

SGPC Moving Forward FAQ

SGPC Moving Forward is a shift at how we “do church” in a way that utilizes what God has provided us within a Biblical and sustainable way. Our hope is to see SGPC grow into a flourishing, Kingdom-minded, and Gospel-centered church.

// GENERAL QUESTIONS //

1. In simple terms, what is the *Moving Forward* plan?

We will be moving toward a stronger emphasis on the church body every day of the week, away from our previous main emphasis on Sunday mornings. This will involve “Life Groups” that are connected to our Main Hub, which will include online resources and Sunday Messages every 2nd & 4th Sunday of the month (with messages hopefully posted on the 1st and 3rd Sundays as well). Think “church life on a smaller, livelier scale”!

2. Why are we shifting to the *Moving Forward* plan?

COVID-19 gave us a unique opportunity to face and acknowledge what limitations we have as a church and to re-look at God’s Word about what “church” really is.

We know Christ is the head, our firm foundation ([Ephesians 2:11-22](#)) of our church and that each member of the church is indispensable and has their own function ([1 Corinthians 12:12-31](#)). Therefore, we recognize that church is anywhere where Christ is present, not just our building, and that every member of our church can help our church “move forward”.

Especially during this time, we want to move away from just planning a Sunday Worship service that only 2-4 of the same people work on each week, to a structure that allows & encourages for more participation of the body, fellowship, and growth.

3. Is this just a program?

No, this is a church-wide strategic plan to help our church flourish by working on some of the weak points of our church and strengthening the strong points about our church.

4. What does it mean to Flourish?

As a congregation belonging to ECO (our denomination, a Covenant Order Evangelical Christians), we desire to thrive in 6 areas or competencies. ECO has identified 6 competencies that define a healthy church. These are: *Identity Declaring, Risk Tribalizing, Disciple Making, Incarnational Messaging, Leader Releasing and Multiplication Organizing.*

- *Identity Declaring* is our congregation's ability to have a singular commitment to the Lord as well as to look at the church's vision and mission to see if they are identifying Jesus as Lord in word and in deed.
- *Risk Tribalizing* is the extent to which the congregation, covenant partners and leaders are willing to risk for the sake of God's mission.
- *Disciple Making* is the extent to which a congregation is structured and devoted to the making of mature disciples.
- *Incarnational Messaging* is the extent to which the church and its covenant partners authentically engage in their surrounding communities for the gospel.
- *Leader Releasing* is the extent to which clergy and staff view their role as encouraging, equipping and empowering the body to do its role.
- *Multiplication Organizing* is the extent to which the church multiplies disciples, groups and leaders and how they can serve in new contexts.

5. What are our weaknesses that we identified as a church?

According to an ECO assessment our Elders & Leadership Team took in 2019, our church scored lowest in Risk Tribalizing, Disciple Making, Incarnational Messaging and Multiplication Organizing. These weaknesses can be otherwise summarized as: *disciple making, multiplying leadership, and nurturing missional living.*

6. What does it mean to make disciples?

To make disciples means that the church trains and matures a person to become a fully devoted follower of Jesus Christ. It asks for leaders to step forward to intentionally invest in others to help them in their maturity as followers of Christ. It essentially involves becoming more and more like Christ and multiplying our capacity to influence others.

7. What is the goal of the *Moving Forward* plan?

Our goal is to make a flourishing church: a church where we acknowledge our strengths and gifting and utilize every person's contributions so that we may all be flourishing disciples of Christ.

8. When will we start the *Moving Forward* plan?

Starting on January 16th, we will begin implementing the first phase of our *Moving Forward* plan.

9. How does this connect with our “regular” church activities?

We see the *Moving Forward* plan aligning with the [SGPC Core Values](#) our church collectively made a couple years ago:

Christ-Centered // Studying God’s Word, worshiping together & prayer will be done within Life Groups, as well as on the 2nd & 4th Sunday until we are able to sustainably & safely manage Sunday Services on a weekly basis.

Belonging & Welcoming, Growing In Christ With Serving, & Missions and Outreach // These Core Values are also demonstrated within Life Groups. Each Life Group will have the opportunity to actively engage with one another, in how they serve one another, and how they can reach out towards their respective communities.

Churchwide activities or fellowship between Life Groups will be planned in the future as we develop the group network.

10. What will Sundays look like?

We will continue to have SGPC Sunday Worship messages from guest speakers every 2nd and 4th Sunday at 9:15AM, unless otherwise mentioned. On the Sundays in between, members & Life Groups will be provided with a supplemental sermon from another church. Potentially, these messages could come from guest speakers when possible.

