



MINISTRY BLUEPRINT



FAITHWAY
FAITHWAY
LOVING. GROWING. SERVING.

Welcome to FaithWay Church. FaithWay is a growing church meeting in Plainwell. FaithWay offers a casual and safe environment for adults and children to experience the love of Jesus.

Everyone must choose the path they will walk in life. Whether you're a grounded believer, a Christian who has lost your way, or someone just looking for answers to tough questions, you are welcome to come find the way at FaithWay.

We would like to invite you to join us as we step out in faith and follow Jesus. Jesus said, "I am the way the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." John 14:6 The best possible life is found in Him, and He will lead all who want to follow to life in Him!

The following is a blueprint for how FaithWay does ministry. If you have any questions about how FaithWay Church functions, or what we believe, we hope this manual helps answer them. Always feel free to speak with our leadership if you have any further questions. Thank you for attending FaithWay Church.

Pastor Tony Dear

MARRIAGE

A Covenant Between Man, Woman and God: FaithWay believes that the bible teaches that Marriage is a covenant relationship. This relationship is made before God and is between one man, and one woman. Marriage is blessed by God and is pleasing to God. It is because of this truth that any wedding performed by FaithWay is considered a Christian worship service. This includes music, bible reading, preaching, as well as the traditional aspects of a wedding (Mal. 2:14, Matt. 19:4-7).

A Picture of Gods Relationship with the Church: In Scripture monogamous heterosexual marriage bears a significance which goes beyond the regulation of sexual behavior, the bearing and raising of children, the formation of families, and the recognition of certain economic and legal rights. Marriage between a woman and a man is emphatically stated in Scripture to create a "one flesh" union (Gen. 1:27, 2:23-24; Matt. 19:5), which in turn signifies the mystery of the union between Christ and His body, the Church (Eph. 5:22-33). This means that the foundational understanding of marriage is as a covenant grounded in promises between a man and a woman which finds its divinely intended expression in the one flesh union between husband and wife. FaithWay believes marriage is always between one man and one woman and does not support homosexual unions. It is the marriage union of a man and a woman that is a picture of Christ and the Church. (cf. Prov. 2:16-17; Mal. 2:14; Eph. 5:31-32).

THE CHURCH

We believe the church is God's called out assembly of believers. All those who have accepted Christ as their Savior are members of His church. The Church is Christ's body on this earth. It is charged with the mission to be ambassadors for God, and to go and make disciples of all nations. We believe the local church is called to be God's hands and feet in spreading the gospel to their specific community first, and then to the rest of the world.

Matthew 16:16-18

BAPTISM AND COMMUNION

The Word of God commands the church to recognize two ordinances of the Lord Jesus Christ, reserved for those who are believers.

Baptism

Baptism is the outward sign of what God has already done in a believer's life and is a testimony to all that the person now belongs to Jesus.

Acts 2:38

Communion

Communion is a commemoration of the death of Jesus Christ and is done in remembrance of Him until He comes again.

1 Corinthians 11:17-34

FOREVER

People are created to exist forever, and will, either with God in the New Heaven and New Earth or in Hell as enemies of God.

John 3:16; John 14:17; Romans 6:23; Romans 8:17-18; Revelation 20:15; I Corinthians 2:7-9, Revelation 21-22

Table of Contents

FaithWay's Vision and Mission.	Page 4
How FaithWay does Ministry.....	Page 5
How FaithWay is Led.....	Page 6
FaithWay is Deacon Served.....	Page 10
Membership at FaithWay	Page 13
What FaithWay Believes.....	Page 15

OUR VISION

FaithWay's goal is "to transform our church and community into followers of Jesus Christ"

OUR MISSION

To accomplish this goal our mission is to guide everyone who attends to take three sequential steps of faith. All of our ministry at FaithWay revolves around these simple steps as we trust God to transform lives.

Step 1 Love God

Step 2 Grow Together

Step 3 Serve Others

SATAN

We believe that Satan was created as an angel of light and is now the open and declared enemy of God and God's people. Satan is the destroyer of human lives and his destiny is eternal punishment.

