

NEXT

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You know, we've been telling you that we're calling today Vision Sunday, right? We're looking ahead to what God has next for us here at Champion Forest. To get our minds and hearts right, over the last several weeks we've been looking at our focus priorities as a church family.

I told you there was going to be a test over the priorities. The test is here. It's this morning. There are two questions and a bonus question. You can cheat off your neighbor if you need to, but I'm going to ask you to help fill in the blanks as we read through our focus statement here at Champion Forest.

Champion Forest advances the kingdom by making disciples, by loving our community, and, bonus, by strengthening the church.

There we go. One hundred percent so far.

The Great Commitment

We've hit the first two focus priorities over the past several weeks. The third, strengthening the church, is what we're going to drill down on this morning.

You can call this a lot of things. We like to call strengthening the church the Great Commitment. Scripturally, you can find it in Matthew chapter 25 as Jesus walks through the parable of the talents. You can find it in Luke 12 as well, as Jesus shares a parable about how you and I are to steward our lives.

Jesus calls for us to use, or to steward, what God has entrusted to us in a faithful, wise, and strategic way. Jesus closes the parable in Luke 12:48. Look at what He says:

Everyone to whom much was given, of him much will be required, and from him to whom they entrusted much, they will demand the more.

— Luke 12:48

When you consider the parable of the talents and just think about our church family as we gather together and look around the room, seeing all the people God brings into this church family, you could say that Champion Forest is a five-talent church.

Think about what God's entrusted to us. Think about the abundance of resources God collects right here in our church family. Think about the abundance of people gathered here, with diverse backgrounds, gifts, mixes, personalities, and influence around our community. Think about the opportunities, the ministries, the influence,

and the privileges God has entrusted to this local body of believers that a lot of churches never really experience.

The driving question behind this focus priority of strengthening the church is this: What are we doing with what God has entrusted to us?

I want to encourage you, and maybe remind you, that a lot of you serve so well and so often. As a church family, we are doing our absolute best to faithfully steward what God has entrusted to us.

I want you to think about how we're working all the time to invest in the kingdom of God right here within our church family, but also outside the four walls that make up these campuses. Think about where we are invested as a church family, not just here.

Think about our missions program and the number of missionaries and missions we are partnered with all around the world, 365 days a year. We do it right here, from our church family to the world.

Think about the residency program we've got. We've got 25 residents right now, young men and young women plugged into our church family, some for one year and some for two years. They're learning what it looks like to be a pastor, a teacher, a student pastor, a kids minister, or a worship leader. They're going to be launched out to serve on staffs and in full-time ministry at churches around our country.

Think about our church planting and pastor resource arm. We call it CF Connect. We talk about that in here a lot. It's about strengthening the church. When I say that, I'm talking about the big-C Church, not the little-c church. You know the difference, right? The little-c church would be our local congregation. We are a little-c church. When we say "strengthen the church," we're talking about the big-C Church, all churches everywhere, doing what we can to invest in them for the sake of the kingdom.

Just two weeks ago, through HCPN, we hosted nearly 500 pastors, teachers, and worship leaders right here on our campus for a day of training, worship, and fellowship in partnership with the Houston Church Planting Network. That's a ministry we support every Sunday as you and I and our families give our tithes and offerings. We support this missional arm here in our city.

Why do we do that? It's part of strengthening the global, or the big-C, Church. We know that a strong little-c church, a strong local church, makes the universal Church so much stronger and more effective.

This morning, I want to talk to you about what we believe is next for our Champion Forest family. It will no doubt help us become a stronger local church, a more effective local church, and, in turn, help us fulfill our obligation and responsibility to strengthen the universal Church of our Lord Jesus Christ.

What I'm about to share with you, Pastor Jarrett and I have shared in various settings over the last nearly six months or so. Some of you have heard the presentation that I'm about to make. There might be a couple of people in here who have heard this more than once. But for the majority of you present today, you're going to hear a lot of this information for the very first time.