11. What will the other days of the week look like?

Tuesdays will consist of supplemental blog posts from Staff or Session to help engage with the message or passages that our Life Groups are going through. Thursdays will have a Worship resource for Life Groups or personal use as well. Friday emails will be sent out each week to help recap what is accessible on the Main Hub. It will include our Global Partner prayer requests as well as other church announcements as needed.

Throughout the week, we also encourage times of fellowship, whether it be virtually, or in person as circumstances allow for it in a safe manner.

12. How will things be different (and the same)?

In the past, our Sunday Worship Services provided a time where we could gather, be exhorted with the Word and fellowship with one another on a big scale. Due to the inability to gather because of COVID-19, Life Groups will provide a time of gathering, studying the Word, encouragement and fellowship on a smaller scale. We believe this difference gives us the ability to address the weaknesses we observed in our ECO Assessment in an intentional way that will last even after COVID-19. The potential to grow as a church through Life Groups will make the times we can gather as a whole even sweeter.

We will still be keeping Sunday's messages whether it be from guest speakers, other Christian speakers or if we get a new pastor. We will continue to adhere to COVID-19 restrictions until safe to meet back in person.

13. How will things be different (and the same) for Session?

Session's responsibility and authority for governing the congregation and guiding its mission for Christ in the world, as ECO Polity states, will remain the same. The main difference will be how the Elder assignments are formed to meet the needs of the Moving Forward plan. Each session member will either lead or actively participate in a Life Group.

14. How will things be different (and the same) for Deacons?

Deacon responsibilities will remain generally the same: ministering to those in need both within and beyond the community of faith. The main difference is that each deacon will also actively participate in a Life Group, whether that is leading one or joining one. As a whole, the Deacons will be adjusting their responsibilities as the Moving Forward plan is implemented. They will also no longer be Communication Leaders, but will be asked to continue to faithfully reach out to their Parish groups once a month to see how they are doing, and to help convey church announcements.

15. How will things be different (and the same) for Trustees?

Trustee responsibilities will continue on as they were: to oversee the financial and administrative duties of SGPC, as well as maintain and manage the church property. We envision them prioritizing requests that flow out of the Moving Forward plan. We also expect all Trustees to either lead or actively participate in a Life Group.

16. How will things be different (and the same) for Covenant Partners (Members)?

Covenant Partners will find opportunities to join a Life Group and be able to experience the benefits of weekly fellowship, discipleship, accountability and times for outreach. They will still be able to have online resources provided for them from the Main Hub and be able to access Sunday messages.

17. Who will be involved?

Our hope is for EVERY Covenant Partner (Member) of SGPC to be involved in the *Moving Forward* plan. What that looks like specifically will be between each member and the Lord. We hope for every member to join a Life Group, and engage in fellowship with one another. Our leaders are to help set the example of how Life Groups will run and operate in this coming year. They will help pave the way to a flourishing church! We ask you to pray about how God may be calling you to engage, serve, and participate in seeing our church grow and flourish!

18. Who will provide leadership?

John Kwok will be the point person for the Moving Forward plan. Additional help and support is provided by Josie, Margarete and Nancy. The elders of session, as stated above, will continue to provide oversight and assistance.

19. How will this continue after COVID-19 restrictions are gone and a vaccine is distributed?

We envision Life Groups continuing as a regular, healthy part of our church structure. Even with in-person Sundays, we find the intentionality and purpose of Life Groups to be essential in seeing our church flourish and grow.

Margarete will go back to focusing on KidMin, and Josie will focus more of her energy on Sunday Worship; John will continue in the role of Point Person.

20. How will it impact our pastoral search?

It will not affect our search for a pastor in any way. The PNC will continue to look actively for a new pastor. If anything, it gives a potential pastor a glimpse at what we are actively trying to do at SGPC.

21. How will it affect the incoming pastor?

Because Moving Forward stems from following the competencies listed out by our ECO Presbytery, it is our hope that our future pastor will recognize the importance of this sustainable plan for our church. We will, of course, take into consideration the direction our future pastor may want to go, so long as it continues to address the areas we are weak in.

22. How long will it take to implement?

We will begin this Moving Forward plan effectively on January 16th, as we introduce it in our Joint Board meeting. Most of the logistics of the Main Hub will begin right away, adjusting for Life Groups once the leaders are recruited, equipped and launched.