Job 1:6-7; John 10:10; Ephesians 6:10-20; Revelation 21:10.

SIN

Every person is born a sinner. Sin is choosing to do things our way instead of God's. It entered the world when Adam and Eve disobeyed God. Because of this sin, our relationship with God is lost, our relationship with others is strained, and our relationship to the world is marred. Ultimately, all humans are dead in their sin and destined for separation from God in a literal place called Hell.

Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:8-9; John 14:6, 1:2; Titus 3:5; Galatians 3:26; Romans 5:1; Romans 10:9-10

SALVATION

Salvation is God's free gift to us, as sinners! We can never make up for our sin by self-improvement or good works. Only by trusting in Jesus Christ for forgiveness can anyone be saved from sin's penalty. We must accept the free gift of salvation God offers us. When we trust in Jesus for our salvation we are "born again," and made alive through Him. Our relationship with Him is restored and we have eternal life which begins at the moment of salvation.

Romans 6:23; Ephesians 2:8-9; John 14:6, 1:2; Titus 3:5; Galatians 3:26; Romans 5:1; Romans 10:9-10

THE HOLY SPIRIT

The Holy Spirit is equal with the Father and Jesus Christ. He is present in the world to make men aware of their sin and their need for Jesus Christ. He also lives in the heart of every Christian from the moment of salvation. It is through the Holy Spirit that the Christian is marked with a seal and finds assurance that they are part of God's family.

The Holy Spirit provides the Christian with the power to live and have a successful ministry in the Name of Jesus Christ. He gives us an understanding of spiritual truth, and guidance to do what is right, He gives every believer spiritual gifts. FaithWay does not believe in the cessation of gifts of the spirit. We believe all the gifts mentioned in scripture are in effect until "perfection comes." We believe perfection to mean when Jesus comes again. (1 Cor. 13) As Christians we seek to live under the Holy Spirit's daily control. It is God's expectation of every believer that they would yield to the Holy Spirit and be fully influenced and filled by Him.

Acts 1:8; II Corinthians 3:17; John 16:7-13, 14:16-17; Galatians 5:25; I Corinthians 2:12, 3:16; Ephesians 1:13, 5:18; 1 Cor. 12-14

THE BIBLE

The Bible is God's Word to us. It was written by human authors, under the supernatural guidance of the Holy Spirit. Because it is anointed and inspired by God, it is truth and without error.

II Timothy 3:16, 1:13; II Peter 1:20-21; Psalm 119:105, 160, 12:6; Proverbs 30:5

HUMAN BEINGS

Human beings are made in the spiritual image of God, to be like Him in character. They are the grand finale of God's creation, the object of His love and affection. Humans were created good, and we're meant to live forever in relationship with God. Mankind has since fallen into sin and our relationship with God is broken. Man is born into this world as sinners. Genesis 2-3

LOVING GOD

The first step FaithWay takes to be transformed by God is falling in love with Him. We want to lead you past religion, and all the work, hurt, and failure that comes with it and into a relationship with Jesus Christ. He will change your life. Everything we do on Sunday morning; whether its FaithWay Kids or our adult worship service, we aim for this goal. That we fall more in love with God.

GROWING TOGETHER

The second step FaithWay takes to be transformed by God is growing together. We can't grow to be what God wants us to be alone. So we come together as a church family to be encouraged. We receive training from the Bible to be equipped to live how God wants us to, so we can serve our church, and serve our community. This step is for all ages. There are many different ways this step happens as you commit to FaithWay. We encourage you to watch for opportunity to grow with us.

SERVING OTHERS

The third step FaithWay takes to be transformed by God is serving others. FaithWay is committed to serving our church and the community around us. Those who are committed to FaithWay and to Jesus Christ will have great opportunity to help people who are in need. We believe we are called to "go out" and minister to the world around us. Sometimes this happens through the church and opportunity that is provided and sometimes God just moves hearts to minister on their own. FaithWay is a church that seeks to equip our members and empower them to serve where God leads. Where is God asking you to step out and serve?