I fully understand that I'm going to cover a lot this morning. I might talk faster than I normally talk on a Sunday

morning. I'm aware. So if you miss something or if I go too fast through something, you're going to get this book as you leave today that's full of details on what we're calling Next. We've got a booth out there in the atrium that can answer questions, and a website with videos. All of it is there. Just know that I'm going to move a little bit fast as we go through it.

Now that you know that, I want to talk about what's coming next at Champion Forest.

A Church Birthed in Faith

I want to emphasize that word "next," because for over 50 years, Champion Forest has been in Northwest Houston, going by faith and making a difference for the cause of Christ right here in this community.

This is a church family, a body of believers, that was birthed in faith. It was birthed with a desire to reach people for Jesus and to do something great for God.

In our offices, we have what you might call a time capsule, just a bunch of church history stuff back there dating all the way back to 1968 and 1969, when the idea of Champion Forest was first being birthed. Our first senior pastor's name was Robin Guess.

Robin wasn't from this area. Robin was a pastor at First Baptist Church of Navasota, just north of here. As a hobby, or maybe a part-time job, he took pictures. He was a photographer, and he was hired by the Navasota Examiner, the local newspaper, to come to Houston in 1969 to cover the U.S. Open Golf Tournament.

Anybody know where it was held? Champions Golf Club, right? It was held at Champions Golf Club.

If you've been to Champions Golf Club, you're about to hear that that golf course had a major part in the forming of our church family.

He came to do that in 1969. I've got a question for you. You don't have to answer if you don't want to. Raise your hand if you were not yet born in 1969.

Okay, just like the first service, the majority of the room.

In 1969, our first pastor came down here and covered the golf tournament, and he was blown away by what he saw. When he went back home, he told his wife, Janie. Here's her quote. Janie said, "Robin related to me all the wonderful things that he'd seen and how Champion Forest Drive was going to be a major thoroughfare someday, and that this area needed a church."

They saw a need in our community. When we talked two weeks ago about the Good Samaritan and loving your neighbor, what did we say about believers? Believers don't move toward comfort. Believers move toward the need.

So Robin and Janie did. They packed up their lives. They packed up their family. They moved down to Houston to plant a church.

Opening Sunday morning, guess how many people were there? Six people. Five of them had the last name

Guess: Robin, his wife, and their three kids. Number six was the worship leader who was there that first Sunday to kick them off.

Think for a minute. Six people. Look around. Think about the first service. Think about Spanish Saturday night. Think about what's going on at our Champions Campus right now. All of that from six people.

This church was birthed in faith.

Then, a few years later, as God continued to reach the community through our church family in its early days, Pastor Robin Guess preached at the grand opening of the first building that was built on the original campus back in the neighborhood of Greenwood Forest.

If you've never been there before, take Champion Forest Drive south of 1960. A mile or two up on the right, you'll see a church right there. That's where we first started meeting in a permanent building.

On that celebration morning, listen to a line from Robin Guess's sermon. Here's what he said: "Believe me, if we yield to the temptation to sit back and take it easy, even for one day, if we relax as a church family even for one week, we're going to tend to become like the church in Laodicea."

That's referencing the words of Jesus in Revelation chapter 3, as Jesus described the dangers of becoming a lukewarm church.

Pastor Guess continued and said, "I pray to God that we shall never be a lukewarm church. Let us pray fervently that the influence of Laodicea will not encroach upon our blessed fellowship."

God bless Robin Guess. Right from the very beginning, this is just who we are as a church family at Champion Forest. It's always been the desire of this family to move by faith and to attempt great things for the glory of God. We're not called to sit back. We're not called to take it easy.

It wasn't just Robin Guess. It was our next pastor, Dean Shook. Many of you know him well. He built on this foundation and desire to reach the world for Christ.

Listen to Pastor Shook's challenge to our church family in 1981. Let me ask that again: Who was not yet born in 1981 in the room this morning?

