

Emmaus Baptist Church — State of the Church Address
Sunday, December 5, 2021

1. The Joy of Partnership in the Gospel

Last year's State of the Church address ended with these words from the Apostle Paul in Philippians 1:3-6 -- "I thank my God in all my remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine for you all making my prayer with joy, because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now. And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ."

Even though Paul was writing about a church he had been part of in the past, these verses capture how I feel about Emmaus in the present. Despite past challenges (and realizing many more challenges will come our way), I am so excited about God's work in our church. I feel gratitude and joy when I think about the opportunity to be part of this church family. The joy comes from the fact that we are partners in the Gospel and God is not finished with us.

The word "partnership" in Philippians 1:5 is the famous Greek word *koinonia*. In the New Testament, *koinonia* is often translated as fellowship; and if we're not careful, we can limit the concept of fellowship simply to eating together or hanging out. Nothing is wrong with either of those things, but the biblical force of *koinonia* is more active, than passive. New Testament fellowship is about partnering together to advance the Gospel.

If you are lacking joy when you think about being involved with a local church family, could it be that your concept of fellowship has shifted from active to passive? When we think about church as another slot on our calendar, another item on our plate, another club or organization to attend, I agree that it's easy to feel discouraged, uninterested, or tired. But the Gospel -- and partnering together in the church for the advance of the Gospel -- is the source of unstoppable hope and neverending joy through Christ.

As Philippians 1:6 shows, God will finish what He has started. Or, to use the phrasing from 1 Thessalonians 5:24, "He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it."

Tomorrow, December 6th, marks the 35th anniversary of Emmaus being incorporated as a church in 1986, after being a Mission Church of First Baptist Moore from 1983-1986. God began a good work in this church family, and we believe He will carry this work forward. Because of this, we want to make sure we keep a forward-looking, eternal perspective. Even as we take time tonight to celebrate how God has worked in the past, we will keep our eyes focused with hope and anticipation on the future.

2. Looking Back at 2021

2.1. Covid and Counseling

Most weeks, sometimes daily, I write in my prayer journal. One gift of doing this is being able to look back at previous challenges and see God's faithfulness and mercy on display. Some of these past challenges look small and meaningless now; others still feel painful years later. But as I read back over these prayers, I'm always thankful that I didn't skip the hard parts, because if we skip the hard parts, we miss the chance to experience the fullness of God's grace and redemption.

Tonight, as we look back at 2021, I've never felt more tempted to skip the hard parts. While 2020 was certainly hard and unprecedented, 2021 felt more challenging in many respects. On Jan 1, 2021, I was too sick to get out of bed. The day before, my wife had managed to get me to urgent care (driving through crazy snow), and I tested positive for Covid. Many of you have been affected far worse by Covid than I was, but I can definitely say I've never been that sick.

Aside from Covid, I also began 2021 in counseling. Again, I say that carefully, because I know many people suffer from mental health challenges far beyond my own. But, at the end of 2020, I began dealing with some serious physical, mental, and emotional challenges. This was a perfect storm of lifelong battles with anxiety, the stress of leading our church through Covid, difficult decisions about church personnel, and many people leaving our church in a short timespan. My wife sent me to talk with Hance Dilbeck, former Executive Director for Oklahoma Baptists. After I broke down crying in his office, Hance sent me to a professional counselor who works with pastors.

One thing I learned during counseling is that more pastors leave the ministry between the ages of 38 and 41 than any other period of life. I'm 39, turning 40 in a few months. I wish I had gone to counseling earlier in life, but my counseling sessions in 2021 came at just the right time.

In counseling, the main issue I had to face was my definition of success. Does my definition of ministry success reflect the world's idea of success, or does my definition of success match God's Word and the values of His Kingdom? In my flesh, I learned that I define success based on two things: (1) numerical growth, especially as this growth compares to other churches or pastors, and (2) how pleased people are with me. In one sense, there's nothing inherently wrong with either of these things; but both can easily become toxic, deadly forces in our lives and neither reflects success in light of God's Word and Kingdom.

In 2018, we averaged 550 people on Sunday mornings. In 2019, that number was 536. We don't have great numbers for 2020...many weeks we had 10 people in the building while taping the worship service. For all of 2021, the average has been 490, with an average of 500 since August. (We continue to have a couple dozen people watching live on Facebook.)

