

# A PLAN FOR DISCIPLE-MAKING



**CONNECTED TO GOD  
THROUGH THE GOSPEL**



**CONVERSING WITH GOD IN  
WORD AND PRAYER**



**CLEAR IN YOUR CALLING**

**Lakeside**  
Community Church

**CHURCH EXISTS FOR DISCIPLESHIP.**

**DISCIPLESHIP IS AN INTENTIONAL PROCESS.**

**CHURCH NEEDS AN INTENTIONAL PROCESS.**

# A MESSAGE FROM THE PASTOR

## WHERE WE'VE COME FROM AND WHERE WE ARE

Years ago, a group of people began meeting in a dilapidated community center on Campau Lake and officially organized as a church in 1977. Lakeside had a quirky, unique, and accessible personality. When other local churches sought bookish, scholarly pastors in their pulpits to grow the minds of Christian insiders, Lakeside put priorities elsewhere, choosing instead to be led by an untrained layman of incredible skill, whose chief qualifications were a vibrant love of God, a love of his word, and the ability acquired in TV broadcasting to communicate timeless truths directly into hearts in a way almost anyone could access. It was that chapter in her history that cemented Lakeside as a church that exists to make and grow disciples, no matter what their spiritual state is upon arrival. Since then, more fantastic things have happened. Lakesiders have become a model of service, giving of their time well beyond what most churches our size are able. You feed the poor with a smile and without judgment, you give generously of your resources and kindness to missionaries, and you partner with relief agencies overseas on a level that dwarfs the efforts of organizations double your size.

Lakeside has always been quirky, but in really great ways—ways that put a smile on God's face.



## THE CHALLENGES AHEAD

There are a lot of great things going on at Lakeside right now and we praise God for that. However, there are a lot of challenges on the horizon, too. For starters, our world is growing steadily more secular as is our neighborhood. 85% of churches in our denomination are plateaued or in decline and only 5% have grown substantially in the last 5 years. Our city is now listed as one of the top 100 most un-churched cities in the United States. What this means for us is that we will continue to see an increase in people we're trying to reach who have no muscle memory of church whatsoever. They are people for whom coming to church will be a foreign thing and showing up uninvited would be as strange as arriving uninvited to a wedding.

More challenging still is what our students are facing. The world they graduate into neither shares nor supports their faith in Jesus on any level. The challenges they face are orders of magnitude higher than anything that we who are older faced at their age. They need to be able to articulate and live their convictions in the gospel more than we ever were forced to do at their age. The fact that our denomination's average age of membership increases 1 year every year should serve as a warning that our students need more from their church every bit as much as outsiders do.

## WHAT WE'RE PROPOSING

Obviously, at the end of this document you're going to find a request for resources, both human and material, that we believe are necessary to position us as a church to carry out our mission, which is Christ's Mission, of making and growing disciples of Jesus by the power of the gospel. However, please don't view this document as just a request for resources. If that was all we needed, there are far simpler ways of going about it.

What you will find in this document is a proposal to re-orient our church around an intentional process to help people grow. We have identified three priorities and we believe that, in order for any disciple of Jesus to be really satisfied and fruitful in him, all three need to be active in the life of that believer. We want to develop a process through our church that helps you and your neighbors develop all three. In this way, we hope to continue Lakeside's God-given legacy of being a church where anyone can grow in their love of Jesus, no matter what their starting point.

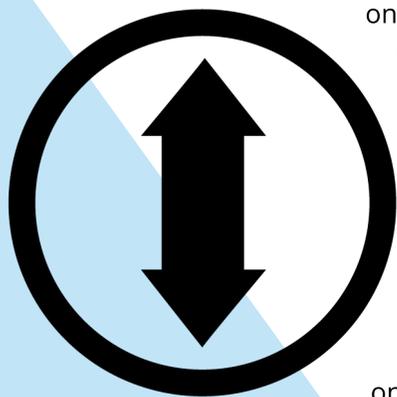
Please read carefully, pray carefully, and let us know what you think. We look forward to hearing what God lays on your heart.