All right, still a good number of us. I just want everybody to see that this has been happening in our church for a very, very long time. These bold moves for the gospel happened before a lot of us were even here.

Pastor Shook said in 1981, "Do you want to do something great to make a difference in Houston and the world? Then put your first emphasis, your first prayers, your first energy, your first dollars where Jesus Christ put His concern and commission: His body of believers. For you and me, this means Champion Forest Baptist Church."

The call to go and do something great for God, to be faithful stewards, to invest in the kingdom, to make a difference, to steward what we've got for the glory of God and not just the glory of self, and to reach Houston and the world has marked our church from the very beginning.

Pastor Robin Guess, Dean Shook, and David Fleming said it over and over again.

In 2008, as our church family was in a season of growth and expansion, David Fleming said this: "Will we do whatever it takes to keep reaching people for Christ? Each of us will make an impact with our lives and the resources that God has and that God will provide. I pray that you will respond with a confident and faith-filled yes, so that together we can make an impact for Him for every generation."

That's why we're calling this Next. What I'm presenting today is just the next chapter in a rich history of a faithful church family. It's not a new direction, not a new story, not a new book. It's just a new chapter of doing what we've always done and being who we've always been.

I love that our students were in here. They had this front section filled up in the first service. They're here from Freedom Weekend. Our young people are hearing now what the generations before them did to invest in them so that they could experience it now. Our prayer is that they would hear it, see it, know it, and participate in it so they can do the same for those coming after them.

From Northwest Houston to the World

With that being said, let me introduce you to Next.

You'll see in the tagline that we're calling it "Next: From Northwest Houston to the World."

As Pastor Jarrett prayed over the last year or so about the direction of our church, God put that phrase on his heart: "From Northwest Houston to the world." The more he prayed about it and the more he began to discuss it with our team, the more we knew God had uniquely positioned our church family to do just that: to reach people here in Northwest Houston and, ultimately, around the world with the good news of Jesus.

As the vision for Next began to grow and was talked about more and more, the team for Next began to expand. We put together a team of 25 or so people from our church family, from the North Klein Campus and the Champions Campus, in English and Spanish, and people who serve across all areas of our church.

You'll see the names on the screen behind me. I believe Rayanne is up there, Heather from North Klein, Ray, Jonathan, Carla Knight, and then Eric Weiss, all from here on our North Klein Campus. As you see them in the weeks ahead, thank them for their work, all of their meetings, and their prayer as we've pored over what God has next for us as a church family.

We shared with them early on that a driving verse behind this comes from Isaiah 54:2. This is the Old Testament. I want you to hear what God says to His people:

*Enlarge the place of your tent,
and let the curtains of your habitations be stretched out;
do not hold back;
lengthen your cords
and strengthen your stakes.*

— Isaiah 54:2

This is God speaking through His prophet Isaiah to the people of Israel. Again, it's in the Old Testament, and this is a word that was coming to the people of Israel, not in a season of growth. This is not in a season of expansion. This is not a joy-filled, good time for the people of Israel.

This is a season when they're being driven toward exile, where they are suffering the consequences of their disobedience. Even as they go toward exile, when many of them are far from home in the nation of Babylon, God is saying to them that restoration is going to be possible.

God is saying that His hand of blessing and His promises are not being pulled back. They're not going away. They're still true. God is telling them that something is coming in the future. He's telling them that something new is on the horizon. He's saying, "Prepare for the growth you haven't seen yet. Prepare for the blessing that's going to come."

The language, of course, reflects the nomadic lifestyle of the day. Look at it. What does God say? He says, "Enlarge your tent." What's that mean? It means make room. In our language, it's, "Put another wing on the house." Make room for the blessing and for the people who are going to come.

God says, "Stretch out your curtains." What's He saying? He's saying, "Don't limit the space. Go as wide as you physically are able to go."

He's saying, "Lengthen the cords. Anchor down. Strengthen the stakes." He's saying, "Go deep and place an anchor down, trusting God to move."