While we wish these numbers were higher, I'm not discouraged. If anything, I feel motivated to press forward and am thankful that God has brought so many new people to our church family during this past year. Plus, we have a good baseline as we move ahead, desiring to reach many people with the Gospel and continuing to be a healthy, God-honoring option for people seeking a church family.

As we think about how the past few years have impacted each of us in unique ways, let me also encourage you to be patient with yourself and with others. Several studies (such as the Holmes-Rahe Life Stress Inventory) help us understand how traumatic life events impact our health, stress, and tiredness. We need to acknowledge how hard the past few years have been, not to mention the complexity of living in an increasingly polarized and chaotic world. Amid all of this, we won't give in and we won't quit. Instead, we will trust in the Lord, rest in Christ, and love those around us.

2.2. Celebrating Goals from 2021

In last year's State of the Church address, we separated goals for 2021 into four categories. And, I'm pleased to say, we made progress in each category.

2.2.1 Programming - Decision about Two Services

Covid-realities in 2020 led us to utilize two Sunday morning services. We finished 2020 trying to determine how long we should continue with two services. On June 6, 2021, we moved back to one service.

This move back to one service allowed us to make a strategic change that our staff had discussed for the past 4 years. With the move to one service in June, we kept the Worship Gathering start time at 10:45am and Sunday School at 9:15 (for many years, we had started Sunday School at 9:15 and the Service at 10:30). Under the old time slots, many parents couldn't make it from Sunday School to "big church" on-time with their kids, and our staff constantly felt rushed. With the current schedule, the time between Sunday School and the worship service can feel awkwardly long at times, but it's been a blessing in disguise. By slowing the transition, our members have more time to interact with those in other classes and with guests.

If you find yourself frustrated by the long period of time between Sunday School and the worship service, I'd urge you to consider how God is leading you to invest this time. Whom can you meet? Whom can you encourage? Whom can you pray for? Who is sitting alone? Church is about family; church is about worship and encouragement and prayer. The conversations before and after the worship service are just as much an act of worship as the music and sermon. I'm thankful God has given us this schedule, and I pray we'll make the most of the opportunity.

Would we do two services again? Sure. Three potential reasons come to mind (famous last words...). First, if we had another Covid outbreak or pandemic, we'd likely need an extra service. Second, when

we're ready to move ahead with the Phase 2 Preschool and Children's Building, we'll almost certainly have to move to two or even three services during that building project. Third, prayerfully we will grow numerically in the next few years to the point that we need a second worship service.

2.2.2 People Groups - Missions

In last year's State of the Church, I mentioned how we had wanted to host a Missions Celebration weekend in 2020. Covid hindered those efforts, and God instead allowed us to strengthen our ministry to the homeless and to those in our community who are hurting.

In 2021, we were able to have an amazing Missions Celebration! We hosted mission partners from the International Mission Board staff, Colombia, Panama, and East Asia. Throughout the weekend, our church learned more about encouraging and praying for these missionaries; and we will continue to look for opportunities to resume international mission trips in 2022. Plus, following Jim's work with the Mission Celebration, he was able to take a sabbatical in October. I'm thankful for a church that invests in its staff by allowing for sabbaticals to rest and recharge. Not only that, but around the time of Jim's sabbatical, we were able to add Afrika Pruitt as a Missions Associate. Afrika will serve alongside Jim to coordinate mission efforts, and she is working specifically with Afghan refugees.

2.2.3 Property - Campus Master Plan

Both the 2019 and 2020 State of the Church documents included the goal of developing a church property master plan. This past year, we were able to present a master plan to the church family. I'll say more about this plan at the end of tonight's address, but the short overview is that our master plan includes three phases (a copy of the master plan is appended to this document).

Phase 1 was approved unanimously by the church on October 3rd. This phase includes expansion of the youth room by allowing the students to have both their current space and the large conference room (Rooms 255 and 256 in Building C). The main portion of Phase 1 involves a number of projects in our back, west property, including an expansion of the barn, a new pavilion, a walking track, multi-use green space (irrigated by a new well), and a kids' playground near the pavilion along with provisions for a new playground behind Building B when we're ready to move ahead with Phase 2.

