

koinonia

May 2022

Change of Seasons

From Pastor Aaron

To everything there is a season, a time for every purpose under heaven...Ecclesiastes 3:1

Blessings Northside Family! I want to start this message to you, my church family, with a genuine thank you from my heart. Thank you for your prayers for Melissa and me through this rather interesting season of transition in our lives. Thank you for loving us even though you might not fully understand the journey we have found ourselves on. Thank you for checking in on us, and asking "How is it going?" And thank you for continuing steadfastly in support and prayer for the ministers and ministries of Northside through this season of vast changes we have all been walking through together. Change is not easy, but it really does seem to be necessary for the purposes of God to be accomplished in us, through us and around us. God established seasons of change as a constant when Noah gave an offering to Him after the flood saying,

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"While the earth remains, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, winter and summer, and day and night shall not cease." Genesis 8:22

We know that this is true in the natural world, but it is also very true in each of our lives individually and in God's continued work through us as His Church, the Body of Christ. There are some seasons we enjoy and appreciate more than others. Or perhaps we can say that there are aspects of each season that we enjoy and appreciate more than others. Regardless of how we feel about the seasons, we must understand and accept that each season has its God-ordained purpose. And as a recent worship song says, "even when we don't see it, He's working". Many times we don't see the work that He is doing because we are too distracted by our discomfort with the change. But if we will take the time and look closer and deeper, we will see God's hand at work in every season and in every circumstance of life.

Today, I am rejoicing at what I am seeing through this season of change at Northside. I am so blessed by those in the Body who are stepping up selflessly and sacrificially to serve in the church. We have people who have been with us working hard in the ministry, continuing to work hard in the ministry. And we have had people who have been walking with us and serving for a long time who have stepped



back from areas of service or have even moved on to serve in other churches in the Body of Christ. But we also have people who are new to our church family who are now stepping into needed areas of ministry or are even opening up new opportunities for us as a church! Praise the LORD for ALL of this!! He is at work in us as we co-labor together in Christ Jesus. Let us all remember that the Christian life is not a “spectator sport”. We are all called to serve one another as our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ laid down His life to serve us in our greatest need. Please pray and ask God how He wants you to co-labor together as a member of the Body at Northside in this new season we find ourselves in.

Upcoming Events:

National Day of Prayer

May 5th

NCA Graduation

May 19th

Vacation Bible School

June 20th–24th

Youth Camp

July 18th–23rd

I am also rejoicing as I look around and see how we have responded and adjusted to a “new normal” as we continue with our facility challenges since the winter storm in February of last year. Much work has been done to make the best use of our facilities until the Lord gives us resources and direction to continue and complete construction of the CEC. What once was our Fellowship Hall is now our Worship Center. The serving bar, refrigerator and warmer have been moved to give us more room during our worship services. Our old Sanctuary is now effectively an Activity Center where

we can have fellowship meals and provides more space for our KidZone services on Sunday mornings. This has allowed us to dedicate what we once called the Activity Room to our youth group in what we are now calling our Student Center. I believe that the Lord is pleased with our stewardship of the resources we have, and that moving forward He will bless us in due season with a new ministry facility that will meet the current and future ministry opportunities God sets in front of us.

As I close this letter, I want to speak personally about where God currently has Melissa and me in this new season of life and ministry. I have now been the full time Administrator at Pine Tree Lodge in Longview, TX since December 13th of last year. As I have told many who have asked me, this is a very difficult job and environment, but I am certain that God has called me into this work. It really is shepherding but in a very different setting. I covet your prayers as the Lord brings me to your remembrance. I cannot do this without His great grace and the presence of His Holy Spirit in my life. Melissa is enjoying ministering to women in our church through visitation and Bible studies and is also loving being able to be an available grandmother to Levi, Sarah and Elizabeth. In this season of our lives, we are thankful that we are not, nor have we ever been “hired employees” of Northside. Northside is our church home, and you are our family. We are here and are called to co-labor together with you in this season as a brother and sister in Christ. I am still a pastor and an elder in the church and take very seriously my responsibility to graciously serve and lead together with the other elders and Pastor Brandon and Pastor Scott as they oversee and shepherd the church. Thank you for your faithful and prayerful support for them as they faithfully fulfill their ministry callings.

In all of this, let us remember that it is God who works in us both to will and to do according to His good pleasure. (Phil. 2:13) And that while the seasons may change, people may change, roles may change, facilities may change, ministries may change...God remains the same, yesterday, today and forever. I don't know what other changes we may be looking toward, and I don't know exactly how this is all going to turn out, but as the Preacher says in Ecclesiastes 3:14, I know that whatever God does, it shall be forever. Nothing can be added

to it, and nothing taken from it. God does it, that men should fear before Him.

Let us move forward together, resting and trusting in that.

“SEEDS” VBS 2022!

We are excitedly looking forward to our summer outreach Vacation Bible School this June. Plans are being made and volunteers are being gathered. We still need help in just about every area to make this a great and effective outreach event. We will be doing an evening VBS from June 20th through June 24th from 5:00pm to 8:30pm. We'll begin each evening by providing a hot meal for the children and volunteers and the children will enjoy times of recreation, crafts, Bible lessons, and music. We will do some community outreach the preceding weeks to publicize the event and will offer transportation to neighborhood families with children who are not able to provide it.

