

Introduction: Today is a little different morning than our regular rhythms but each year we take one Sunday to celebrate what God is doing through you, Foothills Church, and we take a brief moment to conduct a little annual business. Trust me it will be painless...and we have lots to celebrate as a church family.

[Transition] - First, let me start by refreshing us on why we do all this church stuff anyway? Why do we do church? It's important to step back and ask that from time to time.

- It's not because we've always done it.
- It's not because it's tradition.
- It's not because it just makes us feel better about ourselves.

Why we do church?

Our church's purpose statement says, "We exist to connect people to Jesus and help them grow to love and serve him."

Everything we do is aligned with the three key objectives of this purpose statement—**connect, grow, and serve**. These key objectives are our core drivers for everything we do. And it has been for nearly 30 years.

[Transition] - I want to break it down for you briefly...

1. **We exist to connect people to Jesus.** That means that together, our number one priority is to help people get to know Jesus.
 - We attempt to do that directly through our Sunday morning teaching times, and through each one of our ministry teaching times—AWANA, HSM, JHM, YA, and adult classes and small groups.
 - We also attempt to do this through training and equipping each of you to be the church out in the community. We want you to be

prepared and be confident to connect to Jesus those God brings into your path.

- He might use our gatherings as a church. He might use you in all the relationships in your life. Either way, God uses us to connect people to Jesus.

2. **We exist to help people grow to love Jesus.** This means that each one of our ministries has a desire to help you get to know more about Jesus and when you do, your understanding grows more and more, and you become more and more grateful for all he's done in you and for you.

- As a result, you grow to love and value Jesus more and more and your increasing love and trust of Jesus inspires your obedience to him.
- The majority of our church ministries are organized around this objective—Sunday teaching time, Sunday School for all ages, all the various small groups for couples, as well as all ages of men and women.
- The fact of the matter is people grow best in small groups. Many of our groups take a break for the summer, but if you have not been in a small group plan to get involved in one this fall.

3. **We exist to help people grow to serve Jesus.** This final objective is really an outflow of the first two. Once you have met Jesus, and come to trust, love and obey him. It's not long and you come to understand that he wants to use the unique YOU that is YOU to be a part of his work in the world.

It's not long and you start to feel a desire to serve. The reality is, God has not saved you to sit. He's saved you to serve. God doesn't need spiritual tics who just keep soaking up all sorts of Bible teaching, swelling up in knowledge, but never giving out. God has not saved you to sit. He's saved you to serve.

- Every one of our ministries needs a team of volunteers to make it all happen.

- And each of them is ready to train you to serve effectively.
- But you have to step out, reach out, and check out an area of service that fits your personality, temperament, time availability, etc.

Connect people to Jesus and help them grow to love and serve him. That is why we exist. This purpose is born out of two very important statements that Jesus said.

First one is found in Matthew 28:19-20, "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely, I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

This statement is known as the "Great Commission." The core command in Jesus' statement here is, "Make Disciples." And that is what connecting them to Jesus and growing them to love and serve is all about. We hope to make disciples who can make other disciples.

[Transition] - And here's the other key statement by Jesus. This one is called the "Great Commandment." It's found in Matthew 22.

"Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?" Jesus replied: "'Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.' This is the first and greatest commandment. ³⁹ And the second is like it: 'Love your neighbor as yourself.' All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments."

[Transition] - It's these two critical statements of Jesus that have formed the foundation of why we do everything we do here at Foothills Church. And I am so grateful for how God has used each of our ministries this past year. Once again, this past year it has been a very effective year of ministry around Foothills Church, in our community, and literally around the world.

What God has done through Foothills Church

I've asked the staff to share with me, so I could share with you a few of things they are most moved by in their ministry areas.

Pastor **Phil** and Marriage Ministries:

- Our young marrieds and married with munchkins ministries have 4 different groups, 21 couples and 34 kids in the mix.
- These groups are growing friendships and developing better, stronger and healthier marriages & families rooted in Jesus.
- Most of these couples are doing daily life together, sharing childcare, enjoying social events and implementing what they're learning as they live in community.
- We've also got two empty nester marriage groups (12 couples involved) who are intentionally investing in their own marriages so they can invest in younger couples.

Josiah oversees our campus hospitality along with our maintenance teams. He makes really good use of our facilities which are humming 7 days a week. Josiah reports...

- Our Facilities Crew has kept the campus clean, safe, and modern.
- We have updated the playground area for our kids—special thanks to Dennis Gray and his tractor work.
- The Cafe was remodel with a special thanks to Randy Nielson
- We have had great support from volunteers and our first Facilities intern, a special thanks to Nolan Thorne, Matthew Nystrom, and JT Nystrom
- We have a new Welcome Booth point person whose name is Samantha and she heads up the Welcome team volunteers.
- Our Demetia Care group continues to grow as they meet monthly
- Our Celebrate Recovery has seen lives healed and restored and continues to be a place that people find their “forever family” as they call it.
- Blessed Dressed team is absolutely amazing. So hard working and generous. We counted about 400 people served. It's estimated

there were over 300 hours of volunteer time involved. The feedback for this event is super positive.

- We continue to be a resource for the community and have had several groups utilize our campus for meetings/events. These facilities are being used 7 days a week often from early morning to late evenings.

Jamin our High School Ministry pastor reports...

