



August 1, 2020

Below you will find a detailed report from the Strategic Planning Committee. In red you will notice action items that were voted on and approved by the church board and church membership. If you have any questions do not take to reach out to myself or any members of church leadership.

There are a lot of exciting things happening in the life of the church and we are eagerly anticipating God's spirit to show up in a big way over the next year.

You can also view a video on the church website at fccsanangelo.org/about-us/strategic-planning-committee

Final Recommendations: Produced by the Strategic Planning Committee and Craig Walls.

After working with, praying alongside, and listening to the congregation over the past three plus years, and particularly during the 40 Day Holy Listening Process, the Strategic Planning Committee recommendations can be summarized as:

- The Backyard (parts I, II, and III)
- The Grocery Store
- The Unity Project

A. The Backyard (part I): It became obvious during the sessions that the energy and feeling of the majority of the congregation was that FCC should stay in the current location and re-imagine how we reach the community. Additionally, it became obvious that the current building has to be re-examined and re-modeled to better fit the needs of the current congregation. We need to figure out how to better use our current space to meet the needs of our current situation. Old HVAC and Electrical systems need to be addressed, handicap accessibility needs to be improved, and the sanctuary needs to be re-imagined to better fit the current worship reality of the congregation.

Other considerations include: how does the food pantry expand? Does this space house our new grocery store ministry? What do we do with the property across the street? How do we re-imagine our outdoor space? Do we create a new plaza? Green space? Concert space? How do we become the backyard of downtown San Angelo and the Hospital? The back entryway needs to be addressed. How do we reconfigure our current space and building to better connect with our community?



B. The Backyard (part II): During Pastor Shoop-York’s prayer time he was given a wonderful vision of seeing the church as the “backyard of downtown.” We highly encourage FCC to continue to flesh out this vision. It is important that downtown congregations have an identity, something they are known for. The downtown environment can be very difficult for traditional churches—traditional churches often struggle to grow in downtown locations. The experience of DCEF is that most DOC congregations are making the decision to leave. FCC has the opportunity to buck that trend and become a flagship church in the downtown area. However, to do that, the congregation has to do something new and different from what it is currently doing. The peril of not relocating is that it becomes easy to see the decision to stay in the current location as a vote to keep doing the same thing. It must be re-enforced that the energy was not to stay and do the same thing but to stay and remodel, re-envision, and to create a new “backyard” for the San Angelo community.

Immediate Action Item - Approved by the Church Board on May 11, 2020 and church membership on July 12, 2020: At the recommendation of the Strategic Planning Committee and the approval of the trustees, FCC will hire a “Design to Build” firm to consult with members of First Christian Church and develop plans, including 3-D renderings and design drawings of an entire campus transformation/renovation.

After the 3-D renderings are presented to the board and congregation, the next step will be for the church to launch a capital campaign with the hopes of raising approximately one million dollars. Lastly, we will begin construction, alongside the design to build firm, and are hopeful to have the entire project complete in the next 18 months.

Link to the Design to Build firm: <https://www.visioneeringstudios.com/>

C. The Backyard (part III): The final aspect of this backyard is the continued exploration of a new campus. While it appears that God is calling FCC to stay in the current location there was also real energy and vision about a possible campus somewhere else—a campus that might focus on youth and young adults. We encourage FCC, over the next five years, to continue to explore what it might look like to create a new campus somewhere else to focus on youth and possibly children. Yes, the question is always one of resources. How will we pay for this on top of remodeling? However, God has a way of making a way. And we suspect that there will be something important that will happen outside of the downtown location. God has a way of working in crooked lines. We hope FCC continues to explore this new campus as part of the backyard ministry. Perhaps this second campus could actually be called the “backyard.” The backyard is a wonderful metaphor for new community-based ministry.

D. The Grocery Store: More than a few people during this prayer process felt God calling the church to significantly expand the Food Pantry. One person asked “What would it look like if FCC helped create a Grocery Store where people paid what they were able to



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San Angelo, Texas**

Rev. TJ Shoop-York, Senior Minister

pay?” Like all God-sized vision, the “how” has yet to be figured out on this new emerging idea and vision. But FCC is being invited by God to explore how to expand this ministry.

