

Mission and Social Change Working Group

Proposal: Embrace Matthew 25 principles and become a Matthew 25 church.

Based on the parable of the sheep and goats in which Jesus points out doing things for "the least of these", Matthew 25 churches address one or more of three focus areas:

- Building Congregational Vitality
- Dismantling Structural Racism
- Eradicating Systemic Poverty

Our working group believes the Matthew 25 framework complements the prior work performed by Serve Council during the Listening project, which produced three foci: youth, education and poverty.

What do we envision accomplishing with this proposal?

1. Bring our many discrete and varied mission projects under one umbrella, Matthew 25, and

A. Build Congregational Vitality:

- Enhance internal communication
- Provide more specific opportunities for members with limited time/energy to participate

B. Work to Dismantle Structural Racism:

- Increase awareness of and opportunities for participation in existing opportunities (examples include Breakthrough Schools, prison ministry, GCC activities, Bridges to Batey)
- Educate adults/youth re: structural racism in Cleveland Heights/Cleveland (study/discussion of *White Fragility* and/or similar books; speakers)

C. Work to Eradicate Systemic Poverty:

- Continue active hunger alleviation (Mary Marm Wilson dedicated fund - \$10K annually) (Mission financial support of organizations such as Greater Cleveland Food Bank, Heights Emergency Food Bank, Forest Hill Abundance Food Pantry, Hunger Network, etc.)
- Continue and expand FPC's Little Free Pantry
- Support for helping feed and educate area poor youth. In our times, being illiterate or poorly educated is a direct route to poverty.
- Advocate for changes (relevant GCC initiatives; food deserts and food insecurity locally)

2. Rather than multiple identified undertakings, focus energy and engagement around one theme—carrying out our commitment as a Matthew 25 church.

3. Develop/implement strong communications plan with objective to achieve overwhelming support for Matthew 25 commitment.

What will be the impact of this proposal?

- Greater excitement and energy and broader engagement around “our brand.”
- Achieve greater understanding of how different mission undertakings fit together.
- Brand FPC's "make a difference in the world" mission as obvious, "do-able" and quantifiable
- Link FPC to Presbytery of the Western Reserve and General Assembly in a visible, meaningful way

With whom will we partner to accomplish this proposal?

- Other local Matthew 25 churches; in Greater Cleveland, these include Church of the Covenant, Church of the Western Reserve, Forest Hill Church, Lyndhurst Community Presbyterian Church, and Noble Road Presbyterian Church
- Sponsors of the specific programs we support
- PC(USA) resources including the Rev. Dr. Diane Moffett

What resources will be needed?

- FPC's annual Mission Budget - overseen by Serve Council
- Enhanced Serve Council structure to coordinate administration of reporting (videos to website, information to FPC Director of Communications)
- FPC Treasurer - continue to keep records; add related projects to spread sheet
- Space - meetings/Zoom; as needed by projects (many off-site, but could need to assemble Thanksgiving baskets, etc. at FPC); drop-off for Christmas Angels gifts, etc.
- a VERY COMPLETE inventory of ALL of FPC's current community involvements

What is the timetable for implementing this proposal?

- A. Research requirements and expectations of becoming Matthew 25 church (2 mos.)
- B. Seek unanimous Session approval for becoming Matthew 25 church (2 mos.)
- C. Develop/implement congregation-wide communications plan (3-4 mos.)
- D. Roll out and celebrate Matthew 25 church designation (Sept. 2021)

11/17/20