

THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

JANUARY 14TH, 2024 // VISION

RAPID GROWTH

MASSIVE GROWTH AT ALL CAMPUSES

At the end of 2022, we averaged 5,515 across our four campuses. In September of 2023, we experienced 35% growth, averaging 7,412. Last weekend, we saw our largest numbers at over 300 people on this campus and **8,474 across all campuses.**

- We baptized 19 people here in the Ville and 531 across all campuses in 2023.

WHY IS GOD BLESSING THIS CHURCH?

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

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

CONSTANTLY ADAPTING

We were able to add **Joby Williams** to the team as our Children's and Student Pastor, and **Sean Laberer** is now our Development Pastor.

- These changes will allow us to do more and prepare for additional growth. **AD** will be launching this year and **ECCO Kids** classrooms will move to facilitate growth.

MISSIONS

OUR STATE

- Murfreesboro (2009), Cannon County (2017), Shelbyville (2021), Tullahoma (2022), and M.I.T.

OUR NATION

- Mosaico Church (Smyrna, TN), Hope Church (Seaford, DE), City Church (Albany, NY), Garden City Church (Beverly, MA), and Young Life (USA).

OUR WORLD

- King's Castle (El Salvador); Compassion International (World); EEM (Eastern Europe); Grandi Nan Nou Home (Haiti-Jameson Toyo) and Light and Life Ministries (Haiti); First Priority (World); Gideons International (World); Impact Africa (Ashley); Instruments of Joy (World); Paracletes (Thailand-Dylan and Rachel)

BECOMING ACTS 1:8 MISSIONAL

In 2024, we want mission trips to be more accessible to those called to missions.

- We are looking to launch domestic missions with trips to the **New England area** and **Native American Reservations** (Judea and Samaria). We will have **two trips to El Salvador**, and we are exploring trips to **Costa Rica** (ends of the earth).

FINANCES: HOW WE STEWARD YOUR GIVING

IT ALL BELONGS TO GOD

A steward is someone who manages another's property or financial affairs, meaning we are managers of God's possessions.

- As good stewards, we remember that we do not own what we have. **We have been entrusted to manage God's property in this life**, and one day **we will answer for how we handled His property.**

TOTALS FOR ALL CAMPUSES:

- **2023** – Budget: **\$9,900,000**, Expenses (because our church has grown 42%): **\$10,900,000**, Income: **\$12,975,000**
- **2024** – Budget: **\$13,000,000**
- Full and part-time salaries for 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, Outside CPA: \$13,000, Police and Sheriff Dept.: \$9,600 (directing traffic on 41a)

CAMPUS BUDGET BREAKDOWN (ALL INCLUSIVE)

- Murfreesboro and Network: \$9,644,539, Cannon County: \$781,064, Shelbyville: **\$426,475** (6.5% increase from 2023), Tullahoma: \$825,801, Ministry expenses: \$2,176,524, Operating costs: \$1,353,108 (buildouts, maintenance, utilities, etc.)

THE EXPERIENCE COMMUNITY SHELBYVILLE

- **Budget:** \$426,475, **Salaries:** \$204,926, **Benefits:** \$45,043, **Operating Costs:** \$44,905 (utilities and maintenance), **Ministry Expenses:** \$61,044 (decreased by \$345 from 2023), **Mortgage/Rent:** \$0 (Building is paid off!!!), **Benevolence:** \$70,557, **Projected Income 2024:** \$352,788
- **Budget:** \$426,475, **Projected Giving:** \$352,788, **Difference:** -\$73,687
- 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 ARE WE DOING?

When we compare our giving to other churches in America, we actually are not doing that well. There were 14,000 churches surveyed, and the average giving per person was \$2,340 annually. **This campus averages \$1,463.**

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

FINANCIAL COMMITMENT TO THE VISION

I do not know who gives at this church. Whether one believes tithing is a NT thing or not, it is impossible to argue that Christians should not 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.**

WE ARE TRYING TO ADVANCE THE GOSPEL

We do not advertise or use gimmicks to grow. **We will not** waste money on production or meaningless comforts. **We will** strive to be as frugal as possible and to be the most benevolent church we know how to be.

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

WE CAN HELP YOU

If finance and budgeting is a problem for you individually, **we want to partner with you and help you to be in a position to steward your money in a healthy and biblical way.**

- We offer **Experience Finance**, which is a free study on the biblical approach to debt and money. At the end of the study, we give you access to **Ramsey+** for free.

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 community beyond tithes.
- Giving financially to non-profits is considered an offering above and beyond 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 explicitly 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.** Compared to Jesus, who gave us everything, 10% is a good standard of generosity.
- **2 Corinthians 8:2-4 (CSB)**

WHERE IS OUR TREASURE?

Our lives are "like vapor" (James 4:14) compared to eternity, and we are to use our limited time "storing up treasures in heaven" (Matthew 6:19-24).

- The location of our treasures is key because **our heart follows our treasures** (Matthew 6:21). **If we are content storing up earthly treasures, then our hearts cannot be on heavenly things.**

SHARING THE LOAD

WHAT THE NUMBERS COMMUNICATE

We have reached the limit of what we can do as paid staff. We have sacrificed for the betterment of our community. We are not in it for ourselves.

- Somewhere along the way, we allowed a mega-church mentality to creep in, and a **consumeristic mentality is depleting resources and capping us from more.**

WE HAVE EXHAUSTED ALL OPTIONS

Two of our four campuses are out of space, and we are actively looking at ways to avoid having to turn people away.

- The thought of someone in need of the truth not being able to come into a place and hear the gospel should bother us. **We are one church, so this is a problem for us all to bear.**

SHARING THE BURDEN

- We have done nothing to manufacture the growth we see, so God must be making it happen. Since that is the case, **we must step up and do all we can to facilitate what God wants us to do.**
- **Make church a priority and get involved in our discipleship process.**
- **Join us in the 40-Day Fast!**
- **Invest in your personal relationship with Jesus through praying, reading, listening, and obeying.** This is not something we can do for you!
- **There's no gimmick or trick to seeing lives changed—it is just consistent dedication to a relationship with Christ.**
- **Prayerfully consider tithing.** The team will not financially benefit, our salary percentages will not go up, and we will not use your giving for foolish and decadent means. **It will be used to serve our city and advance the gospel.**
- **Serve.** It honors God and changes people! We have a **Volunteer Fair** coming up!

WHO IS THIS CHURCH FOR?

- This church was started and exists for **people searching for truth, people wanting to grow in that truth, people who desire to move from being a disciple to making disciples, and people who do not want just to consume but eventually give back to our community.**

IS THIS CHURCH FOR YOU?

- The reality is we may need to ask, "**Is this place 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 that what you are looking for?**

IT IS ALL FOR HIS KINGDOM!

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