

R I S E U P

The logo consists of the lowercase letters 'r' and 'u' in a bold, black, sans-serif font. The 'r' has a unique cutout on its right side. The 'u' is also bold and has a cutout on its right side. The top of the 'u' is replaced by a blue triangle pointing up, which is itself set against a white triangle pointing down. Below the logo, the words 'R I S E U P' are written in a clean, black, uppercase, sans-serif font, with wide letter spacing.

## FROM THE PASTOR ...

There are at least three types of people who are reading this right now . . .

First, there are those who are relatively new in their faith journey. You have a growing love for Jesus, but you are still learning what it looks like to live for Him fully. You want to grow in following God's plan, but may not know how, or may have fears or hangups yet to overcome. If this describes you, then this guide is for you. It will lead you on a journey to begin to grow more like Jesus, turning everything in your life over to Him.

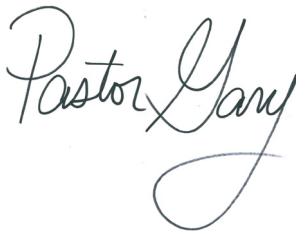
Second, there are those who have been following Jesus for a while. You know Jesus and understand the calling He has for your life. You have already made a commitment to live a life of generosity. This guide is for you as well. We all need time alone with Jesus to allow Him to lead us to deeper levels of commitment.

Finally, there are those of you who are new to our church. You're going to hear more about the vision God has given us for following Him into the future. This vision will require us to rise up together in our growing and in our giving.

But before you continue, I want you to know that God cares more about you than about anything you could ever give back to Him. He loves you so much that He gave what was most precious to Him, His Son Jesus, so that your sins could be forgiven and so you could enjoy an intimate relationship with Him forever. If you haven't made that commitment, then I pray that taking this journey with us will lead you to do so.

We're so glad to have all of you, regardless of where you are in life, to join us on this spiritual journey. Our hope is that this Journey Guide will lead us to discover how God wants each of us to rise up together in our commitment to Him.

Blessings!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Pastor Gary". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a large, decorative flourish at the end of the word "Gary".

## HOW TO USE IT

### VISION

Get familiar with why we are doing this in the first place and what's included in the Rise Up Faith Journey. Get excited about where we have come from and where we are going. You can also find info on our website: [wccnc.org/riseup](http://wccnc.org/riseup)

### 21-DAY DEVOTIONAL

Journey through 21 days of devotions focused around themes from what the Bible says about the purpose of the church. The Rise Up Faith Journey begins with YOU, so take some time to invest in your spiritual growth by digging deep into God's word.

### PRAYER

In this section you will find Scripture and prayer points to follow as we seek God and how He wants each of us to be a part of His story. This is a great section in our Rise Up journey guide to help in prayers with your family and in your own personal time with Jesus.

### FAQs

You will likely have some questions. We understand that, so we've put together some answers in advance. If you have questions we haven't anticipated, don't worry. Just ask at our Rise Up table or send us an email at [info@wccnc.org](mailto:info@wccnc.org), and we'll get back to you.

### COMMITMENT GUIDE

This section offers what you need to know in order to make a commitment to the Rise Up vision of our church. Discover how our challenge: "Not equal giving, but equal sacrifice," can be realized through you.



**VISION**

## VISION

*17 Then I said to them, "You see the trouble we are in, how Jerusalem lies in ruins with its gates burned. Come, let us build the wall of Jerusalem, that we may no longer suffer derision." 18 And I told them of the hand of my God that had been upon me for good, and also of the words that the king had spoken to me. And they said, "Let us rise up and build." So they strengthened their hands for the good work.-- Nehemiah 2:17-18 (ESV)*

### OUR VISION IS LET US . . . RISE UP!

Our vision is that we might respond as the people of God did that day in Jerusalem by saying together, "Let us rise up and build!" Yet, for anything to be built up, whether it's broken down walls or broken down people, someone has to have the faith to rise up to the task. We want to be a people with that kind of faith. When we consider the magnitude of the brokenness in our city, it can easily overwhelm us with feelings of fear and inadequacy. But our vision from the Lord moves us to rise up and make room for more broken people to encounter the life-changing love of Jesus. It's our commitment to this vision that has led us to this generosity initiative called "RISE UP."

