



MULTIPLY

Making Room to Make More Disciples

I. Our God-Given Mission

Matthew 28:18-20 - Jesus came near and said to them, “All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth. ¹⁹Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, ²⁰teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

Jesus gave us the mission to help people know the **GOSPEL**, **GROW** up in Christ, and **GO** out for Christ to their neighbors and the nations.

II. The Current Growth of Choctaw and FBCC

- Choctaw and our surrounding communities continue to grow at a steady pace, with new neighborhoods popping up all over the area and new homes being built at an increasing pace.
- According to the US Census Bureau, 118,000 people live within in 10 miles of our church.
- The US Census Bureau also reports that 59% of the 118,000 referred to above, say that they rarely or never attend church in a given year. That means 70,000 of the people within a short drive of our church desperately need the gospel and a gospel-centered, biblically faithful church home.
- Our church has grown by 30% each year over the past 3 years, which amounts to an increase in over 100 people in average attendance annually.

III. Possible Ways to Address Current and Future Growth

1. Stop growing.

Many churches aren't willing to make the necessary changes to welcome and sustain growth. They put their own comfort, convenience, and personal preferences over Jesus' mission. Their short-sightedness and selfishness quenches the Spirit and kills growth. We however, cannot turn our backs on our mission and close our doors to the many people in our community who need the hope of Jesus and the ministry of a loving local church family.

2. Purchase adjoining property with buildings.

We could purchase some of the houses around us and use them as extra classroom space, but it would be expensive to purchase the houses, and they would provide minimal usable space per house at a very high price. Also, safety would be an issue with crossing the road and lack of adequate security.

3. Build new education space and expand the Worship Center.

At a cost of approximately \$300-\$400 per square foot to build and nearly that to remodel commercial buildings, it would cost us between \$6-10 million to build and expand. Even if we chose this route, it would take 3-4 years to raise enough money for a down payment, draw up the plans, and finish construction. It would not provide the relief we need now.

4. Rent adjoining space.

Similar problems as #2.

5. Rent space off-campus and provide shuffle service.

The only property that we might be able to rent that would offer ample space would be Choctaw Middle School or Elementary School just to our north. This is possible, but would pose a lot of big logistical and safety challenges. We could offer shuttle service (vans) back and forth from our main church campus. Due to safety and security reasons, we would be very limited in which age group we could send off campus. The most likely people would be middle aged adults.

6. Rent off-campus space and ask members to provide their own transportation.

Members may car (or van) pool to and from the church and the off-campus location. This poses all the same issues as #5 above, except the transportation issue.

7. Purchase portable buildings and place on the church property.

This is possible, but not realistic because we would need 6-8 portable classroom buildings over the next few years to meet our growing needs. The buildings usually do not have plumbing (restrooms), which is a major inconvenience. Also, the city may not allow it in our residential setting and our neighbors may resent them.

8. Use members' homes and members provide their own transportation to and from the church campus.

Members who live within a mile of the church may offer to have Bible study classes meet in their homes. The age-group guidelines presented in option 5 above apply to the use of members' homes also – as well as all the logistical and time challenges.

9. Sell Our Current Church Buildings and Build New Buildings at a New Location.

In order to build the necessary space (over 100,000 sq. ft.), it would cost us between \$30 and \$40 million to relocate. At this point in time, this seems like a highly unlikely path due to the extreme cost. (BTW: If you have \$40 million you'd like to donate, we would love to visit with you.)

10. Go to multiple Connect Group meeting times.

This seems to be far and away the best option. It will not be without challenges, but it promises to be the best stewardship of our current facilities and resources. Years ago, we created more space in worship by adding a second worship service. The same principle applies with adding a second Connect Group session.

IV. Proposed New Schedule

How might a new Sunday morning schedule with 2 Connect Groups look?

9:00 - 10:10 am Connect Group 1 / Worship 1
10:30 – 11:40 am Connect Group 2 / Worship 2

Notice, that there will be at least 20 minutes of transition time to allow everyone plenty of time to transition more easily from their first hour to the second. As we get closer to the actual start date, we may adjust the schedule by a few minutes earlier or later as needed.