Phase 2 is currently slated to be a new, two-story Preschool and Children's Building that would involve the removal of the center and north wings of Building B. This P&C Building would be attached directly to the Worship Center with a climate-controlled atrium, and we would repurpose the current south wing of Building B for office space.

Phase 3 would involve demolition of the remaining, south wing of Building B and allow us to build a two-story building attached to the new P&C building. This Phase 3 structure would include new offices on the first floor and multi-use classrooms on the second floor.

2.2.4 Personnel - Music

Every State of the Church Address since 2016 (my first full year at Emmaus) has included a section updating the church on our efforts to solidify the music leadership role.¹ Finally, in 2021, we were able to solidify this role; but it wouldn't be fair to celebrate this development without also acknowledging the pain of the process. Even determining the best and most appropriate way to talk about the music transition is hard, because I feel so much tension in my heart and mind.

On one hand, the process still feels painful because it didn't develop how I first thought it would; some people -- whom we care about deeply -- were hurt; and several people left the church around this time (some related to the music change, others for different reasons). As we move ahead, we do so with on-going love for David and Crystal, with humility before the Lord, and with a deep desire that our unity in Christ will preserve relationships and provide healing as we look toward an eternity of worship together, with our focus on the Only One who truly matters in our worship -- the Lord Jesus.

Even with all the pain from the early months of 2021, I can't say enough about how excited I am to have Jeron Young serving as our Worship and Senior Adult Pastor. I could spend the whole night telling you how much I am blessed by Jeron as our worship pastor and as my friend. He stepped into a hard situation with both humility and courage. His worship team has rallied together, and they have used their various skills to mutually encourage and strengthen one another. Above all, I love Jeron's teachable spirit. He values feedback; he is determined to learn and grow; and he is passionate about building a team focused on leading our church in prayer and praise.

And, as an additional gift, God sent us someone at the end of this year to serve as our Music Associate and work with the choir and vocalists. Cassidy Hopkins, along with her husband Ben, daughter Sutton, and Baby #2 on the way, will be a great gift to our staff and church in the years to come.

2.3 Additional Celebrations from 2021

2.3.1 Cody Moser hired as Student Pastor

Jeron's move to Worship and Senior Adult Pastor meant we also had to fill the Student Pastor role in 2021. First off, I don't think I've said enough publicly about the incredible job Kennedy Lehew did leading our Student Ministry while we searched for a full-time hire. Kennedy is gifted in so many ways, and her ability to lead, encourage, and plan was a big part of why our students thrived this past Summer and into the new school year.

¹ For example, Section 5.1 of the 2019 State of the Church address began, "Our primary goal in 2020 for personnel is to solidify the music leadership position so we no longer need to operate in limbo."

God worked through the Personnel Committee and an Advisory Group of parents, students, and volunteers to lead us to Cody Moser as our new Student Pastor. (When Cody was in high school, he was mentored by a youth minister who happened to be my freshman college roommate at OBU.) Cody, Megan, and the boys (including boy #3 on the way) have been an incredible blessing for our church family. It's hard to imagine they've only been with us for 6 months. I can't wait to see what the next 6 months, not to mention 6 years, look like.

2.3.2 Baptisms and New Members

Among our kids and teenagers this past year, we have been able to celebrate several salvations and baptisms, including a very fun Sunday on Nov 7th when 17 kids were baptized!! I'm so thankful for how Courtney, Amy, and Melissa invest in our kids and families, and these baptisms are wonderful celebrations of the hard work and dedication that happen behind the scenes.

Plus, it's been amazing to see how God is bringing guests and new members to Emmaus. We continue to host occasional Discover Emmaus Lunches for guests who want basic information about the church, and the Membership Process -- which includes a class offered on the 2nd Sunday of each month, hearing the new member's testimony, and presenting new members to the church -- allows us to connect new faces with our church family.

3. What Won't Change

At Discover Emmaus and the monthly Membership Class, we talk about the future of Emmaus, but we also discuss some things we don't see changing. After going through a year with so much change, I thought it'd be good to review the stakes in the ground that anchor and guide our church.