How FaithWay Church is Led

FaithWay is an Elder led church. The bible teaches that Elders are a gift from God and appointed by God to lead His church. (Ephesians 4:11, Acts 20:28, 1 Peter 5:1-2)

What is an elder? The bible teaches that an elder is an overseer of the church. The word for elder in Greek, *episkopos* is translated pastor, ruler, or shepherd. The idea here is that elders are given by God to oversee the local church. They shepherd people towards Christ likeness with authority given by God.

What are an elders duties?

- shepherding the people in the church, setting an example for all (1 Peter 5:1-3)
- feeding and caring for the church (Acts 20:28, 1 Thes. 5:12)
- teaching and preaching the truth from God's word (1 Timothy 5:17, Titus 1:9)
- rule and lead (1 Tim. 5:17, 1 Tim. 3:2,4)
- train others in scripture and equip to do ministry (Ephesians 4:12-14)
- refute and rebuke the insubordinate (Titus 1:9, 13)
- keep watch over and give account to God for the church (Hebrews 13:17)
- pray for the church (Acts 6:4)
- healing of the sick (James 5:14-15)
- build up the flock through encouragement, correction, rebuking, and instruction (Titus 1:9, 2 Tim. 4:2)
- Elders are architects at FaithWay. As expert builders it is their task to design the process of discipleship. They also implement and oversee the ministries of the church making sure they all align with our vision, our mission and our discipleship process. (1 Cor. 3:10)

What FaithWay Believes About...

GOD (The Trinity)

God is the Creator and Ruler of the universe. He has eternally existed in three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. These three are co-equal and are one God.

Genesis 1:1,26,27; 3:22; Psalm 90:2;
Matthew 28:19; 1 Peter 1:2; II Corinthians 13:14

GOD THE FATHER

God the Father is the creator and sustainer of all things. He is equal with Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. God created man in His own image and called man back to Himself through Christ after the rebellion and fall of man. We believe God created the world in six literal days.

Genesis 1-3

JESUS CHRIST

Jesus Christ is the Son of God and is equal with the God the Father and the Holy Spirit. Jesus was born of the virgin Mary and was conceived by the Holy Spirit. Jesus lived a sinless human life and offered Himself as the perfect sacrifice for the sins of all people by dying on a cross. He rose from the dead after three days to demonstrate His power over sin and death. He ascended to Heaven and will return to earth again someday to reign as King forever.

Matthew 1:18,22,23; Isaiah 9:6; John 1:1-5,14:10-30; Hebrews 4:14-15; I Corinthians 15:3-4; Romans 1:3-4; Acts 1:9-11; I Timothy 6:14-15; Titus 2:13

3. Committed to Unity

I am a member of FaithWay Church. I will seek to be a source of unity in the church. I know there are no perfect pastors, or church members, but neither am I. I will not be a source of gossip or dissension. One of the greatest contributions I can make is to do all I can in God's power to help keep the church in unity for the sake of the gospel. As a member of FaithWay I will know and pursue the vision, and mission of this local church.

4. Committed to Serving Others

I am a member of FaithWay Church. I will not let my church be about my preferences and desires. That is self-serving. I am in this church to serve others and to serve Christ. My Savior went to the cross for me. I can deal with any inconveniences and matters that are just about my preference or style. (Philippians 2)

5. Committed to Supporting the Leadership of the Church

I am a member of FaithWay Church. I will support my church leadership. I understand that the pastor and elders of FaithWay are God's authority in the church. I will pray for our pastor and leaders consistently.

6. Committed to the FaithWay Family

I am a member of FaithWay. I will lead my family to be good members of this church. We will pray, worship and serve this church together. We will seek to fall deeper in love with our church family because Jesus gave His life for her.

You and the church leadership can easily tell who the members of FaithWay Church are based on these guidelines of commitment. Are you a FaithWay member?

What are the qualifications to be an elder?

