

Logo, Theme, Purpose etc.

By Dr. Al Detter
 Senior Pastor

As several leaders sat around a table in the dining room at my house, we wrestled with what to call this stewardship campaign. We wanted to somehow capture the vision that God would use Grace to have an amazing impact in the lives of people young and old, rich and poor, saved and un-saved in the Erie area.

We began to reflect on how amazing it would be to be a part of a church filled with people who were living 1st century Christianity in the 21st Century. People whose lives had been so transformed by Jesus Christ that they oozed radical Christianity from every part of their being. People who were so energized by the Holy Spirit that their relationships, workplaces and

families would never be the same. We also dreamed of a church that had ample space, parking and resources to do whatever ministries we believed the Lord was laying on our hearts—a place where successful businessmen, senior citizens, atheists, the poor, college students, Buddhists, single moms, those struggling with

beyond
imagination
 God's Power Through Us-For All Generations
Ephesians 3:20-21

divorce and whole families could find hope, compassion and the open arms of a caring people who were all equal at the foot of a blood-stained cross.

As we dreamed of a church like that, one word emerged. . . IMAGINE. We wanted to somehow share this dream with

the people of Grace and have all of us IMAGINE this place.

Our minds immediately went to a passage in Ephesians 3:20-21 which says, "Now to Him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine; according to His power that is at work within us. To Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations. Amen." We were and continue to be overwhelmed by the magnitude of this project. But we realized that we

serve a God who loves to surprise us by going BEYOND what we can imagine. For every wonderful dream that we have for the future of Grace, God can top it! He is a God who has committed Himself to go BEYOND our IMAGINATION with His wonderful plan. May God's power work through us for

The Spiritual Path to Giving

Over and Above Giving

Capital Stewardship Campaigns rely on church members making gifts over and above their current level of giving. The best path to increased giving is the spiritual path, where you set your heart on things above. Financial priorities then take shape from spiritual priorities.

One way of defining this is "Lifestyle Stewardship" a term used to describe a level of giving that affects one's living. The challenge of lifestyle stewardship is to

find ways, boldly and prayerfully, to let your giving touch your living.

King David declared, "I will not offer to God that which costs me nothing." (2 Samuel 24:24) David understood the gift that would touch the heart of God must first touch the life of the giver! This is the spirit of lifestyle stewardship: If it is for my God, my gift must have meaning and value to me.

Many Christians have been amazed at their ability to give "over and above" to their church.

Lifestyle Stewardship

In practice, "Lifestyle Stewardship" refers to the process of reassessing lifestyle and reordering priorities for the purpose of reclaiming resources that can be reallocated to the work of God.

This is not a singular experience.

Lifestyle reassessment occurs frequently at special times in life, such as when purchasing a home, launching a new business, or

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Inside this issue:

- That each of us at Grace would allow God to empower and show us ways He can give an extravagant gift through us for the sake of the growth of the kingdom of God here in Erie.
- For the Prayer Vigil. For the planning and participation of God's people and that it would be a meaningful time with our Lord.
- For unity within our church. For the sale of our existing building. For the timing of the sale and whomever purchases our church that it is clearly God's will and timing.
- That the people of God here at Grace would be devoted to prayer and that God would increase our faith in Him.
- For health and protection for our leaders on staff, the steering committee, our teachers and small group leaders. Praise God for those who have willingly taken on this responsibility.
- For the lost, that God's Spirit would move in preparing their hearts for the Gospel. Pray that we would cherish our purpose, to reach those who have yet to come to the saving knowledge of Christ.
- For God's wisdom on the location of the new church on the site and on the size and design as we complete the architectural phase
- For the furnishings that must be purchased and for wisdom and protection for the members of the Furnishings Team
- Praise God for bringing us this far. Pray for endurance to finish the task at hand.

