

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

JANUARY 13TH-14TH, 2024 // VISION

RAPID GROWTH

MASSIVE GROWTH AT ALL CAMPUSES

At the end of 2022, we averaged 5,515 in all campuses. In September 2023, we averaged 6,130 in Boro and 7,412 in all campuses (35% growth). Last weekend, we had **6,940 in the Boro and 8,474 in all campuses.**

- We baptized 450 in the Boro and 531 across all four campuses in 2023.

WHY IS GOD BLESSING THIS CHURCH?

We have seen rapid growth the last 14 years because we do **expository teaching, give a large part of our income away, are involved in the community and welcome all people, and we're simple and authentic.**

- We're simply using biblical tactics to make disciples, baptize, and teach (Matthew 28).

BEYOND THESE WALLS

OUR CITY

- **5000:** homeless ministry at Journey Home. **Stepping Stones:** homeless women and children. **Embrace Grace:** unintended pregnancies. **BAR Ministry:** on the square. **Reclaimed:** jail ministry. **Nonprofit partnerships:** (we support 90+).

OUR STATE

- **Murfreesboro** (2009), **Cannon County** (2017), **Shelbyville** (2021), **Tullahoma** (2023)
- M.I.T., finances, and organization

OUR NATION

- **Hope Church** (Seaford, DE), **City Church** (Albany, NY), **Garden City** (Beverly, MA)
- We plan on taking **two trips in 2024**

OUR WORLD

- **El Salvador:** ministry to elementary-age kids. **Two trips in 2024.**
- **Guatemala:** One trip in 2024.
- **Eastern Europe:** EEM and we are trying to find churches to partner with in Europe.
- We also support missionaries in **Haiti, Thailand, South Africa, and Egypt.**

GROWING PAINS

The growth problems

- Parking: we have 500 spaces, but it should be over 1000
- Children's/Nursery and students' space
- Group space
- Serving/Volunteers
- Distractions in service
- Office space

WE HAVE TRIED TO ALLEVIATE THE PROBLEM

Five services, cutting up building, sacrificing office and group space to have more ECCO and Nursery space, using parking at all businesses and schools around us

- We've looked at moving or expanding: another campus, Dillard's, buildings behind us, Mayday, parking garage with space on top

THE SOURCE OF THE PROBLEM IS FINANCIAL

Not only for future growth but to meet the needs of the people currently attending our church, we must make a radical shift.

- We have explored every option, but the fact is that **our finances have to increase if we are going to meet the needs of our community.**

FINANCES

TOTAL FOR ALL CAMPUSES:

- 2023: Budget: \$9,900,000, Expenses: \$10,900,000 (42% growth), Income: \$12,975,000
- 2024: Budget: \$13,000,000 (based off last year's giving)

FULL AND PART TIME SALARIES ALL CAMPUSES:

- **\$4,564,203 (35%)**
- Average salary for full-time: \$54,760, Taxes: \$218,000, Health Benefits: \$883,200, M.I.T.: \$152,000, Police and Sheriff Dept.: \$79,000, Outside CPA: \$13,000

CAMPUS BUDGET BREAKDOWN (ALL INCLUSIVE)

- Murfreesboro and Network: \$9,644,539, Cannon County: \$781,064, Shelbyville: \$426,475, Tullahoma: \$825,801
- Ministry expenses: \$2,176,524
- Operating costs: \$1,353,108 (buildouts, maintenance, utilities, etc.)
- Outreach and Benevolence: **\$3,892,627 (30%)**
- Debt: **\$0**
- Our team earns 35% of our budget compared to 55% national average. We give away 30% compared to 10% national average.
- **If you are giving and serving at this church, we thank you more than we can say! Your faithfulness is changing lives!**

HOW IS OUR GIVING?

Compared to average giving in America, we don't fare well. **The average giving per person in 14,000 churches surveyed was \$2,340 annually. This campus averages \$1,850.**

- **The congregation's giving is subpar, about \$4m below what it should be, but we're stewarding what is given very well.**

FINANCIAL COMMITMENT TO THE VISION

I don't know who gives at this church. Whether one believes tithing is a NT thing or not, it's

impossible to argue that we shouldn't financially contribute to the mission of the church.