- **an elder must be a man.** FaithWay believes that there is not a precedent set in scripture for woman to be elders in the New Testament church.
- **desires to be an overseer** (1 Timothy 3:1)
- **above reproach** (1 Timothy 3:2) This literally means not to be found guilty when accused of something. An elders life would be one that is blameless. Not that an elder is without sin, but they are known for their pursuit of Godliness and purity and are not known for having habitual sin in their life.
- **husband of one wife** FaithWay believes this is a man who is fully dedicated and faithful to his wife. We do not automatically disqualify a man for the position of elder because of divorce in his past.
- **temperate**
- **self- controlled**
- **respectable**
- **able to teach**
- **not given to much wine** (1 Timothy 3:3) FaithWay, like the bible, does not prohibit drinking among it's leadership team. This verse literally reads " one who does not sit long at his wineskin." An elder must be above reproach when it comes to the use of alcohol. Drunkenness should not part of an elders or Christians life.
- **gentle**
- **not quarrelsome**
- **not a lover of money**
- **must manage his own household well** (1 Tim. 3:4)
- **not a recent convert** (1 Timothy 3:6)
- **a good reputation with outsiders** (1 Timothy 3:7)
- **agree with and live out our vision, our mission, and our discipleship process**

How do we know who God has called to be an elder?

God calls elders through gifting. In Ephesians 4:11-14 Paul says that God has gifted men for this ministry. This passage gives a five-fold gifting for the equipping of the church. Apostles, Prophets, Evangelists, Shepherds and Teachers. Men who are called to be elders will have teaching, ruling, or shepherding gifts. Elders will be gifted in at least one of these ways. It is not expected that an elder would display all of these gifts but that the Elder team as a whole would collectively have these spiritual gifts together. A man who has no ability or gifting in these areas has not been called to be an elder. (1 Tim. 3:2, 4-5).

How is an elder at FaithWay appointed?

Elders at FaithWay are appointed by the existing elders. We believe the New Testament does not set a standard for voting, and that voting can create disunity in the church. (Acts 14:23, Titus 1:5, 1 Tim. 5:22)

How long is an elder appointed for?

The appointment of elder is permanent until for whatever reason he is no longer able to meet the qualifications or perform the duties required.

How many elders does FaithWay have?

FaithWay seeks to have enough elders to do the required tasks in leading the church. It is our goal to have elders who are gifted with a diversity of spiritual gifts including the five-fold gifting in Ephesians 4:11-14, and the gifts seen in 1 Corinthians and Romans 12. In this way the leadership will be able to equip the church in all necessary ways, to train them up to do ministry, know scripture, and work to fan into flame the gifts God has given the congregation. (2nd Tim. 1:6) It is also our goal to create a team environment and avoid tyrannical rule. (3rd John 9)

Membership at FaithWay!

At FaithWay Church we believe that individuals who truly want to be part of our church family will do so out of commitment that they feel to the body. The difference between an “attender” and a “member” is commitment.

Here are 6 ways our members are committed to FaithWay Church. Are you a member?

1. Committed to Jesus

I am a member of FaithWay Church. This membership is a gift. When I received the free gift of salvation through Jesus Christ, I became a part of the body of Christ. And now I am humbled and honored to serve and love others in our church. I pray that I will never take my membership for granted, but see it as a gift and an opportunity to serve others and to be a part of something greater than any one person or member.

2. Committed to Being a Functioning Member of the Body of Christ.

I am a member of FaithWay. This is not membership in a civic organization. It's the kind of membership given to us in 1 Corinthians 12: “Now you are the body of Christ, and individual members of it” (1 Cor. 12:27). Because I am a member of the body of Christ, I must be a functioning member, whether I am an “eye,” and “ear,” or a “hand.” As a functioning member, I will give financially. I will serve. I will minister. I will evangelize. I will study. I will be a part of the discipleship process always looking for the next step to Loving God, Growing Together, and Serving Others. I will seek to be a blessing to others. I will remember that “if one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; if one member is honored, all the members rejoice with it” (1 Cor. 12:26).

- **husband of one wife** (1 Timothy 3:12) A deacon is not automatically disqualified because of divorce in their past. At the time when Paul wrote this letter to Timothy it was a growing problem that men were not being faithful to their wives. One might wonder why, if women are able to be deacons, Paul didn't mention that they should be the wife of one husband? Culturally, this was not really an issue to be addressed as it was very uncommon for women to be unfaithful to their husbands.

