

## **StAAC Appreciative Inquiry Summary**

Between September 2021 and April 2022, St. Albert Alliance Church engaged in a prayerful season of discerning God's direction for the season ahead. This process was prompted by the realization that the church had reached multiple inflection points, internally and externally, that would have implications for our ministry for years to come.

Specifically, these inflection points are:

1. The development of new neighbourhoods next to our building;
2. Our move into a new facility that replaces an aging building;
3. The wide-ranging changes brought on by the Covid-19 pandemic;
4. Our lead pastoral transition, as we seek God's direction for a successor to Pastor Jeremy Peters, who resigned in December, 2021.

### **Our Process**

Our discernment process involved an Appreciative Inquiry approach that identified areas of strength by asking what was flourishing and what Jesus loves about StAAC today. We then considered areas of growth by asking what we believe Jesus longs to see more of in the life of the church and its people. Part of this process included setting apart the month of February, 2022 for a season of listening prayer related to these questions. The church's responses were gathered in congregational round table meetings, and discussions among staff and Elders Board throughout March and April of 2022, culminating in our Elders Board retreat. Over 300 responses, comments and ideas were shared during these 8 months. Throughout this season, the priority of StAAC leadership has been to allow Jesus to speak clearly through the church as we sought to listen to, trust and obey his voice.

### **The Strengths Jesus Loves**

As we worked through the gathered feedback, we returned to Jesus in prayer, asking Him to highlight the themes he wanted to emphasize. From among the many groupings of comments, we believe Jesus brought four key areas to the forefront. These represent the work God has done among us and the unique way he's shaped our church. Ultimately, they are aspects of the church we believe he has affirmed as thriving and strong.

1. We listen to, trust and obey Jesus as he leads this church.
2. We equip and encourage people to grow and live out their faith in Jesus together.
3. We are committed to biblically-grounded teaching as a means of revealing and encountering Jesus.
4. We are a place of welcome, and we desire to become a community where people can belong.

### **The Growth Jesus Longs For**

Listening to Jesus and sharing our experiences with each other was humbling, as we recognized areas where our lives, corporately and individually, still need to grow in order to reflect the Kingdom of God. We asked Jesus to point them out and he answered that prayer, consistently highlighting three areas of growth. We believe that these areas are where he specifically intends to work in our hearts and faith community during the season ahead, and in response we are committing to growing in them.

1. We commit to walking with our community by demonstrating love and service.
2. We commit to growing our confidence and capacity to live in the power of the Holy Spirit.
3. We commit to creating space in our lives for authentic relationships and community.

### **Our Values**

We have identified four values that are central to our identity, beliefs and behaviour - they are in the DNA of St. Albert Alliance Church, and reflect what we believe God has called this church to demonstrate.

1. We listen to Jesus as the functional head of the church.
2. We serve best as a team.
3. We create environments where people can experience God and find community.
4. We anchor our teaching in the Bible as the revelation of Jesus.

## **Our Purpose**

Ultimately, we have sought to hear Jesus' answer to the question of why StAAC is here - what his intention for us is right now, in this new season as a community of faith in St. Albert. We believe it is expressed in the statement below.

**We exist to be good news to our neighbours and beyond by practicing the way of Jesus.**

These words capture the heart of Gospel transformation, the Great Commandment and Great Commission, and Jesus' invitation to follow him, becoming people of *the way*, just as the early church did.

We believe the statements in this document reflect the key themes of our Appreciative Inquiry process, listening prayer, congregational round tables and discernment by our Elders Board and staff leadership.