3.1 Commitment to God's Word

As a church family, we remain committed to the Bible as the Word of God. In Matthew 28:19, Jesus told us part of making disciples is teaching people to obey all that He commanded. Our goal isn't simply to teach the Bible as information...we want to teach people to respond to God's Word in worship, faith, and obedience.

3.1.1 Small Groups and Bible Studies: Equip and Encourage

We will continue to celebrate opportunities for members to meet in small groups to be equipped and encouraged by God's Word. Our Sunday School classes (of all ages) remain strong anchors for this commitment. Additionally, Jeff Hemphill has developed Wednesday night groups and other Bible studies throughout the week that have allowed many people to get involved. Jeff and I are always excited when we hear about these groups resulting in a few people getting together simply to equip and encourage one another through prayer and God's Word. Keep it up!

3.1.2 Preaching the Word of God

In 2021, after beginning the year with a study of the Fruit of the Spirit from Galatians 5, we studied Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther, then ended the year by focusing on the female characters related to the Christmas story. In addition, our Sunday Night 5pm service allowed us to do individual studies of Jesus' disciples and explore Ezra and Nehemiah in greater detail. If your schedule allows, we'd love to have you join us on Sunday nights at 5pm for hymns, prayer, and God's Word. These Sunday evening services will restart on Jan 9th, and the plan is to work through 1 Peter.

As a church, we will continue to preach through books of the Bible, while integrating sermons on themes and theological studies; but even these thematic and theological sermons will be anchored in the text of God's Word. In 2022, we will begin working our way through Mark's Gospel. I don't know how long this will take, but I assume it will extend into the Summer.

If you're curious, over the past 6 years, we've worked through:

- Books of the Bible
 - Leviticus (Holiness series)
 - Joshua
 - Judges
 - Ruth
 - Psalms (various)
 - Proverbs
 - Ezra
 - Nehemiah
 - Esther
 - Daniel
 - Matthew
 - 1 Corinthians 12-16
 - Galatians
 - Colossians
 - 1-2 Thessalonians
 - Titus
 - Philemon
 - Revelation 1-3
- Themes/Theology
 - Music
 - Holiness / Sanctification
 - Who is God?
 - Sports
 - Limits
 - 3 Circles Evangelism (Acts 17)

3.1.3 Church Verse - 2 Corinthians 4:5

Our church verse remains 2 Corinthians 4:5 - “What we proclaim is not ourselves, but Jesus Christ as Lord, with ourselves as your servants for Jesus’ sake.” We say this verse together when introducing new members to the church, and it serves as the foundation for our church’s mission statement. Our commitment to God’s Word and to the foundational principles of this verse won’t change.

3.2 We exist to Proclaim and Display Jesus

Based on 2 Corinthians 4:5, we exist as a church to proclaim and display Jesus.

- “We exist” = church is about ‘we, not me’
- “To Proclaim” = what we say
- “And” = we want our words and actions to match; both are important
- “Display” = what we do
- “Jesus” = the ultimate focus of our lives and church