We have point people in place for each area of ministry and are really in need of support volunteers and volunteers to lead groups of children to the different areas of ministry. If you would like to help in any fashion, please let Tonia Crittenden or Afton Beasley know. There are also signup sheets in the foyer. We will open registration for children as the event date nears.

In the meantime, please pray for our VBS committee, our volunteers, and our community. We want to see children come in contact with the gospel and in turn, lives changed by the power of the person and work of Jesus!

Youth Camp 2022

Youth camp is coming up quickly and we are looking forward to taking a great group of kids to Jackson, TN and Union University campus. FUGE camps have been a wonderful experience for our youth over the past several years. The students are challenged in their faith and encouraged to grow in this environment. Many students have experiences at camp that change the course of their lives forever. This is why we are passionate about providing these opportunities for our youth. While many might assume that camp is full of games – there are games – they don't realize that through these carefully constructed experiences, students have the opportunity to come face to face with the gospel and important spiritual truths. They are encouraged to engage their peers and the world with their faith. Camp is so much more than summer entertainment. It is a springboard for spiritual growth packed into a week full of non-stop action.

We have 16 student spots reserved for camp this year. A \$100 deposit is required to reserve a student's spot. It is our hope to raise the remaining funds to send these students to camp. We have adult sponsors that are committed to going to help Jerediah and Taylor with the youth during this week. We currently lack around \$5,000 to finish paying for our spots. If you would like to sponsor a student for camp this year, \$365 will cover their entire week.

We will announce upcoming fundraisers as we get closer to the event dates. Please pray for each student which the Lord has appointed to go with us. Pray for finances and for hearts to be prepared in advance of this important week of ministry.

Opportunities to Serve

As Pastor Aaron mentioned, we are SO thankful for those who are serving! As we continue to move forward and grow together, our opportunities to serve will grow as well. Here is a list of places in which we have immediate needs and current opportunities for ministry.

Nursery Ministry: We currently need more workers willing to teach a brief lesson geared toward the nursery age level. We have simple curriculum that walks you through the lesson. A willing heart and the love of God is really all that you need!

Nursing Home Ministry: Carthage Healthcare would like someone to come weekly and minister to their residents from the Word. Day and time is flexible. This is a precious group of people that are often overlooked and many are hungry for ministry. We currently and have had members here in the past. Speak with Pastor Brandon about serving in this way.

Intercessory Prayer: Many of our members get prayer requests through our app notifications and are faithful to pray for those as they come through. There are often times in which those in need of prayer don't wish to have their request sent out through the entire body. There are also things that come up in ministry that require more prayer and we would love those who are committed intercessors to be available to pray in those times. If you would like to be a part of our intercessory prayer team, contact Pastor Brandon.

Panola County Prayer Task Force: This ministry is being sponsored by the Panola County Ministerial Fellowship and supported by the Marshall Prayer Task Force from Marshall, Tx. Participants will have the opportunity to be paired as an individual or family with one of our first responders in Panola County. You will have the privilege of being their prayer warrior for 12 months, lifting them up in prayer as they serve our county. This is a great opportunity to invest in our community! Check with Pastor Brandon for more information.

Opportunities to serve are listed on the Northside app and printed versions are available on the information tables in the foyer, worship center, and in the cafe.

Pursuing Hospitality From Pastor Brandon

Several months back, I preached through Romans 12 and the Lord began to impress upon my heart one particular scripture. In verse thirteen, Paul encourages the church in Rome to "pursue hospitality." We covered in that message how Paul intended for those encouragements to be things which we continually do, even unto the point that we are known by those actions. Hospitality, or "philoxenia" literally means "love of strangers." This is a powerful idea that we are encouraged by Paul to pursue and I feel that it is a timely exhortation from the Lord for our body in this season. Let's be honest, given the current state of our facilities, it could be easy to excuse ourselves from this one. It could be easy to say that we don't have much to offer. I want to encourage you in this season, to look all the more to love strangers to Northside. Showing joy, appreciating those who come in to our fellowship as strangers, and serving those who are unfamiliar with our facilities are things we should be pursuing.

In light of this, I wanted to offer a brief encouragement and bit of direction for this pur-

suit. Of first importance, I want to point out that “friendliness” and hospitality are not the same things. A warm smile, a handshake, and even a hug can be a nice greeting, but let us consider how these serve our guests. Good “feelings” are often times not enough to provide a visitor with what they need to feel able to navigate our facility and service. Please do greet warmly, but also ask if our visitors need directions or information. Express how happy you are that they have joined us, but also ask them if they need to know where the bathroom, kid’s ministry, or coffee is. Ask them how they decided to visit us, but also let them know that they can find more information on our ministries and service times through the Northside app. The best way to explain the idea of hospitality in a church setting is to ask yourself, “What would I need to know if I was visiting someplace new?”

Did you know?

Our services are now streamed to YouTube, Facebook, our website, AND the Northside app! You can access past sermons here as well!

