



Hello, Connect Church Family and Friends!

The Staff and Elders at Connect pray that you are continuing to be blessed by the real hope of Jesus in spite of the circumstances caused by this pandemic. We all confidently await what God will accomplish in 2021, and we look forward to the time when we can return to living more closely in relationship and fellowship as God designed.

This is normally the time of year when we would present the annual budget for Connect. As you might imagine, the budget that was presented last year for 2020 was developed without any understanding of the global pandemic that was coming. We are so thankful to God for all of you who faithfully gave to support the ministries of Connect and allowed us to meet the annual giving budget last year! We work hard every day to exercise diligent stewardship, recognizing how blessed we are through your giving. There was very little that could have prepared any of us well for what was to come in 2020. The pandemic brought chaos and confusion, especially at the outset. As we all gradually began to understand what we were dealing with, a few themes quickly developed. We learned that we would need to embrace flexibility to adapt to wildly changing circumstances. We also learned to live with a lack of visibility, since conditions continued to quickly evolve.

As we embrace the possibilities of 2021, there is still a great deal that is yet unknown. It's important that we all continue to focus on that which is permanent and immovable, GOD'S SOVEREIGNTY AND HIS LOVE! These things allow us to keep an eternal perspective while living through temporary chaos. It is with this spirit of hope and trust, and this recognition of temporary unclear horizons that we approached Connect's annual budget.

No one knows exactly how, when and to what extent circumstances will change in 2021. In this environment, attempting to set an annual budget may prove to be a mistake. We need to exercise the flexibility and adaptability we learned throughout 2020 until the picture gets clearer in 2021. Accordingly, we have been in earnest discussion and prayer about our budgeting approach for this year. Below is a brief outline of how we have agreed to move forward for the time being:

- Rather than determining a budget in advance through December 2021, we will be building individual budgets for each month.
- We will approve those budgets 3 months at a time and will report to you quarterly.
- Decisions on expansion of ministry efforts and activities, as always, will be made possible only by the generous giving of our Connect family and friends. Thank you in advance for your obedience in answering God's call for generous giving in 2021 and beyond.
- We will continue to practice excellent stewardship, being careful to invest in efforts that have the most impact.

After much prayer and discussion, we feel that this approach reflects the most wisdom and discernment for the near term. We are excited about the opportunities in front of us to have greater and greater impact in our community, especially in this time when people need the real hope and the real love of Jesus more than ever. For all who continue to faithfully give to Connect's ministries, we are profoundly grateful that God has blessed us through your faithfulness and generosity! YOU are this church. We look forward with great anticipation to what God can accomplish through this Connect family in 2021!

Connect's Leadership Team

March 1, 2021