

February 10, 2016

Greetings in Christ!

One of my kids' favorite stories is *The Little Engine That Could*. Night after night we read of that Little Blue Engine who, against all odds, carries that precious cargo over the mountain to a happy welcome on the other side. When the Blue Engine pulls into town, we all yell a collective, "Hurray!"

MainStreet is a lot like that Little Blue Engine, and this letter is our shout of "Hurray!" as we share how God has used your support to push this church along, enabling us to carry people over their own spiritual mountains into the transforming presence of God on the other side.

Experiencing Growth

We are growing in many different ways! We are outgrowing our children's space and actively seeking additional classroom space within the mall. We dedicated 4 new babies and celebrated 4 adult baptisms/rededications this year. We have nearly 40 adults (about 90%) attending a *Lifegroup*. Several *Discipleship Huddles* (involving 15 or so people) formed recently for people wanting to grow deeper in their faith in groups of 3 or 4. We had 28 attend Family Camp. We had nearly 30 people go through our membership class, and we elected our first official leadership team last spring. Two lay-led fellowship groups — *Knit or Not* and *Garage Guys* — were launched to foster community and connect with non-attenders. This fall we sent MainStreet adults on our first overseas mission trips to both Nicaragua and Romania.

Beyond the Walls Ministry

One of the things that makes Mainstreet different from many other churches is our commitment to be in the community. MainStreet left our "four walls" many times this year including:

- An all-church prayer walk around our city during our regular Sunday worship time in June.
- Great Giveaway again blessed many people with free housewares, clothes, furniture, etc.
- Service Sunday where we go around the city cleaning houses, yards, serving local needs
- worship at the beach
- Public Reading through the New Testament at Presbyterian Homes during Lent

I (Jeremy) am in my second year as president of the Westonka Ministerial Association leading other area pastors/churches in an unprecedented effort to get all churches to go out and serve our community in Jesus' name at the first ever *Sunday2Serve* on July 31st! MainStreet has been doing this every year and now our influence is rubbing off on other churches and possibly igniting a city-wide movement among churches!

Financially Frugal

We again experienced remarkable generosity both within and outside MainStreet in 2015 enabling us to end the year not just "in the black" but with an operating surplus of \$20,000! We had a small increase in our regular MainStreet giving, a significant increase in our support coming from outside MainStreet, and our expenses this year were under budget (see below).

While we celebrate this generosity, we must also face the reality that we continue to operate on an extremely lean budget with only one person on the payroll and a heavy dependence on outside support to keep operating. We don't want to merely survive but thrive. We don't want

to get by but grow. In attempts to grow MainStreet, we will likely need increase our funding to hire additional key staff positions (e.g., Kids/Youth Director, Worship Leader, Office Admin) as well as raising funds to expand our ministry space to accommodate our growing children's ministry.

We believe God has uniquely called MainStreet to minister to those living well below the typical household income for our area, and so we are not shy in continuing to ask our partners outside MainStreet to continue including us in their regular giving in 2016.

2015 Finances (compared to 2014)

MainStreet Tithes & Offerings	\$106,482	(\$99,000 - 2014)
Outside Support Income	\$54,366	(\$46,944 - 2014)
Total Income	\$160,849	(\$151,276 - 2014)
Total Expenses	\$140,849	(\$144,000 - 2014)
Mission Giving	\$14,165	(\$12,000 - 2014)

Measuring 'Success'

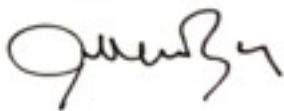
Overall, we measure our ministry effectiveness and growth not by counting heads in Sunday worship, but by counting stories of lives impacted and how many people are taking real steps forward in their faith maturity. The REVEAL Research Project recently surveyed members of more than 1,000 churches and found that on average only 11% of church attenders are actively growing in their faith. Most are "stalled." While MainStreet is not experiencing as much numerical growth as we'd like, we're very proud to say that 95% or higher are *actively* engaged and growing in their faith walk at MainStreet (learning to read their Bible, actively being disciplined, etc.). We are bearing much fruit!

So, thanks to your faithful support in 2015 we have continued chugging steadily along, undaunted by the mountains before us. When faced with challenges, we don't look within ourselves and mutter, "I think I can, I think I can, I think I can." No, we join the Psalmist in singing together:

***"I lift my eyes up to the mountains —where does my help come from?
My help comes from the LORD, the Maker of heaven and earth" (Ps. 121).***

Will you continue to help push MainStreet up the mountain and carry God's precious cargo to the salvation that awaits on the other side? While it sounds cliché, we truly cannot do this without your continued faithful support!

Chugga-chugga, choo-choo!



Jeremy Berg
Senior Pastor
MainStreet Covenant Church
www.mainstreetcovenant.org