

koinonia

August 2022

Moving Forward Faith and Finances in the Coming Year From Pastor Brandon

“But who am I and who are my people, that we should be able to give as generously as this? For everything comes from you, and we have given you only what comes from your own hand.” – 1 Chronicles 29:14

David declared this to the Lord after observing what gifts had come in for the construction of the temple of the Lord. He was overwhelmed at the giving of the people of Israel and thankful for the provision of the Lord that made it happen. When I read this prayer of David, I cannot help but feel the same way about our church body. We are blessed each year to see the provision of the Lord at work in our ministry. This past year is no different. We have been sustained for another year through the faithful and sacrificial giving of those in our body from that which the Lord has given them! Take a moment to praise the Lord with me for His faithfulness to His people and His kingdom.

As we look forward to another year of ministry and as we consider the work the Lord is calling us to, we are faced yet again with numbers on pages. We cannot escape the reality that it takes money to run a ministry, especially one that includes comprehensive ministry six days a week. There is another reality though that should be our focus at this time. That reality is that the advancement of the Kingdom of God always has these two elements at work: the Spirit of God moving and the people of God giving.

We have felt the Spirit of the Lord leading us to walk in faith in this season to broaden our ministry to families. One aspect of this has led us to step out in faith and remove the tuition requirement for our school. We have already seen this step increase this ministry’s reach among families in our community and are expecting this to continue. Another aspect of this is to examine our approach to mid-week ministry by providing more comprehensive ministry to people in every area of life. All of this requires resources like facilities, curriculum, volunteers, and yes... money.



While many of us who are number crunchers by nature can look at spreadsheets and become overwhelmed by the “on paper” realities we face moving forward, I am reminded of this encour-

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agement from Paul in 2 Corinthians 9:8. “And God is able to make every grace overflow to you, so that in every way, always having everything you need, you may excel in every good work.”

It could also be easy for us to look at this verse out of context and simply do nothing but wait for the Lord to take care of us. Reading the verses before this puts it into context. In this chapter, Paul is letting the church in Corinth know that he plans to receive giving from their church when he returns. Since they had committed to this gift, He wasn't begging or in his words, “extorting” it from them. He encourages them in the grace of giving and the realities of kingdom giving in verse 6: “The point is this: The person who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and the person who sows generously will also reap generously. Each person should do as he has decided in his heart – not reluctantly or out of compulsion since God loves a cheerful giver.” It is with these words in mind that he adds verse 8.

God provides for his people, with the purpose of providing for His kingdom. This was His plan from the beginning. As we begin another year of ministry with the expectation and goal of advancing His kingdom, we humbly put before you the need to do so. This is not to convince you of the need or to extort it from you but, as Paul says, so that each person can determine in their heart what they will give. Our encouragement is that as you make this determination, you consider the harvest. It is my prayer that we can be at this spot next year, again mirroring the heart of David, in awe of God and His people for the provision for the work ahead.

So, what does this work look like? What will it cost? What is the need? Here is some financial information regarding the next year's work of ministry and what it will take to accomplish it as planned:

Payroll:

We enjoy ministry from many different people in our body. Some of those work at a frequency in which we feel that paying them is important. Here is a breakdown of what payroll looks like for the next year.

Pastoral Staff:	\$ 92,000.00
Ministry Staff:	\$ 5,732.00
School Staff:	\$ 71,580.00
Support Staff:	\$ 23,640.00
Payroll Taxes:	\$ 14,760.83
TOTAL PAYROLL:	\$207,712.83

Overhead and Expenditures:

There are many moving parts to our ministry, especially considering that we are looking at ministering to over 60 students each week with the school ministry. Between items such as insurance, utilities, office supplies, facility care, auto care, and more, the numbers stack up pretty fast. Also added to this is curriculum for the school and missions & benevolence giving. These things add up quickly but are necessary for our ministry to run according to what we offer our church and community.