### WHAT IS IT?

RISE UP is our 3-year generosity initiative to make room for more people to come as they are and be forever changed by the love of Jesus. We are at the midpoint of our initiative, so we want to strengthen our original commitment and challenge new attenders to join us on the journey! Through RISE UP, God is calling us to partner with Him by investing ourselves and our resources in greater levels of commitment that will impact Wilson and the surrounding area of Eastern North Carolina today, and for years to come.

### FROM WHERE WE'VE BEEN TO WHERE WE'RE GOING

Someone had to rise up in faith, or there wouldn't have been a WCC. Pastor Gary and Robin Combs felt the Lord calling them to plant a church. God gave them a vision for reaching people who didn't go to church, people far from God, a different kind of church a church for the unchurched. So, at age 32, Gary quit his corporate job, went to seminary, and planted WCC. What began as a small circle of seven

gathered in the Combs' living room in November 1991, now averages nearly 400 every Sunday at our Wilson campus and around 75 at our Rocky Mount campus.



The Bible says that the church is the family of God. And our family has really grown! Isn't that what healthy families do? They

**Healthy things grow!**

grow. Healthy plants, healthy babies, and healthy families grow! If they don't, that's not a good thing.

That means there's something unhealthy hindering growth. And we are continually asking God to make us a healthy church family.

Healthy families need a home. In September of 2010, the Lord provided miraculously, enabling our congregation to purchase the former Regal Cinema. On Sunday, May 1, 2011, after several months of remodeling, we held our first worship service there. After 19 years of being the portable church, the Lord had given us a home of our own!



We have come so far, yet we have further to go to continue rising up to follow our Savior's command to bring His message to more of our friends and neighbors. Our church family represents less than 0.25% of the combined population of Wilson County (82,000) and Nash County (94,000), so we have much work to do!

We see evidence of God doing incredible work in our church. We see it in the many decisions to follow Christ, the changed lives, the reconciled marriages, the sacrificial giving to the poor, the members going on mission trips, and the consistent attendance growth ministry-wide, especially in our children's

ministries. It is evident that God has called this congregation to fill a unique role in Wilson, Rocky Mount, and in the Eastern North Carolina region.

We are approaching, and in many ways exceeding, the capacity of our existing facilities. The comfortable decision for us to make would be to say that we are full and that there's no more room, or that we are already big enough. Some might even say they like our church just the way it is now. But choosing our comfort over reaching more people with the gospel is not the vision that the Lord has given us! God is calling us to rise up and make room for more!

**How far should we go in joining the Father in His pursuit of the lost?**

We look around us and see there are still so many in our community who are lost, so many kids who do not know Jesus, so many singles who are searching, so many parents who need sound instruction in raising their children, and grandparents who want the best for their grandchildren. The gospel holds the answers they are seeking, the hope they are longing for, and our church is called to carry it to them. If we don't share God's love with them, who will? Do we dare open our arms out even further? How far should we go in joining the Father in His pursuit of the lost?

These are questions that compel us to rise up, to create a safe place where people can come as they are and be forever changed by the love of Jesus. If we don't make room for them, who will?

### WHAT THIS MEANS

Our church family has reached yet another decisive moment in its history. We are being called to rise up to make room for more! This means the expansion of our Wilson home. The Lord gave us this property after 19 years. In 2018 we remodeled the old "Multi-Purpose Room" into a beautiful new children's education wing. God gave us a house and we're still moving into all of its rooms. Remember what Jesus said, "To whom much is given, much is required."? Well, He has given



us a big house with a huge parking lot in the middle of Wilson. What are we going to do with what God has given us?

What are we going to do  
with what God has  
given us?

We asked a church growth consultant to advise us. He developed a beautiful Master Plan for how to best use the property that the Lord has given us. We have it hanging on the wall of our lobby. Have you seen it?

