

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ

May, 2021

A few weeks ago I wrote a pastoral letter naming various layers of loss Highland Church has experienced in recent years. The purpose was not to discourage, but rather to cast all our cares on God. We trust him to provide us with comfort, strength and bright hope!

In turn it is fitting to focus on all the strengths and assets which our church possesses. The purpose is not to boast, but rather to be encouraged. It is clear that God has blessed our congregation with terrific resources which should provide us confidence for Highland's future and spark dreams of what God can do in us and through us.

Here are key strengths and assets I have observed:

- 1 Highland Church is unified in resting on God's Word, holding out the gospel of Jesus, and living in the power of the Holy Spirit. This firm foundation is the one thing necessary for any church to grow and flourish.
- 2 Highland Church is full of wonderful people. First and foremost the church is God's people. I have been deeply impressed with the love, warmth, energy, talents and commitment of our church family! It seems no matter what the need- whether for musicians or ministry helpers or a facility project- there is someone with the ability and availability to meet that need.
- 3 Highland is a multi-generational congregation. Our church family includes young and old. Many churches struggle to attract younger families. Young families are a great strength of ours.
- 4 Highland Church has experienced leadership. Many men have served as elders or deacons. Many men and women are providing leadership with our programs: Children in Worship, Sunday School, GEMS, Centershot, Xtreme, Strong Tower, MOPS, Ladies Bible Study etc. While we have gone through some rough waters recently, our leaders have faithfully carried on with our important ministries.
- 5 Highland Church has a capable staff team. Sara Bruno brings first-rate training, skills and warmth to her role as our Administrative Assistant. Cary Sikkema and Mallory Vander Meulen keep our building and grounds clean and looking good. Shari Benthem ably keeps our finances and accounting in good order. Perhaps we will add a youth director soon. It is a blessing to have a fine staff team, where each one makes their special contribution to our shared mission.
- 6 Highland Church has a fine, spacious, attractive building. Along with the youth center, our facilities are adequate for all our needs: worship, fellowship, education, staff offices etc. It is wonderful to see our facility serve as a hub for ministry and some community activities throughout the week.

7 Highland has solid financial footing. Our \$300,000 budget provides for a full-time pastor, a part-time staff team, many programs, and the stewardly care of our building and grounds. Further, I believe God has blessed us with the resources to give even more, so that we can expand programs or develop new ministries in the future.

Jesus said: **From the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.** (Luke 12:48) All the assets God has granted us are great reason for thanksgiving! And they are a challenge and responsibility- to use them well for his sake. I trust and pray that in coming years Highland Church will use its God-given strengths to please God, build each other up, and bless our community!