

EMBERS TO A FLAME

FTF ADMINISTRATOR'S REPORT TO CONGREGATION

MARCH, 2017

WHERE WE'VE BEEN: It's not easy to encapsulate all your FTF Servant Team's been up to these last 12 months. It's been close to a year since Westminster committed to the church revitalization program with Embers to a Flame. It's been a very(!) interesting year to see what the Lord has done with our congregation in the interim.

Although in God's providence, He has moved several families out of our congregation, we are still encouraged that the Lord can use us just as He did with Gideon's army – He winnowed it down from 32,000 to 300 (Judges 6:33-7:2, ff) and He did it to show His own glory, lest Gideon & the people say, "my own hand has saved me" (7:2). So, as the Fanning the Flame effort continues to follow the process here at Westminster, we look to the Lord to glorify Himself (& not us) as he fulfills His promise in Isaiah 42 & Matthew 12 "*A bruised reed shall He not break, and the smoking flax shall He not quench: He shall bring forth judgment unto truth.*" The promise is fulfilled in Christ who will "*send forth justice to victory.*" Nonetheless, we, broken reeds & barely smoking flax that we are, still have much work ahead of us as we hold fast to the promise, knowing our God is faithful to build His church!

THE ROLE OF THE FTF SERVANT TEAM is not to do this work for the congregation but to facilitate the congregation's involvement as each member of the congregation senses their personal ownership of the ministry of the church. Putting on the full armor of God, all of us must do our part, too. It's not a stretch to say that we are now in a situation similar to that faced by Gideon's small army. The Lord will get glory as He gives us the victory—with few or many, but all of us must do our part!

In looking ahead, your FTF Servant Team members have begun to lay ground work for future generations. In some cases, that means re-building. Nehemiah's narrative (Neh 4) shows us the tremendous need both for the Lord's protection and the peoples' concerted labors. We, too, are called to labor with "sword & trowel." Just as Gideon shouted it in his rout of the Midianite army, "The Sword of the Lord and of Gideon" (Judges 7:18 & 20), we rely on the Word of God to meet our goals.

THE ROLE OF THE CONGREGATION is to use the gifts given by God to His children. This is a "rebuilding the wall battle" in which all of us are engaged and, as we look to "remember & repent" (Rev 2:5), we see some good & also things that hamper our restoration. We've been challenged to remove the proverbial debris (Neh 4:10). How to do that? It may be helpful to take some time to look at Paul's guidance in Colossians 3 for a good "how-to." The Church will be blessed and so will each of us as we struggle to emerge from the comfort of old habits & look forward to what He has for us!

Foundational to the whole FTF effort is the need not only for the Word to be preached faithfully, which we have here at WPC, but also corporate prayer. The book of Acts shows how vital these two are to the healthy growth of the church! Moreover, the spiritual gifts we have been given are for the mutual good of the entire body and to keep us functioning in a healthy manner (1 Cor 12 & Rom 12). And, going back to Nehemiah, we see that everyone is actively to be involved!

THE ROLE OF THE LORD is to be glorified as He grows us up in His loving care. He has not only given us the privilege to work for the up-building of His kingdom in this place, He has provided the needed tools in the form of spiritual gifts each of us has received. For our protection He has also provided His armor (Eph 6:10-20). So, while we have a fierce enemy, we have the greater power of our loving God & Savior to resist his attacks. His promises & grace are new every day.

WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE? Westminster is here to be a church not only for ourselves but for upcoming generations, all for the glory of God & His Christ. That means your prayers & support for the church and her efforts to "Remember, Repent, & Renew" are of huge importance!

As you can see, we're in this together! Peter in his first letter made it clear that the enemy of our souls goes about as a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour. We don't want Westminster to be devoured, nor do we want our lampstand to be removed. Your active support is vital at this point in Westminster's life. Please not only prayerfully consider where & how the Lord will use your capabilities & interests, but follow through & talk with the Session members to see which part of the proverbial wall the Lord has assigned you to clean up, restore, and protect. In the meantime, join in one of the Small Group Prayer Cells if you haven't already! Your brothers & sisters here in the church will be blessed and so will you.