



We Are Wheat Street

“God’s mighty fortress on Auburn Avenue where the doors swing back on welcome hinges.”

Pastoral Letter

Volume 1 No. 1 April 3, 2016

Dear Wheat Street,

Vanessa and I want to thank you for the warm welcome we have received. This is a congregation that is filled with love and we have felt your love. We want you to know that we love you as well!

As we enter spring we take this time to announce where I feel God is leading us in terms of our focus during these initial months. We are going to focus on:

1. **Reaching Up** - we are going to focus on excellence in worship and the teaching and preaching God’s word as we seek to get closer to God. We want to hear from God as we seek what is next in the life our church.
2. **Reaching In** - we are going to take special care of each other, our faithful members and their families. We are also going to reach out to those who were once a part of our family as we seek to reconnect and reconcile the larger Wheat Street family. Our in-reach will also involve us organizing / reorganizing ourselves even more effective ministry.
3. **Reaching Out** - we will reaffirm our missional focus as we ask why we do what we do? Why do we exist? Why are we where we are and why we need to reflect on our past to inform our future. Evangelism and discipleship will also be a hallmark of our time together as we seek to share the gospel with new people who aren’t a part of our church.



During the months of April and May we will preach and teach on these three areas of emphasis. As we think about organizing our church for growth we will have our first **Leaders Empowerment Gathering on Saturday, May 14, 2016 at Columbia Theological Seminary from 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m..** The focus of our time together will be looking at why are where we are and how we might begin to move forward to be what God is calling us to be. All leaders are expected to attend this gathering. There will be breakout sessions for various ministry groups. I am planning this gathering with the deacons of our church.

To be what God is calling us to be means we are going to have do the difficult, hard work of change. You have heard that famous saying, “If you keep on doing what you have always done, you will keep on getting what you have always got.” If we want different outcomes we are going to have refocus our energy, streamline our ministry while supporting and funding those things that will move us forward. It is hard work to change and grow but it is what God is calling us to do. What I am sure of is that **We Are Wheat Street** and we can do this! I have faith in the God who has been with us since 1869.

Keep the Faith,
Ralph B. Watkins

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