- This year at HSM we started SALT... which stands for the Servant and Leadership Team. We take the core students of the ministry and pour into them, encourage them to serve more, evangelize often, get out of their comfort zones, and be all in for Jesus.
- Recently a student on the Salt Team invited two of his friends to youth group... one of them is unchurched and the other previously walked away from their faith.
- The first thing they said after attending HSM for the first time was how loved and welcomed they felt by the other students... those students being the other SALT people... so they kept coming to HSM consistently because how welcomed they felt.
- On their fourth week of attending HSM they both gave their lives to Christ.
- Another highlight would be students getting involved in Missions, both locally and globally. We have over 30 students serving on projects this summer and some of those students are considering doing a life of ministry and being missionaries.

Pastor **Buddy** James reports these highlights from JHM...

- In the last year, Junior High Students have given over \$700 to help fund the Chapman's mission work in Guinea
- Junior High students made over 200 Valentine's Day cards for Senior Citizens with the Senior Helpers organization

Karri Koenigs directs our Children's Ministries. She shared...

- When kids show an interest in being baptized, I meet with them and their parents to make sure they understand what baptism is and why we do it. One concern is always their motivation, and I do my best to make sure they're not seeking baptism as a way to please or impress others. I often ask the question, "What got you thinking about being baptized?" In the last year I noticed more kids answering that they started thinking about baptism after seeing others baptized on our patio. Through a few follow-up questions, I learned that this was not their motivation but a sincere inspiration. Kids are often very nervous about being on display in front of the whole church and scared about being dunked under water. These kids were no different, but they witnessed the spiritual obedience of others which inspired them to have courage and voice their interest this public declaration that Jesus is their Savior and the Leader of their lives.
- Last fall, I stood in the parking lot consoling a distraught young mother. She was 5 months pregnant, and it had been a rough Sunday morning with her very active twin toddler boys. As we talked, I learned that her husband had been deployed since the start of her pregnancy and wouldn't be home until right before her due date. God saw her and used that morning to make sure she was seen by her church family. Over the months that followed, God moved many hearts to provide her with parking lot escorts, meals, encouragement, prayer, and even a team to hang-up and take down her Christmas lights. The call to serve came through Children's Ministry but help came from all over Foothills: Blended & Blessed Small Group, Sunday School parents and volunteers, Welcome Team, Awana parents and volunteers, Compassion Team, and the neighbors up the street who invited this family to church. In March, her husband returned from deployment just in time to welcome his son into the world. As he adapted to civilian life in a new time zone with a newborn, this body has continued to serve and love his family well.

- Several years ago, Children's Ministry made a small shift in the Sunday School schedule for 4th & 5th graders, giving them the opportunity to serve during the first 30 minutes of their class time. Every year since, we've seen more and more of those kids returning as JH and HS students, eager to serve as helpers on Sunday mornings. This past year, some of our 5th graders began asking to serve outside of their Sunday school class time and have been faithfully coming to campus early so they can serve during one service and attend Sunday school during another. Most recently, one of our 2nd grade boys started arriving at 7:30am and staying 'til 1pm to assist us with Sunday set-up and clean-up. It's exciting to see these young ones serving as the Church now and pondering how God will continue to use them for His kingdom as they grow.

Aside from overseeing finances, which he'll share more about in a few moments, **Dillon** reported these highlights:

- This past year, our Sr. Nutrition program celebrated 14 years of serving our Seniors. Over 100 meals a week. Thanks to Jan Mesher for directing that effort. And thanks to all our volunteers who serve.
- The Missions fund raising efforts have been amazing. All short-term teams have been well funded for this summer
- The Rummage Sale was tremendous, raising over \$11,000...all going towards missions.
- We also had three of our people Licensed by the Alliance as Official Workers—Jamin, Chris, Mikayla.

Pastor **Doug** oversees all of our Adult Ministries and Missions. He reports...

- Women's ministry has reorganized under a new overall Women's Ministry Director—Nicole Cimino. Nicole's role will serve to unite all the different programs for women under our Women's Ministries.
- Our Adult Sunday School classes averaged 85 people attending various classes.

- Our people are involved in 4 different Short Term Missions efforts this summer.
- And...this is huge...we currently have 16 students/young adults in the pipeline considering vocational ministry and missions.
- Finally... Pro-life efforts continue to make a big difference in our community...our Embrace Grace ministry has loved on and helped to resource 4 different young mommas considering abortion, but who made the brave choice to keep their babies. Friend's this is huge. Many of you helped with the baby showers, or making quilts for these babies.
- In addition there were two adoptions, one by a Foothills family and one by a former Foothills family who moved out of state. Amazing.

Conclusion

As I said at the beginning, the great commission and the great commandment drive our reason for doing church. We exist to connect people to Jesus and grow them up to love and serve him. These highlights are just a few of the examples of how God is using our church in the lives of people for kingdom purposes.

It's been another fantastic ministry year friends. Nicely done. All of you.

Wrap Up....

In a moment...our team has prepared a super fun Year In Review Recap video. But, before we watch that, we've heard a number of highlights about the missions momentum we are experiencing here at Foothills. And that momentum continues this summer with our first team leaving for Utah after our services today. Jamin, bring your team up with you. Tell us where you're going and what you're doing and then we'll pray for you.