

Hearing From God
A Journal of My Journey

Forward in Faith

MOMENTUM



That the World May Know

modesto **covenant** church

mission • Christ • community





Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, so that there may be food in My house, and test Me now in this, says the LORD of hosts, if I will not open for you the windows of heaven and pour out for you a blessing until it overflows.

– Malachi 3:10

Dear Modesto Covenant Church Family,

Whether you have been a part of our church for decades or even just a few months, I believe that this is an exciting and thrilling time in our journey together as a church. I am convinced that the Lord is calling us to seek Him and anticipate His kingdom work like never before.

We have seen God do amazing things in our presence. Children, youth, and adults have come to faith in Jesus Christ. We are growing as disciples of Christ. Greater and greater numbers are being equipped to serve in ministry and mission. The hurting are being comforted. The imprisoned are being set free. God's kingdom is advancing locally and globally.

"If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit.... This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples." John 15:5-8

The key to seeing the Lord move in our church and in our world is remaining in Christ – hearing from God and responding in obedience. I want to invite you to join me in the next six weeks in seeking the Lord for the future of our church, that we might together bear much fruit.

Seeking His kingdom,

Pastor Mark Krieger

HISTORY

The history of our church shows God's faithfulness in carrying out our mission and vision.

In 1958 Modesto Covenant Church began with 28 people meeting in a farmhouse. As the ministries grew, there was also a need for additional facilities. The original sanctuary (now Pearson Hall and Building B) was completed in 1959. An educational wing and social hall (Building C) was built in 1964.

Our current sanctuary was finished in 1976. Additional classrooms were also acquired in 1980 from the purchase of two-story dormitories from Castle Air Force Base (Building D).



Through these 56 years of ministry, Modesto Covenant has been a faithful witness to the Modesto community and the world. We have continued to have vibrant ministries to children, youth, and adults, leading people to become disciples of Jesus Christ. In

1996 Lighthouse Preschool began. Today more than 100 children attend our preschool. In 1999 the Bridge Covenant Church in Riverbank began as a church plant from Modesto Covenant Church. In 2009 we sent off more people from our church to plant Covenant Grove Church on the east side of Modesto.

Modesto Covenant Church has a rich history. We honor our past and anticipate our future!



MISSION & VISION

“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.”

Matthew 28:19-20

The mission of our church is to lead people to become fully devoted followers of Jesus Christ. We seek to accomplish our mission through our three core values:

MISSION CHRIST COMMUNITY



MISSION – *reaching people with the gospel*

Reaching people with the gospel through mission characterizes our life together. Mission begins by following Jesus into the world. Through friendships, sharing life together, and ministering to the needs of others we become ambassadors for Jesus Christ.

Our strong children's and youth ministry uniquely share the gospel of Jesus Christ. We also share the love of Jesus through Family Promise, Love Modesto, ministry at the Modesto Gospel Mission and Salvation Army, promoting Safe Families for Children, seeking justice, and simply loving our neighbor.

Supporting local and global mission financially and with our prayers is also important part of our discipleship. Our Mission Budget makes up more than 20% of our total budget expenditures each year. Many of us have also gone on short-term mission trips to follow God's call into the harvest field.

We seek to be a family on mission together.



MISSION & VISION

CHRIST – *growing as disciples of Christ*

Our vision for ministry could be summed up in one word: discipleship. Following Jesus is the life of discipleship. Our Sunday worship celebrations, Sunday Connections, Sunday School, small groups, mentoring relationships, and our daily devotional life lead to becoming followers of Jesus.

Modesto Covenant Church uniquely seeks to follow Jesus as a multigenerational church family. We worship together and grow together as a church family.

CHRIST is at the center of all that we do.

COMMUNITY – *loving one another in community*

Jesus said that all people will know that you are my disciples if you have love for one another (John 13:35). We are a community characterized by love. We extend the same love and grace toward each other that we have received from God.

We find community in our church often through our Sunday Connections, small groups, and ministry teams. Some events like the KOA Campout and church picnics also promote community. Ministries of compassion like Stephen Ministry, Divorce Care, Grief Share and our Deaconess Ministry provide care for the community.



MASTER PLAN

As faithful stewards, we desire to continue to bear much fruit. We want our church to be a place of vibrant kingdom ministry to the next generation of Jesus followers. To this end, we recognize that our current facilities are aging and not adequate for our ministry needs. It has been:

- 38 years since we built our current sanctuary;
- 50 years since Building C was completed;
- 29 years since Building D was refurbished from being used barracks;
- 55 years since Building B was originally constructed, and 23 years since it was upgraded.

The Master Plan is not just about facility. The ministry of our church is about making disciples of Jesus Christ. We believe that our current facility will limit and lessen our future ministry if we do not step out in faith with a new Master Plan.

With much prayer and extensive input from the congregation, our leadership has put together our facilities Master Plan. The Master Plan will enable growth in our ministries to children, youth, and adults. Phase 1 of the Master Plan will include:

- Remodeling our sanctuary for multipurpose use;
- Construction of a large “3rd Space” foyer for gatherings and fellowship;
- Construction of a two-story children’s classroom building to replace Building B; providing new nursery and children’s classrooms as well as adult classrooms upstairs.

