

## PEACE CHURCH VISION PROCESS

Approved at Council on March 13, 2014

The mission of Peace Church is stated as follows:

**In celebration of God's grace, through the work of the Holy Spirit, we are committed to loving God, loving our neighbor, and sharing the Gospel of Jesus Christ with all people.**

In order to move us closer to completing that mission, we recognize four elements of community life here at Peace. These goals work together in a progression, with each element building on its predecessor. The progression is as follows, starting with our end goal and working to the beginning. After everything is said and done, we will see:

**4. More people coming to know Jesus.** The primary end of the church of Jesus Christ is to make more disciples, teaching them to obey everything that Jesus has commanded us (Matthew 28:19, 20). Jesus said that the harvest is ready, but the laborers are few (Luke 10:2). Since the harvest is ready, and since Jesus told us to make more disciples, we should be witnessing and participating in conversions, where unbelievers are coming to the realization that Jesus is their Lord and Savior. We will expect to participate in the conversion of people to a saving knowledge of Jesus. Rather than be satisfied with planting seeds, we will be part of the harvest as well, on a regular basis. We will live in an atmosphere of expectation, eagerness, and celebration as people give their lives to the control of Jesus Christ. We will be able to identify new brothers and sisters who have come to salvation in Jesus.

We recognize that people connect to Jesus at the point where He meets their needs. In order to more effectively connect Jesus to the needs of our neighbors, we must be able to actively and effectively:

**3. Be involved in community.** We will know the top five needs of the people surrounding our church, and our individual homes, and will be able to point to quantifiable ministries that are addressing those needs. Galatians 6:9 says, "Let us not become weary in doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up. Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people." Our community will view Peace Church as a vital, and necessary, participant. At the same time, members of Peace Church will be given the resources necessary to be representatives of this church in their own neighborhoods. We will be aware of the greatest needs in our community, both of the church and the individual members. We will be able to identify practical aspects of the church's ministry that address those needs. Our budget will reflect this awareness and response.

This will only happen when we are:

**2. Caring and supporting our own church members.** We will not be able to address, or even have concern, for the needs of our community if our own needs are not being met. Galatians 6:10 says, "Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all people, especially to those who belong to the family of believers." Our Lord is calling us to be a place where people are connected to one another, where burdens are shared and encouragement is expected. Each person knows, and is known by, one another. We are dedicated to fellowship, like the early

Christians were in Acts 2. When someone has a need, their first thought is to share it with their family at Peace. If someone begins to drift away, they have people who know them and love them who will miss them and call them. Our love for one another will be shown in regular interaction for everyone in the church. Our church will be known as a place where you can belong.

We will continue to develop an environment of care and support, encouraged by the leadership of the church. This will happen when we:

**1. Mobilize leadership.** The work of elders and deacons will be primarily people-oriented, instead of focused on systems and policy. While administration is good and profitable for a healthy church, the leadership will spend more time in care and support of the members. 1 Peter 5:1, 2 says, “Be shepherds of God’s flock that is under your care...—not because you must, but because you are willing.” Our leaders, the elders and deacons, are encouraged and enabled to lead through relationship with the people in their shepherding groups. Rather than spending most of their time in meetings, the majority of their time is spent listening, caring, and supporting the people in their groups. Elders and deacons will view their ministry as invigorating, for the most part, rather than draining. People in the church will think of their elder and deacon as a source of encouragement and care. The administrative work will be secondary to the pastoral work of our elders and deacons.

Our vision:

**Mobilizing leaders will support a caring congregation, allowing us to address needs in our community, resulting in more people being saved by Jesus Christ.**

This vision presents the picture of a church that is dedicated to the growth of the kingdom through evangelism, through the love of a caring community. While today’s church cannot be an exact copy of the church of Acts, the core elements must be the same: a dedication to making disciples for Jesus while focusing our resources to make sure that “there were no needy persons among them” (Acts 4:34).

This vision also assumes that our church will not grow beyond its ability to care. This vision applies to a church that is large enough to provide the necessary resources to effectively minister, while remaining small enough to recognize individuals. If we grow in each of the areas presented, we trust that God will draw others into this community. People will become believers through this church. Believers who have been disenfranchised will be drawn back into the church. Our church will grow.

However, we hear and understand God’s call to be a church that is both large enough and small enough to effectively care. When our church exceeds the limit to provide effective care, we will plant new churches, which carry the same vision:

- †To make new disciples
  - †from the community
    - †through the expression of love and care
      - †modeled by our leadership.