

Life at SFGC

May 2017

In this issue of 'Life at SFGC' I have decided to layer in past posts from previous issues, to bring a sense of flow or continuity to what we are growing in and walking toward as a body of believers. I have found it very encouraging to personally witness great spiritual hunger and growth in so many of our members. There is a sense of desiring 'the more' God has for us.

- Elaine

Extending Grace & Igniting Hope

From the Pastor:

Late in 2016 I sensed that our church was 'stuck'. It was time for an inward look to see how healthy we really were.

Kenn Parker, our ACOP Director was contacted to lead us through an exercise of self assessment. Kenn helped us identify areas of concern. He then helped formulate a plan to activate all of us to do life with the New Testament Church in view. He challenged us to start on a journey. This will be an on-going process.

Our mandate to extend grace and ignite hope in each other, our community and the world will be ever more exciting and productive.

An excerpt from pastor Les's Address to the Body from 'Life at SFGC' October 2014

...it is my hope and my goal that this nice political phrase 'Extending Grace—Igniting Hope' evolves into an actual living reality. The term 'Family' in Scripture describes much more than just any community of people. It represents rather a more solid, tight-knit, caring structure: A nuclear family, where there is safety to grow, learn, have differences, and admit our faults one to another. Being received and accepted with all of our individual quirks, makes for an environment where we can blossom and dare to dream and stretch into all the Father has for us... I hope to see us operate in love, sharing blessings and helping one another... We appropriated our place in the family when we accepted Jesus into our hearts. SFGC is where we are plugged into the family of God...letting our light shine. How bright is bright enough?

We are called to be our brother/sister's keeper.

They will know us by our love for one another.

Vacation Bible School Community Outreach Event

Lea Ann Thompson and Abbie McCullough have stepped into leadership for this very important community outreach event. We thank them and everyone else who will again enthusiastically commit their time and energy into seeing kids ministered to.

July 24-27, 2017 will again be a time of great excitement and activity around here. VBS is geared towards kids ages 5-12, but everyone present is blessed!

The church gets 'dressed up', God's Word is taught, games are played, crafts are made, songs are sung, verses are memorized. Above all, the love of Christ is shared.

Please pray in preparation.



WE are a FAMILY church:

Whatever your age, know you are a valuable member and your gifts and purposes are precious to the whole body. We desire that everyone find how to participate in their own unique way in serving one another.

You are invited to Focus on Prayer with other believers

- Wednesday morning prayer 9:30—11:30 am
- See Bulletins for Corporate Prayer Meeting announcements, Sundays 6 -8 pm

Other community outreach events for SFGC

TRUNK-or-TREAT

On Halloween, for the past 4 years, we have set up our vehicles in the church parking lot, with decorated trunks for the kids from the community to do the rounds and collect candy. It has been a very effective way of entering where the people are. We are not celebrating the darkness, rather entering the darkness, for we are the light of the world. We have engaged with many that might otherwise not consider 'going to church'. There is hot chocolate and popcorn for all and kids games provide opportunities for interaction. For all who come out to participate, it is lovely to visit with one another around the fire in the middle of the parking lot toward the end of the evening. If you have never considered coming out for this event, we encourage you to drop by this year and visit. Or if you are ready to join us, we are sure to find a spot for you to park. Let personal conviction be your guide.

WHEATLAND LODGE BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION MONTH

We have been invited, along with all the other churches from the community to provide the cake and entertainment for senior residents who celebrate their birthday in a particular month, together. We are delighted at the opportunity to be a blessing. This year we committed to doing the month of May.

Renovations on Church Building:

We are thankful to have this building as a place to gather and meet together. Taking care of our church building is necessary. The first phase of renovations is complete. Thanks to Eric, team and volunteers the multi-purpose room, hallway and sanctuary has been re-painted. Also, new flooring has been installed in the multi-purpose room and hallway. The Nursery and Kyle's office is also undergoing much needed upkeep.

There are still other changes to be made to the Bathrooms and Front Foyer.

