



Pastor's Report to the Annual Church Meeting

2017-2018 Church Year

March 21st, 2018

Dear Family and Friends of Bridgeway Church of the Nazarene,

It is with deep gratitude and humility that I offer my **12th Annual Report** to you, the body of Christ here at this local gathering and sending station; you, co-servants of our Lord Jesus Christ; you, the members, partners, and supporters of this church community; you, the precious sons and daughters of the Most High God.

As I just ponder that: 12 years with you, I cannot help but reflect on the many celebrations, joys, and triumphs we have shared in together along the way. Likewise, I ponder the challenges and heartbreaks that we have experienced both corporately and in individual lives – trusting in God as we have moved ministry forward nonetheless. In some, God has brought healing, hope, and restoration; while in others, God has closed doors and has refined our perspective.

In, by, and through them all, I remain grateful for your incredible energy, heart, passion, and willingness to serve for the furtherance of the Kingdom of God. It is His Kingdom and for His glory that we labor, serve, and work day in and day out, in ways that are observable and in other ways that are not seen. As we share from time to time: some of what we do is out front, but a majority of things that happen and occur on a daily basis is in obscurity. I think of those that are so involved in cleaning, in counseling, in being available, in family and compassionate helps. I think of those that invest in children, in youth, in outreach – where results aren't seen in days or weeks, but in seasons and over years. I think of the Praise and Worship Team, those involved in AVL and Media, and those who are here when maintenance, projects, and special work needs to be done. I think of those who handle accounting, organization, and scheduling. Without all of you – we could not do this. We could never pull it off.

One of the things my friend and mentor reminds me of, quite often, is the reality that without you – the church – the backbone of Bridgeway – without the leaders, the servant volunteers, the teachers, and the workers of ministry – without you, I could never do what I have been called to do. That is very true, and I am grateful for each and every one of you.

In this Report, I could recount many highlights going back over the 12 years we have been together. In this length of time, just like a family, we would have times of great laughter and times of deep sorrow. Some of it would encourage us while other parts would challenge us deeply. In 12 years, we have had just about every possible experience we could expect. But one thing I hold onto, and one thing I believe is accurate, is this: It has made us better, it has helped us grow, and God has used it all for what He is forming us into.

As you listen tonight to the Reports of our wonderful team and those you have chosen to lead: you will hear praises and we will rejoice. But you will also hear challenges, and I pray you will be moved. May God use this entire evening to speak His will, to refine His people, and to help us fulfill what He has for us in mission.

This past year, I am elated about our intention to see Evangelism and Outreach develop, expand, and grow. I feel and sense a new wave of passion to engage this community and the entire Crystal Coast. I believe people, and this church, is being formed and prepared to go out in even greater waves in the seasons and years to come. Not just in new patterns, but in reinvigorating some things we have been doing.

- Our relationship with other churches, including our sister church, Crystal Coast Church of the Nazarene in Morehead City, has seen a flourishing renewal. Pastor Justin and I are meeting regularly, and I believe in the next 30 days, you will hear of more combined efforts to gel at special events, ministry happenings, and in the work God has placed before us.

- Project Galilee (going into its 6th year), and last year's 1st Annual Coastal Revival, had far and deep reaching impact that we are looking to build on.
- 2 New Lay Minister's Licenses were approved and issued – after several years of no new applicants.
- Continuation of our presence at Jarrett Bay Boatworks and the chaplaincy ministry there – of which, you are a part.
- Our relationship to further involve ourselves with the DownEast Women's Shelter, EZRA Ministries, Mission Navigation, Martha's Mission, and the local school system in the coming year – is strong. We need to be a part of this effort in ministering to needs, real needs, as much as possible.
- Our partnership with Noe Funeral Home, and Chris Noe especially – which is a blessing in more ways than I can count. I am thankful for this, with you, to be able to offer these facilities to help families in a place of need for services and visitations; for after service fellowship meals and a place where people can have memories that endure.
- An incredible finish to the 2017-2018 Church Year as far as being faithful to our budgets, our allocations, and to investing in ministry. God has blessed us, and we are grateful for the resources He has/is providing. Your faithfulness and obedience to God, in the areas of time, talents, treasure, and touch shines forth and testifies to the faithfulness and obedience of this body.
- The Prayer Drive Thru Ministry is new, and it may take a little while to further develop, but I am just humbled that we have willing hearts and hands to keep at it. To come here or to go elsewhere, once a month to bless others, to reach others, to shine light on others, is a sign that we care about the people of Beaufort, of this community, of the county. I believe the best days of this ministry are coming.
- In February, at our Leadership Workshop – we had people engaged for the entire session. Asking questions. Developing strategy. Wanting to improve. Clarifying vision. My prayer is that everyone here, each and every person at Bridgeway Church of the Nazarene, will find ways to get connected, stay plugged in, and be involved in sharing the Good News.