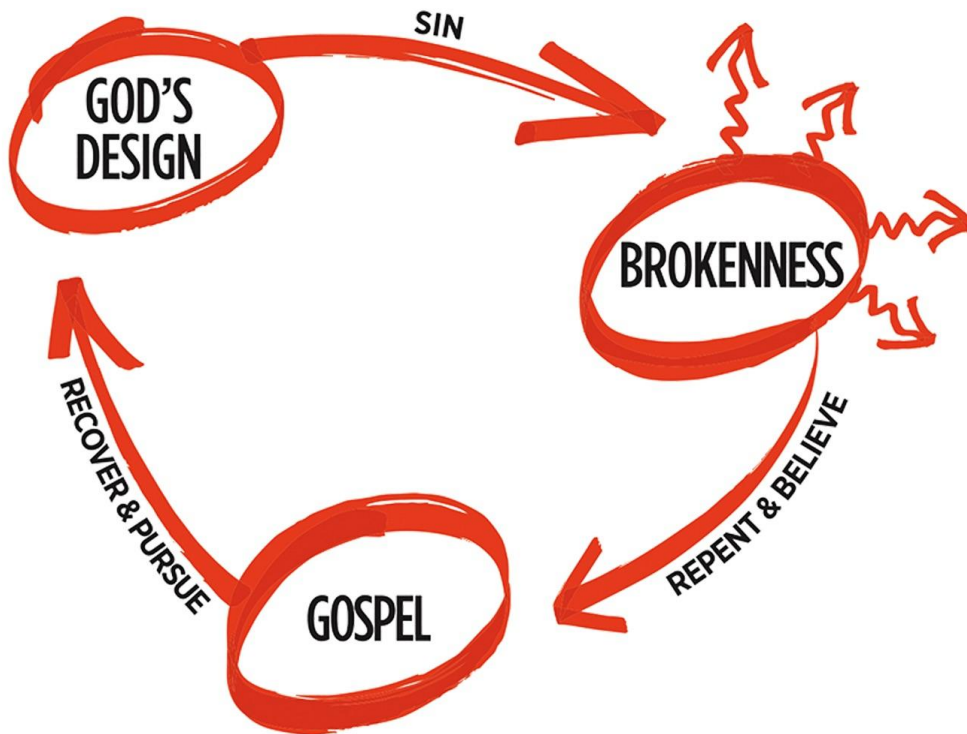
3.2.1 Focus on the Gospel (Proclaim) AND Care for Others (Display)

As a church we are committed to sharing the Gospel (Proclaim) AND caring for our Community and World (Display). We don’t see these as competing forces. We believe that faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God. It is crucial to share the Gospel and call people to respond, both individually and in our worship services. At the same time, we are called to display the love and grace of God through our actions. We want to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God.

3.2.2 The 3 Circles -- Our “Proclaim” Model

As we train members for evangelism and help people understand the big picture of the Bible, we’ve found the 3 Circles model to be very helpful. As people move away from God’s Design for their life and for His world, we see the effects of Sin and Brokenness (with Brokenness leading to death). I often say there are 2 problems none of us can fix on our own -- sin and death. But Jesus has dealt with both of these through the Cross and Resurrection. As we repent of sin and believe in Jesus, we are not only forgiven of sin and have eternal hope beyond death, but God’s Spirit uses the Gospel message to help us recover and pursue God’s design for life right now.

We will continue to teach this model, not as equivalent to Scripture, but as a helpful tool to know and share the Gospel and the overall story of God’s Word. And, if there’s a tool you like better (EvangeCube, 4 Spiritual Laws, Bridge Illustration, etc), use that one!



3.3 Church as People

3.3.1 Belong to a Family

Though we want to serve and lead with excellence, our approach to church can't be based on the "leaders" offering a good product (or performance) that the "audience" (congregation) consumes or watches. Worship is participatory. Worship connects us not only to God, but also to one another. As much as possible, we want people to associate church with a family to which they belong, not just an organization they're part of or a place they show up to. People will begin attending a particular church for multiple reasons, but they stay because of the people. We're not perfect (far from it); but as a church, we want to be a family of faith.

3.3.2 Humbly Love, Encourage, and Respect One Another

A key value at Emmaus is humility. (Is it prideful to say that?!?!) As a church family and as leaders, we don't want to be brash or arrogant. Toxic forms of spiritual leadership are based largely on power, personal charisma, and manipulation. Spiritual leadership certainly requires courage -- but *how* we say things and *how* we approach situations matters. In the years to come, as the culture becomes more divisive and many religious groups continue to chirp and bite, I pray we will remain focused on loving, encouraging, and respecting one another in a humble and gentle manner.

3.4 UP -- IN -- OUT

- **UP** / Worship = *Prayer and Praise* (individually and corporately)
- **IN** / Discipleship = *Equip and Encourage* (in your home and in the church)
 - We don't want to look religious on the outside while feeling empty on the inside.
- **OUT** / Missions = *Give and Go*
 - What happens on the inside should come out. We live from the inside out.
 - Neighborhoods (where we Live, Learn, Work, Play)
 - Nations (including those from other nations who live in our neighborhoods)

4. On the Way - Looking to the Future

4.1 *Old Paths, New Power*

Earlier in 2021, I read, at the suggestion of another pastor, a book called *Old Paths, New Power*. Our staff then worked through part of the book toward the end of this year.² I'm not sure I'd even put this book in the Top 10 of all books I read in 2021...yet it probably created the most conversations in my head about where we are as a church and what my role should be. The book is based on Acts 6:4, that at a time when the Early Church needed to care for widows and address disunity, the leaders in the church didn't take this task solely upon themselves. Instead, they doubled down on prayer and the ministry of the Word, and the leaders deployed the church to meet needs and serve one another.

