



STUDENT MINISTRY

CHRIST COMMUNITY CHURCH
STUDENT MINISTRY STRATEGIC PLAN

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THE PURPOSE OF STUDENT MINISTRY

The State of Humanity and the Purpose of Ministry

A good plan starts with a purpose. From the beginning, humans were made by God to worship and obey Him (Gen 1). But as Genesis 3 and following show, humanity chose to rebel, which left the world in sin instead of the garden state of Genesis 1. The problems we see in the world today stem from sin. Sin manifests itself in a variety of ways, but at its root is humanity's desire to worship themselves or the work of their hands rather than the Creator and Sustainer of the universe (Rom 1:21). It is God alone who must be worshiped (Exod 20:3) All ministry exists to restore people back to a life of worshipping and obeying God, just as Adam and Eve were in the beginning.

The Purpose of the Church

Because humans are naturally predisposed to sin against God, Jesus gave His church a mission. This mission is to restore people back to God through proclamation of the Gospel. The purpose of the church is to carry out the Great Commission to make disciples of all people (Matt 28:18-20). Said another way, the church has been given the ministry of reconciliation—of restoring people back to a loving relationship with their Creator through the message of the Gospel (2 Cor 5:18). All ministries within the church, including student ministry, must see to fulfilling the Great Commission, albeit in more focused ways. For example, student ministry is focused on making disciples of students, women's ministry is focused on making disciples of women, and so on. A successful student ministry will start with this purpose in mind.

The Purpose of Student Ministry

The purpose of student ministry is to make disciples of students—to restore students to a right relationship with God through Christ, our redeemer. Student ministry is grown out of the

desire to connect students to Christ in a way that is both biblical and understandable. When the Apostle Paul shared the Gospel, he would do so with his audience in mind. To the Greeks he thought like a Greek, to the Jew he became a Jew (1 Cor 9:20-21). His sole purpose was about making disciples of Christ by proclaiming the Gospel (1 Cor 9:22-23). When he addressed Jews in the synagogue he spent most if not all his time reasoning from the Scriptures (Acts 17:2-3). When Paul addressed the Athenians in the marketplace he understood the culture and shared the Gospel with the culture in mind (Acts 17:22-23). One thing remained, though, and that was the Gospel was proclaimed and people were given the chance to be reconciled to God.

WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED IN STUDENT MINISTRY?

The Role of Parents

Parents play a pivotal role in student ministry. The Bible commands parents be the primary disciple-makers of their children. They are to teach their children diligently the commands of God so that they may worship and obey God all the days of their lives (Deut 6:4-9). Parents are primarily responsible for showing their children what it means to love God above all else—not just intellectually, but in all ways (Deut 6:4-6). Consequently, parents are to serve as models of what it looks like to follow God as they go about their daily lives (Deut 6:7-9). Short of a guarantee, children raised by parents who follow Christ and diligently seek to train their children in the ways of the Lord, have the greatest chance to know and follow Christ all their lives (Prov 22:6). Though parents are the primary faith influence in a child's life, other faithful adults must be present in students' lives, though in ways that supplement their parents (Ps 145:4).

The Role of Faithful Adults

Adult followers of Christ will be encouraged to do what they have been gifted by God to do. Some adults may not be interested and/or particularly gifted in directly ministering to students. However, many are willing and gifted to assist the student ministry in ways other than direct contact with students. As Scripture teaches, each person has a gift and should use it for the benefit of serving others both inside and outside of the body of Christ (Rom 12:6; 1 Pet 4:10). Thus, there are at least four ways adults in the church can be involved in student ministry.

Sunday School Teachers

The first is to be a Sunday School Teacher. Sunday School Teachers must be gifted to teach students using pre-assigned curriculum chosen by the Pastor of Student Ministry. They must also have a passion for students to know, love, and apply the Word of God.

Small Group Leaders

The second is to be a Small Group Leader. Small group leaders will invest in students of the same gender both inside and outside of regular student ministry programming. The primary goal for Small Group Leaders is to be a spiritual role model in students' lives as they faithfully lead their assigned small group both in and outside of small group times.

Ministry Team Leaders

A third way to be involved in student ministry is to be a Ministry Team Leader. Ministry Team Leaders will help students grow deeper in relationship with God through the planning and execution of service- and missions-oriented experiences. Under leadership of the Pastor of Student Ministry, their primary goal is to focus on ways for students to serve and be on mission for Christ.