V. FAQ's (Frequently Asked Questions)

1. *Why have two Connect Group meeting times?*

There is only one reason for adopting such a plan, but this is a very important reason—to reach and teach more people for Christ. Two Connect Group meeting times will make space available in an inexpensive way to expand our Connect Group ministry.

2. *How will we decide who will go to which Connect Groups session?*

- All babies, preschoolers and kids up through 2nd grade will follow a uniform plan of Connect Groups and Children's Worship.
- All Student Connect Groups will stay together and attend Connect Groups and Worship together.
- Each adult Connect Group will work together to decide when their group will meet (either Connect Groups Session 1 @ 9:00 am or Connect Group Session 2 @ 10:30 am).
- To create balance (even split) between the 2 Connect Groups and Worship sessions, we will encourage some groups to consider choosing a different time. If our Connect Group sessions are still unbalanced after those adjustments, we will start new groups to fill in the gaps. All this will be carefully worked out over the coming months in concert with the church staff and Connect Group leaders.

3. *Will this change the makeup of our present groups?*

To some extent it will, but so would any plan designed to reach more people. Building a large new educational building would also involve changes in present class and department structure. In the same way, two Connect Group meeting times will involve changes in some of our present classes. But keep in mind our mission of reaching and teaching more people about Jesus. This goal is important enough to endure some inconveniences—in fact, to welcome such inconveniences in order to see more people come to know and follow Christ.

4. *Where will we get enough leaders to staff two Connect Group meeting times?*

We will find new leaders the same way we have since 1901 – from our church family.

We believe that God will raise up the leaders from within our church. The church must and will provide more training opportunities for new leaders. This will be a big challenge, but it's also a huge opportunity to mobilize more people to use their God-given gifts to serve.

5. *Will two Connect Group meeting times hinder our fellowship?*

As our church grows, it becomes harder and harder to see everyone on Sunday morning as it is. While we should have a love for our whole church family, realistically, most of our closest ties of Christian community develop and grow in our individual Connect Groups. We will continue to have special opportunities for people to get to know their church family by serving together (VBS, Love Out Loud...), All-Church Fellowships (Thanksgiving Dinner), Retreats (Men's Retreat, Women's Retreat...), and more.

6. *How will the two Connect Groups meeting times be administered?*

The two Connect Groups meeting times will not be in competition, but cooperating in reaching people and in teaching the Bible. Both meeting times are actually part of one Connect Group ministry. Our Church staff will continue to lead and oversee the administration of the Connect Groups ministry to ensure that they are unified and healthy.

7. *Will two Connect Group meeting times cause problems when two groups use the same room and equipment?*

Close cooperation between the leaders who use the same room and equipment will be necessary. Members of the first Connect Group session will need to be considerate of the members of the second session to make sure they leave the room in the same order as they found it when they arrived for their class.

8. *Will this cause more congestion in the halls?*

Yes, it will. But so would any plan that brings in more people. That is why the new schedule we have proposed will allow for more transition time between worship services and Connect Groups and vice-versa.

9. *How will prospects be handled?*

In a spirit of cooperation, not competition. If a prospect has a preference of which worship service or Connect Group session to attend, he/she will be assigned accordingly. Otherwise, prospect assignments will be evenly divided.

10. *Will this plan work?*

A similar plan has worked successfully in thousands of other churches in our city, state and country. Additional space was provided. Additional people have been reached and disciplined. The plan will work if we are willing to work at it together with a unified and cooperative spirit.

11. Will this plan provide plenty of space for future growth of our Connect Groups?

Yes! We will have approximately 60-70% more space for Connect Groups and provide plenty of empty rooms for us to continue to expand our Connect Group ministry for several years to come.

12. How will this plan provide more room for growth in Worship?

Currently, our 11:00 am Worship has about twice as many people as our 8:30 am Worship. On some Sundays, our 11:00 am Worship is close to the 80% capacity principle. The principle is that 80% of full is functionally full. At 80%, there are very few available seats of 4 or 5 together. If a family of 4 or 5 shows up a couple minutes after the service starts, they will have a very hard time finding a place to sit.

