

Faith Church History

1984: Dick Bakke, a postal worker and lay preacher of the Evangelical Free Church, put a classified ad in the local Shopper inviting members of the community to join him in forming a new church.

April, 1985: Faith EFC was accepted as a new church with the Evangelical Free Church denomination, joining 120 other Evangelical Free Churches in Minnesota and over 1,200 nationwide. About 15 adults were meeting at the YMCA in Austin.

October 1987: Jim Mitchell became the pastor of Faith EFC. Over the next two years, the average Sunday attendance was almost 70. The church rented space from another local church.

1990: We purchased an existing church facility (1805 12th St. SW) from Bethlehem Free Methodist Church for \$130,000.

February 1991: Pastor Mitchell resigned.

June 1991: Pastor Chris Holck became the full-time pastor.

1993: The Congregation voted to build a new sanctuary and remodel parts of the existing structure. The previous mortgage was paid off, and a new mortgage was taken out for \$300,000.

March 6, 1994 the new sanctuary was dedicated.

1994: Judi Needham was hired part time as the church administrator and Jeff Jensen as Associate Pastor of Student Ministries. Since then many other staff have been added to meet the needs of the congregation.

1996: Southgate School was rented on Sundays for Christian Ed. classrooms for about 200 people with 60 additional people meeting at the church.

November 1996: 100 people (47 adults) were sent from Faith Church to Albert Lea to begin what is today called Crossroads EFC.

May 1998: We purchased almost 9 acres of the land across the street from the current building for a cost of \$120,000. Brown Church Development Group of Holdrege, Nebraska designed the new building.

1998: The church undertook a 3-year giving campaign to raise funds to pay off the existing mortgage and begin saving for future construction. The Growing In Faith Together (GIFT) Campaign was born.

December 2000: Commitments had been given for \$1,017,000 with over \$737,000 actually given. The congregation voted to proceed with the building construction in the spring of 2001.

February 2002: moved into the 1800 12th St. building. Mortgage: 1.1 million.

August 2002: Pastor Chris resigned

March 2003: Pastor Mike Alfieri became Senior Pastor.

June 2004: Pastor Mike Alfieri resigned.

March 2006: Pastor Mike Sager became Senior Pastor

Ministry

Faith Church has had from its beginning a distinctive of small group ministry. As the church has grown so has the emphasis that everyone should be involved with some sort of growth group where Bible study and mutual caring is a priority (i.e. Care groups, affinity groups, etc.) We have also had a strong children and youth ministry focus. During the 90's God brought many people who were strong in the worship arts. There was an emphasis on contemporary worship, drama and outreach events that included music and drama.

Over the last few years we continue to see an emphasis on worship arts, seeing it expand into other areas such as art, interpretive dance and creative themes. We also remain strong in the area of children and youth. We are increasing our emphasis in affinity groups and offer many opportunities through special events.

Summary

Faith Evangelical Free Church, during its short time in Austin, has touched hundreds of lives in the Austin area with the love of Jesus Christ. The church has successfully reached out to the community; offered quality programs for children, youth and adults; given opportunities for personal growth; provided scriptural teaching for all ages; offered meaningful worship experiences; and provided support for short-term and long-term missions both locally, nationally and internationally, and will continue to do so. Faith Church desires to continue to serve Christ and the community of Austin by pursuing the mission of making disciples of Jesus Christ.

Statement of Faith

1. God - We believe in one God, Creator of all things, holy, infinitely perfect, and eternally existing in a loving unity of three equally divine Persons: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Having limitless knowledge and sovereign power, God has graciously purposed from eternity to redeem a people for Himself and to make all things new for His own glory.

2. The Bible - We believe that God has spoken in the Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, through the words of human authors. As the verbally inspired Word of God, the Bible is without error in the original writings, the complete revelation of His will for salvation, and the ultimate authority by which every realm of human knowledge and endeavor should be judged. Therefore, it is to be believed in all that it teaches, obeyed in all that it requires, and trusted in all that it promises.

3. The Human Condition - We believe that God created Adam and Eve in His image, but they sinned when tempted by Satan. In union with Adam, human beings are sinners by nature and by choice, alienated from God, and under His wrath. Only through God's saving work in Jesus Christ can we be rescued, reconciled and renewed.

4. Jesus Christ - We believe that Jesus Christ is God incarnate, fully God and fully man, one Person in two natures. Jesus-Israel's promised Messiah-was conceived through the Holy Spirit and born of the virgin Mary. He lived a sinless life, was crucified under Pontius Pilate, arose bodily from the dead, ascended into heaven and sits at the right hand of God the Father as our High Priest and Advocate.