Perhaps this ministry will happen on the current campus and perhaps it will be somewhere else in the city. Perhaps it will be run by FCC and perhaps there will be a community partner involved. FCC should continue to step out in faith believing that God will open up opportunities to expand and create a new Grocery Store Ministry. This could be a distinguishing aspect to the future ministry of FCC.

Immediate Action Item - Approved by the Church Board on May 11, 2020 and the church membership on July 12, 2020: At the recommendation of the Strategic Planning Committee, FCC will transform its existing parlor into a “permanent” food pantry distribution center. The parlor will be relocated to the church library, and the library will serve as a multipurpose space. However, we imagine that the design to build firm will help us reimagine our entire campus footprint to help maximize the usage of our entire facility. It is important to note that we believe strongly that relocating the food pantry to the church parlor is not a permanent solution, we think this is the first step in a much bigger vision of mission and outreach.

E. The Unity Project: Like the Backyard, The Unity Project has a couple of different components. First, there was a sense from the listening sessions that FCC is one and needs to consider how to become one in worship (this does not necessarily mean moving to a single service worship experience). Like all visions, the “how” will need to be worked out over time and lived into. But there was a sense that FCC needs to work on how to become more unified as a worshipping congregation.

Secondly, the Unity Project also seems to include how to incorporate Grace Presbyterian church in the larger life of FCC. Perhaps they participate in the remodeling project? Perhaps the two congregations formally merge? Perhaps they help provide a second campus? There is a sense in the church that God has brought these two congregations together for a reason. FCC needs to continue to include the nesting congregation in this discussion and visioning process.

Additionally, there was a sense that we need to also reach out to Community Hills Christian Church and see if there is a place for connection with them as well. There was a sense in this process that FCC would be at the center of movement for Unity within the life of the church and outside in the larger community.

We suspect that God will move in some surprising ways in the coming years. We need to be ready to say yes to unity. For the church of Jesus Christ is one!



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A note from Craig Wells, FCC Church Consultant:

Overall, I believe the 40 Day Holy Listening Process was a success for FCC. After years of consternation over whether to move or stay there appears to be a final decision to plant the flag in downtown for the foreseeable future. Additionally, there appears to be a couple of clear ministry goals like the grocery store, a renewed energy for a new youth and children's focus including a possible new site, as well as a push for unity.

I am also very excited about Pastor Shoop-York's "Backyard" vision of FCC. I believe that notion of the Backyard will be a guiding principle for the church going forward. While none of these three visions is worked out completely I sense that the church is on the right path and will trust that God will make a way for a new and vibrant ministry under the leadership of their new pastor. I believe the future is bright and that FCC will grow more and more unified in this shared vision over the course of the next few years as things become clearer. These three visions will become clear and more realized every day as the church acts in faith.

My one word of caution for the congregation is to make sure that FCC understands that God's leading during this process to stay at the current location was not the Spirit saying to do the same thing. While I believe God is calling FCC to be a presence in downtown I also believe that the call of the 40 days is for the congregation to do something quite different and even radical. I believe God is calling the church to re-imagine the current space and to truly make the church something new.

The energy of the process was not to put in some new carpet and an air conditioner and call it good—it was to re-imagine the building in a new way that will be more able to attract new people to FCC. Additionally, I hope FCC remains open to the possibility of some sort of second campus to expand the scope of the ministry. God may present an opportunity soon or perhaps years down the road; my hope is that the congregation remain open to the possibility. My hope is that the church operates with wet feet.

My final observation is that I believe that God is working in amazing ways at FCC. I see a church that may become a model for other DOC congregations. I'm confident that things will begin to fall into place, and doors will open as FCC moves down this path and vision. I'm also highly confident that you will be able to raise the money and resources necessary to accomplish all that God has put in front of you. I recommend that you continue to put forth a big and bold vision for the facility and ministry and that God will provide the resources.