Our goal is to use this new Connect Group and Worship plan to create greater balance between the 2 worship services. This is much easier to achieve than ever because we now have a unified worship style in both services. No matter which worship service you attend, the music and message is exactly the same. We believe that a more even split in attendance in the 2 worship services will mean that both services will be equally dynamic, and that both will have plenty of room for growth.

13. What is the timetable for the plan to move to 2 Connect Groups?

The staff has been researching multiple possibilities to meet our growth needs for the past 6 months. The Deacons and the Vision and the Vision Team have given good feedback and input into the plans over the course of the last few months.

2024

- Oct. 20th Vision Team reviewed the proposed plan.
- Oct. 27th The Deacons reviewed the proposed plan.
- Oct. 30th All Connect Group Leaders were introduced to the proposed plan through an email from Pastor Andy.
- Nov. 3rd The church will be introduced to the plan in both morning Worship services.
- Nov. 10th Church Q & A Session on the Plan @ 5:00 pm in the Upper Room.
- Nov. 17th Connect Group leaders will go over a survey that will ask each group to work together to decide which Connect Group Session (9:00 or 10:30) they will meet. In addition, the groups will also be asked if any members or group of members would be willing to help start new groups (as a leader or attender) in either of the 2 sessions.

(CALENDAR CONTINUED ON THE NEXT PAGE)

2025

- Jan. 5th Connect Group surveys (see above) will be due.
- Jan. – Mar. The staff will work with Connect Groups leaders to use the results of the survey to draw up the best possible working plan. Our goal is to have a reasonable balance of groups for all ages in each Connect Group session, and to have a more even split of people in both worship services (closer to 50/50 than our current 70/30 split.) New leaders will be recruited and trained as needed.
- Early Apr. The “rough draft” of the plan will be reviewed by our Deacons and Connect Group leaders. Any changes/improvements will be made as needed.
- Late Apr. The plan will be ready to use in case we have an unexpected surge at Easter or VBS that makes it necessary.
- Aug. **THE NEW SCHEDULE WITH 2 CONNECT GROUP SESSIONS IS LAUNCHED.**

14. *Again, what are the advantages of two Connect Group meeting times?*

- It increases the available educational space by 60-70%.
- It provides for efficient use of buildings.
- It is very cost effective (verses building or relocation) and demonstrates responsible stewardship of our resources.
- It makes more finances available for ministries and missions, rather on building and maintaining new facilities.
- It mobilizes more people to serve.
- It gives our members more choices about Connect Groups and worship opportunities.
- It extends the outreach of Connect Groups. By making room, we will be ready to reach and disciple far more people.
- It conserves energy by using space that it is already heated or cooled on Sundays.

V. New Ministry Possibilities

There are some benefits to having everyone start and end church at the same time with this new schedule. In our current staggered schedule, these opportunities are not available.

- We can have all-church or various ministry breakfast gatherings before church, such as a quarterly men’s prayer breakfast.
- Friends or family members who currently attend different worship service services will be able to leave church at the same time and enjoy going to lunch together.
- We will be able to have all-church or ministry group (Sr. Adults, Ladies, Youth Workers...) lunches for fellowship or planning meetings after church.
- We can have committee or ministry team meetings before church if needed.

VI. People We Consulted on Adding a 2nd Connect Group Session

- Ken Braddy – Small Groups Consultant at Lifeway, Nashville, TN
- Dr. Todd Fisher – Executive Director of Oklahoma Baptists
- Ray Griffin – Executive Pastor at Quail Spring Baptist Church, OKC, OK
- Scott Schooler – Minister of Education at Immanuel Baptist Church, Shawnee, OK
- Dr. Mark Walters – Executive Director of Metro Baptist Network, OKC, OK
- Dr. Heath Tucker – Pastor of Waterloo Road Baptist Church in Edmond, OK (A church similar to ours that just moved to this 2 Worship / 2 Connect Groups model.)