5. The Work of Christ - We believe that Jesus Christ, as our representative and substitute, shed His blood on the cross as the perfect, all-sufficient sacrifice for our sins. His atoning death and victorious resurrection constitute the only ground for salvation.

6. The Holy Spirit - We believe that the Holy Spirit, in all that He does, glorifies the Lord Jesus Christ. He convicts the world of its guilt. He regenerates sinners, and in Him they are baptized into union with Christ and adopted as heirs in the family of God. He also indwells, illuminates, guides, equips and empowers believers for Christ-like living and service.

7. The Church - We believe that the true church comprises all who have been justified by God's grace through faith alone in Christ alone. They are united by the Holy Spirit in the body of Christ, of which He is the Head. The true church is manifest in local churches, whose membership should be composed only of believers. The Lord Jesus mandated two ordinances, baptism and the Lord's Supper, which visibly and tangibly express the gospel. Though they are not the means of salvation, when celebrated by the church in genuine faith, these ordinances confirm and nourish the believer.

8. Christian Living - We believe that God's justifying grace must not be separated from His sanctifying power and purpose. God commands us to love Him supremely and others sacrificially, and to live out our faith with care for one another, compassion toward the poor and justice for the oppressed. With God's Word, the Spirit's power, and fervent prayer in Christ's name, we are to combat the spiritual forces of evil. In obedience to Christ's commission, we are to make disciples among all people, always bearing witness to the gospel in word and deed.

9. Christ's Return - We believe in the personal, bodily and premillennial return of our Lord Jesus Christ. The coming of Christ, at a time known only to God, demands constant expectancy and, as our blessed hope, motivates the believer to godly living, sacrificial service and energetic mission.

10. Response and Eternal Destiny - We believe that God commands everyone everywhere to believe the gospel by turning to Him in repentance and receiving the Lord Jesus Christ. We believe that God will raise the dead bodily and judge the world, assigning the unbeliever to condemnation and eternal conscious punishment and the believer to eternal blessedness and joy with the Lord in the new heaven and the new earth, to the praise of His glorious grace. Amen.

Mission Statement

To introduce people to Jesus and teach them to follow Him.

Core Values

Centrality of God's Word (II Timothy 3:16-17)

We believe God's Word, not human opinions, should direct the lives of His people. The Bible is the foundation for our faith, our life and daily conduct. We teach it clearly and seek to live out its truths in all areas of life.

Prayerful Dependence (Acts 2:42)

A priority of prayer should be visible in our personal lives and all of our ministries. It is our goal to live in prayerful dependence on God, intimately connected with the Holy Spirit and living in obedience to Jesus Christ.

Fruitful Evangelism (Matthew 28:18-20; Acts 1:8)

We are passionate about introducing people to Jesus, both inside and outside our community. We believe the most effective evangelism happens through people cultivating genuine relationships, planting the gospel of Jesus Christ into those relationships and reaping a spiritual harvest for God's kingdom.

Inspiring Worship (Hebrews 12:28; Psalm 100)

Inspiring worship which glorifies God and engages the heart, mind, and emotions of people with God must be a hallmark of our public services. We strive for excellence, not perfection, with consistent evaluation and willingness to change for the sake of the kingdom of God. Relating to our culture through redeeming the arts while remaining true to the Scriptures is a balance we will always keep.

Mission-and-Vision Driven (Matthew 28:18-20)

We desire to have a clear sense of God's mission for Faith Church and a compelling vision for the future that is communicated clearly to our members and that drives our priorities, ministries, budget, staff and facilities.

Leadership Development (II Timothy 2:2; I Timothy 3:1-13)

We are committed to intentional leadership development and the exercise of leadership gifts. We desire to equip spiritually mature people to serve our church. We also desire to see mature leaders sent out from us in full-time ministry.

Church Planting (Acts 1:8; 13-28)

Faith church is committed to planting or facilitating the planting of healthy churches in our region and beyond. We are sensitive to the cultural and ethnic diversity within and around our community and desire to partner with like minded believers in the planting process.

Financial Stewardship (II Corinthians 8:1-7; I Timothy 6:17-19)

We desire the people of Faith Church to be financially obedient through learning and applying the biblical principles of stewardship. We will challenge our people to make sacrificial investments in eternity.

Spiritual Growth (Colossians 2:6; Ephesians 4:12)

It is our deep desire that each one in our church will grow into a fully devoted follower of Jesus Christ. We are committed to a gift-based ministry where everyone uses his or her God given spiritual gifts for the building of His body and the expansion of His kingdom. Our ministry and community life will reflect a commitment to on-going life-changing spiritual growth for all ages.

Authentic and Loving Relationships (John 13:35; Colossians 3:12-14)

We seek to imitate Christ's love for all people. We place a high priority on loving relationships that promote friendships, mutual care, accountability, peace, respect and humility.