

January 2023

Salem Family,

I was recently reminded of how God's plan has taken shape through my own life. As Brenda and I moved from state to state on our eventual path back to North Dakota, we were always drawn to the perfect churches and communities for us at just the right time as we relied on God's provision and navigated life together. We didn't always recognize it at the time, but God was guiding us and helping us grow through it all. Through prayer, reflection and sometimes difficult conversations and situations, we have strived to rely on God's sovereignty, mercy and love to guide us in all our decisions. What a heavy, difficult load He takes from us! From Mathew 11:28 *'Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.'*

Lately, as elders we have been praying for Salem, waiting on the Lord and seeking Him. His plan is rarely, if ever obvious, but we can be assured by focusing on His word and earnestly seeking Him that our future as a church community will be just as beautiful and rich as we have seen in the past. As you are aware, we have been approached by a few different entities who were interested in renting the Fargo building. Relevant Life church was one of the interested parties and has agreed to rent the building from us for two years. The other parties either were not interested or were not a good fit after some consideration. Relevant Life plans to start services at the Fargo building in early March 2023, but they have been allowed to prepare the building for occupation by doing some minor remodeling and other preparations to help modernize the stage and foyer area. Many in our congregation have been helping go through and move some of our belongings as we prepare for our guests. (A big THANK YOU! to all that have helped! Your work is very much needed, and appreciated!)

This activity of preparation, though exciting, has also brought to mind many sweet and rich memories of how God has worked through so many lives at Salem while we were in the Fargo building. Memories of lost loved ones, memories of faithful friends or special moments and conversations had in the building. God was there--there is no doubt about that. Please, let me remind and reassure you that God is also here now as we prepare for this change, and He will be with us into the future as we follow His will and strive to know Him better. We often do not see God working in the moment, but can always reflect back after some time has passed and recognize the mighty and merciful hand of God on our path.

Regarding finances, we are still waiting on final numbers from 2022, but early numbers indicate expenses have outpaced giving, so please continue to be in prayer for a strong financial turnaround in 2023 and wise handling of any deficit. Once the totaled numbers are in elders will review the status and work along with the senior leadership team to balance the budget, all with a commitment to ministry for the glory of God and serving His people. If you haven't plugged in to Salem yet, I encourage you to take a closer look any of a number of ministries and see how God can bless you through serving!

I will close with a verse that I have often taken comfort in, from Proverbs 16:9

“The heart of man plans his way,  
but the LORD establishes his steps.”

In Him and with much love,

Daryl  
Chair of the elder board