How many people can  
we make room for if we  
maximize what God has  
given us?

We asked: How many people can we make room for if we maximize what God has entrusted to us? Our consultant said that if we are willing to follow the Master Plan that he laid out for us, we would easily be able to make room for 2,000 people!

So, we said, "Let us Rise Up and build." We were able to complete Phase One of the plan, the children's education wing and playground, using our equity. Already our children's ministry attendance is up. But children can't drive themselves to church! Where are we going put the young parents that bring them?





## IT'S TIME TO RISE UP AND BEGIN PHASE TWO

### REMODEL THE THEATER ROOM

We still have a room in our house that is unused. Shouldn't we use it? We want to level the floor of the theater room for a true multipurpose room.

- *On Sunday mornings*, it's a new adult worship venue with its own distinctive feel, but same sermon.
- *On Sunday evenings*, it's a space for our student ministry.
- *During the week and at other times*, it's a lunch cafeteria for the school, a meeting place for our Celebrate Recovery ministry, and a place for M.O.P.S. groups and other fellowships.



### REMODEL THE LOBBY AND BATHROOMS

We want to improve our first impression for guests. Our lobby and bathrooms are essentially the same as we found them. We don't notice how dated they are, but our guests do.



## RELOCATE AND EXPAND THE NURSERY

We'd like to move the nursery across the lobby to the former classrooms. We plan to add a bathroom at the end of the hall. This will more than double our capacity for children 0 to 3 years old.

## REFRESH THE PARKING LOT

We lack curb appeal. People often are surprised that we are a church. A newly surfaced parking lot, with better landscaping and signage could change that.

Will sacrificing to build Phase Two automatically reach more people for Jesus? No, of course not. But we are going to keep making disciples who have a heart for God, for each other and for our world. We will continue to "Go and Tell" people to "Come and See" how Jesus has changed your life. As fathers and mothers in this spiritual family it's our responsibility to make room for them.

## OUR RISE UP COMMITMENT BEGAN IN 2019 ...

Our Rise Up generosity initiative represents a commitment from our church family to continue making room for more people, to serve our Lord, and to fulfill God's purposes for us. In order to accomplish Phase 2 of our building project, we challenged our church to raise \$1 million to be given over a three-year period,

**Our primary goal during the Rise Up initiative is 100% engagement**

beginning on March 10, 2019. With God's help, our members committed to give over the \$1 million goal. And we have already received nearly half of that committed amount. That's why we're taking a few weeks now to refresh our commitment and to

open the way for new members and attenders to partner with us in attaining and even exceeding our financial need.

But our primary goal during the Rise Up initiative is 100% engagement of our members to take this journey of faith together. So that one of the really important benefits will be that we grow spiritually in prayer and generosity and faith!

We believe that God is looking for a people who want to see Him move in glorious and miraculous ways. A people who are willing to move out of their comfort zone, to "rise up and build" to make room for more lost people to be found, more addicts to be set free, more homeless folk to find a home, more children to be raised up in Christ, more marriages to be reconciled and more orphans to find a family. As the apostle Paul reminds us:

*Ephesians 1:5 (NLT) God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave him great pleasure.*

Our vision is to invite people to join God's family with us. We feel called to rise up, making room for more people to answer the invitation to . . .

**"Come as you are and  
be forever changed by the love of Jesus."**



# 21-DAY DEVOTIONAL

## 21-DAY DEVOTIONAL

Going on a spiritual journey together requires unity and commitment. We're committing together to attend the 4-week sermon series and do the 21-day devotional. We asking God to speak to us. How can we do this?

A good way of doing this is to follow the S.O.A.P. method of having a daily quiet times with God.



### WHAT IS S.O.A.P.?

#### S - SCRIPTURE

Take time to read God's Word, asking God to speak to you.

#### O - OBSERVATION

What is God saying to you in this Scripture? Ask the Spirit of Christ to teach you and reveal His will to you.

#### A - APPLICATION

Personalize what you have read, by asking yourself how it applies to your life right now. Perhaps it is instruction, encouragement, revelation of a new promise, or a correction for a particular area of your life.

