



Leadership Team,

Good morning! I pray that as this lands in your email boxes, that it finds you well!

1. **2009** - It was a good year. We ended the year at 407 average weekly worship attendance, an increase over 2008's 362 of 12%. I firmly believe that when any organization, much less a church, can pull off 10% it's doing well. When you look at the new member numbers, and the people we are connecting with, we seem to be reaching well the disenfranchised and disaffected - what church sociologists call the dechurched. These are people who at some point were either hurt by the church or came to feel that it's irrelevant and so left. They are finding relevancy and purpose with us! This is awesome. Our challenge will be to keep our culture of invitation up, and our architecture open so that more and more people can get involved.
2. **2009 Budgets and finances** - as you'll hear tonight, we are hurting. When we approved the 2009-2010 spending plan there was no congregational ownership of it. I know that several of us around the council table increased our giving, but almost all of the income growth of \$30K can be attributed to two new families who have joined us in mission. Going into 2010 we are carrying a \$70K deficit, a \$20K income to expenses deficit, and an additional \$50K deficit against ourselves, a loan we made ourselves to float us when the income wasn't great enough. The problem is that we haven't yet been able to pay this back. As we come up on a congregational meeting it will be incredibly important that if we say YES to this new Community Life Center, we agree to increasing our regular giving as well. Building this building and supporting this congregation's growth means growing in our stewardship and giving as well.
3. **Raising the Roof of Faith** - was a success. You've done well in any economy to get twice your annual budget in commitments and we achieved that. It will make doing what we need to do with the new building possible, assuming people step up in their regular giving as well. In addition, the D/B Team has been working hard to get the visual concept ready to present to the congregation on January 31st. We'll have a fly by and a fly through ready so that the congregation can see and feel what this space is going to look like. Pretty exciting stuff. I'm personally very stoked. We will be able to deliver tremendous ministry through this space. Now is the time. This is the right concept. We need to do this thing!
4. **Staffing** - I had talked two months ago about bringing a part time pastor on to help with pastoral care...something I could do for around \$10K/year. But in conversation with the Care Team, they feel like this would undercut their ministry when what we need to be doing is ramping it up. I'm going to take their lead on this (especially since we are not in the financial position to pull this off). We are having a commissioning service for them this weekend where they will be Christened, "Care

Deacons,” and I will be working at more aggressive training and equipping so that they can do even more of our communities caring with excellence. I continue to be a “man” down on my staffing. Going into the Fall without a new and full time Minister for Families and Missions is really going to hamper our ability to grow, not only this year, but also as our Community Life Center opens. Again, what we do as a congregation with our regular giving is critical here.

5. **2010** - we have several priorities, all important for keeping us healthy as a congregation, and growing both in faith and numbers.
  - **This pastor has to get healthy.** I let myself go in 2009 and the weight and fatigue overcame me. I don't get a pass in 2010 and so am working on bringing the weight down and getting myself into fighting prime. As I go, so the church goes.
  - **Leadership architecture** - we've been living out of a pseudo-Carver model for our leadership operations for almost three years now. It's the direction Pr. Ron Lee was taking you, and I've added steroids and some definition to the process. It's time to name it, clearly articulate it, and consciously live from it. It gives leadership accountability to the congregation and to each on the one hand, but lets us, and every member, operate freely and flexibly within the policies (the Vision, Mission, and Values) of the congregation.
  - **Worship/Learning architecture** - being without the Learning Center this Fall is going to cause us to do things differently especially in the areas of our Christian education. One of the things I think may be necessary will be going to a two Sunday school hour model and I think that as we do that, we need to think through adding one worship service and moving another. This will create more space for us to grow both in terms of Christian education and in worship. I'm still playing with the general possibilities, and their consequences, and would like to share my further thinking with you over the next two months.
  - **Using the Social Connectivity tools well** - our website has become a powerhouse communication and advertising tool for us. I want to not only be using our web presence to the fullest, but capitalizing on other social connectivity tools as well to get our mission, vision, and values daily into the lives of our people and their friends. This is critical to a future impact, and something we identified as a critical move in our Leadership gathering last June.

That's it for now, and I'm afraid you've all stopped reading anyway. Looking forward to getting into 2010 with you. This is going to be an incredibly good and exciting year for this congregation.

God loves you and I do too!

*Pastor Nathan*