The Master Plan also includes a Phase 2 that will replace Building C with a new two-story Youth Building, with additional classrooms on the 2nd floor.

IMMEDIATE NEED

We believe that these facilities improvements are necessary to reach people with the gospel of Jesus Christ for this generation and generations to come.

The immediate need we are seeking is to pursue Phase 1. The projected cost for Phase 1 is approximately \$4.2 million.





"I tell you, open your eyes and look at the fields! They are ripe for harvest. Even now the one who reaps draws a wage and harvests a crop for eternal life."

John 4 : 35 - 36

ASK

The Bible is replete with accounts of special campaigns initiated by God to expand ministry and outreach.

There are five notable campaigns recorded in the Old Testament. They are:

1. The campaign to build the tabernacle.
2. The campaign to conquer and settle Canaan.
3. The campaign to build the temple.
4. The campaign to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.
5. The campaign to rebuild the temple.



In each of these, four distinctive things occurred:

1. An entire nation focused their collective attention upon God in seeking His direction.
2. People came together in unity, exercising their spiritual gifts to expand God's work.
3. Personal spiritual renewal was realized in the lives of all those who were involved.
4. National spiritual revival followed the outpouring of God's blessing.

Because we are on a journey together, we must seek His leading as it relates to how He would have us be involved in this effort. We are asking one thing of each member and friend of this ministry: please skip one meal each week for six consecutive weeks, to seek the heart of God. We are asking you to use the time usually set aside to eat in order to fast, ask God questions, and listen to His responses.

AN INVITATION

Won't you join us for a journey of a lifetime!

SEEK THE LORD

Throughout history when godly men and women were desperate for God's intervention, they forsook food (fasted) and laid their needs before the throne of God. And often, during this dedicated time of prayer, God made clear His heart to those who asked (Acts 13:2,3).

National fasts were proclaimed in times of great trouble (2 Chronicles 20:3); individuals facing personal crisis paused from their routine to fast and plead their case before the God of Heaven (2 Samuel 12:16); and others needing clarity about the mind of God sought Him through fasting (Daniel 9:3). It was during fasting that God revealed to the early church His desire that Paul and Barnabas be set apart for ministry (Acts 13:2); and it was after a fast that these same men were released to take the gospel to *"the uttermost parts of the earth"* (Acts 13:3, 1:8). Jesus assumed that fasting would be common among those committed to Him, saying in the Sermon on the Mount, *"When you fast ..."* (Matthew 6:16).

What was a practice among godly men and women throughout the centuries has been lost to our generation. The idea of forsaking food for any length of time does not appeal in our fast-paced world where information on just about anything is readily available from a variety of sources other than the God of Heaven.



A COMMITMENT TO FAST

God has granted us a vision for expanded ministry. As we move forward in pursuit of that vision, we earnestly desire His continued involvement in all of our plans.

We are about to take a journey together as a congregation; an exciting journey wherein we will collectively seek the mind of God about how He would have each one of us involved at this important time in the future of our church. We benefit from the faith and work of those who have preceded us, and it is now our time to be faithful so that another generation can be granted the opportunity to embrace the salvation made available to us all through Christ.

The idea of fasting is new to many of us. In an effort to introduce fasting, we are asking our entire church to forsake only *one meal each week* for the next six weeks. Mark on your calendar your scheduled “Meal with God.” And, during what would have been your normal mealtime, we are suggesting to each one in our church to go before the Lord and ask specific direction about important spiritual issues relating to us as individuals and as the church. It is our hope that as God responds to our inquiries, we will choose to obey Him.



HEARING FROM GOD

“O Lord, hear me as I pray; pay attention to my groaning. Listen to my cry for help, my King and my God, for I pray to no one but you. Listen to my voice in the morning, Lord. Each morning I bring my requests to you and wait expectantly.”

– Psalm 5:1-3 (NLT)

Start Your Day “Hearing from God”

We have committed time in our campaign to ask each person in our church to make a fresh, new commitment to begin your day with God. We are encouraging you to pray, read devotionals, reflect on questions, and to journal to record reflections and responses.

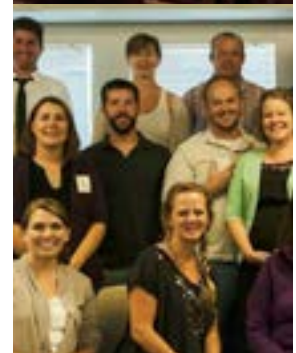
It is also our desire that the practices we are set to begin in the weeks ahead may become life-long spiritual disciplines that will continue to enrich us in our lives and in our relationship with God.

As we begin “Hearing from God”, we focus on becoming attuned to what God would like us to be sensitive to. That He may use the journey upon which we are about to embark to bring a new unity of purpose to His calling upon each of us. And, as this unity of purpose affects the calling for our lives, it will also affect the life of this church to which He has called us.