The Power of Prayer

By Beth Thornton
Administrative Involvement

A couple years ago I embarked on a journey to find a new home church. I was looking for a church where I would feel welcome and which would help me to grow closer to God. I found that Erie churches are not very friendly, especially to single women. After months of frustration I got to the point where I cried out to God to help me find a church. I sat on my couch one Sunday morning with the Saturday Religion section of the *Erie Times-News* on my lap and asked God to direct me to the church he wanted me to go to. When I opened my eyes I immediately saw the Grace Baptist ad. I said "OK God," got in my car, drove to Grace Baptist, and walked into the 11 AM service. I sat down and, shortly afterward, Nancy Carlucci sat in front of me. I

knew Nancy from working at Hamot, so we struck up a conversation before the service began. I loved the music, and Pastor Al's sermon touched me as if God told him exactly what I needed to hear. After the service Nancy introduced me to several people and I knew that I had found my home church. Nancy later told me that the Spirit had led her to pray for me way before I had stepped into Grace Baptist Church for the first time.

God not only answered prayer, but He blessed me "Beyond Imagination." I not only felt welcome at Grace, but there were women in the church who made sure I had someone to sit with in church, shared their hearts with me, invited me to their houses for dinner, invited me to join them at different events and became my

friends. I continue to draw closer to God through the wonderful Biblical teaching that takes place at Grace and through encounters with the many wonderful people that attend Grace. God again went above and beyond by providing me with a wonderful Christian man as my future husband. Matt is just another reason why Grace Baptist is so special to me.

This is just one tiny example of how God has used prayer and Grace Baptist Church to reveal his plan in such a wonderful way. I am so excited as we embark on this stewardship campaign and building project because I know that God has a plan in place to use us to impact the lives of so many more people in a way that is "Beyond Imagination."



God not only answers prayer but blesses us "Beyond Imagination."

"Best yet, the children are discovering the same truths that the youth and adults are each week."

The Truth of the Matter

By Randy DeMers
Executive Director

During the past six months God and I have been journeying through some new waters. I have been reading from a variety of authors, but the two most significant are Rick Warren and Randy Alcorn. Combining their writings with the capital campaign, I think God is sending me a message LOUD and CLEAR.

Here are two of the truths I have gleaned:

Where I spend eternity is directly

related to how I respond to the Gift of Grace.

When I accept Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior I will spend eternity with Jesus in heaven.

How I spend eternity is directly related to what I do with the Gift of Grace and all that was entrusted to me. Some suggest that we will sit in heaven and worship 24-7 for all eternity. I think they are sorely mistaken. The reality is that we have to give an accounting of what we did with the Gift of Grace and all that was entrusted to us.

I have set my heart and mind on things above and continue to ask myself a hindsight question: If Jesus died for me and I am to live for Him, what does that mean I should do with today? It is a hindsight question because when I get to heaven I will not be able to go back and change what I did. I need to live today and plan tomorrow in light of eternity. I want to demonstrate to God that his Gift of Grace was of such great value that I lived my life in a way that said it was a gift of great value! If I do that well He will show me HOW and WHAT I do in eternity.

From the Prayer Team

This week I would like to encourage your use of the Prayer Journal. Pray about how God may use you during our Stewardship Campaign.

As you pray, trust God to move you beyond visible limitations to

where faith becomes the truest offering. And, let us pray for one another, for wisdom.

We are also looking forward to our Prayer Vigil, to be held on March 29th. The hours of the vigil

will be 5:00 p.m. to midnight. It will be a quiet evening of prayer. You may come and go as you like. Please put this special event on your calendar. We would be so blessed by your attendance.



The Prayer Vigil will be on Mar. 29 from 5:00 p.m. to midnight.

Join Us For Celebration Sunday

Plan on being a part of our Celebration Service on Sunday March 30th. This will be an important and memorable day in the life (history?) of Grace Baptist Church! Our special service will begin at 10:00 a.m. at Fairview High School's auditorium, followed by great food and fellowship in the school's cafeteria.