Prayer Warriors

Finally, there is a need for people to pray for students, parents of students, the Pastor of Student Ministry, volunteer student ministry leaders, and the student ministry in general. Without dependence upon Christ, the true vine, we can do nothing in student ministry (John 15:5). Thus, these Prayer Warriors will intercede regularly on behalf of the student ministry and all those who are involved in it.

These positions are not exclusive. For example, Sunday School Teachers can also be Small Group Leaders. Regardless of the formal title one holds in the student ministry, Scripture teaches that it is right and honorable to submit to spiritual leaders in Christ and imitate their way of life (Heb 13:7). Thus, it is important for all leaders to be spiritually growing in faith in Christ to be a good example for students to imitate (1 Cor 11:1). Unfortunately, some students are raised by parents who do not know Christ as Savior and Lord or who are absent from their lives altogether. These faithful adult leaders may be the only example of Christ in their lives. Even students who are raised by godly parents, need other faithful adults to care for their well-being in Christ. Just as Paul instructed and cared for young Timothy, so should adults in the church pursue God-honoring relationships with students.

The Role of the Pastor of Student Ministry

As a pastor, his primary role is to teach the Word of God faithfully and care deeply for students, because he bears great responsibility for the spiritual wellbeing of students under his authority (Heb 13:17). Nevertheless, though he bears great responsibility, he and/or the student ministry should not seek to replace the biblically-given authority and responsibility of parents to disciple their children (Deut 6:7). Thus, the Pastor of Student Ministry is to play a critical, yet supplementary role in discipling students. In a support role, the Pastor of Student Ministry is to help equip parents for this important ministry (Eph 4:12-13). This will be done mainly through

monthly parent emails and at least one parent meeting a year in the Fall. He is also responsible for leading all aspects of the student ministry under the guidance of the Senior Pastor and Elders.

MISSION, VISION, AND VALUES

Mission

We exist to raise up a new generation of believers committed to loving Christ, loving one another, and to sharing Christ's love and God's Word with others.

This student ministry will be guided by the principles and practices modeled in Christ. That includes striving to fulfill in our daily walks the Great Commandment and Great Commission. Our love for one another will be evidence to the world that we are truly Jesus's disciples (John 13:35)

Vision

Invest in students to impact the world for Christ.

We must invest in the next generation of students. We must invest relationally, prayerfully, financially, and in every other way to the glory of God. As students are invested in, they will be equipped both now and for a lifetime be effective witnesses for Christ in a broken world.

Core Values

Our ministry is based upon the authority of Scripture. As such, all that is done in student ministry should have a biblical rationale. Acts 2 presents the six core values of the early church, which will also be the values of the student ministry.

1. BIBLICAL TEACHING (Acts 2:42a)

Hebrews 4:12; Romans 10:17; 2 Timothy 3:16-17; John 17:17

Without the Bible as our authority and foundation, student ministry is not much different than a social club. The primary difference between a social club and a student ministry is that the latter seeks to help equip students to know Christ and His plan for all areas of a teen's life.

Without the message of God's Word, it is impossible for students to respond to the Gospel of

Christ (Rom 10:17). The Word is “alive and active” and, thus, relevant in this present age (Heb 4:12). It is useful for teaching, among other things, so that a student may be adequately equipped to serve Him all the days of his or her life (2 Tim 3:16-17). Through the truth of God’s Word, students can know with certainty that the contents of the Bible are applicable and necessary for spiritual growth in Christ (John 17:17).

2. PRAYER (Acts 2:42b)

Hebrews 4:16; Luke 18:1; 1 Thessalonians 5:17; James 5:17; John 15:5

God wants his people to live in prayerful dependence upon Him. Because of the work of God in redeeming us to Himself, we are to approach Him with confidence, knowing that our prayers will be answered (Heb 4:16). Not only are we to pray with confidence, we are to pray continually for provision and for one another (Luke 18:1; 1 Thess 5:17; Jas 5:17). Prayer is more than simply talking to God. It is dependence upon Him for everything. As John writes, it is only by abiding in the true vine, Jesus, that we can do anything fruitful, including student ministry (John 15:5). As a student ministry, we will prayerfully seek God’s Will in all things.

