



A new Vision for *Helping people find and follow Jesus*

FBC Family,

September 4, 2020

2020 has been a year of complete surprises, unbelievable change and continued uncertainty. Things we could never have imagined have happened before our eyes and the world and the church will likely be forever changed. This can lead to one of two reactions: we can cave in to fear, cross our fingers and hope things will soon go back to the way they were before; or we can see this crazy time as an unparalleled opportunity to follow God into the future. As a fellow follower of Jesus and as your Pastor, I choose the latter. I am choosing to view this time as an unwanted but an unquestionably real opportunity to reconsider what God is doing and wants to do in our community and world through this church body. How will we continue to be the church in the world? How can we be an even brighter light for the Gospel of Christ in a day and time when so much is changing so rapidly? How can we leverage this time to make hard but incredibly necessary changes so that future generations will have the opportunity to find and follow Jesus? What do we do?

We go *Deep* and we go *Wide*.

In 2016, Pastor Caleb put forth a new vision for our church called “Vision 2021.” Included in the Vision were a variety of elements, goals and desires that we have seen accomplished over the course of the last four and a half years. It has only been through God’s leadership and the faithfulness of His people that we have been able to accomplish these things. But as the year 2021 quickly approaches, and our nation and world continue to be in complete upheaval, it is apparent to me ***now more than ever*** that we must continue to push forward to seek God’s will for our church family in the future.

Over the course of the past several years God has been placing a New Vision on my heart. It has not all come at once, but has come in parts and pieces as we have lived, worshipped and served together. Throughout the last six months God has clarified the Vision for me and during the next seven weeks, I am going to share it with you. We will begin this coming Sunday, September 13 by starting a new sermon series which shares the name of the Vision. “***Deep and Wide***.” During week one and two, I will be sharing an overview of the Vision and the Values that God has led me to which will help serve as guideposts along the journey. On September 27 and October 4, we will discuss the two components of the “***Deep***” portion of the Vision. Then on the following three Sundays, October 11, 18 and 25, we will discuss the three

components of the “**Wide**” portion of the Vision. This is how the five components of the Vision will initially be introduced to the church body.

In addition to the sermon series, from October through January I will be calling and hosting a series of roundtable discussions in order to share, discuss and discern three very specific parts of the Vision, which will require congregational approval. It is my sincere hope and prayer that as we have the opportunity to sit side-by-side and discuss these particular elements of the vision, God will unify our hearts and help us to see a clear path forward together. Hear these words once again from a letter I sent to the church family in November of 2019.

Then as the new year begins, I will start working with the leadership of the church to lead us into consideration of three key ideas that I have been prayerfully considering which I believe we need to address in order to continue to move forward together into the future. These items/ideas will test the strength of our resolve to move forward together and my ability to pastor and shepherd this church family. I am confident and hopeful that we have put in the time and relational work needed in order to address these areas but I know that it will not be easy. I believe now, more than ever, that we are at a turning point in the life and ministry of this church, and my hope and desire is that we can move forward together in unity. Will you join me?

While Covid has moved these conversations back by 6 months, these words are as true now as when they were written. I am more convinced now of God’s desire for us to continue following Him faithfully into the future. If we are going to reach people for the Gospel that we have never reached before, we are going to have to do some things that we have never done before and I am ready and excited to lead you there.

I believe that we are on the cusp of amazing things that God has in store and that we have only begun to scratch the surface of what God desires for this church family. Please know that during this process, my door is always open. If at any time during this season of casting the Vision you have questions, comments, concerns and/or things you would like to be clarified, please come and visit with me. As I continue to Pastor and lead this church family, I do not want to leave anyone behind. I know that we will never agree on every detail of every portion of the Vision, but I humbly ask for two things, your engagement and your trust.

We as a church are poised and positioned to continue to be a light for Christ for the future of Norfolk in a powerful way. So may we not be afraid. May we refuse to live in fear. May we be honest, open and willing to follow the Holy Spirit wherever God leads. May we seek together a new and better tomorrow for our church, for our community and ultimately for God’s Kingdom. May we together grow **Deeper** as disciples of Jesus, so the Gospel can reach **Wider**.

Grace and Peace,

Pastor Caleb