



Bellevue

BAPTIST CHURCH

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Dear Prayer Partner,

This is Joel Creekmore, your church planter in Bellevue, Washington. It's been a while since I have given an update and for that I apologize. Last update we were still in COVID online-only mode unsure of what the future would bring. As we entered the summer it became clear that the risks associated with COVID were not what we were led to believe and not enough to forbid the assembly of the local church. At the end of June, we prayerfully decided to open the church back up for in person services although our county was still shut down for that type of activity. Although for some there was an uneasiness in being in a group for the first time in several months, there was an overwhelming sense of joy in being able to assemble. It seems that this time of online only church services has really cemented in many people's minds the value of local assembly and while I wouldn't want to do it again, I am grateful for that.

We continue to meet for in person services although our county is still only allowing 25% capacity for religious services. Most of our members have come back to normal church attendance. We have several older at-risk individuals that have decided to continue online for the time being and we understand, but we miss them.

In September we had seven of our church members contract COVID. One of them was my youngest son, who is still living at home. Because of this we had to go back to online only services for two weeks to ensure that no one else would become infected. Thankfully nobody experienced severe symptoms and after two weeks we were able to meet again in person. Rather than hiding and stopping normal life, managing the virus and outbreaks seem to be what is necessary as we return to life.

Over the last couple of weeks, we have had several people inquire about baptism and church membership. Both individuals found us online and have watched online services. Please pray with us as we seek to build relationships and walk through biblical doctrine with them.

We had our 4th anniversary in September but we had to move it back a week as we were on COVID quarantine. It wasn't extravagant but it was a great opportunity to be reminded of God's faithfulness and getting us to 4 years. That milestone also means that we have less than a year left on our lease for our church space. Our building was purchased and will most likely be developed sometime in the future, so I contacted a commercial real estate agent that specializes in nonprofits and religious organizations. I gave him the details of what we need, and the budget and he told us that there wasn't anything in Bellevue. The church prayed and we spoke to the owners of our current space and they are willing to extend our current lease until the end of 2024. This is a huge answer to prayer and a blessing! We have a lot of money invested in this space and although I wish we would have outgrown it by now, we haven't. I am so grateful to be able to have a location to meet. As a further blessing, I personally guaranteed our last lease and I will be taken off for the extension with just the church as the lessee. That is a relief.

Lastly, we have had the privilege of having Nick Tallarita as our church planting intern over the last 2 years. He and his wife Aleah have been a huge blessing to our small church, but his commitment is over, and it is time for Brother Nick to move to a new opportunity. With this, we will be losing staff, but we are also excited to be looking for another intern/staff member. We don't have any salary to offer, but we have plenty of opportunity. I am thankful that there are still young men and women that have a desire to serve the Lord and are willing to do so regardless of compensation. We are excited about the opportunity to invest in more young people that desire to serve Christ.

I know that this time has been crazy and challenging for all. We appreciate your continued prayers and giving even amid these trying times. Thank you and God bless.

In Christ,

Joel Creekmore