Sincerely,  
Pastor Dave

# I. CONNECTING TO GOD THROUGH THE GOSPEL

## INCREDIBLE THINGS HAPPEN WHEN PEOPLE BECOME CLEAR IN THE GOSPEL

The first and most important thing that any Christian must have in order to live a meaningful life in God, is a clear understanding of and trust in the redeeming work of Jesus Christ. Without that, there is no real connection with God. An absent or disordered understanding of the gospel will lock us into a number of ongoing struggles like unforgiveness in relationships, hopeless enslavement to destructive sinful patterns, and the continual pendulum swing between prideful self-righteousness in our own works and despairing self-loathing in our failures.



## WE HAVE A TOOL TO HELP PEOPLE FIND THAT CLARITY

Anyone who spends life anywhere near unbelieving neighbors can tell you that helping someone find clarity in the gospel takes more than a five-minute sales pitch. A worldview seldom changes that fast. For the last two years, we have been experimenting with a tool that we're calling *Gospel Literacy*. It was developed over twelve years at Sunlight Community Church in Florida. By training a few individuals one-on-one over a span of six months to a year, we have found that we can develop a crop of leaders who not only are clear in their own gospel convictions, but able to sit down

with anyone who is new to the faith or curious about it and lead them one hour, once per week. They can do this until that individual either loves Jesus or knows why they do not. All this they could be able to do using the very same tool with which they were taught.

## HOW WE CAN HELP PEOPLE MAKE A CLEAR COMMITMENT

We would like to spend the next few years training up capable leaders able to disciple others in *Gospel Literacy*. In partnership with the pastor, here's how these leaders could help others:

### Students

Students, now more than ever in American history, need help forming a clear commitment to and articulation of the gospel. What if, instead of a high school Sunday school system that isn't working well and an under-developed profession of faith system, we spent our efforts trying to make one excellent class experience through which we challenge every high schooler to travel? What if we did this using the very same methods we would use to teach outsiders? We think great things could happen. Our dream is that students wouldn't just be knowledgeable, but capable.

### Transferring Members

As many as 3 in 10 people transferring from other churches either have a hazy understanding of the gospel, or have missed it altogether. What if we had a special dinner, twice a year, aimed at helping new members get to know our ministries, share their stories, hear the gospel, and start making meaningful connection with our community. We call it, *Discover Lakeside*, and we'd like to start doing it right away.

### Faith Outsiders

Right now the pastor is the one mentoring, guiding, and connecting all new members who are new to the faith. That's better than nothing, but hardly adequate. What if one person in each row in our church knew how to talk with someone about Jesus one hour, once a week until they either loved him or knew why they didn't?

# 2. CONVERSING WITH GOD

## INCREDIBLE THINGS HAPPEN WHEN PEOPLE START CONVERSING WITH GOD

Imagine for a moment that a man and a woman, madly in love, stand before God and their peers and commit themselves to lifelong fidelity. Some of us have done it and it's a life-changing thing. That's what the gospel does between us and God. But now, suppose that, after the ceremony, the couple never talked again. Or suppose that one either did all the talking or dictated what could and could not be addressed. Would they still be married? Sure, for the time being. Would they be enjoying it? Probably not. We all know that's true. And yet, often we still take this approach with God.

Here's the truth: You can know God through the gospel and have it be a life-changing, powerful commitment. But if you don't learn to converse with God, you won't be finding joy in that relationship for long. You need encouragement, you need to marvel at God's surprising glory, he needs to be able to raise uncomfortable subjects, and you need to learn to trust him with your burdens.

Yet, most of us have never really been taught to do this and we struggle.

## ALMOST NO ONE GETS GOOD AT THIS ALONE

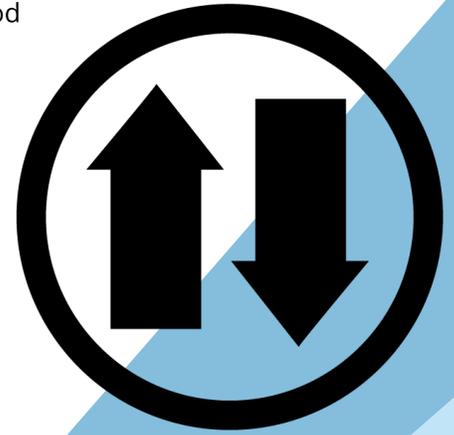
In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus' disciples ask him how they should pray. Even good, religiously educated Jewish boys had no idea. You're not alone in your struggle. When Jesus answered them, the first word of his answer said much. The prayer he recommended started in the plural, "OUR Father in heaven..."