Essentially, God's saying, "Get ready." He's saying to get ready by going deep and wide.

Anybody sing that song as a kid at VBS? "Deep and wide." Somebody broke out in song in the first service. Thanks for not doing that in here.

It's a verse that's calling the people of Israel to anticipate God moving. Think about that. They're to anticipate a mighty move of God, and as they anticipate God moving, they get ready for God to move.

In the same way, as we plan and pray for God to move, we want to get ready for God to move.

Listen, if you've been around here for the past couple of years, you've already seen God move in a profound way. Think about just our worship services over the past three years. There's a three-year growth trajectory for our Champions and North Klein campuses just in worship alone.

A growing church in the United States is said to be growing at a 2 to 3 percent clip per year. Look at what God's done in our worship services here between these two campuses. It's unreal. This just isn't happening in churches around the nation right now. God's moving in a really special way right here.

In the first service earlier this morning, we had to pull chairs out and put them along the back wall because there weren't enough seats at our 9:30 service today. Listen, that's happening more and more. That's happened at 11:00 a few times as well. We're seeing God move in a really, really special way.

It's in our life groups too. Think about that. It's one thing to come and sit down here in a service, but think

about getting plugged into a life group class and the number of new people who have been plugged in just over the past couple of years. That means they're connected, they're being encouraged, they're being disciplined, and they're being poured into in a special way.

You see at North Klein the drop-off in the growth percentage in that last year. What happened in that last year? We ran out of space. We don't have any more life group rooms here on campus where we can start new groups and get new people plugged in.

Our kids ministry blew up and took a lot of the adult ministry classrooms, which we're thrilled about. That is a good problem to have. All of our problems around here are growing pains.

A lot of our adult life groups have moved down to Fox Elementary, and we're super grateful for the space. But we're in a season where more and more people are plugging in. I want to let you know that, as I go through this Next booklet here in just a minute, more space on this campus is a major part of the Next campaign here at Champion Forest.

With that being said, seeing where we've been and where we're going, know that Next is a capital campaign. Next is a generosity initiative. You can call it whatever you want, but it's a three-year campaign focused on five major projects here in our church family.

If you're new to Champion Forest and you've never been part of one of these before, or if you're new to church in general and you've never been part of one before, I'm going to explain what it is on a very basic level. I'm happy to answer any questions after the service. You can meet me at the Next booth if you want to see how these things work.

Every Sunday morning, my family, your family, and a lot of us give a tithe or an offering. We put it in the offering basket or we put it in that box. It's easier for my family to do it online. I don't have a checkbook, so it's a whole lot easier to do it that way.

When we give on a Sunday, that supports the ongoing ministry of our church family. It supports things like Freedom Weekend, with over a thousand students growing in their walk this past weekend. Our weekly gifts go toward that. It supports the ongoing ministry of our church and our widows' dinner tomorrow night at 5:30. Come to that if that fits your stage of life.

The ongoing ministry of our church is funded by our acts of worship through giving every Sunday morning. But when seasons like this come along, when we're experiencing growth and preparing for the future, these projects won't fit into the ongoing ministry budget of the church.

What we do, like a lot of churches do, is ask our church family to give over and above that tithe or offering to support the vision of the campaign. Like I said, this one has five specific projects.

Five Next Projects

Project number one of this Next initiative is a remodel or refresh of the worship center at our Champions Campus.

Our Champions Campus worship center was built in 2002. You know what else happened in 2002? I graduated high school. My parents didn't know if I would make it, but I did. I got through. Then I moved on to A&M and had a great four years there.

But here's the deal: If you walk into that worship center, you're going to notice something. They haven't changed the paint or the carpet since I graduated from high school. It's time.

The technology was last updated in 2012. Who has a phone in here from 2012? If you did, you wouldn't have a charger for it, right? The technology has changed. You couldn't plug it in anywhere.

That's what's going on in our worship center with a lot of the technology. It's at an end-of-life phase, and it's just time, almost 25 years later, for it to be remodeled and for a lot of those elements to be replaced.