#### P - PRAYER

This can be as simple as asking God to help you use this Scripture, or it may be a greater insight on what He may be revealing to you. Remember, prayer is a two way conversation, so be sure to listen to what God has to say! Write out your prayer in the journal.

Our Rise Up Journey Guide will offer a daily reading for the next 21 days, beginning on Monday, November 2nd and ending on Sunday, November 22. Each day's reading will offer room on the page to journal using the S.O.A.P. method.

So, let's get started praying rising up together!

## EXAMPLE ...

### SCRIPTURE: Mark 1:35-38 (ESV)

<sup>35</sup> And rising very early in the morning, while it was still dark, he [Jesus] departed and went out to a desolate place, and there he prayed. <sup>36</sup> And Simon and those who were with him searched for him, <sup>37</sup> and they found him and said to him, "Everyone is looking for you." <sup>38</sup> And he said to them, "Let us go on to the next towns, that I may preach there also, for that is why I came out."

### OBSERVATION

*Jesus rose early to pray. He went where he could pray alone. In prayer, he was reminded of his purpose from the Father.*

### APPLICATION

*I want to be like Jesus in my prayer life and begin each day alone with God in prayer. I want the Father to remind me and instruct me as to my purpose for that day.*

### PRAYER

*Dear Heavenly Father, thank You for the example of Jesus' prayer life. I want to be like Him in every way. I commit to begin every day alone in prayer with You. My relationship with You is the most important one to me above all others. I love You and need You as I need air to breathe. Breathe on me afresh by Your Spirit today, O Lord. Hear my heart's cry, O Lord and strengthen me. Guide me with Your wisdom, so that I will not turn to the left or the right from Your straight path today. Speak to me, O Lord, so that I know that You have heard me. In the name of Jesus, I pray, amen.*

## DAY 1

### SCRIPTURE: Luke 14:16-24 (NLT)

<sup>16</sup> Jesus replied with this story: "A man prepared a great feast and sent out many invitations.

<sup>17</sup> When the banquet was ready, he sent his servant to tell the guests, 'Come, the banquet is ready.' <sup>18</sup> But they all began making excuses. One said, 'I have just bought a field and must inspect it. Please excuse me.'

<sup>19</sup> Another said, 'I have just bought five pairs of oxen, and I want to try them out. Please excuse me.' <sup>20</sup> Another said, 'I just got married, so I can't come.'

<sup>21</sup> "The servant returned and told his master what they had said. His master was furious and said, 'Go quickly into the streets and alleys of the town and invite the poor, the crippled, the blind, and the lame.'

<sup>22</sup> After the servant had done this, he reported, 'There is still room for more.' <sup>23</sup> So his master said, 'Go out into the country lanes and behind the hedges and urge anyone you find to come, so that the house will be full. <sup>24</sup> For none of those I first invited will get even the smallest taste of my banquet."

### OBSERVATION

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### APPLICATION

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### PRAYER

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## DAY 2

### SCRIPTURE: Isaiah 49:19-21 (NLT)

<sup>19</sup> "Even the most desolate parts of your abandoned land will soon be crowded with your people.

Your enemies who enslaved you will be far away.

<sup>20</sup> The generations born in exile will return and say, 'We need more room! It's crowded here!'

<sup>21</sup> Then you will think to yourself, 'Who has given me all these descendants?'

For most of my children were killed, and the rest were carried away into exile.

I was left here all alone.

Where did all these people come from?

Who bore these children?

Who raised them for me?"

### OBSERVATION

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### APPLICATION

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### PRAYER

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## DAY 3

### SCRIPTURE: Zechariah 2:4-5 (NLT)

<sup>4</sup> The other angel said, "Hurry, and say to that young man, 'Jerusalem will someday be so full of people and livestock that there won't be room enough for everyone! Many will live outside the city walls.' <sup>5</sup> Then I, myself, will be a protective wall of fire around Jerusalem, says the Lord. And I will be the glory inside the city!"