- **manage his household well** (3:12)
- **must know and live out our vision, our mission, and our discipleship process**

How are Deacons Appointed? Deacons are appointed by the elders. The appointment of deacon is permanent until, for whatever reason, he or she is no longer able to meet the qualifications, or perform the duties required. A deacon is to be seen as a willing servant who loves, sacrifices, and serves Jesus Christ at FaithWay Church.

Encouragement for Deacons as they press on in their work and labor for unity.

Deacons: According to 1 Corinthians 12:28, you have the gift of "administering" which is just as important as apostles, prophets, miracles, and healing. If you have a gift for administration and the qualities of a deacon you are a gift to Christ's church. You have been given a particular "manifestation of the Spirit for the common good." (1 Cor. 12:7) use your gift to combat division and build up Christ's body.

How do the elders officially make decisions?

It is the goal of the elder team to work together in unity and agreement. (2nd Cor. 13:11, Phil. 1:27, Phil. 2:2, Eph. 4:1-6, 1 Pet. 3:8). When Godly men lead biblically and responsibly, unity is attainable, and the people being led will follow joyfully. (Hebrews 13:17) While the lead pastor at FaithWay is equal in authority he will act as overseer to guide this elder team towards unity and keeping with the vision, mission, and discipleship process of the church.

How should the congregation view and respond to the elders?

- They should love them (1 Thes. 5:13)
- Not accuse them flippantly or slander them (1 Timothy 5:19)
- Accept decisions made by elders as binding on the church (Acts 15)
- Joyfully follow the elders leading like a sheep follows a shepherd, knowing that the elders love and care for you! (Hebrews 13:17)
- Recognize elders as the God appointed authority in the church.

FaithWay is Deacon Served!

In following the biblical guidelines for leadership in God's church FaithWay believes that God has gifted some to be deacons in the church.

What is a Deacon? The word deacon in the New Testament literally means "to serve."

Deacons are called upon to administer tasks in the church that the elders appoint them to do (1 Cor. 12:28). Acts 6:4 shows that the elders of the first church were overworked and didn't have time to serve the church in every way. They gave the first deacons the task of giving money to the poor to free elders to "give their attention to prayer and ministry of the word." A deacons duties at FaithWay Church are given to them by the elder team whom they joyfully support.

What are the qualifications of being a deacon?

- **men worthy of respect** (1 Timothy 3:8)
- **sincere** (3:8)
- **not given to much wine** (3:8)
- **not pursuing dishonest gain** (3:8)
- **must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith** (1 Timothy 3:9)
- **have a clear conscience** (3:9)
- **must be tested and then able to serve if nothing is found against them** (1 Tim. 3:10)

The word "tested" here means, to test with a view towards approval. The goal of the elders when testing deacons to be appointed is to be positive, hoping that the deacon will meet the biblical qualifications and be able to be approved for leadership.

- woman worthy of respect (1 Timothy 3:11)

FaithWay believes that women can also serve as deacons. 1 Tim. 3:11 states that "in the same way their wives are to be woman worthy of respect..." In the greek this passage indicates the translation should be "in the same way *women* are to be worthy of respect....". It is interesting to note that for a higher position above in 1 Tim. 3:1-7 that elders wives have no qualifications. This indicates that Paul was addressing all woman in verse 11. We do not believe based on the context of this passage that woman are a separate category of leadership (deaconesses), but are actually deacons as well. More evidence for this is seen in scripture when looking at a few woman in the bible as follows.

- Phoebe in Romans 16:1 is called a deacon or servant of the church.

- Priscilla in Romans 16:3-5, and 1 Corinthians 16:19 is addressed by Paul as a woman who with her husband started at least 2 churches. Priscilla is mentioned 6 times in the Bible and 4 of those times her name is listed before her husband's. This was a bold statement by Paul in a culture that did not respect women's authority. Priscilla is widely regarded as a deacon in the church by bible scholars and is most famous for teaching Apollos the "way of God.." (Acts 18:24-26)

- **not malicious talkers** (3:11)
- **temperate** (3:11)
- **trustworthy in everything** (3:11)