



CHRIST FIRST

COVINA

May 2, 2018

Dear Christ First Family,

Thank you for coming along this journey called Daring Faith, Pursue One More. The Apostle Paul was in chains for the gospel, but that challenge caused the believers to *“dare all the more to proclaim the gospel without fear”*. (Ph 1:14) Tackling such a large Master Plan comes with many challenge as well. May we be just as daring to take bold steps of faith, despite our fears, because we have a big God and so much is at stake.

If you didn't receive PreCampaign letters #1 and #2, PLEASE pick one up in THE SCOOP at church, or call the church office and we'll mail one to you. These letters are so important for you so we are all on the same page as we begin this journey.

I want to mention this again so we are absolutely clear because I don't want anyone caught off guard with what we believe God is leading us to. Collectively, we will be giving a sacrificial offering over and above our regular tithes and offerings. On May 20th, I encourage you to seek the Lord in what He says to you and bring your largest one-time sacrificial gift you've ever made. I also encourage you to faithfully consider what you will pledge to give over the next three years. Pledge cards will be distributed soon. I can't wait to see what God is going to do!

Two Reactions to the Campaign

When I mention a sacrificial offering and making a commitment some people get nervous about that. I heard someone say that the most sensitive nerve of the human body goes from the heart to the wallet. For some people, that's a reality and they just get all freaked out.

If that's you, I graciously encourage you to relax, calm down and trust God who gave it all to you in the first place. Remember, no one will be forced and we will not guilt you into giving. If God leads you to give a lot or a little or nothing please go where God leads, then praise and serve Him with all you've got alongside an incredible church family who will do the same.

I received some council from a pastor who has taken his church through multiple capital campaigns. He told me that there would be two reactions to this campaign. Most of us will find ourselves to be in one of two groups.

Group One: Those who are going to give no matter what's said. They're spiritually mature people. They lean towards trust versus suspicion. They probably don't even need a giving campaign. They just have a high level of faith and want to support seeing more people come to Christ. They will still ask great questions, offer their wise input and get clarity on the Master Plan but they will give, and give sacrificially.

They still hurt financially as they give. However, they see the big picture, and they're excited to be stretched not because they have to but because they get to. Not because God says so but because God did so – God did so much for them through Christ, they count it a privilege to give sacrificially because God did first. They'll give a faith-stretching gift and they'll make a faith stretching three-year pledge commitment on May 20th.

Group Two: The second group of people are those who are not going to give. They're just not going to give. Why? Why would anybody not give to something as significant as this? There are three very well known reasons.

The first reason is pain. When you are in pain you can't think of anything else. And that's legitimate. If your husband has just walked out on you or you just discovered you've got cancer or you're going through major pain, the last thing on your mind is "what is my church doing?" That's a real and painful season of life.

If you had asked me when I was 17 about giving to a church campaign after the death of my younger brother I just wouldn't have had the strength. The weight of grief can be debilitating and giving to something like this probably wouldn't have been on my radar. I'd be so consumed with what I was feeling at that point. It's not that I would be opposed to it; it's just that I wouldn't be able to think about it.

Some people are going to have some really serious pain in the next three to seven weeks and they're going to say, I can't even think about an offering. I can't even think about Christ First's future.

What do we say to people who are in pain and don't want to give? We say to them: **"How can we help you?"** Because that's what this church does. We help people in pain in honor of Christ. For the people in pain... *forget the offering. Forget Daring Faith.* Forget the goals. Let's just get you through this season. You're in pain right now. We love you. You're a part of our family, and I hope you have a Community Group gathered around you helping to carry your pain burden. Our church and our groups are here to say "How can we help you?" One of the reasons this church exists is to serve people in pain in Jesus' name. Pain is a legitimate reason for not giving.

The second reason people say "I don't want to give" is a lack of understanding. They have no idea where buildings come from. They think that maybe Tinker Bell flies through with pixie dust and builds a building for us. Isn't that nice? They have no idea how much money it costs to care for a congregation of three hundred plus people. It takes a lot of money to provide space for the ministries at Christ First Covina and it has for 120+ years.

Somebody paid for the parking lot your car sits on. In the past we had real people in real families with real struggles similar, if not the exact same as yours, who likely sold some major items and instead gave to the buildings we have enjoyed for the past 66 years. People may have cancelled vacations, paused pension plans and given personal material possessions. I have heard some people, who were part of a campaign at another church, willingly re-financed their house because they felt the Lord lead them to that to give more. And no doubt children gave their allowance, or sold some toys, or gave of their birthday money. Why? Because God led them to sacrificially give. God doesn't miss a sacrifice and honors each one.

Some people just don't understand and they just think "poof" a money tree is going to grow outside to make this happen. They say to themselves "Let somebody else do it and I'll enjoy it."

Then the third reason are those who might just plain old disagree. They may disagree due to having a self-focused heart, which is simply an area of spiritual growth for them. They're never really going to be happy until they learn to be unselfish but that may not be during the start of this campaign but guess what... God's not done with them. ☺ There may be some that simply disagree because they don't believe the staff, elders and other leaders are making a wise decision at this time. That's ok. My hope is that these people would not grumble in isolation or in a dissenting and divisive manner but be part of the conversation and offer their wise council on the table. If they choose to not converse, or they do converse but continue to choose to grumble... let's patiently and graciously love them well. They are family and we will love them as such.

Finally, how do you stretch and grow your faith? In other words how do you get the most of the *Daring Faith* campaign?

5 Ways to Spiritually Grow During the Daring Faith series.

1. First, get in a Community Group to grow in new friendships and discuss and pray through God's Word together.
2. Read and review all three Pre-Campaign letters and be at all four weekend messages as we kick off the campaign. If you miss church any week, watch the messages on our website: www.christ-first.org.
3. Spend time with God daily by reading the daily Daring Faith Devotional. Pick one up in THE SCOOP this Sunday.
4. Meditate on the weekly Bible verse. Week 1 and 2 memory verse key tags will be available this Sunday.
5. Take a Walk: Walk to and read all six milestone markers on our campus. Pause, pray and praise Jesus in all five locations. Do it at least once. Even better... do it every week. Whether it's on a Sunday or anytime during the week, come on our campus and walk, pause, pray and praise Jesus. If you happen upon someone at the same mile marker at the same time, introduce yourself, then spend a minute

praying together for what's on that mile marker and don't forget to pray for each other.

RSVP to sign up to one of the following **"Q&A by the Dozen"** meetings. Each meeting is open to anyone and will be limited to a dozen attendees. We are keeping these meetings small so people have more time to share.

Upcoming Dates:

- **May 14, 7pm, church lounge: Q&A By the Dozen**
- **May 16, 11am, church lounge: Q&A By the Dozen**
- **May 20: Commitment Sunday**
8:30am Free Breakfast
10:00am Combined Worship Service
- **June 10: Reveal Sunday**
We will reveal and praise the Lord for the amount of gifts given and pledged in the 9am and 10:30am worship services.

If you have any questions, comments or would like to schedule a meeting with a staff person and/or elder we'd be honored to receive your request. Contact the church office.

In the pursuit of one more for Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'James', written in a cursive style.

Pastor James