




# LETTING THE **WAY OF JESUS LEAD**

FPC HOUSTON ——— VISION GUIDE

**Learn how Jesus is *at the center***  
of the mission and rhythms that  
unite us as a church.





The story of our church is rooted in history,  
***but it's never been about standing still.***

For more than 185 years, our church has sought one thing—  
**to follow how God leads.**

Born from an entrepreneurial spirit and moved by God's leading, First Presbyterian Church has long been entwined in the fabric of Houston. What began as a beacon of hope for early settlers has become a home for generations who've called this city their own.

As Houston has grown, we've been part of shaping its story—planting churches, starting ministries, and serving neighbors in times of need. As industries have flourished, we've equipped leaders to live out their faith in work and community.

And through a joyful commitment to God's Word, we've contributed to generations discovering His love and being formed by it.

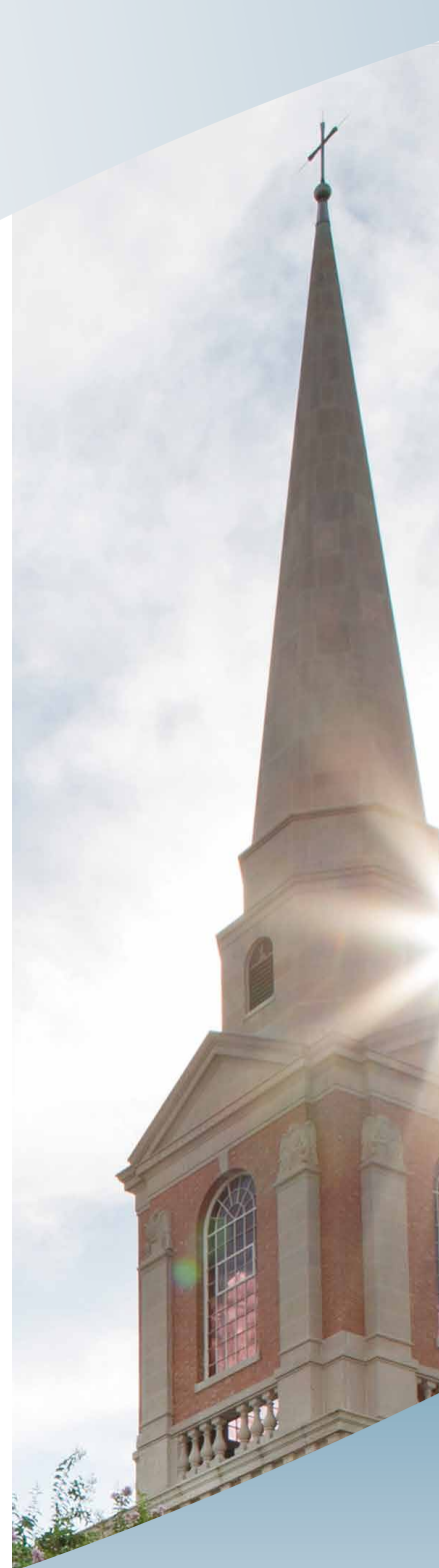
**Through every season, we have let the Spirit lead our church and our people to press on in the good work he has prepared for us in Houston and around the world.**

Today, we are living  
out a mission that  
**grounds and guides us.**

Every church must answer a simple but defining question: What are we here to do? For us, that answer is clear: to *cultivate community in the way of Jesus for the flourishing of the city*. This mission grounds us in what matters most and gives direction to our priorities as a community.

At the center of both our mission and our church is **the way of Jesus**—his love, teachings, and invitation into life with him. And it is the way of Jesus that shapes how we engage in life together and move beyond our walls in service and hope.

We believe that as we live in alignment with this mission, we become who God has called us to be—together.