TOTAL EXPENDITURES: \$197,250

You are welcome to request a detailed copy of our expenditures and any financial report whenever you like. We are very transparent with how finances work at Northside and wel-

come your interest! These numbers total \$404,962.83. While that is a large number for many of us, it is a small number to the God who owns everything. The question becomes, how do we ensure this number is covered?

As I stated before, the advancement of the Kingdom always has these two elements present: The Spirit of God moving and the people of God giving. The Holy Spirit has directed our steps in ministry and brought together a people for the work of ministry. He continues to add families to us as partners in ministry. We strongly feel that our next steps in ministry as a church have been set before us by the Holy Spirit. The next step in this process then is for the people of God to give. While a significant portion of this total will come from school families partnering with us in the ministry of Christian education, it is us who have been entrusted with this ministry and should be the first to give towards it. The Lord has laid it upon the hearts and minds of Northside Christian Center to grow His kingdom and we will do our part to ensure that it is done well, and faithfully so. As the Lord provides for your needs – be it through income, giftings, or talents remember where they have come from and, as Paul exhorts in 2 Corinthians 8, grow in the grace of giving.

I am trusting the Lord to provide for you in this season in a way in which you can faithfully take part in building the Kingdom of God through our ministry. I pray that you are blessed according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus. Pray with us as we look to the Lord to supply

Coming In October!

Wednesday night ministry for all ages:

Nursery: 0–5yrs old

Kids: Kindergarten – 5th grade

Youth: 6th – 12th grade

Adults: Multiple groups meeting around the church.

Sandwiches at 6:00pm, small group ministry from 6:30–7:30

all that we need for the coming year of ministry exalting God and enlarging His kingdom. While it may be easy to show up on Sunday Morning or Wednesday night and not have to consider the work of ministry happening Monday through Friday at NCA, we should all be mindful and prayerful about this important work of ministry. Every member of Northside shares in the work of ministry at NCA. Not all will teach. Not all will volunteer, but each member helps to provide something that is necessary for the kingdom work happening at NCA. Each member promotes growth of the rest of the body for the purpose of building up the body. Further, our work of Christian education should build the greater body of Christ in Panola County!

Changes to Midweek Ministry!

As Ecclesiastes tells us, “There is a season for everything.” We have enjoyed a season of midweek ministry that entailed monthly meetings for our men and women and Bible Study or Prayer Meetings every other week for several years now. While we have enjoyed this ministry, we understand that as our church body changes, our ministry needs change as well. With a fresh focus on family ministry and discipleship within our church, we feel the need for our midweek ministry to more closely reflect this focus.

We are currently entering a planning phase to reshape our midweek schedule to offer ministry for every age group and stage of life. Our plans include nursery, kids, and youth min-

Upcoming Events:

FIRST DAY for NCA
August 10th

PANOLA COLLEGE MOVE-IN
August 13th – 10am–12pm

WELCOME TO THE FAMILY LUNCH
September 11th After Service

NCA FAMILY LIFE EVENT
September 18th at 6:00pm

istry, as well as a few on-site small groups for adults each week. We would like to include a simple meal – most likely sandwiches (and soups when it's that time of year) and a time of age-appropriate ministry to our children and teens. We'd like to see our adults from every age group plug into one of our on-site small groups that will participate in a conversational study of topics and/or Bible books or passages.

Our goal is to provide a place where our body can grow together, discipling one another, and sharing in fellowship around the Word. Our current plan is to offer this ministry every Wednesday evening from 6:00 to 7:30 to ensure that families with children are able to get home in time for bed. Our men's and wom-

en's meetings will continue to happen monthly, but on the same night in separate locations around the church. We are hoping that having ministry available for children on these nights will enable more of our people to attend.

It is with this in mind that we again ask you to consider volunteering in one of these areas of ministry. We will be asking for a quarterly commitment from volunteers in these areas. This means that our nursery workers, kid's workers, or those who volunteer to help serve food or facilitate a small group will only be expected to serve for one quarter at a time.

