1 Cor. 5
Day 3: Acts 18	Day 3: 1 Thes. 5	Day 3: 1 Cor. 1	Day 3: 1 Cor. 6
Day 4: 1 Thes. 1	Day 4: 2 Thes. 1	Day 4: 1 Cor. 2	Day 4: 1 Cor. 7
Day 5: 1 Thes. 2	Day 5: 2 Thes. 2	Day 5: 1 Cor. 3	Day 5: 1 Cor. 8

Birthdays and Anniversaries February 2020

Birthdays		Birthdays		Anniversaries	
Paige Clark	02/03	Matt Kinnucan	02/12	*Kelly & Wolfgang Grotendiek	02/19
Julianne Dusendang	02/04	Ronan Yantz	02/12	Lisa & Brent Hooker	02/22
Fisher Pham	02/05	Cheryl Runstrom	02/14	Ann & Jim VanderMeulen	02/27
Jessee Smoes	02/05	Kassandra Darling	02/16		
Reid Lynema	02/06	Megan Waghorn	02/17		
Bo Smiley	02/07	Benjamin Bosscher	02/17		
*Rich Visser	02/07	Autumn Rickert	02/18		
Mark Rosenberger	02/08	Isaac Hooker	02/18	* Missionary	
Eden Roberts	02/08	Joash Kooi	02/18		
Ryan Antles	02/09	Sharon Vosovic	02/18		
Glynn Harding	02/09	Kyle Visser	02/18		
Dave Pasquale	02/10	Donna Blattner	02/20		
Ben Gerard	02/11	Aubrey Antles	02/21		
Ellouise Watson	02/11	Kenda Haines	02/23		
Jelaine Smoes	02/11	Emma Laux	02/26		
Bob Roush	02/12	Faith Chipman	02/29		

FBC Calendar: February

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1						
						7:00 am Basketball
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9:30am: Morning Service	6:15pm: Youth Group (Grade 6-12)	7:00am Basketball 9:30 am Ladies Bible Study 6pm Tae Kwon Do	10:30 am Playdate 4:00 pm: Missions Team Meeting 6:15pm: Awana	7:00am: Basketball 5:30 pm Family Matters Team 7:00 pm Children's Ministry Team		7:00 am Basketball
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
9:30am: Morning Service	6:15pm: Youth Group (Grade 6-12)	7:00am Basketball 9:30 am Ladies Bible Study 6pm Tae Kwon Do	9:00 am Men's Bible Study 10:30 am Playdate 6:15 pm Awana	7:00am: Basketball 9:00 am MOPS 7:00 pm Admin. Deacons Meeting 7:00 pm Mercy Deacons Meeting		7:00 am Basketball
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
9:30am: Morning Service	6:15pm: Youth Group (Grade 6-12)	7:00am Basketball 9:30 am Ladies Bible Study 6pm Tae Kwon Do	10:30 am Playdate 6:15 pm Awana	7:00am: Basketball 11:00 am Prime Time 6:30 pm Coffee Break	4:00 pm leave church for Lake Effect	7:00 am Basketball
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
9:30am: Morning Service 12:00 Return from Lake Effect	6:15pm: Youth Group (Grade 6-12)	7:00am: Basketball 9:30 am Ladies Bible Study 6pm Tae Kwon Do	9:00 am Men's Bible Study 10:30 am Playdate 6:15 pm Awana	7:00am: Basketball 9:00 am MOPS		7:00 am Basketball