Faith Community CHURCH

Dear *Faith Community Church* family,

In 2020, a Canadian businessman claimed in court that he had incinerated over **ONE MILLION DOLLARS** in cash! Why would anyone literally burn their own money? Think of all the good $1,000,000 could do! The man's intention was purportedly to keep his ex-wife from getting any of the money in the divorce settlement.

Think about that. He'd rather set cash on fire, than give it to others. More than a year later, the Ottawa man is in hot water with the courts, and his ex-wife and kids are struggling to keep a roof over their heads.

Even though we know Scripture deemphasizes the pursuit and love of money (Matt. 6:24; Luke 12:16-21;1 Tim. 6:10)—the above example reminds us that the money we have in our possession should be stewarded well—

used to **help**, not hinder; **bless**, not burden; **love**, not limit.

It's a great blessing of mine to briefly inform you of how God's goodness has manifested itself in the life of our church this year, as well as communicate some of the "God-sized plans" He may have for us in 2022. In so doing, if you feel led to ***give***, **give *more***, **or give more *consistently***, I pray you follow that prompting and watch how God uses the faithful giving of His people to accomplish His will in and through the local church.

In addition, please join me in praying for our church to be used by Him to effectively reach the lost and dying world around us with the hope of Jesus.

Looking back at this year, we celebrated a half-dozen **baptisms**, saw all-time **attendance** records set in our children's ministry, witnessed several **marriages** (CONGRATS to all our newlyweds!), welcomed lots of **new attendees**, and affirmed a number of them as new **members**! We also grew our **staff** by

bringing on two new part-time employees: **Lura Elie** (*Creation Kids Assistant Director*) and **Erik Hanson** (*Student Ministry Director*).

More of our church budget was spent on **missions** work than in any previous year. **Sonja Luce** officially formed *Safe Haven Ministries International* and has seen tremendous success helping women escape poverty and human trafficking in **Cyprus**. We also began giving monthly financial support to **Brian Crawford** with *Chosen People Ministries*, reaching Jews for Jesus around the globe!

Additionally, from the gifts to our Compassion fund, we distributed over **$30,000** in money and resources to people in need in our church and community. We launched a new arm of our CARE ministry called ***Neighbors In Need*** that has been collecting and distributing hygiene items to the homeless in Carlsbad. Even now, our team is purchasing new sleeping bags to help those we've met get through the extremely low temperatures at night.

We've reinitiated pre-service **prayer meetings** on Sunday mornings, our **Faith Groups** have been gathering regularly for communal prayer, Bible study, and fellowship, and our **Men's** and **Women's** ministries have seen increased involvement and experienced successful seasons of fellowship and rich study in God's Word! Some of our church **seniors** have gathered to begin revitalizing ministry plans aimed at those 55 & up.

From the pulpit, the focus of 2021 has been establishing the biblical foundation for our revised mission statement, (simply stated as: ***For His Glory, Gospel, & Gathering***). We preached through 1 Peter, surveyed the Bible to catch *Glimpses of Glory*, unpacked the gospel in 1 Corinthians 15, discussed *Church Matters*, and much more.

I'm immensely grateful to have **Pastor Johnny** as a partner in gospel ministry. I so appreciate how he crafts each

worship gathering to aim us godward through gospel saturated liturgy.

In other great news, our **Board of Elders** affirmed and approved **Filipe Mesquita** and **Mike Riley** as elders (having undergone 18 months of training). We are thrilled to see how God will use them as shepherds here!

So, as we approach 2022, what is ahead for us?

Our church-wide emphasis for next year will be ***Set Apart/Not Ashamed***. Paul tells the church in Rome that he's been "***set apart*** *for the gospel of God…"* and that he's "***not ashamed*** *of the gospel, for it is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes"* (Romans 1:1, 16).

Every believer should understand that they are called to be ambassadors of Jesus, heralding the good news of reconciliation between God and man through faith in Christ (2 Corinthians 5:17-21).

To better understand and embrace our call to be set apart *for* and not ashamed *of* the gospel, I am planning to take the bulk of the year to preach through the book of **Romans**—a book that some consider Paul's "*magnum opus*" on the gospel. We will follow that up with a sermon series on **Jonah**—reminding us of the importance of following God's call to share the good news with those who need it, even when we are reluctant to do so.

To give us practical help in our spiritually aimed conversations with others, all of our **Faith Groups** will be going through unified study material for 8-weeks starting in February.

The curriculum is called *Tactics: A Game Plan for Discussing Your Christian Convictions*. This resource by Greg Koukl will equip and encourage you to "*be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer*

everyone," as Paul urges in Colossians 4:5-6.

As I close this letter, I want to draw your attention to a massive opportunity we have as a church to impact many families in our community—and that is through increased focus on **Christian education**. For the last 3 years we have hosted *Independent Learning Academy*, a Christian ministry to home-schooling families. Because our public schools are increasingly influenced by the government and secularism-infused curriculum—we are seeing the need in our community for more Christ-centered educational options.

Over the last few months, we've been in discussion with ***Heart Christian Academy*** about their program being held here starting in the fall, and I can't wait to tell you more about that in the weeks to come.

Although we are rising up to help meet the Christian educational needs of the community, it has become more apparent than ever that **we need more functional space**. Our building committee is in discussion with our general contractor to get updated cost estimates for building out **two classrooms, two offices, and a large multi-purpose area** on the second floor of the church.

This build-out would serve the community need, but would also immediately resolve the church need for additional space for *Creation Kids* (specifically 3rd-5th grade) and *Refuge* (6th-12th grade). If you are interested in helping us financially prepare for this exciting but expensive endeavor, please consider giving to this project (by selecting "Building Fund" when you give)!

Speaking of giving, thank you so much for prayerfully considering making **a tax-**

deductible year-end donation that will help us finish 2021 strong and set us up for a new year of new ventures in God's kingdom work! You can use the info below to give in the way that is most convenient for you.

Note: Mailed donations must be post-marked on or before 12/31 to be included in your 2021 contribution report. **Have a wonderful Christmas and a blessed new year!**

In Him,

Pastor Justin Windham

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