Here's how you can pray with us through this time of preparation for midweek ministry:

- Pray for leaders to step up: We need gifted and called individuals to step up to lead in many capacities for this to work. Pray with us that the Lord draw and equip those in our body who would serve in this manner.
- Pray for direction for our groups: We want our groups to adequately minister to our body where they are. Pray with us to discern how to best provide groups that will minister to those in our body who would attend.
- Pray for workers: Every ministry requires those who serve in the background, setting up chairs, washing dishes, cleaning up, making copies, etc. Pray for those looking for a way to plug in to find a place to minister through this.

We will provide you with more information as we have it. If you would like to be a part of the planning group for this ministry or have suggestions, contact Pastor Brandon at (903) 754-3645 or brandon.pierce@northside-online.org.

A Word on Worship From Pastor Scott

This month's Word on Worship comes from a devotional written by Stephen Venable on the song Holy Spirit by Bryan and Katie Torwalt.

“But an hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in

spirit and truth; for such people the Father seeks to be His worshipers.” John 4:23
What does it mean to worship in the Spirit? Paul echoes these words of Jesus in Philippians 3:3 when he says, “for we are the true circumcision, who worship in the Spirit of God and glory in Christ Jesus and put no confidence in the flesh.” What is the role of the Holy Spirit in worship?

The night before the crucifixion Jesus had gathered His closest companions to Him so that He could pray for them and share His heart with them one final time before His death. In the midst of this holy night we find one of the most shocking statements in the entire New Testament. Judas had departed, the company of disciples had left the upper room, and little time remained before the agony of the Garden would begin the unthinkable sequence of events that would culminate at Golgotha. Soon the hands of Jesus would be shackled and He would be taken from them, as He had tried to warn so many times. His friends – still so immature and fearful – would be left with the daunting task of leading all of His followers and establishing the foundation of the church. The prospect of Jesus, the Lord of glory and the sinless Son of David, leaving them seemed devastating and disastrous for the small, fledgling band of those who loved Him. And then He said it.

“It is to your advantage that I go away.” What? Advantage? How could losing Jesus mean gain for the disciples? What could possibly be better than God with us, actually dwelling among us? (Matt. 1:23, John 1:14) The reason was so simple, so beautiful, so stunning. God in us. For the disciples, the only thing that could surpass the indescribable privilege of those years spent walking alongside Jesus would be having Him actually live within them through the gift of the Holy Spirit. Give heed to these words of Jesus in their larger context:

“I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, that He may be with you forever; that is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not see Him or know Him, but you know Him because He abides with you and will be in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you...If anyone loves Me, he will keep my word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our abode with him...But now I am going to Him who sent Me; and none of you asks Me, ‘Where are You going?’ But because I have said these things to you, sorrow has filled your heart. But I tell you the truth, it is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I go, I will send Him to you...But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into all the truth; for He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and He will disclose to you what is to come. He will glorify Me, for He will take of Mine and will disclose it to you.” John 14:16–18, 23; 16:5–7, 12–14

The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is the chief glory of the New Covenant. Just as Jesus said, the Holy Spirit had been with the people of God but through the incarnation, death and resurrection of Jesus men would be joined to God and have Him dwell within. Why is this truth so vital to worship? Our first thought might be to link the indwelling with holiness. The Holy Spirit in us helps to make us holy. This is so wonderfully true, and it is also true that apart from sanctification and a life of walking in the Spirit we cannot be vibrant worshipers. Yet the work of the Spirit consistently emphasized as paramount in the New Covenant is knowledge. Yes, knowledge. Jesus said that the Helper would guide us into all truth and disclose to our hearts the riches of His glory (cf. Eph. 3:8). The climax of the main prophecy of the New Covenant found in Jeremiah is that the law will be written on the hearts of the people and “they will all know Me.” (Jer. 31:31–34) Paul says that the Spirit searches out “the depths of God” and that we have received “not the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is

from God, so that we may know the things freely given to us by God.” (1 Cor. 2:10–12).