Here's what Jesus knew that should be obvious to all of us. If you want to have in your life a critical rhythm of conversing with God in Word and Prayer, you will almost certainly never get there alone. You will need to do learn with other people, or you will not succeed at all. Almost no one has ever gotten good at this alone.

## HOW OUR SMALL GROUPS CAN HELP

What we would like to try is to launch two short term, 8-12 week long small group experiences per year with a goal of helping each other build this rhythm of conversation with God into our individual lives. Each module would be professionally managed with materials provided, outcomes would be measured each time to improve each successive experience, and leaders would be professionally trained and supported.

By making them short term, we make them accessible to outsiders, manageable as a commitment, and it also allows us to continue to learn from feedback each semester. We'll have to experiment with timing (after all, your lives are busy), materials, and maybe even setting. Maybe in-home groups work the best, or maybe on-site groups at church work best after a communal dinner. We don't know what works the best, but we would love to experiment and find out.



# 3. GETTING CLEAR IN YOUR CALLING

## YOU WERE CREATED FOR A REASON.

It seems clear that a Christian should be connected to God through the gospel in order to find a fully meaningful life in God. Equally obvious is that we need to be in continual conversation with God and submitting to him. However, what isn't immediately obvious is why there are so many people who believe deeply in Christ's work and converse with him regularly in word and prayer who, nevertheless, can have spiritual lives that feel distant from God and spiritually unfulfilled. How can this be? What if God created you for more than just good conversation.

## YOU WERE CREATED FOR A CALLING

In Genesis 1, God doesn't just create humanity and start spending time with them. Rather, he gave them something to do. "Be fruitful and multiply, fill the earth and subdue it." Likewise, in Ephesians 2, God tells us that we are, "God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works". Each one of us is custom made to serve in a special way. You know when you're working in your calling because it serves God and others, you're good at it or could become good at it (we should all sing in church, but not all of us into a microphone), and it makes your heart sing. That's what happens when you do what you were carefully crafted to do. The challenge for us as Christians is to discern how to serve that way in different chapters of life. That discernment is a skill and it's essential if you're going to enjoy God fully.

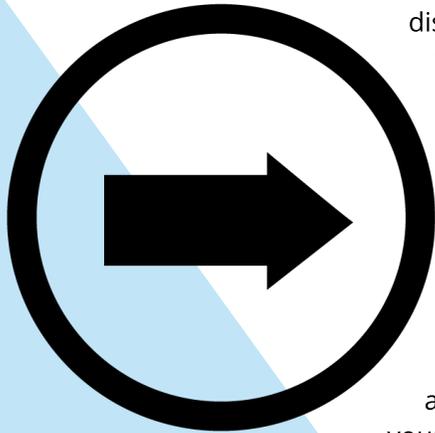
## HOW CAN WE HELP PEOPLE LEARN TO DISCERN THIS?

Here's the short version: We're not entirely sure yet.

Even if we were sure, there's simply no way to roll out a ministry to address this while making the changes proposed on the last couple pages without burning out our volunteers in the process. This we do know: In the one-to-one discipleship processes with which local pastors have been experimenting, we have seen time and time again something astonishing. When the people that we disciple get clear in their gospel convictions, steady in their rhythm of conversation with God, and clear in their personal calling to serve God, all of the sudden they no longer seem to need their teacher anymore.

They're steady. They're satisfied. They're independent. Here's another name for that: *Maturity*.

Calling is a tricky thing because it usually doesn't come out of a burning bush or reading writing in the sky, but rather by the carefully honed skill of discernment. We, the pastor and elders, are not requesting at this time that we be allowed to start some new ministry around this goal. Rather, we are asking your feedback as we consider making it a ministry priority. There are materials, resources, and local wisdom that we can explore in the future, but we want to know how you feel about this becoming a ministry priority.



# WHAT WE ARE ASKING FOR

## 1. A FULL TIME DIRECTOR OF YOUTH AND ADULT DISCIPLESHIP

As we developed a ministry strategy, one thing that became immediately clear to our elders is that there is no practical way to launch and continue a proper small groups ministry in our church without professional support. The last time small groups were launched at our church, it required professional support and we have no reason to believe it would be any different this time. Once our search team was convened, they quickly concluded that our church would be far better served by a full-time employee than two part-time employees. They believe that we would likely get access to a better pool of candidates if we search for full-time and that we would also be more likely to have them stay with us for a longer duration.