3. DISCIPLESHIP (Acts 2:42-47)

Deuteronomy 6:7; Ephesians 6:4; 1 Corinthians 11:1; Hebrews 13:7; 1 Thessalonians 2:8

Students must learn what it means to be a disciple of Christ. The biblical model for discipleship begins with parents, especially fathers, intentionally and diligently teaching and modeling what it means to be a Christ follower (Deut 6:7; Eph 6:4). Though parents are primarily responsible to disciple their children, other godly adults in the church must also seek to mentor and love students. These spiritual mentors have tremendous impact on a student’s faith. Students are called to imitate the faith of their parents and mentors as they imitate Christ’s character and purpose (1 Cor 11:1). Likewise, mentors are to seek opportunities to impart

biblical wisdom, understanding, and care to students (Heb 13:7). Mentors should seek not only to teach but also to invest in students' lives, just as Paul, through Jesus' example, modeled and practiced (1 Thess 2:8).

4. FELLOWSHIP (Acts 2:42b)

John 13:35; 1 John 1:3; 1 Thessalonians 2:8; Acts 2:42-47; Hebrews 10:25

It is critical that students know they are known and loved by others in the body of Christ, whether they are inside or outside of the faith. Those who are outside of the faith will come to know Jesus by our love for and unique fellowship with one another (John 13:35). Not only is fellowship about love, but also about truth. Leaders are to explain the Gospel to students and model it well (1 John 1:3). In fact, as the truth of God's Word is revealed to students, both leaders and students will have a heart to grow deeper in relationship with one another, just as Paul's heart was deeply drawn to the church at Thessalonica (1 Thess 2:8). Through deeper fellowship, the church will grow in unity, both in the student ministry and the greater church (Acts 2:42-47). A healthy ministry will consist of believers who do not neglect meeting together because of their love for one another (Heb 10:25).

5. WORSHIP (Acts 2:47a)

Romans 12:1-3; 1 Corinthians 10:31; Colossians 3:17; Psalm 34:8

Our spiritual worship is about living a transformed life in Christ, which extends beyond what any single event or activity can provide (Rom 12:1-3). In fact, every aspect of our lives should be for the glory of God (1 Cor 10:31; Col 3:17). Nonetheless, specific events or activities can give a taste of what a lifetime of worship can look like; a taste of the goodness of God (Ps 34:8).

6. MISSIONS (Acts 2:47b)

Luke 19:10; Philippians 2:15; Matthew 28:18-20

Every believer is called to participate in Christ's ministry to seek and to save the lost, just as Jesus emphasized (Lk 19:10). This includes students. A student who is grounded in the faith has a unique opportunity to be a light to his or her classmates, teammates, teachers, and coaches (Phil 2:15). But first, a student must be equipped to do so. Parents and leaders will set an example in fulfilling the Great Commission to make and grow disciples of Christ so that students may catch a vision for how and why we do missions (Matt 28:18-20).

OUR STRATEGY

Everything we do in student ministry must come back to fulfilling the mission, vision, and values of our student ministry. In order to achieve these most effectively, the following strategy will be used to determine specific programming throughout the year. Every student ministry event must intend to achieve at least one of the above-mentioned core truths: Biblical teaching, prayer, discipleship, fellowship, worship, or missions.

Biblical Teaching

The goal in teaching the Bible is for every student to be grounded in the essentials of faith prior to leaving the student ministry. Biblical teaching will be achieved primarily in both Evening Worship and Sunday School. The teaching in Evening Worship is primarily geared toward unbelievers and new believers. The teaching in Sunday School will be believer-oriented and will include a Bible Instruction Course (BIC) class at least every two years. This course is designed for 7th and 8th graders to understand core doctrines of the faith. The teaching for Evening Worship will address the following four areas needed for Christian maturity:

1. **DOCTRINE (KNOW)** | Students know core beliefs of the faith.

2. **LIFE & RELATIONSHIPS (BE)** | Students know how to relate to others and cultural issues in a biblical manner.

3. **DISCIPLESHIP (GROW)** | Students know what it means to be a disciple of Christ and disciple others.

4. **SHARING THEIR FAITH (GO)** | Students know how to share Christ and the message of the Gospel with others.



Sample topics for each of the four categories are below. Some topics do overlap, but each of the four categories of teaching topics can be summarized as KNOW (Doctrine), BE (Life and Relationships), GROW (Discipleship), and GO (Sharing their Faith). These terms may also be used to generally describe the discipleship process from beginning to end as follows: KNOW (Evening Worship), BE (Small Groups/Sunday School), GROW (Relational Discipleship), and GO (Student-Led Discipleship). The discipleship process is detailed in a later section.