The second aspect of the Next initiative is an expansion of our digital broadcast ministry.

There are so many elements to that. One is very practical and easy to see. Two weeks ago, CBS called and said, "Hey, the time slot opened up at 10:30 on Sunday mornings, right after Face the Nation and right before the football show. It's the best time slot we've got. Do you want it?"

We said, "Yes, please. Thank you very much."

We're excited about it, and we know people are going to see that and many will be driven to our local church family.

Someone was streaming online a few weeks ago, and they came and got baptized at our church within the past month. Their baptism day was their first Sunday on our campus. They found us online, began to watch, got saved, and showed up here at North Klein not too long after that to get baptized and plug into the church.

We know God works through digital media. All of you streamed something online this week. I have no doubt about it. You streamed something. You watched something on your phone, on a computer, on an iPad, or on a tablet. It's the way of the world.

This is going to open up a lot of doors, not just with our services being online, but also through an app called Pando. If you've never heard of it, it's fascinating. It allows worship services, music, and sermons to go into prison systems across the United States.

There's a hardware cost for that. There's a software cost for that. There's an airtime cost for that. But we know there are people who would not have access to a church and who would not have access to Christ-centered, biblical teaching apart from that. We want to be on it. We want to take that message to them there.

Part of this digital reach is in our Spanish ministry as well. You might be unaware of this if you don't speak Spanish, but our lead pastor in Spanish at Champion Forest is Ramón Medina. If you ever have a chance to sit down and talk with him, do it. He's an unbelievable guy.

He is a leading voice in the United States when it comes to preaching the gospel in Spanish. People from all over the world and all over our country fly in and come to Champion Forest. They sit down with Ramón to

learn from him, to see what he's doing, and to see how he leads in Spanish.

It is unbelievable, the gift and the anointing God has on his life. This digital broadcast expansion is going to allow his sermons and his voice to be broadcast far and wide to Spanish speakers, not only in the United States but throughout South America and Europe as well. It's an incredible, incredible way to let many more people hear the good news of Jesus.

That's the worship center remodel and the digital broadcast expansion. There's a lot more to say about that, but you can find it in the book.

The third project is one I'm excited about, and I know a lot of our life groups are excited about it. It's an expansion of our kids and adult life group, or discipleship, space right here on the North Klein Campus.

You saw that we ran out of room. Many of you are in a life group that meets every Sunday morning down the street at Fox Elementary. We are thrilled and thankful for the partnership we have with Klein ISD, but it is beyond time to have more space right here on our campus.

If you look at the master plan of our campus, and some of you were part of that when it was originally designed, you'll see a map of the campus. At the bottom right is that student building that was finished about two years ago right here on our campus.

Our student ministry has grown by almost 50 percent in the last couple of years. The space, "If you build it, they will come," continues to fill up. They've spilled out of that and into our multipurpose building as well, which we're thrilled about.

Next is going to cover that orange space, an expansion of the existing building to the west toward the road, to the tune of about 15,000 square feet.

A few notes on those numbers: That's essentially doubling the discipleship space we have for kids and adults. The architectural drawing is back there. It's not as pretty, but it might give you a little bit better picture of what it's going to look like. That's just the second floor of that new expanded space.

I want you to know that we're going to have enough space for all of our kids, including a new kids worship space with plenty of room, a state-of-the-art room they don't currently have.

With that, we will have enough life group space to literally double the number of adults we have in life groups on a Sunday morning right here on campus. We are building space for our life groups to be here and to continue to grow because we believe in it, and we know God's going to do a really, really neat thing through it.

Another part of this is that our resource room will expand. Those of you who serve in kids ministry will be thrilled to know that.

Then, on the west and south sides of our campus, part of this project will include a parking lot with 130 additional spaces and more exits out onto the road as well, to continue making room for growth here on our campus. That's project number three of the five.

The fourth project is our international church planting project.