23. What stages (phases) are involved?

We have created three phases:

- Phase One will include the implementation of the Main Hub, as well as the recruitment and training of Life Group Leaders. We will also be promoting Life Groups during this time (and continually through each phase). The Main Hub will include: Tuesday Blog Posts with supplemental resources to engage in God's Word or the messages we receive; Thursday Worship resources, a Friday recap email (similar to a bulletin); Sunday Worship Online messages.
- Phase Two will include the launching of Life Groups as well as potentially training the next cohort of leaders. If possible, we will add an in-person gathering once a month as circumstances permit.
- Phase Three will include the launching of the second cohort as well as adding an additional in-person gathering once a month for Life Groups to fellowship with one another. By this phase, we hope that Moving Forward is well underway and groups formed will begin to flourish and grow!

24. What is the timeline of the stages (Phases)?

Phase One will begin January 16th. Phase Two we believe will begin a month to two months after Phase One once the Life Groups are ready to launch. Phase Three is mostly dependent on COVID-19 circumstances.

25. What if these things don't happen?

As always, given the circumstances we are in due to COVID-19, we are prepared to be fluid and flexible. We firmly believe that as God has led our leadership team to this idea of moving our church forward, He is faithful to redirect and establish our steps (Proverbs 16:9).

We will monitor the progress of Phase One and adjust as needed. Our overall goal for Life Groups to launch precedes the exact time in which our phases roll out. The Main Hub will continue to function unless unforeseen circumstances arise.

// LIFE GROUPS //

26. What is a Life Group?

- A. Life Groups consist of two Life Group co-leaders and 5-8 other members, engaging in the following activities:
- i. Bible Study ([2 Timothy 3:16-17](#))
 - ii. Worship ([Romans 12:1](#), [1 Corinthians 14:26](#))
 - iii. Fellowship & Serving One Another ([1 Peter 4:7-11](#), [John 13:34-35](#))
 - iv. Accountability & Prayer ([James 5:13-16](#), [1 Thess. 5:10-11](#), [Hebrews 3:13-14](#))
 - v. Outreach & Discipleship ([Matthew 28:16-20](#), [Matthew 5:13-16](#), [Acts 2:46-47](#))

Overall guiding Scriptures: [Acts 2:42-47](#) & [Colossians 3:15-17](#)

27. How is a Life Group different from a Small Group?

While Small Groups generally emphasize the study of God's Word, Life Groups not only will include studying God's Word, but also include other important aspects of being a disciple of Christ, such as fellowship, discipleship, accountability, and outreach. One goal of the Life Group is to eventually multiply.

28. What will we be doing in my Life Group?

Each Life Group has a lot of freedom to exercise how they want to operate and schedule their meetings. We only ask that you consider using the guides and resources (especially Sunday sermons) provided so all groups can study the same material together.

29. What happens to the existing Small Groups or Communication Groups?

Existing groups can convert to Life Groups if they desire to stay together. Please note that groups are asked to meet the new guidelines to be consistent with the overall church vision.

30. What day should I meet?

Once Life Groups are set, leaders will have the authority to decide what days and times they would like to meet. Members will have the opportunity to see which groups best fit their schedules.

31. Where should we meet?

While Stay-at-Home orders are in place, we encourage Life Groups to meet virtually. As they are lifted, Life Group leaders can decide how to meet in a safe way.

As a church, we will be adhering to the CDC guidelines in Los Angeles County. When meeting in person, we ask you to observe social distancing and wear masks.

32. How many people are in a Life Group?

Life Groups will consist of 5-8 members. We would like groups to remain small enough to encourage transparency. As groups grow through inviting others, we hope to see Life Groups split and multiply as the Spirit leads.

33. How do I join a Life Group?

An online sign up form will be emailed out as we launch and promote Life Groups. Life Group leaders will also have the ability to reach out to Covenant Partners (members) and those who participate within our church to join their group as they feel called.

34. How do I become a Life Group Leader?

If you are interested in becoming a Life Group leader, please contact Margarete Kwok (margarete.kwok.sgpc@gmail.com). Training, equipping and assistance will be provided for leaders.

// MAIN HUB //

35. What is the Main Hub?

The Main Hub is everyone's "go-to" spot for online resources. Sermons and tools for group meetings can be found there. We encourage leaders to direct their members there to encourage ownership of their own spiritual growth even as the group builds a sense of community and camaraderie. The Main Hub will be on our church website.

36. What do I do with the Main Hub?

On the Main Hub, you'll find the latest sermons, worship resources, icebreaker ideas, outreach prompts, and a place to ask questions or make suggestions. You can access them during your group time, or you can assign different elements to your group as something to review before you meet so they can be prepared for discussion. You might want to bookmark the home page for quick reference.