

December 11, 2024

Dear friends,

This year-end letter is for everyone who has invested time, money, and effort into Lighthouse. I think it is right to update you on the results of your investment. I'm happy to say that Lighthouse is doing amazingly well, thanks to your help.

Overview

We have had an extraordinary year of growth. We have experienced answered prayers and biblical promises fulfilled as we have put God's word into practice. And, we continue to be a model church that leads the way for other churches. Thanks to our many volunteers and donors, we are able to provide a wide spectrum of high quality programs and ministries. Our community is healthy, as evidenced by our relational warmth and effective evangelism. From a financial point of view, we have the funds necessary to grow our staff capacity, and we are planning to use those funds for strategic growth in the next few years. We would very much appreciate the continued support of everyone who gives to the church. The remainder of this letter expands on these themes in detail. Please read on for highlights to celebrate, an assessment of our church health, a forecast of the coming year, some dates, and some details about our church finances.

Some highlights from 2024

- We baptized ten of our friends! Their names are Stephen, Celine, Kartik, Calvin, Josia, Christene, Erika, Jason, Queenie, and Thomas. In addition, we are preparing to baptize five more by the end of the year! To put it in perspective, we will end this year having baptized over 10% of our average attendance.
- Young Adults Ministry had a breakthrough year with a retreat, the new Summer YAM large groups, and several new small groups. Many of our members have committed to lead these new small groups.
- Zoe Fellowship had an outstanding year. Our teens are extraordinary, bringing many of their unchurched friends to fellowship, and serving in a wide range of programs and special events. Zoe Camp and SYC camp were both excellent.
- We hosted VBS for over 100 children this summer, breaking our record by a wide margin. The children enjoyed a custom-built program that was both fun and biblically deep.
- Our campaign with Operation Christmas Child exceeded all expectations. We sent 905 shoebox gifts to children overseas! We expect that our contribution will result in literally hundreds of children coming to faith.
- Our adult ministries have matured, with the new RAM group, a new 18+ camp, new Bible study groups, and continued steady fellowship in our couples' groups and book clubs.
- Our children's ministry is stronger than ever, with our experienced Kids' Club team and our new two-class Sunday school.
- We have expanded our staff team with two vitally important part-time roles. We are blessed to have Deanna Liou as our Sunday school director, and Anita Pham as our Executive Assistant. Their ministries are preparing our church for our next season of growth.

Above are just some of my favorite highlights. There are many more things to be thankful for, and a full list of highlights would be impossibly long. There have been so many small acts of kindness and courage that are known only to God and to a few individuals. Whoever is doing those small acts of faithfulness even when the spotlight is not on you -- thank you very much.

An assessment of our church health

Overall, our church is extraordinarily healthy. We have an outstanding sense of community, in which those who come to church are accepted as they are. Everyone is invited to participate in God's work together. Our participation level is remarkably high, and our burnout level is remarkably low. We have spontaneous initiatives all the time from our volunteers as they take ownership of the Christian mission. Our Bible teaching has excellent accuracy and breadth of insight, while being friendly to people who do not come from a Christian background. And, I love the way we have honored our children and our teenagers. We have dedicated much of our best talent and energy to make disciples of the next generation, and God has blessed our work – just as the Bible tells us to expect. Our church may not be perfect, and indeed there are no perfect churches. But, we are a model church, leading the way for others. I consider the extraordinary health of our church to be more exciting than our obvious numerical growth.

A forecast of the coming year

I expect 2025 to be a year of steady growth and improvement for our church. Our leadership is working on a number of small projects that will make the experience of church better for everyone. We have plans to provide better information flow so that everyone can have more awareness of what is happening around our church. And, we have plans to support our volunteers more closely, now that we have an executive assistant on staff. For the most part, our volunteers are gaining experience and not burning out, which means we will benefit from the increased skill of our volunteers in the coming year. And, because our events and camps were consistently successful this year, we should see a repeat of practically all of our events and camps in the next year.

Some camps and events to look forward to in 2025

- **Camps**

- April Camp (designed for adults and young children): April 4-6, 2025 at Camp Caroline
- Young Adults camp at the CNBC Mission Centre: May 30-June 1 2025
- Vacation Bible School for kids: June 30 to July 4, 2025 at Lighthouse
- SYC (a weeklong camp for teens): July 21-26, 2025 at Prairie Bible College in Three Hills
- Worship retreat (Date TBD)
- Zoe winter camp (Date TBD)

- **Events**

- Good Friday outreach dinner: April 18, 2025
- Candy Carnival: October 31, 2025
- Operation Christmas Child pack and pray night (Date TBD)
- Christmas banquet (Date TBD)

Some details about our church finances

Overall, we are in a good position financially as a church. We are on track to end the year with a modest surplus. Over the years, we have accumulated a sizeable reserve fund. I expect we will end this year (2024) with about \$164,000 in our church bank account, which represents about 9 months' worth of operating expenses. The size of our reserve fund is considered on the safe side, but not excessive.

I expect 2025 to be a deficit year because we have expanded our staff team to prepare for future growth. Historically, our church has grown by about 10% per year for the past 11 years. The past two years have featured accelerated growth, with about 15% growth per year. So, it has been necessary to expand our staff capacity.

My best estimate is that we will have a deficit of about \$20,000 in 2025. This deficit is nothing to be alarmed about, as we can sustain this kind of deficit for several years in a row, and we can expect our income to increase as our attendance numbers increase. It is right to have a deficit year sometimes, because the funds in our bank account were given to us in trust -- that we would deploy that money to make a difference. So, seeing that we have a healthy bank account, our board will seek to use some of our saved up funds to improve the church.

I want to thank everyone who has supported our church financially. It is extraordinary what we are able to do as a church, and one of the biggest reasons is that people have given generously. We would appreciate your continued support as we reach more and more people with the gospel.

Conclusion

What an incredible year we have had! Thank you all for your partnership in God's work. I hope and expect that a year from now I will be able to send you another letter full of highlights and encouraging news.

Yours truly,
Pastor Enoch