THE MISSION OF FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

# Cultivating Community in the Way of Jesus for the Flourishing of the City.



**A mission is more than words—  
it is a call to shared action.**

**Three rhythms** shape our  
commitment to letting the  
way of Jesus lead.



**These three rhythms form us in the way of Jesus,** inviting  
us into regular patterns of life with him.

You can step into any rhythm at any time, but the way of Jesus invites us to  
live them all—gathering, equipping, and serving—as one shared movement.



**We gather together** for prayer, worship, and to hear God's Word—that our eyes might look upward.



As we enter through the doors of our church each Sunday, we come together as a community—submitting to God's leadership over all of life as we learn His Word and join in song and prayer. Each time we enter into this rhythm of gathering, we are empowered to cultivate community and live out our mission—intentionally drawing near to one another in worship and extending a warm welcome to those not yet here. Gathering is not simply about being in the same room; it is about **opening ourselves to the transforming presence of God above us and to the people around us.**



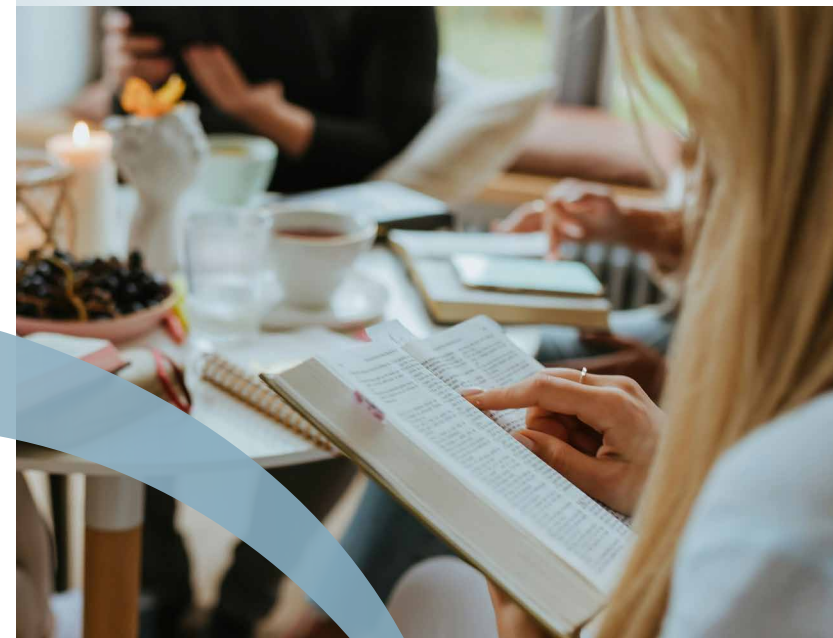
**As we follow Jesus into new rhythms of gathering, we envision:**

- **A culture of intentional hospitality**, where long-time Covenant Partners and guests alike experience an authentic welcome and are warmly invited into the life of the church.
- **A deeper sense of unity in Christ**—becoming a worshipping community knit together in the Scriptures and by the Holy Spirit as we cultivate community in the way of Jesus.
- **A renewed joy and expectancy in worship**, lifting our eyes to the God whose ways are higher than our own and whose presence shapes us week by week.

**We equip one another** in the knowledge of God's Word that we might focus inward, living Christ-centered lives.



A life of following Jesus is not meant to be lived alone, and the things we're drawn into are never just for ourselves—even in the books we're reading or what we're studying. As a church community, we join together in letting the way of Jesus lead—deepening our relationships with God and one another as we study the scriptures, engage in spiritual practices, and apply the gospel to our lives. As we do, we're learning to surrender to a way that is greater than our own—and to embrace new rhythms of equipping in new times and spaces. There's no single way this takes shape; what matters is our openness to the Spirit's leading, trusting that equipping happens **not only inside our church walls, but around tables, in living rooms, and throughout our neighborhoods.**



**As we follow Jesus into new rhythms of equipping, we envision:**

- **A growing number of Houstonians pursuing spiritual formation** beyond Sunday mornings and beyond the church campus – embracing practices that shape everyday discipleship.
- **New leaders rising up to guide groups**, shape studies, and form communities of practice – multiplying opportunities for learning, connection, and growth.
- **Rich, intergenerational, neighborhood communities**, where people at every stage of faith are formed through Scripture, relationships, and shared rhythms of following Jesus.