We shall call more 'WorkBees' in the future. Your contribution of time and sweat will be much appreciated.

CHECK OUT SFGC INFORMATION PAMPHLET FOR DIFFERENT PROGRAMS BEING OFFERED DURING THE WEEK AND TO SEE WHICH LOCAL AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS AND MISSIONARIES ARE RECEIVING FINANCIAL SUPPORT FROM US CORPORATELY ON AN ANNUAL BASIS.

Prophetic Perspective—Summary of Ben Peters Newsletter, 5 April 2017

God wants to use His people to bring about a major shaking that will change the world.

Insights and revelations from a variety of sources suggests strategy of conquering and ruling from the seven mountains (spheres) of influence in society: 1. Religion, 2. Family, 3. Education, 4. Government, 5. Arts and Entertainment, 6. Media and Communication, 7. Business and Finance. Whoever sits on the top of these mountains has control over what happens—influencing all the other areas of influence.

Since the Fall of man, the weight of corruption is on everyone and everything. Our hope and expectation is that we and all creation will be restored to wholeness that comes with God's touch and the spiritual blessings of a truly intimate Garden of Eden type relationship, reviving our God nature and removing completely the sin nature from our hearts. Some of this might have to wait for the next age, but let's not limit God.

'Likewise, the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groaning which cannot be uttered. Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.' (Rom. 8:26,27)

Now is a very strategic time to employ our secret weapon—praying in tongues. We can bring about major change and authorize great transformation as we allow the Holy Spirit to pray in us, for us. Children of the Father, receive from Him the faith and courage to rise up out of our comfort zones and, in unity with others, through the power and authority of the Holy Spirit, challenge the kings on these mountains, exposing their corruption and replacing it with justice and righteousness. We want the mountains of influence to shake. We need God's presence to return to the top of those mountains again.

There is a huge battle going on for the conquest of these mountains. No king easily surrenders his throne, and those now on the top of these mountains will not either. The powerful weapons God is equipping us with are not carnal, but they are mighty and have the power to pull down strongholds. (11Cor. 10:4,5)

In the book of Acts we see the apostles consistently using spiritual gifts to defeat their enemies, including those with religious spirits in religious and political authority. The apostles had God's words in their mouths and they changed their culture. The battle lines are drawn and we must take these mountains for God and His Kingdom.

CHILDREN'S CHURCH WILL BE UNDER NEW DIRECTION **IN THE FALL**

The Lord
has
answered
our prayers
and we are
happy to
announce to
you that



Lea Ann
Thompson
will be
giving
leadership
to the
Children's
Ministry as
of this Fall.

Excerpt from ACOP Newsletter, written by Jeannie Pattison-Brown

"Have you ever bought a book because you like the writer or the way he spoke, taken it home, put it on a shelf & suddenly God reminds you five years later that now is the relevant time to read it? David and I agreed after our daily time with God we would read a chapter a day out of this book called 'The Land Between' by Jeff Manion ...I highly recommend it. When we have one of those sudden-lies happen in our lives which we have no control over, we may go through a valley & wonder how we will come out on the other side..."
God has purpose in these very special times of waiting on Him. These are times to look back and reflect on all the things

God has brought us through before in 'The land between.'
"We saw it as a time of new hope & preparation for the future. God lead the Israelites into The Land Between (the wilderness) to show His character, demonstrate His great power, reveal His presence, His provision and also to test His people's faithfulness and trust in Him. He wanted to reveal Who He was so they would learn their identity in Him and eventually their destiny. The Land between is a journey of trust in God alone!

Jeremiah 39:18. "The Lord said, 'But your life will be a prize to you, because you have put your TRUST in Me!'"
"The Land Between' can be our friend, when it moves us to take action and to trust in God! When we take a step of faith, God will move, on our behalf. The only thing that limits us is our complacency, fear, doubt or unbelief. Isaiah 30:18. "Therefore the Lord will wait for you to come to him, He will be gracious to you; and therefore He will be exalted, that He may have mercy on you. For the Lord is a God of justice;
(Who is faithful to His promises).