TEACHING TOPICS			
DOCTRINE (KNOW)	LIFE & RELATIONSHIPS (BE)	DISCIPLESHIP (GROW)	SHARING THEIR FAITH (GO)
The Bible	Singleness	What is a Disciple?	Apologetics
Prayer	Dating	How to Study the Bible	Worldviews
Fasting	Marriage	Spiritual Disciplines	Science & Faith
Worship	Parents & Children	Servant Leadership	Intelligent Design
Faith	Siblings	Bible Difficulties	Missions & Evangelism
God as Trinity	Friendships	Spiritual Gifts	Evolution & Origin of Life
The Kingdom	Homosexuality	Scripture Memorization	
Sin	Manhood & Womanhood	Suffering/Persecution	
Humanity	Gender Roles	Stewardship	
Salvation	Pornography	Giving	
Grace	Media	Christian Unity	
Baptism	Sex	Spiritual Warfare	
The Lord's Supper	Church Leaders	Obedience	
Last Things	Bullying	God's Calling	
The Family	Cohabitation	Freedom & Liberty	
Church	Euthanasia		
Miracles	War & Peace		
	Abortion		
	Love		
	Transgenderism		
	Money		
	Divorce/Remarriage		
	Work		

Figure 1: Teaching Topics

Prayer

Prayerful dependence on the Father was consistently modeled by Jesus as essential to a life of faith. In the Gospels, Jesus regularly took time to pause and be with His Father in heaven. As our model for godly living, we must be prayerfully dependent upon God in every aspect of ministry to students. Whether planning events and mission trips, meeting for relational discipleship, or meeting for our Evening Worship time, everything we do must be saturated in prayer. Prayerful dependence is strategic in that we can do nothing without God (John 15:5). We are committed to seeking God's Will as we seek to fulfill the vision and mission of student ministry instead of the latest trends.

Discipleship

The Great Commission in Matthew 28:18-20 clearly mandates the church be involved in making disciples. Each student is at a different level spiritually and, thus, not all programming is

specifically designed for each student. The intent is for every student to progress through the discipleship process so that they are able to fulfill the Great Commission in their daily lives.

The process looks like a pyramid. One begins at the bottom where there is little to no prior commitment to Christ. These may be students who are unbelievers or those who are spiritual infants in Christ.

As students grow in faith and commitment to Christ, they will seek out opportunities to have more focused time of studying the Word and fellowship with an adult leader. This may look different depending on the spiritual and emotional maturity of the student.

The end goal of the discipleship process modeled below is for students to be able to transfer their faith to others. This is known as student-led discipleship. Student-led discipleship is for older, more spiritually mature students to lead younger, less spiritually mature students to a deeper relationship with Christ, as they have seen modeled. Students who are prepared to lead other students must continue to meet on a regular basis with an adult leader as a spiritual mentor. Below is a basic representation of the discipleship process.

