



January 4, 2019

New Year's Greetings!

I trust this letter finds you well and off to a good start in 2019. I wanted to get a note out to our congregation expressing Kim's and my gratitude to God for his faithfulness to our church over the past 150 years. We have been "doubly blessed". At the same time, I assure you that we can be optimistic and enthusiastic about our future as a local congregation. Good things are happening right now, and our future looks bright!

Starting this month, we launch a two year plan that will take us to the end of December 2020. The next four Sundays of January I will be spelling out our "2020 Vision" and how you can be a part of it. I heartily encourage you to join in and participate in the significant opportunities and strategic things we are preparing for the coming weeks and months.

One of these came from the 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Benevolence Fund. The church leadership has set aside money for undesignated memorial funds plus money from our past budget surplus to be put to work as an outreach fund to our community. We are calling this our "Kingdom Initiative". The money will be administered in two phases.

Phase One will involve 50-100 people from our congregation, each receiving \$100 to be invested in "God's work" in our local community. Each volunteer will agree to receive the money as a steward of God's resources, to pray for God's direction in how to use the money in His service, and then to give it towards a needy person, cause or ministry in our area. We've patterned this idea off of the book "The Kingdom Assignment". (You can pick one up in the lobby on Sunday.)

Phase Two will involve our small group fellowships doing a similar thing, each receiving \$2000 and likewise choosing how to invest that money for the extension of the kingdom of God in our local community. The sky's the limit as to possible ways God could lead people from our church to use these funds to impact others in Jesus' name. And all of this flows from a sense of gratitude for the many ways God has blessed us at Bethel Gilead over the years!

Stay tuned in each week. You'll be hearing more about ways we can make a difference for God's kingdom as we begin to unpackage, develop and carry out our two year "2020 Plan", starting this Sunday.

Happy new year and we will see you soon.

Pastor Jim