Blessed are all those who wait for Him." So what am I saying here? When God blesses us, we cannot keep it to ourselves. Others may need what God has given us. So we need to share our good times and also how God is trustworthy in the difficult times. In Daniel after God saved the three men from the fiery furnace, the king declared: Daniel 3:29. "There Is No Other God, Who Can Deliver Like This!" We want to declare this day that God Can and Will deliver! Amen!
Jeremiah 45:5 "Do not seek great things for yourself...But I will give your life to you as a prize to you in all places, wherever you go."

What's the scoop?

Early in February 2017, Kenn Parker, Regional Director (Officer in charge of Church Multiplication Project with A.C.O.P.) did a 'church audit' per request by pastor Les. The process required accountability and transparency for the inside workings of our community. The first meeting with Ken was a Friday night meeting with Pastor Les, Diane and the Board of Elders. On Saturday pastor Les had requested a representative from each area of ministry at SFGC to be present around the table for discussion.

This was the time to take a hard look at what was working well as factors contributing to a sense of 'belonging' and also to point out what opposed that in our community. By the end of the day it was encouraging in that the supporting list was much longer than the opposing list. Grouping similar items together, we identified five main areas working against us:

- We need to recognize that we are in a spiritual battle. As such, we are each one responsible to pray, study the Word and grow in our security and identity in Christ, our Savior. Ken reiterated this in his preaching on the Sunday morning. He called us into battle and asked us to become courageous. Ken prophesied over us as a community a power anointing: Militant Davidic tribe-style. He called us ones on the edge: Searching the new thing.

These following four areas that were identified, would be handled by break-out groups which were placed in the hands of those around the table on Saturday, who were willing to take up leadership in that regard. They committed to regularly report progress to pastor Les.

- Inadequate building/facility

Pastor Les and the Elders have been assigned to look into this aspect. Ken specifically said to ask God for clear vision and then let no building hinder that!

- Young Adult Community at SFGC

Kyle Lomenda was assigned to bring direction to this group. He has met with some of the younger couples to get their input and reported on that.

- Children's Ministry and Nursery

Pam and Veronica were given the task to look into what could assist in bringing more stability and possibility to these important areas of ministry. They have drawn up their suggestions and presented them to pastor Les, all of which are under consideration.



- A culture of invitation and hospitality

Ray, Eric and Elaine are meeting together on a semi-regular basis. The task to affect the Culture of a community is not one to be taken lightly. There seems little need for short-term Rather than long-term effect. We have prayerfully considered whom to call on from our Congregation for the initial 'think-tank' stage of this.

As a group we have dubbed ourselves the '7-8-9' group—pertaining to the specific numbered Areas on the board during the initial meeting with Kenn on that first Saturday. The areas That we are looking to bring change to include: '7' Intentional, relational mentoring/ Discipleship; '8' Complacency in spiritual growth; '9' Cliquey/Lack of connectivity

It is easy to see that none of these are simple issues. We have already had two meetings Together as a group. The first meeting was to relay the goal and to give opportunity To commit to helping achieve it. At our second meeting we took a close look at each of Above mentioned terms, in order to know which direction we all felt comfortable heading Towards. The importance of understanding how we might actually affect culture for the Long term, may take some trial and error. It is for this very reason that we have a small

Group. **We are not meeting together as a small group for any other reason than the Safe-keeping of the larger community. We want to test our ideas on a small scale and have a Good idea of what may work and why.**

So far, my personal favorite advancement made at our last meeting was that 'Cliqueness' is Not automatically a negative thing. Without small cliques of people who know one another And who get along well, there is no hope for a true sense of belonging. It is rather a natural Part of human connectedness. It is only when this group presents itself in exclusivity that a Negative connotation to the word is valid.

Our goal is to advance toward the biblical model of what it means to be the church. We come together for times of equipping, refreshing, encouragement, so we may go out into all the world and make disciples..