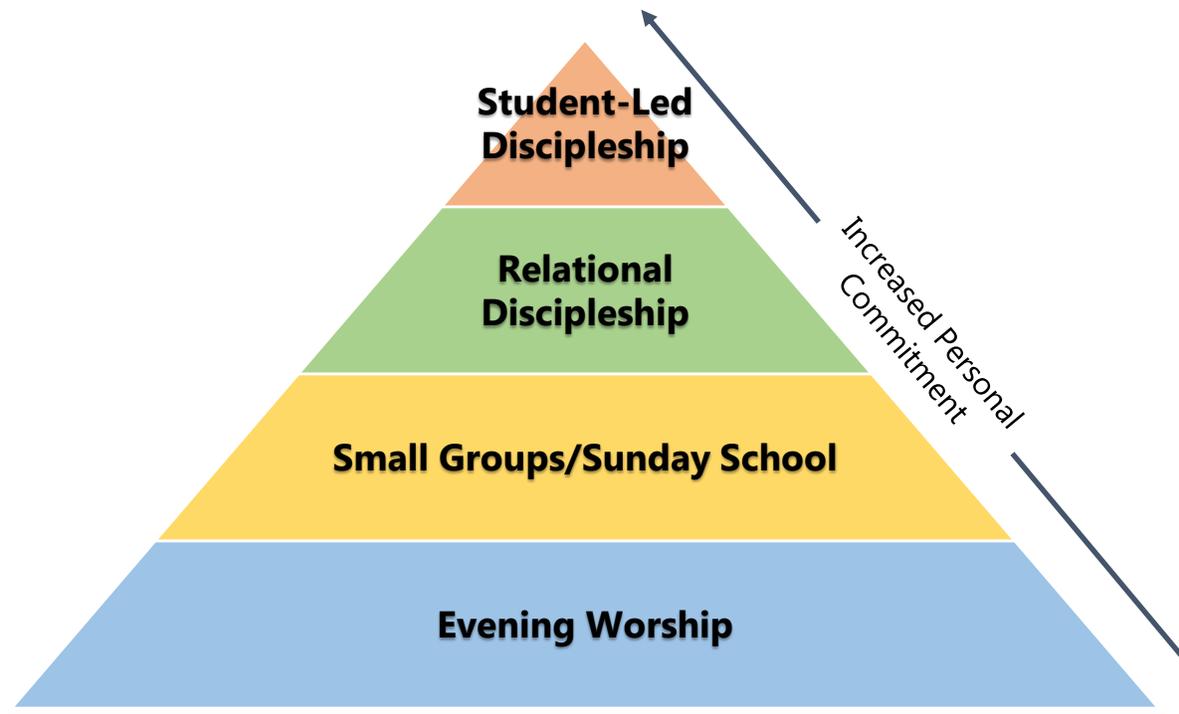


Figure 2: The Discipleship Process

Evening Worship

Once a week, we will gather primarily for worship and fellowship as a combined group of junior high and high school students. Evening Worship is the front-door of our ministry where people who don't believe can come to hear the Gospel. As such, the emphasis of Evening Worship is to make newcomers feel welcome while ensuring all students leave fed with the message of the Gospel. It is our hope that upon hearing the good news of the Gospel, they would commit to following Christ in worship and obedience all the days of their lives. Evening Worship will generally include a time of getting to know one another, prayer, games, praise songs, a message from the Bible, and small groups.

Small Groups/Sunday School

Small groups are a vital part of student ministry at Christ Community Church. Small groups are led primarily by volunteer student ministry leaders, and are incorporated primarily but

not exclusively into Evening Worship. These are made up of students of the same gender and relatively same age. The purpose of small groups is to allow students the space to be open with one another, to talk about the message, and to make plans to share life and serve with one another outside of Evening Worship. This leads to the second component of small groups, which is spending time outside of our scheduled Evening Worship time.

Sunday school is similar in that students are divided up between middle school and high school and by gender. The main difference between small groups and Sunday School is its emphasis. Small groups focus more on relationships, while Sunday School focuses more on instruction in the Word.

Relational Discipleship

Students who are growing in faith and desire to grow outside of Evening Worship and small group times will be encouraged to pursue a discipleship relationship with a mentor. Mentors will keep track of the progress of those they disciple and give regular reports to the Pastor of Student Ministry, as required. Students who have shown maturity in faith, after a time of relational discipleship, will be encouraged to disciple younger students.

Student-Led Discipleship

Students who have been meeting regularly for relational discipleship with a mentor will be encouraged and equipped to mentor those who are younger and less mature in their faith. This is the last and most significant step in the discipleship process as it allows students to take what they learn and teach others (2 Tim 2:2). Students who have a desire to disciple younger, less spiritually mature students, will still be required to meet regularly with a mentor for relational discipleship, though perhaps not as often.

Student Leadership Team

Students who show signs of maturity in faith and who have leadership ability will, by recommendation of the Pastor of Student Ministry, be invited to join the student leadership team. Student leadership will be open to those who meet with a mentor for relational discipleship. The goal of student leadership is to entrust students with aspects of the student ministry. Paul told Timothy to entrust the Gospel to reliable men who could teach others (2 Tim 2:2). Under the direction of the Pastor of Student Ministry, students will put their faith into practice and will be encouraged to use their gifts in the ministry of the church to the glory of God.

Fellowship

Every year will have at least one high school and one middle school retreat in January and February, respectively, put on by the Evangelical Free Church of America. Though retreats could easily go under discipleship, generally these retreats are where students connect on a more personal level. Deeper relationships are formed with their peers and they are encouraged by one another to press on in the faith.