Worship or prayer, whether spoken or sung, is always and ever a response to a Person. Stemming from this recognition that worship and prayer are both personally and relationally oriented is the conclusion that the authenticity and vitality of worship in a community directly corresponds to the accuracy and depth of its knowledge of God. The ‘problem’ of worship in modern Church is not the wrong worship pastor, a bad sound system, an incapable band, the question of traditional or contemporary, or any other question of form. The problem is that shallow knowledge will never produce deep expressions of worship. Personal or corporate devotion will simply never ascend beyond the knowledge of the Person to whom we are devoted. Where the vision of that Person is dim, obscure, or marginalized, true adoration will be rare and fervent cries of intercession scarce. Yet where Christ is treasured and exalted in the hearts of the people, worship and prayer alike will have both their impetus and their staying power.

Thus, to worship “in the Spirit” means, in part, to worship with the knowledge of God at the forefront because the Holy Spirit loves to make God known. This is why Jesus adds “and truth” and Paul says “and glory in Christ Jesus” in the passages above. As worshipers we need to cultivate the knowledge of God in our own lives through the revelatory power of the indwelling Spirit, and actively invite the ministry of the Holy Spirit in corporate settings so that He can move among the people and put the splendor of Jesus on display. When we recognize that the height of our times of worship are directly related to the depth of the knowledge of the One we praise, then we make ourselves desperately dependent on the Holy Spirit to come and do what only He can do.

Opportunities to Serve

Panola College Move-in Day: On August 13th from 10am to 12pm we will have volunteers helping Panola College Students move into their dorms. We’ll have a booth that will pass out some small goodie bags and information about our church as well. You can help with this by volunteering to help move students, helping prepare the goodie bags, baking cookies or brownies for the goodie bags, and praying for our local college campus as they begin another year.

Northside Christian Academy: We are always looking for faithful ministry partners in our school ministry. IF you have a heart for children and a passion to serve, we can find a place for you. We often need volunteers to help with lunches, crafts, class parties, field trips, etc. If you are interested in serving at NCA, contact Pastor Scott or Shelly Dragoo.

Nursery/Kids Ministry: We have spaces available in our Sunday morning rotations for helpers and teachers in our nursery and KidZone ministries. We will also be looking for someone to lead these ministries for the first quarter of our Wednesday night ministry. Volunteers working with children and youth must be members and pass a background check. Contact Pastor Brandon if you are interested in serving in this capacity.

Nursing Home Ministry: Carthage Healthcare would like someone to come weekly and minister to their residents from the Word. Day and time is flexible. This is a precious group of people that are often overlooked and many are hungry for ministry. We currently and have had members here in the past. Speak with Pastor Brandon about serving in this way.

Intercessory Prayer: Many of our members get prayer requests through our app notifications and are faithful to pray for those as they come through. There are often times in which those in need of prayer don't wish to have their request sent out through the entire body. There are also things that come up in ministry that require more prayer and we would love those who are committed intercessors to be available to pray in those times. If you would like to be a part of our intercessory prayer team, contact Pastor Brandon.

Panola County Prayer Task Force: This ministry is being sponsored by the Panola County Ministerial Fellowship and supported by the Marshall Prayer Task Force from Marshall, Tx. Participants will have the opportunity to be paired as an individual or family with one of our first responders in Panola County. You will have the privilege of being their prayer warrior for 12 months, lifting them up in prayer as they serve our county. This is a great opportunity to invest in our community! Check with Pastor Brandon for more information.

Giving Update

It's a new ministry year for us and so our giving chart is starting clean! We are praising God for His provision during our last fiscal year and are looking forward to seeing His hand provide through His people this year. Our prayer is for "enough." We plan for our coming year of ministry and trust the Lord for His provision. He knows what we need before we even ask. Join with us in prayer for our finances this year.

The chart below reflects projected costs of ministry for our 2022-2023 ministry year. We'll update this chart every month to show how giving is measuring up to our overall need. Please note that this chart is meant to be a prayer and giving tool only and not a source of fear or anxiety. As we plan, we trust that He will direct our steps, always providing enough.