The path forward for our church must be centered on the power of prayer, the truth of God's Word, and the impact of the whole church -- every member -- being equipped, encouraged, and deployed to serve one another and spread the Gospel. In prayer, we learn to hear the voice of God and experience His presence and power. In His Word, we are made wise unto salvation and shown the path that leads to full and abundant life. In teamwork, we learn to tap into the resources and spiritual gifts that God has given us, not elevating one person above another, but simply working together toward the greater mission of making disciples and glorifying God.

4.2 *On the Way*

While the old paths must guide us forward, it would be a mistake not to consider where these paths are heading in the future. While obsessing over the future is dangerous, it's also dangerous for churches to live in the past. One of the hardest elements of church leadership is balancing the past and the future, while not missing what God is doing in the present. For the next couple of minutes, I want to focus our attention on a few things God has placed in front of us for 2022 (and beyond).

² As a staff, the other book we worked through in 2021 was "Lead" by Paul David Tripp (probably a Top-5, all-time Christian leadership book for me). This book provided key principles for building a church leadership culture based on the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

4.2.1 *The Way of Jesus: A Study in the Gospel of Mark*

As I mentioned earlier, the main sermon series for 2022 will be the Gospel of Mark. One key theme throughout the book is Mark's strategic use of the Greek term *ὁδός*, which means path or way. This next year, we want to consider how Jesus lived and how He leads us on the path of true (and eternal) life. The earliest Christians were simply known as The Way. In 2022, I pray we will learn to walk like Jesus walked; to live like Jesus lived.

***ACTION ITEM #1:** Will you commit to prayerful study and reflection on the Gospel of Mark in 2022, asking God to transform the way you walk and live each day?

4.2.2 *Master Plan Progress and Prayer*

On October 3rd, Emmaus voted unanimously to move forward with Phase 1 of our Master Plan. The Building and Grounds Committee has hired a Construction Manager for these projects, and we are already making progress. I can't say enough about the work Jonathan Smith, Gwen Unruh, and Abbi Fuller have done behind the scenes to organize and communicate the Phase 1 plans, not to mention Jeff Meyer and our entire building team maintaining and improving our facilities each week.

As a church in 2022, we are "on the way" to:

- An expanded youth room, because we are committed to seeing teenagers reach their friends for Christ and grow in love for God and love for one another.
- A multi-use green space in the back field, because we are committed to creating connections with young families and reaching out to our community for the purpose of sharing the Gospel.
- A new pavilion, with a small playground and other amenities, because we are committed to families and small groups spending time together, marking key moments in life (birthday parties, anniversaries, weddings), and celebrating God's blessings.
- A walking track, with other fun elements such as kid games and some disc golf holes, because we are committed to prayer walking, building friendships, honoring God with our bodies through exercise, and enjoying the gift of being outdoors.

As we think about goals for the West Property, we are focused on prayer (especially prayer walking) and connecting our members with opportunities to share the Gospel. As one Finance Committee member said recently, these Phase 1 projects will be an on-going piece of our church's mission work.

Imagine people from our community coming up here to walk, and as they walk, they see signs that lead them through the Gospel message. Or, imagine a group of friends who walk together each morning, praying for revival in our community. Or, imagine a family reunion at the pavilion, in which family members who haven't been together in a long time are reunited and reconciled by the Gospel.

***ACTION ITEM #2:** Will you commit to praying for and connecting with those around you, seeking to share the Gospel with at least one person in 2022?

4.2.3 *On the Way: 2022 Giving Campaign for Phase 1 Projects*

The Phase 1 projects will require financial resources beyond our normal, operating budget. Tonight, we are debuting our “On the Way” Giving Campaign for 2022.³ We hope to pay for as much of Phase 1 as possible with cash. We already have \$425,000 available in designated accounts, with another \$100,000 incorporated into the 2022 operating budget.⁴ Plus, strong end-of-year giving should allow us to finish 2021 with a budget surplus, a large portion of which can go toward Phase 1.