The first five to ten minutes of Evening Worship will include time for interacting with one another and getting to know one another. Students are encouraged to come beforehand for an extended time of fellowship.

Because a significant part of fellowship is relationships, students will also be encouraged to spend time with their peers and adult leaders outside of regular student ministry events and activities.

Worship

In addition, because worship is multi-faceted, there are many ways in which we must be intentional in cultivating students' worshipful hearts. One of the ways we will provide worshipful experiences is through singing songs to God, which will be done primarily in our

Evening Worship time and in our church's regular worship service. The reading and teaching of the Word of God will also feature prominently in nearly if not all aspects of our ministry to students.

These worship-oriented activities and events should draw students closer to God, such that they may have Isaiah 6 moments. In other words, that they would: (1) see Jesus for who He truly is—worthy of worship and obedience (vv.1-4), (2) have a right view of themselves in relationship to Jesus (v.5), (3) know their sins can be forgiven in Jesus alone if they trust in Him alone (vv.6-7), and as a result (4) live a life of worship and obedience, being sent as lifelong ambassadors of the High King (v. 8).

Missions

Mission Trips

One's entire life is to be devoted to God's mission, no matter where one is located, what he or she does for a living, or how young or old one is (Matt 28:18-20). Students are to be sacrificially living for Jesus and a mission trip is one way in which students can put this into practice. Students will be given specific opportunities to serve people through planned acts of service and proclaiming the Gospel. This is an important part of student ministry as these trips give students a heart for the lost world around them like Jesus (Luke 19:10). The student ministry will host at least one mission trip a year during the summer. Students are also encouraged to pursue other mission opportunities in addition to those planned by the student ministry.

Personal Evangelism

Students must be taught to share their faith. This means they must know their faith and own their faith. The need for personal evangelism is clear in Scripture. How will students'

friends, neighbors, coworkers, and classmates know the Gospel without someone telling them about the Gospel (Rom 10:14-15)? The student pastor and other adult leaders in the church must model what it looks like to share one's faith with another. Thus, the discipleship process will include an emphasis on equipping and encouraging students to tell the good news with others.

MAJOR RECURRING EVENTS

Events are an important part of student ministry, though not the most important. Every event in student ministry must achieve at least one of the six core values: Biblical teaching, prayer, discipleship, fellowship, worship, or missions. Our mission, vision, and values will lead us to consider which events the student ministry will participate in and which it will not. Students and their families are busy; thus, rather than having several big events throughout the year, emphasis will be on making leading students to go deeper in the discipleship process, as outlined above.

Challenge

CHALLENGE

Challenge is a national conference put on by the Evangelical Free Church of America every two years around the middle of July. It is open to high school students and mature junior high students. Challenge will challenge students to be on mission for Christ for a lifetime.

Gospel Reading Night

Gospel Reading Night

Gospel Reading Night is an annual event held the weekend before Easter. As a church, we will read one of the Gospels in its entirety in one sitting. The purpose of this event is to get students, parents, and the congregation as a whole in the Word of God.

IMPACT



IMPACT is generally held the first weekend in January. It is a yearly retreat for high school students put on by the Evangelical Free Church of America.

Operation Christmas Child



One Sunday in November each year before Thanksgiving, our students will participate in an Operation Christmas Child packing party. This is an opportunity for students to make a difference in the world through prayerful and sacrificial giving.

Senior Night Out

SENIOR NIGHT OUT

Senior Night Out is our chance as student ministry leaders and parents to honor our graduating seniors. It is also a time to reflect upon and celebrate where God has called them after high school. It will be held yearly on the first Saturday in May.

WinterBlast



WinterBlast is our annual junior high retreat generally held the first weekend in February. It, like IMPACT, is put on by the Evangelical Free Church of America.

CONCLUDING THOUGHTS

Everything we do must be done for the glory of God (1 Cor 10:31; Col 3:17). The aim in putting together this strategic plan is for student ministry to be done effectively—that is to achieve our mission, vision, and values in a way that aligns with God’s mission, vision, and

values. I pray this strategic plan will guide us as a church to make more disciples of students for the glory of God. This responsibility to invest in students does not rest on the shoulders of any one individual, but on the church body as a whole. As we seek to achieve our vision—to *invest in students to impact the world for Christ*—may we do so to the glory of God.

For His Glory,



Brandon Thiel
Pastor of Student Ministry