

Questions and Answers about *The Journey Forward*



What is *The Journey Forward*?

The Journey Forward is a five-year effort to equip the Lord's ministry at Northside for greater kingdom work. It is the product of year-long discussions with individuals and groups within our church family, and a humble pursuit of God's will.

What are *The Journey Forward* Challenges?

We have identified four challenges in the areas of *stewardship, ministry, discipleship* and *outreach* that will help us reach the potential we believe God has given our church family. Over the next five years we will be pouring our energy into meeting these four challenges in an effort to experience the lasting effects we seek in the life of our congregation.

What kind of financial goals have we set for *The Journey Forward*?

During *The Journey Forward* venture we will be challenged to *simultaneously* pursue two financial goals as a church family:

- One goal is to raise \$1,000,000.00 in advance for a much needed Student Center. The Student Center will be designed for teen ministry, but will also be useful for some other adult functions. Construction will not begin on the Student Center until we have received and saved \$1,000,000.00 for the project.
- The second goal is to reduce the overall debt of our congregation by \$1,000,000.00. Our current debt, left over from our initial campus construction and the purchase of the horse farm is around \$2,630,000.00. If we reduce this debt to \$1,630,000.00, the interest we save will provide thousands of dollars a year for ministry.

Thus, our financial goals will be like an object lesson on a grand scale, as we emphasize the principles of *delayed gratification* and *traveling lighter* in our personal lives and as a church family. These efforts will put us in a position to do so much more with the resources God has given us.

How will we make financial commitments to the Student Center?

On March 7, we will make four-year commitments toward the \$1,000,000.00 needed to begin construction on the Student Center. Commitments on that day and funds received in *The Journey Forward* offering envelopes thereafter will be used for this purpose. Our target for beginning construction is March, 2014, or the completion of year four of *The Journey Forward*. We estimate construction will take a year and we will enter the Student Center at the end of year five.

The total cost of the Student Center will most likely be more than \$1,000,000.00 (*our Children's Center, a similar structure, cost approximately \$1,100,000.00*), but we hope to raise the additional funds needed during year five so our facility will be completely paid for when we take possession.

How will we reduce the debt?

Our \$1,000,000.00 reduction in debt will be accomplished through our *general* offerings. While no official commitment cards will be filled out for this purpose, we are all encouraged to consider increasing our weekly giving to the general fund as we have been blessed by God.

We are already reducing our debt every month when we make our mortgage payment to the bank. But now we will be making additional principal payments to reach our five-year goal of a \$1,000,000.00 debt reduction. Last fall, our finance team estimated the funds needed to accomplish this goal and the additional principal has already been factored into the current church budget. Therefore our “weekly budget need” already includes the additional principal needed to reach our debt reduction goal.

How do these financial goals teach lasting Biblical principles?

By waiting until we have \$1,000,000.00 in the bank before beginning construction on the Student Center we demonstrate the value of *delayed gratification*. By reducing our debt by \$1,000,000.00 we teach what God can do with what He has given us when we reduce our obligations to others, or in keeping with our theme of *The Journey Forward*, when we learn to *travel lighter*.

There are many other lessons to be learned within this emphasis, such as the principle of living within our means, and discerning the difference between needs and wants in our lives. Over the next five years we will also be offering opportunities for families and individuals to learn systems that will help them reach their financial goals. We believe if we grow in our understanding of biblical stewardship as a group and as individuals, the impact on kingdom work at Northside will be astounding.

How will we meet the other challenges in *The Journey Forward*?

A number of leaders are already working on plans to increase the overall involvement of our church family in all four areas of *stewardship, ministry, discipleship* and *outreach*. But to a great extent, it is up to each of us to decide how much we want to grow. The need for volunteers in a number of ministry areas is already evident, and will only increase as our church family grows. Our Community Group leaders are available in our lobby every Sunday to help us find a place where we can grow as disciples. And God brings people into our lives every day and challenges us to reach out with the love of Jesus. As we look for ways to equip our church body for *The Journey Forward*, we will all be asked to pray about what God is leading us to do in our personal journey with Him.

How can I learn more about *The Journey Forward*?

During the month of February, Larry Jones will be preaching four messages on the four respective challenges contained within *The Journey Forward*. These messages will be available on the church website and in CD format. Teams of leaders will also be sharing *The Journey Forward* vision at a number of church gatherings, and four special one-hour information meetings called “Pie with the Preacher” have been planned on Wednesday nights at 7:00pm in February. You can sign up for one of these meetings at *The Journey Forward* table in the lobby or by contacting the church office (admin@northsideecc.org or 595-5890).