



Dear simplechurchar,

We have a wonderful church.

The richness of community, the joy of life together, the stretching as we serve and use our gifts, the weekly meals shared and prayers offered, the love exchanged between one another and our children. What God has shaped over these past ten years is not a take it or leave it thing. It's become a central, vital and constant rhythm in our lives and our children's lives. For many of us, next to our family, this church is our lives primary point of relationship and meaning.

We have a wonderful church. In the past two years, many new people have been learning about this too. One drawback of being in our own weekly house gatherings is that we don't easily get a sense of the whole, but this band of believers is growing. It's growing with people from all walks. Some just beginning to learn about Jesus, other's who've come from other places. In 2016 we added a new church, which is now vibrant and full. In 2017 we've started another. Each of our churches is full and active.

We have a wonderful church. Which is why we have every confidence that you will respond to this letter with attention and faith. *In this past year and especially recent months your council has noticed a trend that we feel pressed to now bring to you as a matter of concern and prayer. We need you to carefully consider this matter, and discern how God might be directing you to respond.*

At the May council meeting, as encouraged by our church accountant, we looked closely at our church's financial picture. The numbers did not look good. While we have seen many wonderful gains, these gains have not been reflected in our finances. 2016 we finished below budget and in these opening months of 2017 we've seen our reserve drop significantly. Our preset rate of decline will see us run out of funds in this calendar year.

As we looked at the numbers we asked God what we should do and how we should respond. In those moments, what filled the Franco's living room - our meeting place on that evening - was a gust of faith and a course of action. As we discussed we decided two simple things were required. *We needed to clearly articulate the need and clearly ask you to respond.* To those that already give, we need you to prayerfully consider the amount. For those that have yet to give, we need you to join in on the cause.

As we talked though, we also felt inspired that one further step was required. We needed a goal. Something that would cause us to stretch and sacrifice. Something that wouldn't just "pay the bills" but that would empower us in our mission together. As we leaned into this, Henry Braun led us in prayer. He asked that God would lead us to a number and he reminded us that this wasn't really about balanced budgets but about Jesus name. It was a powerful prayer.

Discussing afterward, the faith goal we were led to was an increase of \$2500/month or \$30,000/year. Specifically, this results is an increase of \$10,000 toward balancing our operating budget and \$20,000 toward mission and caring for the needy in our city.

Both of these thrusts are necessary. When we began, one of the values we adopted we called "generosity". We decided that we would live simply as a church, with minimal infrastructure, *so that* we would have more to use for mission and care.

Ten years later, nothing has changed. We still hold to this ideal, but the fact is, we do have operating costs which are essential to our church operating. Without these, we wouldn't exist. Part of this goal is about doing what we need in order to "pay our bills". But is it enough to simply cover our fixed expenses? No! We want to thrive and give and serve our city! We also want to live out that dream of extravagant generosity. Which is what this faith goal represents.

Attached is a document with more information about how our church views finances and how to give.

We really do have a wonderful church. Thank you for your part in it. Thanks for taking this "faith goal" with prayer, discernment and sacrifice.

With thanks and love,

simplechurches council

P.S. One other thing. If you are new, just learning about Jesus, this letter isn't something we want you to be concerned about. All we ask from you is that you keep coming, and keep searching. We're so grateful you are with us.