### OBSERVATION

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### APPLICATION

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### PRAYER

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## DAY 4

### SCRIPTURE: Malachi 3:10-11 (NLT)

<sup>10</sup> Bring all the tithes into the storehouse so there will be enough food in my Temple. If you do," says the Lord of Heaven's Armies, "I will open the windows of heaven for you. I will pour out a blessing so great you won't have enough room to take it in! Try it! Put me to the test!

<sup>11</sup> Your crops will be abundant, for I will guard them from insects and disease. Your grapes will not fall from the vine before they are ripe," says the Lord of Heaven's Armies.

### OBSERVATION

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### APPLICATION

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### PRAYER

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## DAY 5

### SCRIPTURE: Mark 2:1-5 (NLT)

<sup>1</sup> When Jesus returned to Capernaum several days later, the news spread quickly that he was back home. <sup>2</sup> Soon the house where he was staying was so packed with visitors that there was no more room, even outside the door. While he was preaching God's word to them, <sup>3</sup> four men arrived carrying a paralyzed man on a mat. <sup>4</sup> They couldn't bring him to Jesus because of the crowd, so they dug a hole through the roof above his head. Then they lowered the man on his mat, right down in front of Jesus. <sup>5</sup> Seeing their faith, Jesus said to the paralyzed man, "My child, your sins are forgiven."

### OBSERVATION

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### APPLICATION

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### PRAYER

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## DAY 6

### SCRIPTURE: Luke 22:7-13 (NLT)

<sup>7</sup> Now the Festival of Unleavened Bread arrived, when the Passover lamb is sacrificed.

<sup>8</sup> Jesus sent Peter and John ahead and said, "Go and prepare the Passover meal, so we can eat it together."<sup>9</sup> "Where do you want us to prepare it?" they asked him. <sup>10</sup> He replied, "As soon as you enter Jerusalem, a man carrying a pitcher of water will meet you. Follow him. At the house he enters, <sup>11</sup> say to the owner, 'The Teacher asks: Where is the guest room where I can eat the Passover meal with my disciples?'" <sup>12</sup> He will take you upstairs to a large room that is already set up. That is where you should prepare our meal." <sup>13</sup> They went off to the city and found everything just as Jesus had said, and they prepared the Passover meal there.

### OBSERVATION

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### APPLICATION

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### PRAYER

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## DAY 7

### SCRIPTURE: John 4:23-24 (NLT)

<sup>23</sup> But the time is coming—indeed it's here now—when true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and in truth. The Father is looking for those who will worship him that way.

<sup>24</sup> For God is Spirit, so those who worship him must worship in spirit and in truth."

### OBSERVATION

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### APPLICATION

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### PRAYER

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## DAY 8

### SCRIPTURE: Psalm 96:8-10 (NLT)

- <sup>8</sup> Give to the Lord the glory he deserves!  
Bring your offering and come into his courts.
- <sup>9</sup> Worship the Lord in all his holy splendor.  
Let all the earth tremble before him.
- <sup>10</sup> Tell all the nations, "The Lord reigns!"  
The world stands firm and cannot be shaken.  
He will judge all peoples fairly.

### OBSERVATION

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### APPLICATION

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### PRAYER

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## DAY 9

### SCRIPTURE: Psalm 100:1-4 (ESV)

<sup>1</sup> Shout with joy to the Lord, all the earth!

<sup>2</sup> Worship the Lord with gladness.

Come before him, singing with joy.

<sup>3</sup> Acknowledge that the Lord is God!

He made us, and we are his.

We are his people, the sheep of his pasture.

<sup>4</sup> Enter his gates with thanksgiving;

go into his courts with praise.

Give thanks to him and praise his name.

### OBSERVATION

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### APPLICATION

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### PRAYER

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## DAY 10

### SCRIPTURE: Proverbs 11:24-26 (NLT)

<sup>24</sup> Give freely and become more wealthy;  
be stingy and lose everything.

<sup>25</sup> The generous will prosper;  
those who refresh others will themselves be refreshed.