We believe in the local church, right? We could go on and on, story after story, about what God has done right here in this church family. You've got stories from your life group. You've got stories from people whose lives you've seen God move in through His body of believers gathered together.

We have some ministry partners that Champion Forest has partnered with for a long time who are instrumental in helping launch, plant, and run local churches around the world. They're in regions and areas that don't have the resources among believers that you and I have here today.

They've asked us to partner with them as we look at what's next for our church in three specific areas.

One is through For All Mankind Movement in the nation of Nepal. They've asked us to come alongside them to help saturate every province in Nepal with the gospel, with pastors, church planters, and trainers. Hopefully, some of you will go on those mission trips to help train those people in the next several years.

The next partnership is through Greater Europe Mission. We've had a partnership in England as a church family for years with UK-USA Ministries. They're part of Greater Europe Mission over there in Europe.

They've asked us to come alongside them in four strategic cities to plant churches and train pastors in a way that these pastors are trained to begin planting more churches that will spread throughout their cities as well. We get to come alongside them.

The third aspect of this international church planting project is through the International Mission Board. That's part of the Southern Baptist Convention. We have partnered with the IMB since our church was formed in the late '60s and early '70s.

Here's what the IMB came to us and said. They've noticed what's happened around here in Spanish over the last several years. We've mentioned this before, but over the last several years, our church family, and that's you and me, because when we give, we are part of this and we're funding this work, has trained over 50 Spanish-speaking pastors in our church planters residency program.

Over 50 churches have been planted in the last several years in Spanish throughout the United States and down into South America as a result of the work of Champion Forest. These churches are flourishing.

Pastor Ramón told us last year that on Easter Sunday, those churches together, the ones we had launched, accounted for over 4,000 people in worship on Easter Sunday morning. That is unbelievable. That's like a whole other campus of Champion Forest going out on an Easter Sunday morning.

The IMB has seen this, and they've said, "We want to duplicate this." They've asked us to partner with them to launch a Spanish church planting residency in Barcelona, Spain, that will do the same thing: train pastors to plant churches in the Spanish-speaking parts of Europe.

One of our very own, Pastor Esteban Vásquez, is willing to move his entire family and his kids over to Barcelona to launch this program in partnership with the IMB.

Not only do we get to come alongside them, fund it, and be part of it, but we get to launch one of our very own to see the gospel move across Europe and the Spanish-speaking world as well.

That's the local church, and we are all about it. That's a big part of the Next initiative.

The fifth aspect of Next, which we're really excited about, is a third campus in the Magnolia region just north of here.

If you go back to when Champion Forest was first planted, Robin Guess was here, and what did he say? He said Champion Forest Drive was going to be a major thoroughfare someday and that the area needed a church. He moved toward the need.

There's a guy named Roger Yancey. Roger Yancey runs the Tryon Evergreen Baptist Association. He came and met with our staff several times. He met with our Next team right before Christmas, and he had tears in his eyes. He is so passionate about this area.

He's responsible for the areas of Magnolia, Montgomery, Willis, Cleveland, and north of here. He was able to tell us by the month, by the week, by the day, and by the hour the number of people who were moving to the Magnolia region who were lost, did not know Jesus, and did not have a church home.

He has been praying like crazy for a church like Champion Forest to step up and plant a campus in that region.

If you live there, and some of you do, you know the growth that's happening up there. You know the people who are moving up there. This is an incredible window to plant a gospel-teaching church right there in the middle of it.

Look at the numbers of people who are moving toward Magnolia. We've got more and more people from the Houston area inching closer and closer to the Promised Land of College Station. They're stopping just short of that in the Montgomery-Magnolia region.

If you look at this heat map of members of our church family right now and how we've concentrated in this area in Northwest Houston, you can also see the Magnolia-Montgomery region. We've got members from both of our campuses, the Champions Campus and the North Klein Campus, who are driving in from Magnolia and Montgomery to be at one of our campuses right now.