The 2022 “On the Way” Giving Campaign is focused on raising \$300,000. The display board includes 300 squares, representing \$1,000 each. By focusing on \$1,000 squares, givers can focus on \$100 per month, while having a two month “buffer”. Many of the squares are sub-divided into \$500 sections, as well, for another giving option.

Two quick clarifications -- First, on the display board, we are using the walking track to show progress toward the total goal, but financial gifts will go toward all Phase 1 projects. You’re not giving toward the walking track only...and the walking track won’t cost \$300K! Second, we must maintain consistent giving toward our general budget. We hope contributions toward the “On the Way” campaign will be above and beyond your regular giving.

For many givers, \$1,000 (or \$500) will be a maximum goal for the campaign and that pledge will require a lot of work and sacrifice. For other givers, taking 10 squares and committing \$1,000 per month for a \$10,000 total will be what you’re able to do. This campaign will require all of us working together! Do what God leads you to do.

What’s your next step? Pray; have conversations with your family; determine the pledge you can make for 2022. Then, in the next several weeks, go to the display board in the lobby and write your pledge on a card. You will receive a magnet to take home, and we will send pledge reminders via email and snail mail during the year. We will also color in the walking track to reflect the growing pledge amounts.

As for paying the pledge, you can pay the full amount up front, set up an automatic recurring payment through our online giving system (information cards will be available near the display board), or make payments at your convenience throughout the year via check, cash, or online.

³ Because our Master Plan also includes a Phase 2 and 3, there’s a secondary meaning behind the “on the way” motto. By developing a giving campaign to pay for Phase 1, we are “on the way” to being financially and missionally prepared for Phases 2 and 3.

⁴ Phase 1 is estimated to cost \$850,000. With fluctuating material costs -- and the reality that many construction projects cost more than expected -- we know the final total might be higher. As the projects proceed, we will keep a close eye on available funds and make adjustments to the projects or come back to the church for additional funding if needed. Ultimately, we want to be good stewards of our church finances, while at the same time making sure we do quality work on the projects and continue to care for our building and maintenance staff who do so much work around the property.

Here is one other thing to consider about finances related to Phase 1 and beyond. As you consider long-term giving, would you consider investing in local church ministry -- or even a specific ministry within our church -- by including Emmaus in your estate planning or by setting up an endowment? We have resources to help with this process, and by establishing a gift that would provide on-going support, it will allow future generations to focus their giving on new opportunities. I know it's a big goal, but I wonder if God would lead someone to establish an account to provide on-going funds that would cover long-range expenses and ministry projects for the West Property, thereby lessening the burden on future operating budgets? As we look toward the future, we will need to think strategically and creatively about our finances in order to stay focused on the mission of proclaiming and displaying Jesus to our neighborhoods and to the nations.

***ACTION ITEM #3:** Will you give as part of the "On the Way" giving campaign? If you do not already give financially as part of the Emmaus church family, will you begin doing so this year?

5. The Path Ahead

In a recent interview about church leadership, Matt Chandler encouraged pastors to remain faithful to their church and be prepared for the uncertain future. In this podcast, he stated the obvious: "Two years from now definitely won't look like two years ago." Of course, this has always been true (!) ... but the reality is hitting home with more force at the end of 2021. The year 2019 isn't coming back; neither is 1999, nor 1986 for that matter. The world is changing fast; the issues are complex; and the future is uncertain.