Personal growth amongst our body of believers is only part of God’s plan for the growth of His church. For our home to become someone else’s home, we must be willing to provide them with the interaction and information which they need to settle in and decide to grow together with us. The truth is that we desperately need those whom the Lord would bring into our body. We need the growth that their presence requires of us, as well as the gifts which the Lord has placed within them for the edification of our body.

Lastly, I would give you an encouragement that has been handed down throughout the ages. This was given through Jesus, in John 13:34–35, echoed in 1 John 3, and kept in front of us by Brother Billy Shoffner. I can hear Bro. Billy’s voice in my head as I write this. “Little children, love one another.” Jesus says in John 13:35 that this is how the world will know that we belong to Him and are His disciples, that we love one another.

Let your love for each other be evident to our guests. Let them see the love of Christ through your love for them and for one another. And let our home at Northside, be a place which outsiders are welcomed, not just into a meeting or building, but into the presence of the Almighty God and into fellowship with His saints.

Insurance / Facilities Update

As most are already aware, we have been waiting on a response from Church Mutual Insurance after a demand was made for a payout on the total loss of our current worship facility. The company has been reluctant to pay for a total loss of the facility and we have had engineers from both sides inspecting the building and making recommendations. As it stands now, we are still waiting, hopeful that the insurance company will do the right thing.



Because our structure is still standing and considered safe to occupy, many may question why we are seeking payment for a total loss of the building. The easy answer is that, while the building is safe to occupy, it is in no way in the condition in which it should be and will continue to degrade because of the damages done by the snow and ice in the winter of 2021. We have lawyers working on communication with the insurance company and keeping our case before them. We are in prayer about how to move forward if

the insurance company denies our demand for payment on the total loss. We have options, a suit filed only being one of those options, and need to hear from the Lord in how to approach this matter so that He receives what He is due in our attempts to steward the facilities with which He has entrusted us. Please continue to pray with us for God's will in this matter and pray that God would receive every bit of the glory in the resolution of this issue.



Until we find ourselves on the other side of this trial, choose joy. Choose faith that God is walking us through this trial and has His best for us on the other side. Choose to trust God for the provision to complete the CEC because the insurance company does not hold our future. The Lord holds the future of Northside and its facilities.

A Word on Worship

From Pastor Scott

And behold, Jesus met them and said, "Greetings!" And they came up and took hold of his feet and worshiped him. Matthew 28:9

And when they saw him they worshiped him. Matthew 28:17

Throughout the Bible we see examples of people worshiping God after receiving a revelation of Him. Abraham and Isaac on Mt. Moriah. Jacob at Bethel. Moses at the burning bush. Joshua on the way to Jericho. Israel at the showdown on Mt. Carmel. Peter after catching some fish at Jesus' instructions. The disciples after Jesus calmed the storm.

When we see God for who He is, our natural response is worship. I pray that you have reached a new depth of worship as we have seen God revealed through his names. Knowing Him more and more naturally leads us to worship Him more and more.

In Matthew 28:9 and 28:17 we see the response of some of Jesus' followers when He reveals Himself to them after the resurrection. Their first response is worship. As we continue to allow the Resurrected Christ to reveal Himself to us over the next few weeks, I pray you will allow yourself to respond in worship of Jesus like never before.

Giving Update

Each year we are blessed to celebrate God's faithfulness to His church as we look at His sovereign provision for us. It is always a blessing to see how the Lord chooses to fund kingdom work. Last year, we made the decision to combine the school and church finances, creating a budget that provides for both. We have been blessed to see this greatly helping in how we view and assess our finances throughout the year. Because of the nature of our ministry, giving has always been the answer to any budgetary issue. It is no secret that over the past several years, we have trimmed away many line items from the church and school budgets to ensure that we can function as normally as possible.

It is also no secret that the economy has been challenging for our membership. Each year our budget is set on giving trends with the most recent years taken into consideration. This

year was no different. The budget was set into place last year with a decrease in giving accounted for because of the trends of the previous years. We have experienced that decrease, but to a greater degree than we had planned for. This is reflected in a 13%–15% decrease in giving past what we had accounted for.

We are currently around \$32,000 behind in regular giving for the fiscal year. This means that we have a very real need for giving throughout the Spring and Summer months. Our encouragement to you in this time is to prayerfully trust the Lord for provision. You can do this in two ways:

1. Pray for the Lord to provide. He is our source and provision. In Him is all that we need. So bring this need before the Lord in prayer fervently.
2. Prayerfully give. Ask the Lord to reveal to you what you might give to help meet this need. Throughout its history, God has used members of the church to provide for the needs of the church. He has placed you within this body to partner with it in ministry. If you aren't currently giving, prayerfully ask the Lord what you might begin to give regularly to help sustain the ministry of Northside. If you are currently giving, prayerfully consider increasing your gifts to help cover the needs of this season.

Below is a chart that shows our year-to-date giving for regular offerings, projects, and areas in which we still have need. This chart shows what giving needs to come in to ensure that each area is paid for. Use this information to partner with us in prayer over our finances and prayerfully consider whether the Lord is leading you to help meet a specific need within our church.

