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Issue 1

GROW the VISION



A Publication of the Community Covenant Church Stewardship Campaign

"We are the Christmas people. We are the Easter people. We are the people of the open tomb. We are the people of the risen Lord. God has called us to the greatest mission in the world. People will be helped. Lives will be changed. There will be reconciliation, wholeness, caring, and justice. There is no greater mission in the world than making disciples of Jesus Christ."

Dr. Billy Graham

"Grow the Vision – Fulfill the Mission"

This is what I will do in the last days, God says: I will pour out my Spirit on everyone. Your sons and daughters will proclaim my message; your young men will see visions.... even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit. Acts 2:17-18(GNT)

Vision and Mission are intricately intertwined, yet they are not the same. Our church's mission is to: *"glorify God, reach non-believers, and develop all God's children into mature disciples of Jesus Christ."* That all sounds great. Hopefully, we all agree that this is God's Biblical mission for our church. So how do we fulfill His mission? This is when vision comes into play.

Vision focuses on what can be tomorrow. Vision is about seeing the future through God's eyes. It is looking forward to what God wants to do in and through us in the future. Vision is crucial because God never intends for us to just stay comfortable and content with the status quo. God wants us to grow in our trust and faith in Him so that our personal relationship with Him deepens. Also, God desires for His faith community (us) to grow in our faith and commitment to His mission to reach those who have not discovered the love and grace of God through Jesus Christ.

Therefore, the fulfilling of God's mission to *"reach non-believers and develop all God's children into mature disciples of Jesus Christ"* is only possible if we see God's vision clearly. This means we must seek God, asking God to grow His vision in our minds and hearts. Over the past several years, God has clarified His vision for Community Covenant Church. God's vision is to strengthen and expand our ministry to young adults and High School youth by hiring an additional Pastor for this specific ministry focus. The time is now for us to step forward and commit ourselves to *"Grow the Vision"* so we can *"Fulfill the Mission."*

This is what our 3-year Stewardship Campaign is all about...Vision and Mission. As we commit ourselves to give sacrificially to this campaign, we will be able to move forward with two crucial initiatives:

- Call a full-time "Young Adult and Youth Pastor." No church in East Bridgewater has a Pastor that is specifically called and committed to this age group and ministry. Our church is blessed with several youth adults who want to grow in Christ and serve Him. This Pastoral staff will enable us to minister more effectively to this generation.
- Renovate our out-of-date bathrooms, enlarging their capacity and bringing them up to current building codes. This will enable us to accommodate and serve those whom Christ is going to bring into His Kingdom at Community Covenant Church.

The time is now. Let us *"Grow the Vision – Fulfill the Mission."*

Pastor Don Olson

FROM YOUR PERSPECTIVE

Tom Bolinder's parents, Howard and Frances, attended the Covenant Congregational Church in Brockton, MA. Tom grew up in the church, was baptized there, and became a member in 1964. Tom joined the Marines and served in the Vietnam War from November 1967 until November 1968, when he was severely wounded. Tom remembers that during his recovery, he was very ill, and the church held a prayer vigil for him. Around the same time as the vigil, his condition began to improve.

Tom credits his church family with creating the man he is now. He remembers being cherished by the elder women of the church when he was a child. He also remembers the influential teachings of Rev. Warren Swanson and the way they helped shape several members of our current church, including Tom's wife, Susan (Smith) Bolinder. Tom and Susan met at church were confirmed together, and began dating while in youth group. They were married in 1970 and now have 3 adult children, Matthew, Michael, and Katie. The family settled in and continued attending Covenant Congregational, even when it moved to its current location in East Bridgewater and renamed itself Community Covenant Church.

Tom noticed, as his children grew up in the church, the enormous impact that certain people – especially youth leaders – had on his family. His desire is for every child at Community Covenant to have the same experience. Tom himself had many mentors, including Susan's parents, Harold and Margaret Smith, who “lived their faith like no one I had ever known”. These memories of his own childhood and those of his children prompted Tom to make the motion that Community Covenant investigate the possibility of hiring someone to focus primarily on encouraging the youth of our church. Tom gets emotional when talking about the elders in the church from his youth and how they helped raise him as the strong Christian he is today. He remembers Roy Rathbun, a bachelor with no children of his own, selling his Ford Mustang and buying a station wagon so he could haul kids from Hi-league to activities and camp. And he notes that some of the start-up money for this Stewardship Campaign comes from the Roy Rathbun Fund.

Tom emphasizes that, although he made the original motion for a youth pastor, he wants to make sure this is what God wants for our church's future and not just what we want. He also believes that "the more you give to church, the more you get in return." *Rachael Buckley*



PRAYER

We are embarking on a three year spiritual journey as we seek God's Will for the growth of our church here at Community Covenant. Unity in prayer is vital during this time so that God will reveal to us His plan. Prayer was a priority in Jesus' life. He prayed because He wanted to be obedient to, united with, and empowered by His father. God gave us Jesus as an example here on earth. God can do so much more than we can imagine, so let's give Him the reins here within our congregation here in East Bridgewater.

God's heart is for His Kingdom work here on earth. We will be tying into a great power to be unleashed into our church family when we all join into unified prayer for His Will at Community Covenant. God is going to meet each of us right where we are - so let's talk to Him, and learn what He intends for our future. When we go to the throne and talk with our Father in Heaven, we can stand in the presence and pleasure of the Lord. Jesus sent us the Holy Spirit to give us immediate access to the Father.

In Exodus 33:11 It reads that “the Lord used to speak to Moses face to face, just as a man speaks to his friend.” In James 4:8 it states “Come near to God and he will come near to you”. In the book of Acts the Early Church fellowship of believers were in on the action of God and God acted through them! They were unified by constantly meeting together, pooling their possessions for the good of all, always in unity, praising God! Therefore, the Lord added to their number daily. Let each of us draw near to the Lord - like speaking with a dear friend - by communing with Him in prayer and meditation on His word; to guide us as we are actively seeking His will for our church.

50 DAYS OF PRAYER

Throughout the fifty days of this campaign, we invite and encourage you to spend some time in focused prayer, seeking God's will for our church, our children, and our vision. We have compiled a daily devotional to guide you in this prayer process. There are several ways to receive this devotional:

1. You may request that a copy be mailed to you from the church office.
2. You may view it on our prayer blog at growthevision.tumblr.com/

To receive future Stewardship Campaign newsletters by email, visit communitycovenant.com and sign up through Constant Contact.