The “Hearing from God” weekly devotional series presented in this booklet, will be used for personal study and growth in combination with the **Momentum** sermon series topics:

- Momentum for the **Future**
- Momentum through **Reaching Out**
- Momentum through **Ministry / Serving**
- Momentum through **Giving**
- Momentum through **Prayer**
- Momentum through **Commitment**

Join us now, as we commit to set our hearts and minds on *Hearing from God*.



Scriptural Passage: Romans 12:3-8 (New American Standard Bible)

“For through the grace given to me I say to everyone among you not to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; but to think so as to have sound judgment, as God has allotted to each a measure of faith. For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, each of us is to exercise them accordingly: if prophecy, according to the proportion of his faith; if service, in his serving; or he who teaches, in his teaching; or he who exhorts, in his exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness.”

In the message today, faithfulness and ministry are linked together. As we were reminded, “We have different gifts, according to the grace given to us.” As we ponder today’s message, we realize the connection between serving and faithfulness. As we practice serving and grow deeper in our faith, the church and community benefit by our ministry and gifts, and the body of Christ reaches its highest potential.

Romans 12:3 notes, “as God has allotted to each a measure of faith.” Faith in Jesus Christ releases faith for living, which is demonstrated in the gifts given to each of us listed in the rest of the Romans passage. It is important to note that while God gives each of us gifts, it is our responsibility to develop them to their fullest potential by exercising them accordingly (Romans 12:6).

Faithfulness, then, is assuming responsibility for ourselves and the gifts God has invested in us, to identify them, develop them and use them for the cause of Christ through the local church. Synonyms of faithfulness in today’s language would include such concepts as responsibility, initiative, development, accountability, personal improvement, and active participation, to name a few. As we practice faithfulness by utilizing and participating in the use of our gifts to the body of Christ, faith grows stronger and stronger.

Faith and faithfulness demonstrate our partnership with God. As the saying goes, “Without Him we cannot. Without us, He will not.” Interestingly, in our faith development, it is important to note that anything God asks of us is doable. God doesn’t ask something which is beyond us. No, what He asks is well within the realm of our ability.

In our partnership with God, He always gives us the easy part and He always takes the hard part for Himself. He requires us to pray, read the Bible, give our tithes, attend church regularly, find a place to serve, and grow in maturity. All of which we can do. In response, He takes the hard part, such as answering prayer, working supernaturally, opening doors of opportunity, and demonstrating His power.

Faithfulness as described above leads to greater faith, trust and confidence in God.

Questions for Reflection:

- What are my top three spiritual gifts and where am I using them in the church?
- In the area of gifting, where do I struggle and do I know people with those gifts who could be a blessing to me?
- List two or three areas where you believe you are gifted and what steps you are taking to develop your gifts.

MY REFLECTIONS

MY RESPONSES

Scriptural Passage: Colossians 4:12 (New American Standard Bible)

“Epaphras, who is one of your number, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, sends you his greetings, always laboring earnestly for you in his prayers, that you may stand perfect and fully assured in all the will of God.”

The line from the old hymn, What A Friend We Have in Jesus, describes our “privilege to carry, everything to God in prayer.” One of the great joys and opportunities we have is the invitation to dialogue with God. Yet, how easy it is to procrastinate and miss the chance to spend quality time with Him. S. D. Gordon said, “You can do more than pray after you’ve prayed, but you cannot do more than pray until you have prayed.”

Our prayer life will become more effective when we acknowledge any personal limitations that prevent us from accomplishing what God has placed in our hearts, whether talent, resources, wisdom, creativity, influence, intelligence, or favor. However, our limitations don’t affect Jesus. He told His disciples, “With Me, nothing is impossible.” So we surrender everything to Him, choosing to depend wholly on our limitless God to accomplish what He has planned.

Interestingly enough, Colossians 4:12 tells us that Epaphras was an effective follower of Christ because he was “always laboring earnestly for you in his prayers.” The phrase “laboring earnestly” is the Greek phrase, which gives us the English word, “agonizing.” Epaphras was one who agonized with God in prayer. Is it possible that the reason many people spend too much time and energy upset about life is because they have spent too little time agonizing with God in prayer?

The same hymn quoted earlier notes, “Oh, what peace we often forfeit, oh, what needless grief we bear, all because we do not carry, everything to God in prayer.” Life becomes much easier when we spend time talking with God. Here are just a few of prayer’s benefits:

- Strength to keep going
- Peace in our hearts
- Answers for facing life’s problems
- Wisdom to know what to do
- Resources to accomplish God’s will
- God’s nearness to keep us company

When you spend time in prayer with God, you can know with assurance, “I talked to God today ... and it made a huge difference.”

Questions for Reflection:

- What personal obstacles prevent me from praying?
- What are some of my answers to prayer?
- What other benefits can be gained in prayer?
- What is God saying to me at this moment?

MY REFLECTIONS

MY RESPONSES



modesto *covenant* church

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Let's gain momentum together!

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