

## **STATE OF THE CHURCH QUARTERLY UPDATE – Forestgate PCA**

*(Pastor Matt gave the following report to the congregation on Sunday, Oct. 16 before both worship services.)*

Good morning, once a quarter after the elders and deacons have a joint meeting (which we did a week and a half ago) they ask me to give a State of the Church Report on several items of interest to the church.

We have not had a “normal” year of fellowship and events in a while, but we hope that this year (especially this fall) is feeling more normal. We’ve already had a church picnic, a barn dance, and a men’s retreat. In addition to that, I want to mention several fellowship events and holidays services that are upcoming, especially around Thanksgiving and Christmas:

First, what’s happening around Thanksgiving?

1) Sun, Nov 20 – Chili Cookoff and Advent Kickoff – in the evening.

2) Wed, Nov 23 – Thanksgiving Eve service and Pie Social, 7pm. This is an annual event, and a great time to share testimonies of Thanksgiving, sing Thanksgiving hymns, and then eat pie together.

3) On Sunday, Nov. 27, there will be no Sunday School at the Christian Education Team’s request; Fellowship Team will provide food between services. Worship Service times will stay the same – 830am and 11am.

Then a few weeks later, we’ll have a lot of Christmas-related events, but I only want to highlight two things:

We will have **two Christmas Eve services, 4pm and 530pm** – The 4pm one is usually the high attendance one.

We will also have **two Christmas Day services**; Christmas is on a Sunday this year. Those two Christmas Day services will be at **slightly different times: 915am and 11am**. There will be no Sunday School, and no plans for food between services because we assume folks will want to get home to family on Christmas. But we do want to worship together on the day when we celebrate the Lord’s birth.

We know you may not come to all of those events. We hope you’ll take advantage of as many of those opportunities for fellowship and worship as you can.

Other things of note in the life of our church: Pray for our Assistant Pastor Search Committee (APSC). We’ll give an update when it’s best, but we’re still reviewing candidates and encouraged by that process and the candidates. Also, the pastoral staff are managing well but staying busy in this season. We appreciate your prayers, and we want to thank all of our volunteers. The list is lengthy. A partial list is available every Sunday at the end of the service. There’s a slide that recognizes all of the volunteers from that particular Sunday that pops up on the screen right after the benediction. That may be a small gesture on our part, but we hope it shows something of our appreciation for the many Godly servants who make Forestgate go. Thank you once again.

Lastly, a brief update on finances. Long-term finances are very good. We’re debt-free with money in the bank to cover several months of operating costs. In the short-term, we’ve seen some downturn in giving. We are aware of the state of the economy. That may affect some more than others. Of course, we hope you’ll continue to be generous to the church, or start being generous, if you’re not currently giving a portion of your income to the work of the church here at Forestgate. If the members of a local presbyterian church don’t support her, who will? However, let’s take a big

**step back.** A few years ago, we saw **record giving** at Forestgate in a year that involved both a capital campaign (which was in addition to that record giving to the general fund) and a pandemic. We had a few years where we planned to possibly dip into our savings account in case COVID negatively affected our giving. We never had to dip into our savings account, aka, our operating reserves. God's people outgave our modest expectations, and you've done it again and again. So, yes, it's worth mentioning a recent downturn in giving, but I think it's also worth mentioning years and years of faithfulness – from God and from God's people. Thank you for that, and, more importantly, praise the Lord. Let's ask God to continue to be faithful to us, and let's expect great things from God and attempt great things for God. Thank you.

*Dr. Matt Giesman, Senior Pastor of Forestgate*