On the morning of March 30th, we will gather for an amazing worship service that will take us *beyond imagination*. This is definitely an event that you will want to attend. Nursery is being provided in child-friendly classrooms for babies through pre-school children. Our Children's Ministry team will pro-

vide the staff and equipment for this day.

Fairview High School has the perfect facility for this event. It is located off of Route 98 between I-90 (exit 16) and Route 20 in Fairview. There is plenty of parking on the north and south sides of the school. The south side has handicapped access; the north side has stairs. When you arrive, we will meet in the school's auditorium. The auditorium will seat our entire Grace family quite comfortably. Several greeters will be there to answer questions and direct you to where you need to go. Immediately following our service, we will enjoy fellowship

with each other over a delicious meal in the school's cafeteria, directly off of the auditorium. We will have a variety of lunch foods available to please everyone's tastes

Over the next few weeks, each family from Grace will receive a telephone call asking for their reservation so we can plan for this wonderful day. Mark your calendars now and be ready to tell them "Yes, we will be there!" when you are called. This will be a day you will remember for a long time. It should not be missed! We look forward to sharing this day together.



Celebration Sunday is a time to celebrate the month of prayer and commitments.

The elementary children are digging into the stewardship education campaign and are unearthing new heroes and role models. Perhaps your child is thinking up a way to be generous with the gifts God has given them, like "Fish and Bread Boy." Your child is remembering the simulation exercise in which a small loaf of bread was shared with sixty other children -- and it was enough.

Last week your child learned about God's seven gifts to Adam

and Eve (the seven days of creation) and discovered how they were asked to take care of those gifts. The children had their eyes opened when they completed a stewardship self-evaluation. Best yet, the children are discovering the same truths that the youth and adults are each week. Engaging in faith talks with your kids has never been easier. Just take turns sharing what you learned in Sunday School or small groups this week.

Kids' stewardship education will

continue to roll long after March ends. Beginning in April, a team of our curriculum writers will be providing both the elementary and preschool teachers with a prayer activity and a creative offering activity which can be added to the lessons each month.

Children will continue to have opportunities to present their offering during the 11 AM Children's Church services. If needed a child may also give their offering during the Sunday School hour.

important task before us.

It is a spiritual experience.

The adventure ahead is a

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Methods to Meet and Exceed Your Pledge

WAYS TO CONSIDER HOW TO MEET YOUR PLEDGE

1. Priority Budgeting
 - Gift by sacrificing something presently in the budget
 - Gift by postponing a planned expenditure
2. Re-channeling a Present Expenditure
 - Gift by giving something presently being given to other causes
 - Gift by giving money that has been or is being used for something else.
3. Gifts of Unexpected Cash
 - Gift from tax return
 - Gift from an inheritance
 - Gift from a dividend

- Gift from a gift
4. Gifts from Increased Income
 - Gift from increase in salary
 - Gift from bonuses
 - Gifts from dividends, rentals, etc.
 5. Gifts of Accumulated Cash
 - Gift from a savings account

KEYS TO YOUR DECISION

- Participation
 - Priority Giving
 - Proportionate Giving
 - Planned Giving
 - Personal Response to His Spirit which leads to enlarged giving
1. Gifts from Extra Work
 - Gift from a second job

- Gift from other earnings
2. Gifts of Valuable Real and Personal Property
 - Gift of valuable personal property
 - Gift of real estate
 3. Gifts of Stocks and Bonds
 - Gift of appreciated stock (Great Tax Benefits)
 4. Gifts from Life Insurance
 - Gift of cash within policy
 5. Gifts through a Trust
 - Gift of property
 - Gift of income now, either give or keep property later
 - Gift from retirement fund



Use your tax return to help meet your pledge.

Note: Secure legal and tax counsel prior to giving stock or property to the church. Also, check with church leadership prior to giving any personal property to make sure that the church can accept the property.