I'm just telling you that our hope and prayer is that very soon you'll see another colored dot on that screen representing people who attend our third campus up in Magnolia.

For Next, we know this isn't a completed project or anything like that. It's for a foothold. Through Next, we want to set aside money for land to build a campus up there.

I want you to think about all God has done with the birth of this campus. It's been just over 10 years. We now have 2,000 or so people on a weekend between our services and our kids. Just last year, over 220 people were baptized.

I don't follow these numbers and trends a lot. Our executive pastor does. He told me at the end of the year that

if you were to take every Southern Baptist church in Texas, line them up, and number them by the number of people baptized, the North Klein Campus, not Champion Forest altogether, but the North Klein Campus of Champion Forest, would have ranked in the top 10 in baptisms among SBC churches in Texas.

That's what God can do when a new campus is birthed, especially in a growing area like the Magnolia-Montgomery region. We are really, really excited about the opportunity to partner with what God is doing there.

Listen, we're not waiting for land. We're not waiting for a building to start up there. Our prayer is that as early as January 2027, we're able to start services in a portable kind of way.

A lot of you, if you've been here and joined since 2019 or 2020, know this building as the North Klein Campus. But before this building was here, this campus was a portable church family for five years and seven months. It was set up and torn down in a school facility 51 Sundays a year.

If you talk to Luis Miori about that, he will tell you that for 285 Sunday mornings, he was there to set up and tear down.

We understand there's a good chance that our Magnolia Campus will be portable before it's permanent, but we're excited about what God can do.

That's Next. That's where we believe God is leading this church family.

The worship center at our Champions Campus is \$13 million. The digital ministry expansion is \$4 million. The North Klein Campus expansion is \$9 million. The international church planting piece is \$2 million. The Magnolia piece, to hold for land acquisition, is \$10 million.

If you add all of that up, over the next three years, we are prayerfully trying to raise \$38 million as a church family.

Here are some dates that go with that. This morning is Vision Sunday. We're rolling it out. We're talking about it. We're going to begin to talk more and more and to answer all of those questions.

In a few weeks, March 1, we'll have Commitment Sunday. I'll tell you what that is in just a minute. Then, on March 22, we're going to have a Celebration Sunday morning.

Our Next Steps

Here are our action steps. We always want to leave with something to do. Here are our four action steps as they relate to Next.

I don't want you just to hear these and move on. I would encourage you to write these down and live these out over the next several weeks.

The first action step is this: Pray, pray, pray.

We want to encourage you to pray this through. We know this is a God-sized goal, a God-sized vision. We believe He has put it on our hearts, but it's not going to happen apart from this church family uniting together

in prayer.

It's going to take every single one of us in prayer, locking arms together and moving forward.

Some of you got a text message this morning. My phone beeped at about 4:30 this morning. I was thankful for that. It was a devotional, day one of our Next devotional series.

If you've signed up for our devotionals before, you got that same text message or email. If you're not part of it, I want to encourage you to text "DEVO" right now to the number on the screen, 77069. It's going to give you an option to opt in to emails or text messages for a 28-day devotional that will help all of us be united in prayer together through this Next season.

Number two, I want to encourage you to participate as God leads.

This is a big project, and it's going to take our entire church family participating to make it happen. You're going to see in this book, when you get it in just a few minutes, how you can participate. Of course, that includes prayer, serving, and being part of the ministry.

But in the book on page 23, you're also going to see a commitment card. This is common. This is how churches do these kinds of campaigns. In fact, there are a lot of people in this room right now who have filled out commitment cards at Champion Forest before, most recently back in 2017 with Multiply.

For those of us who were part of the Multiply campaign and filled out these cards, guess what? This campus we're sitting in right now was built as a result of people prayerfully filling out those commitment cards almost nine years ago.

When we talk about participation on Commitment Sunday, this is what we're talking about. You'll see on that card that there are two ways to participate.