Kenn pointed out that by far, the greatest part of society today falls in the utterly un-churched category. People need Christians to live 'differently' before them, over an extended period of time. That alone will grow curiosity in the unsaved about us and our faith.

It is also true that those of us already participating in church community, are each in a different stage of the sanctification process: The looking more like Jesus every day. God's grace and mercy abide in, upon and with us. May we be characterized as merciful and full of grace.



facebook

Come join
our Facebook Group

Ron, Veronica and Keeley, missionaries from among us, are fervently preparing to make the leap into the way the Lord has prepared ahead for them to walk in. They plan on being 'on the ground' by September. We know these three personally, which allows us great confidence in participating with them in this Kingdom work. Thank you for each one's willingness to come beside them in unique ways. May the Lord do far above what we can think or ask! We pray for hearts to be open to the Good News!

Eat-Your-Way-to-a-Building Fund

'Eat-your-way-to-a-building fund' is a concept birthed at one of our Staff meetings about three years ago. This has now grown to include four annual fundraising events:

1. **Our greatest fundraiser, the CHRISTMAS BANQUET**
 2. **The newly installed 'SOUPER' SUNDAY**
 3. **MAY-HAM, and the**
 4. **CHURCH PICNIC, which will take place as a fundraiser for the first time this year.**
- This event will mark the beginning of Summer.**

We are hoping this communication through the newsletter will promote the efforts we make towards raising funds. We love our church building but it has obvious restrictions in space and functionality, so we have to look to the future and prepare for it. Please grow with us in enthusiasm and support for these events. We are happy to hear from you if you have any great ideas for Fundraisers.

Thank you for your commitment to Generosity

The Bible has the authority in each Believer's heart. We have each one entered into personal relationship with God and He is the One Who is in the process of completing us and making us who we ought to be. There are many passages to read in regards to teaching us about God's economy. We need to know God's Word on the issue in order to address our very human concerns in a world of limited resources. We are required to use wisdom, and he who lacks wisdom may ask for it and receive it.

See 2 Corinthians 9 and the lesser known passage in Proverbs 11:24-25

Special mention and thanks is due:

-We said good-bye to one of our Worship leaders, Noah Dollinger in January. Our best wishes are with him and his new bride Cassidy as they have relocated to Kelowna, B.C.

-We are saying goodbye to the Nielsens toward the end of May. They have been nothing but a blessing to us. May God have great things in store for all of them in this re-location.

-We are also saying goodbye to Dave and Colleen Skanderup, currently serving as Elders. They have been involved in just about every thinkable way in our church community for the past twenty nine years. They will be missed.

-Pam has made a whole new web-site for SFGC!

-Candace Knappe will be taking over from Pam in keeping the website updated.

-Candace Knappe faithfully prepares for each 'First-things-first'-study on Tuesdays at the Hardy's. If you are in any way intimidated by reading the Bible, this is a great place to get more comfortable with it and to gain confidence.

-Ray and Nida faithfully open their home Saturday evenings for Adult Small group. Thank you for your hospitality.

-Eric Desbiens has been leading the Men's Ministry. His faithful efforts to feed those who show up with physical and spiritual food is producing a much closer-knit community among the guys.

-Shane McCartan has been faithfully preparing the Powerpoint announcements for Sunday mornings.

-Many volunteered in Children's Church. Thank you.

-Joedy and Lorraine have been doing an awesome job of making us all feel extra welcome on Sunday mornings.

You are uniquely equipped to do the Lord's will and purpose in life. His perfect love casts out fear.

In the Pew Contribution

“The most beautiful people we have known are those who have known defeat, known suffering, known struggle, known loss and have found their way out of the depths. These persons have an appreciation, a sensitivity, and an understanding of life that fills them with compassion, gentleness and a deep loving concern. Beautiful people do not just happen.”

Elizabeth Kubler Ros

Thank you Joanne Kukuckska for this meaningful quote.

Scripture sticks with us throughout our lives and is able to transform us us.