

DEAR CHURCH FAMILY,

Session (Board of Elders) would like to share a few updates following our Annual Congregational Meeting last month as we begin our new fiscal year.

PREACHING

We hope you are as excited as we are as our preaching team launches the message series called “[First Things First](#)” – a study of the early church from the book of Acts. This message series is an opportunity for our church to dive deeply into Scripture to remember what matters most for our church yesterday and today. You can also join us in our 90 days of prayer and fasting to bring us together in unity as a church, to seek new possibilities together as we bring the good news of Jesus to the Bay Area and beyond. You can [sign up](#) for a day of prayer and fasting and receive a prayer guide as well.

BUDGET

Many of you joined us last month at the Annual Congregational Meeting (ACM) when we shared our year-end 2020 financial report. At the ACM, we reported that giving for the fiscal year 2020 was expected to come in about 7 percent below projections. As committed members in our ongoing mission to help people find and follow Jesus, we want to continue to inform you about the finances that God has provided Menlo Church through your obedience and sacrificial generosity. Your gifts enable our church to offer hope through our online services and programs, as well as through opportunities to serve our local communities and beyond.

Like many churches during COVID-19, we have had a continued decline in our weekly giving, trending down over the last few months. To exercise good stewardship, the budget for our new ministry year (which began on September 1) was approved by Session to reflect our ongoing commitment to discipleship and mission, and it also reflects significant investments in our digital platforms, including our new online campus. This has required us to make some adjustments to our staffing levels and organizational structure. We will also be leveraging some of our reserves this year. For up-to-date information on our budget and financial position, you can visit our giving pages on the church [website](#).

TRANSITIONAL PASTOR

The transitional pastor search committee has been making good progress. They have been meeting every week and have reviewed a total of 14 candidates from across the nation. We received recommendations from our denomination ([ECO](#)), members of the congregation and staff. The committee is narrowing the list and are praying for God’s wisdom to recommend the right person to lead Menlo Church through this season of transition. We hope to update you in the coming weeks and have a transitional pastor identified before the end of the year.

IN-PERSON WORSHIP

Some of you may be wondering when we will regather in-person for our worship services. The California Governor's office has updated both Santa Clara and San Mateo counties from the [Purple to Red](#) tier. While this news is encouraging, we recognize that the risk of COVID is still substantial. As the risk in our communities (hopefully) continues to decrease, our plan is to gradually phase back our in-person services. For now, we expect to remain online through the end of the year with the hope of returning in early Spring. Please stay safe and healthy and take advantage of the many opportunities we have online to gather and grow together.

SUPPLEMENTAL INVESTIGATION

Updates regarding the supplemental investigation will be reported from the Investigation Advisory Committee (IAC) as they become available.

COMMUNICATION

Session continues to look for ways to connect and provide regular updates beyond email. We hope you have been able to join one of our campus Zoom gatherings to spend time with your pastors and elders and ask questions. Many have remarked at how helpful the campus gatherings have been, so for the time being, they have taken the place of the Fireside Chats. You can also find the latest updates from our elders on our website, in the section called [Updates from our Elders](#).

As always, we are happy to answer any additional questions you might have. You can reach us at elders@menlo.church.

Sincerely,

MENLO CHURCH'S ELDER BOARD