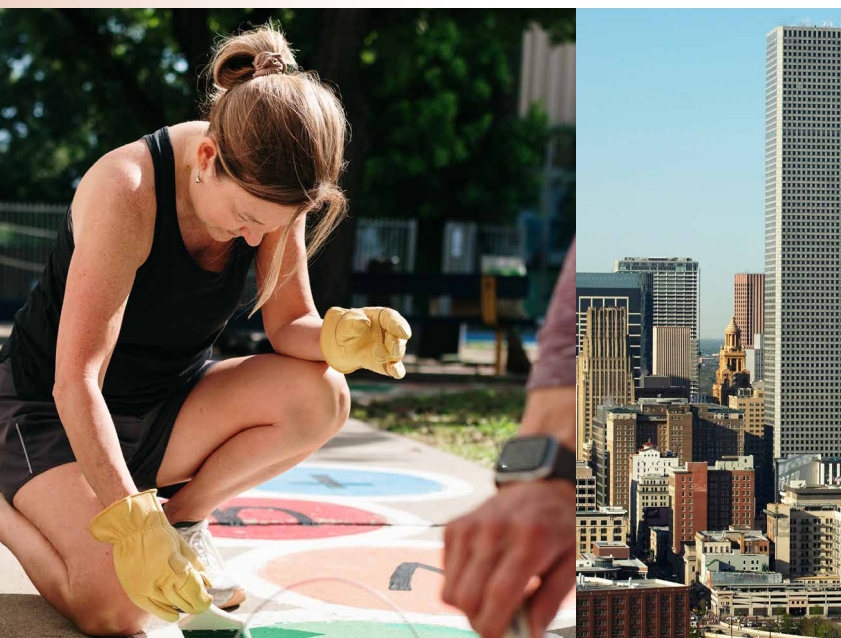
We serve the needs of those here, near, and far in the example of Jesus's disciples—ready to look **outward** and address the concerns of others.



Together, we meet the needs of our city, our neighbors, and the world as a reflection of the heavenly city. Serving is not defined by what we do or who we partner with—it begins with the posture of our hearts. It is a rhythm of presence and participation, following the way of Jesus into the needs of others. As we let the way of Jesus lead, we seek not simply to do more, but to engage more deeply—to serve with intentionality, connection, and impact. In this way, serving becomes a spiritual practice, a vital part of our discipleship and of **God's ongoing work in and through our community, as we seek the flourishing of the city.**

As we follow Jesus into new rhythms of serving, we envision:

- **Broad congregational participation in serving together**, joining our gifts for the good of our neighbors here – in our congregation, near – in our city, and far – around the world.
- **Deeper impact through long-term, mission partnerships**, strengthening our effectiveness and our embrace of others in need of God's love.
- **A growing connection to the needs of our neighbors**, recognizing our city as the primary place where God's mission unfolds and where we are called to love in Jesus' name.



## The rhythms of the way of Jesus touch every part of life:

From busyness to *belonging*

From noise to *presence*

From fragmentation to *fulfillment*

From burdened to *beloved*

From seeking validation to *feeling valued*

From striving alone to *being formed in community*

From full schedules to *shared life together*

From ritual to *relationship*

From comfort to *calling*

From consuming to *contributing*

One step at a time, we move together in the way of Jesus—and there's a place for you on this shared journey.

“

Walk with me and work with me—watch how I do it.

Learn the unforced rhythms of grace.

I won't lay anything heavy or ill-fitting on you.

Keep company with me and you'll learn to live freely and lightly.”

MATTHEW 11:28-30 (MSG)



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