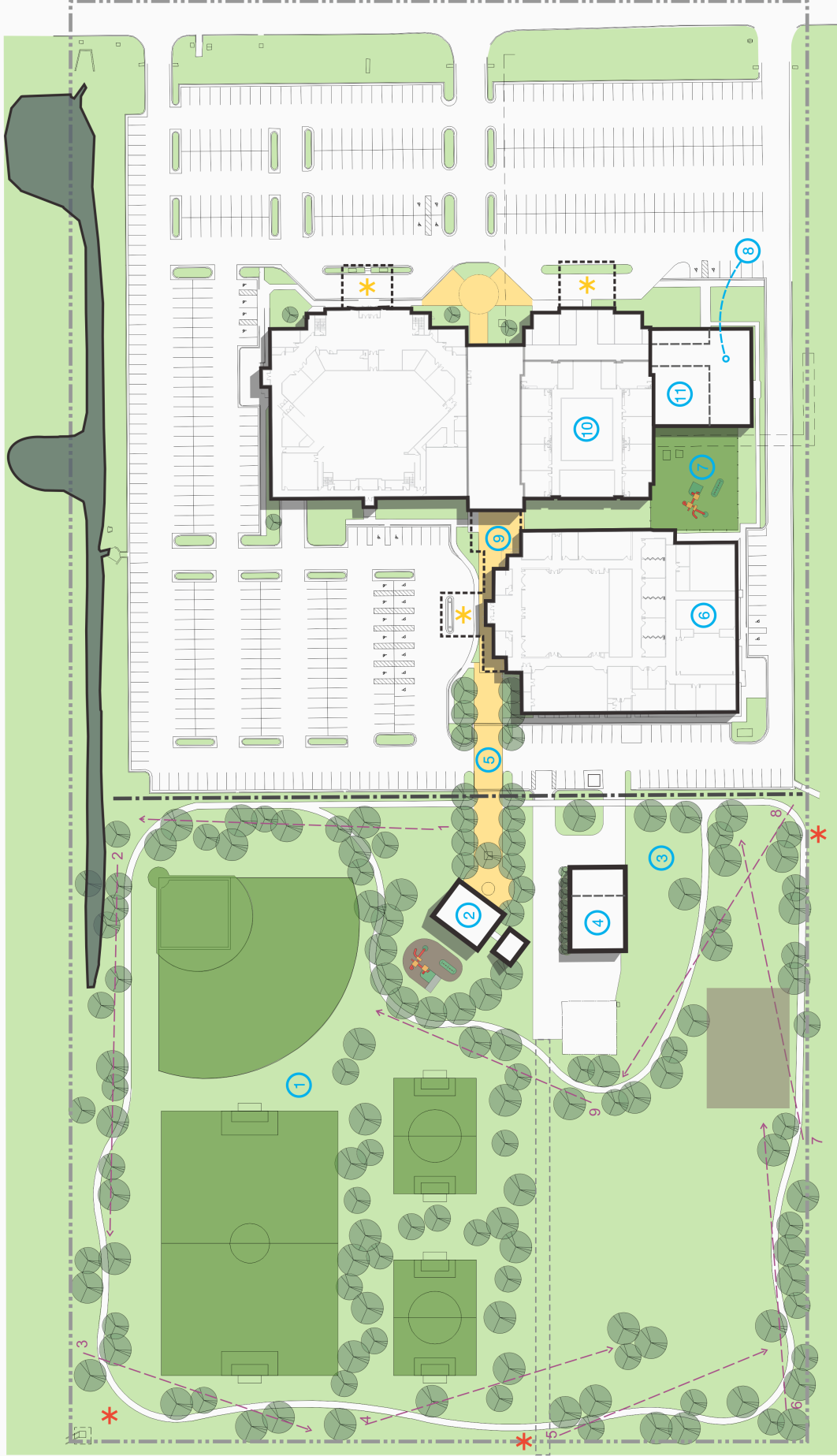
But, instead of fear, we will live with faith and anticipation. God is on His throne. He is at work among His Church for His glory. Times like these are ripe for revival, for those who desperately seek the Lord in prayer and trust in Him. May we walk ahead, together, knowing that the way of Jesus always leads to life.

"Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen." (Ephesians 3:20-21)

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Owen Nease". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr. Owen Nease



- phase I**
- 1 - sports fields
- 2 - outdoor pavilion / restrooms / playground
- 3 - new water well
- 4 - expanded big barn / remove small barn
- 5 - pedestrian connection to outdoor areas
- 6 - youth renovation
- 7 - enclosed outdoor play area
- phase II**
- 8 - admin offices (dashed)
- 9 - covered walk
- 10 - early childhood - 6th grade ctr / compass / atrium / 2 story
- phase III**
- 11 - admin/adult class addition

community connection * porte cochere

campus masterplan
scale: none

north