- **If we're going to advance the gospel, it will take not only time and effort but also a financial commitment.**

BIBLICAL GIVING

WHAT ARE TITHES AND OFFERINGS?

Tithing is the biblical action of giving a tenth of one's "first fruits" to the work of the ministry.

- **Offerings** are when we give to the church or benevolence beyond tithes.
- Giving to non-profits is an offering given above what we should be contributing to the church.
- **Proverbs 3:9-10 (CSB)**
- **Malachi 3:8-10 (CSB)**

TITHING IN THE NT?

The command to give exactly 10% is not blatantly taught in the NT, though Jesus alludes to it in Matthew 23:23.

- **The NT takes it up a notch and asks us to practice generosity because Christ has been generous to us.** Personally, I think 10% is a good standard of generosity.
- **1 Corinthians 16:1-3 (CSB)**
- **2 Corinthians 8:2-4 (CSB)**

GIVING IS AN INDICATOR OF A MATURE CHRISTIAN

God honors our generosity! This isn't always financial, but trusting God with our money and living by His teachings will align our hearts, help us live responsibly, and create opportunity to bless others.

- **Where our treasure is, our heart will be also** (Matthew 6:21).

WE ARE TRYING TO ADVANCE THE GOSPEL

We don't advertise, use gimmicks, waste money on production or meaningless comforts. We exist frugally, we're the most benevolent church we know how to be, and we understand and appreciate the sacrifice giving to the church is.

- **We need your help financially to provide space and resources for people to hear the gospel.**

SHARING THE WEIGHT

I DON'T KNOW WHAT ELSE MY TEAM CAN DO

We have never done pledges or campaigns.

- We cannot do more services at this campus.
- We struggle to get volunteers to equip the five services we currently have and our team is giving all we can.
- We cannot creatively cut up this space any more than we have.

SOMETHING HAS TO GIVE, OR WE ARE CAPPED

The majority of our team's time is used trying to figure out facility, parking, and logistical issues when it should be used for actual ministry.

- We often think of how much could be done for our congregation if we could dedicate more time to ministry than management.
- If we want **space for our kids, safer and closer parking, room for Life Groups, free childcare, and to have the massive impact we've had on this city, nation, and places around the globe, we need to step up and get involved in the vision of this church and what God is doing!**

SHARING THE BURDEN

- We have a great church, but we all need to dig in because there is much to be done.
- **Since we're not manufacturing the growth, it must be God making it happen.** If that is the case, **we need to step up and do all we can to facilitate what God wants to do.**

HOW TO SHARE THE BURDEN NOW

- **Please be patient** as we do our best with rapid growth and limited resources.
- Be present and **make church a priority.**
- Don't just come; **get involved in our discipleship process** because it helps grow and connect people.
- Join us in the **40-Day Fast!**
- **Build your personal relationship with Jesus: pray, read, listen, obey.** There's no gimmick or trick to seeing lives changed; it is just consistent dedication to a relationship with Christ.
- **Prayerfully consider tithing.** I will not personally benefit, and we will not use your giving for foolish or decadent means. It will go to serving our city and advancing the gospel.
- **Serve.** It honors God and changes people! We have a **Volunteer Fair coming up!**

WHO THIS CHURCH IS FOR?

- This church was started for people searching for truth, people wanting to grow in that truth, people who want to move from being a disciple to making disciples, and those who don't want to just consume, but to eventually give back to our community.

IS THIS CHURCH FOR YOU?

- So, maybe we need to ask if this place is for us. We are a community of seekers and believers who want to grow in our faith. **When we grow in our faith, we will be committed through serving, giving, and getting involved in the community.** Is this what you're looking for?

THIS IS ALL FOR HIS KINGDOM!

- We must stay humble, focused, selfless, and hungry because **we're invited to be instrumental in God touching people and saving them here and all over the world!**
- **The church has to step up because people desperately need Christ, and we are to be His ambassadors.**