I could go on and on. But the key elements of our Vision, to be a place where you, where others can **BELIEVE, BELONG, and BECOME** is an essential piece of everything we do. From the oldest chartered member to the newest conversion, from the wisest leader to those not even here yet, I believe this community of faith is positioned to extend reach.

Our Mission ***“to go into all the world and make disciples of all people”*** comes out of the compelling presence of Christ's love. We go because He went. We invest because He was fully invested. We love others because He loved them, first. Our philosophy isn't, and can never be, to wait for others to find us, or to wait for others to come to us. We are and we must further become people who go, who go seek, who go and search in order to bring people in to His eternal Kingdom.

I don't apologize for emphasis on bettering the church atmosphere, and I don't apologize for the desire to see Bridgeway Church thrive in the areas of evangelism, discipleship, physical growth, and outreach. These are so essential to overcoming complacency and the status quo.

A few of my goals, personally, for the 2018-2019 Church Year are:

- To see a more concerted effort toward improving communications through all the means we use, and witnessing more engagement with you (the church) and with others (the community) on an ongoing basis.
- To invest in more equipping and training, to prepare the entire church to “go out and make disciples.” This must start with putting focus on the areas of: evangelism, inviting others, and missional emphasis. For the 1st time in 6 years, we will host a Fall 2018 Workshop tailored to this task.
- To put whatever is necessary toward streamlining ministry decisions and making Bridgeway “user-friendly” toward church events, non-church events that bring people in, and other plans and programs

that will introduce people (of all ages) to the church in practical ways.

- To see 20 precious souls converted to a saving faith in Jesus Christ, for the 1st time, and to see 20 precious souls recommit to His Lordship after seemingly slipping away. In conjunction with this: to see at least 10 people come forward for public baptism.

And finally, as we all know by now: A compilation of various Projects have been assimilated in the past few months, examined, and put together in a Project List Update. Many of the items detailed vary in scale and scope, with a dozen requiring skilled experience and knowledge in areas like: Electrical; HVAC; Plumbing; and Roofing. While a handful are related to basic general repair, painting, and housekeeping – sadly, much of the list remains and has been on the list for a year or two.

I am not sure what, if anything, I can say to help motivate giving towards these items or actual motivation to get them resolved. But for the past few weeks now, God has given me the peace that passes the lack of understanding. So I am praying deeply concerning the projects and work that is needed to preserve the facilities here and protect against further deterioration. I simply invite you to pray with me as we seek to finalize each item on the list.

We are in need of some repairs.
We are in need of some new equipment.
We need to get some work done – right here.

Let us be found to be “good stewards” and “faithful workers” to what God has entrusted to us. We can’t expand expansion and physical growth until we show that we are obedient with what we have right now.

This evening, I hope you have come in anticipation. I hope you have come with great expectancy. I hope you have come not as a spectator or as a fan, but as participant as we move forward. In every area of our ministries: your gifts are needed and wanted.

Find a new place to get involved. Sign-up for the rotation in your area of passion. Dig in and make an impression for our Lord. Give some time and talent to spur on others. The opportunities are many and we are delighted to be shoulder to shoulder with you. In fact, we are better together, now and for all eternity.

Humbly submitted,

Pastor Porter R. Graves, III

Lead Pastor