One is bringing our first and best offering on that Sunday morning. That's a little different at Champion Forest. The other is bringing this card with a commitment to what you, or your family, have been prayerfully led by the Lord to do over the next three years. It's right there, and we're encouraging you to participate as God leads.

Number three, help propel us forward.

When we say that, here's what we mean. We have focus priorities as a church, right? They're in the atrium out there, in big letters on those pictures above the lobby.

We want to encourage you to continue living out the focus priorities of our church family. We know God has called us to make disciples in all things. We don't want to stop. Everything we're doing now is driving toward that. Continue making disciples.

Love your community and love them well. We know God has called us to that, and everything is driving toward that.

Then pray about how you can be part of strengthening the church. All of that is going to propel us forward.

Finally, number four, I want to encourage you to protect our unity in this next season.

In times of growth, when the Lord is moving, when people are trusting Christ, when people are plugging into the body and being baptized, and when spiritual growth is happening in a church, we have to remember there's a spiritual element to this. There is an enemy who does not like it.

Don't allow him to bring division. Don't allow him to put anyone against one another. Don't let him sow divisiveness in our church. Stay unified, and love one another well in this next season.

Pastor Jarrett said it this way: "One of the markers of success for Next will be a church family that is more unified when we're done than we are right now."

I've given you those key dates: Vision Sunday today, Commitment Sunday in about a month, and Celebration Sunday after that.

But know that next Sunday morning we're starting a sermon series teaching through the book of Nehemiah. If you've never been in Nehemiah, I'm excited to be part of it, and I hope you are too.

It's a great picture of the people of God coming together with a vision and a purpose to do great things for the Lord and for the hearts and souls of those around them. That's what we want to be about.

Back in 1976, again, before a lot of people in our church family were born, our first pastor said this: "Sacrifice is the key to success."

It was true in 1976, and it's true in 2026 as well. We know that to whom much is given, much is required. We've got this stewardship on our lives, this obligation and responsibility to teach as many people as possible the good news of Jesus Christ, to disciple them, and to teach them to disciple others also.

There's a sense of spiritual urgency here, and I hope you can feel it. God has opened up this incredible window in the life of our church family.

Let's not hold back. Let's go where God leads us, from Northwest Houston to the world, moving forward together by faith like our church family always has.

Let's step into what's next.

Invitation and Prayer

Would you pray with me this morning?

As our heads are bowed, I want to encourage you to pray a couple of things today.

First, I want to encourage you to pray for your church family, just the people who are sitting right around you right now. You might know their names. You might not. But I want you to pray for the people around you in here right now, that they'd walk closely with Jesus and that they'd live in a way that brings glory to their heavenly Father.

Pray for them as we head into this next season of life and ministry in our church, that God would use them in a powerful way for His glory. Pray for them now. If you know their names, pray their names.

Then I want to ask you to pray for our entire church family, the collective body of believers here at Champion Forest. Whether they worship at this campus or our Champions Campus, pray for them. Whether they worship in English or Spanish, whether they're young or old, pray that God would lead and guide our church family.

Pray that all we say and all we do would bring glory and honor to Him and to Him alone. That's our heart. It always has been as a church, and it always will be.

Pray that God would get glory from what's now and from what's next.

In just a minute, we're going to stand and sing one last song. We're going to have pastors and prayer partners down here. We'd love to pray with you during that song.

If you're here and you want to be part of what's next, but you're thinking, "I can't be part of where God's going if I'm not in that relationship with Him yet," and you know you're ready to trust Christ as Lord, we'd love to pray with you.

If you know baptism is next for you, we'd love to pray for you. Maybe you want to become part of our church family. We'd love to pray with you. Or maybe you're just in a season right now where you're struggling and you need prayer. If that's you, we'd love to pray with you as well.

I'm going to pray. We're going to stand. We're going to sing. That'll be your invitation to come.

Heavenly Father, we love You. We trust You. We thank You for all that You've done and for all that You're doing. God, You are good. We love You. We thank You. And we trust You with what's next.

It's in Your name we pray. Amen.