



December 16, 2020

Dear Valley Church Family,

Advent is about anticipation of something great coming in the future... looking for the promise of Messiah in the middle of a long period of isolation from God. I think we can all understand that with COVID on the upswing and regulations getting more and more restrictive. The prophet Isaiah said, "Comfort, comfort, oh my people" and went on to talk about the strength that we get from the promise of the future suffering servant King Jesus.

2020 will definitely go down in history as "unforgettable" for many reasons. But what about 2021? As we look forward, we are balancing the uncertainties of what life and ministry will look like with the mission of Valley Church. All of our ministries at Valley Church are important components for making disciples of Jesus. But given the circumstances, we've decided to emphasize three critical elements in 2021.

Excellent Worship – Our in-person and online worship services continue to be our single most impacting ministry at Valley Church. We want to continue to provide our traditional and contemporary worship service styles with excellence. We plan to continue to invest in the people and equipment needed to improve this vital ministry. Thankfully, our mild Bay Area weather also allows us to continue to meet in person outdoors!

Personal Engagement – As important as our worship services are, they cannot meet every need. We'll continue to encourage our DISCIPLE groups (Community Groups, SS classes, 1 on 1's, men's and women's groups, etc.) to meet virtually and/or in person. We will look for ways to meet together to encourage and pray for one another like we have for the Joel moment. This may also take the form of prayer groups, book clubs, and "electives" like our current class on the book of Daniel.

Creative Outreach – We feel it is imperative that we continue to share the Gospel with those in our community and around the world. We'll ask God to show us new opportunities for both compassion and Gospel, demonstration and proclamation. We'll continue to develop ministry partnerships like we have with City Team and Bayshore Christian Ministries who serve the poor and under resourced communities around us, and we'll prayerfully disburse the funds God has given us to build His Kingdom.

Where are we financially? Looking forward to 2021, we can hope the virus is eliminated and some semblance of normal activity will return. But there are signs of gathering storms in the world and in our culture that do not bode well for the church, our society, and the economy. How should the church approach this? **Firstly**, we will, as always, shepherd the church and comfort any in affliction. **Secondly**, we will maintain a benevolence fund to help those in need, especially the believers at Valley. **Thirdly**, we have crisis planning in place that will help us survive difficult financial times.

We are very thankful that the church has continued to give during this pandemic. We have cut costs and hope to end the year at about break even in the general fund. We pray that missions also will break even by the end of December. However, for us to finish well, we need our normal December year-end giving to be strong. If you believe that God is working at Valley, would you consider us in your year-end giving to the general fund, missions, and benevolence? Would you also commit yourselves to regular giving during 2021?

We want to express our deep appreciation for your continued financial support. If you attend an outdoor worship service you may give there, or you may mail your check to the church office. You may also give online by going to the valleychurch.org website and selecting "Giving."

God is sovereign. He will accomplish all he has purposed to do, including the destiny of his people. This is not a time to be afraid or to lose hope. Come what may, let's be his true church and by faith, hope, and love, serve Him well.

Christmas Blessings,

Kurt Jones – Lead Pastor
Jaime Burnett – Elder & Treasurer