There is a job description accompanying this document for your consideration. The short version is that this position would cover three things: student ministries, small groups, and volunteer connections. Such a position would help us lead our students, become more immersed in word and prayer, improve the general operations of our volunteer bodies, and free up Pastor Dave to spend more time discipling leaders in *Gospel Literacy* and more time developing higher quality teaching.

## 2. THE DEVELOPMENT OF A COMPREHENSIVE FACILITIES IMPROVEMENT PLAN

Our building has served us well since it was finished in 1983. However, it has incurred some wear and tear. Windows need to be replaced, plumbing needs to be fixed, walls repainted, and other maintenance items as well. It seems clear to our operations team that we will, at some point, need to be doing some fund raising beyond normal budget for a significant overhaul.

As long as we're planning for some major work, we are asking the church for your permission to think bigger than a mere overhaul. In addition to repairs, there are also things we wish we could do with our facilities that are presently just not possible. Here are a few:

- We would love to have a kitchen space that allows for better hospitality during events like our Discover Lakeside dinners.
- It would be great to have spaces where adults could meet for groups or education during the same times when our cadets, gems, or high school students are also meeting. Our current classroom arrangement isn't adequate for that.
- It would be nice if the aesthetics of our church could be updated for better hospitality.

As long as our building is getting an overhaul, it makes a lot of sense to take a second look at other things as well. We don't know what this would cost and we don't know if we're talking about an addition or just moving a wall or two. We're at the dreaming stage. However we would like to, with your blessing, perhaps start developing a plan to present to all of you at a later time. Our facilities have served us and our neighbors well and we would like for them to keep serving well for years to come.

## THE COST

With regard to hiring, we estimate that moving from our old staffing structure to one that includes a full-time director of Youth and Small Group Ministries would require a budget increase of approximately \$25,000, bringing our total yearly budget from \$340,000 to \$365,000. Our deacons are confident that this is quite doable. As far as our facilities planning is concerned, we already have the funds that we need at present to hire whatever consulting that our plan might require. All we're looking for right now is your thoughts and feedback regarding us bringing a proposal at a later date which would likely involve further fundraising.

# WE WANT YOUR FEEDBACK

## HOW TO COMMUNICATE TO US

On October 7, we will be holding a lunch after church. During that meeting, Pastor Dave and some members of the Elder Board and Search Team will be hosting a conversation to hear whatever questions and feedback you might have. In addition, we will be emailing a brief survey out to everyone in the congregation in order to hear your questions, concerns, and ideas. We are not alone wise and would love to hear what you think God might be laying on your heart.

## QUESTIONS FOR YOU TO CONSIDER

HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT YOUR CHURCH ORGANIZING AROUND AN INTENTIONAL PROCESS OF SPIRITUAL GROWTH?

IF WE LAUNCHED NEW SMALL GROUPS AROUND WORD AND PRAYER, WOULD YOU PARTICIPATE?

DO YOU THINK WE OUGHT TO TAKE A MORE SERIOUS LOOK AT IMPROVING OUR FACILITIES FOR THE FUTURE?

WHAT DO YOU THINK OF THE PLAN OF HIRING AN ADDITIONAL FULL TIME MINISTRY EMPLOYEE?

# GOALS

- 1. FULL-TIME DIRECTOR OF YOUTH AND ADULT DISCIPLESHIP HIRED, IF POSSIBLE, BY THE END OF THE 2018-2019 SCHOOL YEAR.**
- 2. TRIAL RUN OF THE GOSPEL LITERACY CLASS FOR STUDENTS EXECUTED BY THE END OF THE 2018-2019 SCHOOL YEAR.**
- 3. 5 CAPABLE GOSPEL LITERACY MENTORS TRAINED BY PASTOR DAVE BY FALL OF 2019 AND 5 ADDITIONAL TRAINED BY FALL OF 2020.**
- 4. 40 INDIVIDUALS PARTICIPATING IN AT LEAST 1 MODULE OF WORD AND PRAYER CENTERED SMALL GROUPS BY THE END OF 2019.**
- 5. 15 ADULTS WELCOMED THROUGH DISCOVER LAKESIDE PROCESS BY FALL OF 2019 AND 30 MORE BY THE FALL OF 2020.**