### OBSERVATION

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### APPLICATION

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### PRAYER

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## DAY 11

### SCRIPTURE: 2 Corinthians 8:9-12 (NLT)

<sup>9</sup> You know the generous grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that by his poverty he could make you rich. <sup>10</sup> Here is my advice: It would be good for you to finish what you started a year ago. Last year you were the first who wanted to give, and you were the first to begin doing it. <sup>11</sup> Now you should finish what you started. Let the eagerness you showed in the beginning be matched now by your giving. Give in proportion to what you have. <sup>12</sup> Whatever you give is acceptable if you give it eagerly. And give according to what you have, not what you don't have.

### OBSERVATION

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### APPLICATION

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### PRAYER

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## DAY 12

### SCRIPTURE: 2 Corinthians 9:6-10 (NLT)

<sup>6</sup> Remember this—a farmer who plants only a few seeds will get a small crop. But the one who plants generously will get a generous crop. <sup>7</sup> You must each decide in your heart how much to give. And don't give reluctantly or in response to pressure. "For God loves a person who gives cheerfully." <sup>8</sup> And God will generously provide all you need. Then you will always have everything you need and plenty left over to share with others. <sup>9</sup> As the Scriptures say, "They share freely and give generously to the poor. Their good deeds will be remembered forever." <sup>10</sup> For God is the one who provides seed for the farmer and then bread to eat. In the same way, he will provide and increase your resources and then produce a great harvest of generosity in you.

### OBSERVATION

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### APPLICATION

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### PRAYER

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## DAY 13

### SCRIPTURE: 1 Timothy 6:17-19 (NLT)

<sup>17</sup> Teach those who are rich in this world not to be proud and not to trust in their money, which is so unreliable. Their trust should be in God, who richly gives us all we need for our enjoyment. <sup>18</sup> Tell them to use their money to do good. They should be rich in good works and generous to those in need, always being ready to share with others. <sup>19</sup> By doing this they will be storing up their treasure as a good foundation for the future so that they may experience true life.

### OBSERVATION

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### APPLICATION

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### PRAYER

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## DAY 14

### SCRIPTURE: John 13:33-35 (NLT)

<sup>33</sup> Dear children, I will be with you only a little longer. And as I told the Jewish leaders, you will search for me, but you can't come where I am going. <sup>34</sup> So now I am giving you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, you should love each other.

<sup>35</sup> Your love for one another will prove to the world that you are my disciples."

### OBSERVATION

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### APPLICATION

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### PRAYER

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## DAY 15

### SCRIPTURE: Romans 12:9-13 (NLT)

<sup>9</sup> Don't just pretend to love others. Really love them. Hate what is wrong. Hold tightly to what is good. <sup>10</sup> Love each other with genuine affection, and take delight in honoring each other. <sup>11</sup> Never be lazy, but work hard and serve the Lord enthusiastically. <sup>12</sup> Rejoice in our confident hope. Be patient in trouble, and keep on praying. <sup>13</sup> When God's people are in need, be ready to help them. Always be eager to practice hospitality.

### OBSERVATION

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### APPLICATION

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### PRAYER

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## DAY 16

### SCRIPTURE: Romans 12:14-18 (NLT)

<sup>14</sup> Bless those who persecute you. Don't curse them; pray that God will bless them. <sup>15</sup> Be happy with those who are happy, and weep with those who weep. <sup>16</sup> Live in harmony with each other. Don't be too proud to enjoy the company of ordinary people. And don't think you know it all! <sup>17</sup> Never pay back evil with more evil. Do things in such a way that everyone can see you are honorable. <sup>18</sup> Do all that you can to live in peace with everyone.

### OBSERVATION

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### APPLICATION

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### PRAYER

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## DAY 17

### SCRIPTURE: Romans 13:7-8 (NLT)

<sup>7</sup> Give to everyone what you owe them: Pay your taxes and government fees to those who collect them, and give respect and honor to those who are in authority. <sup>8</sup> Owe nothing to anyone—except for your obligation to love one another. If you love your neighbor, you will fulfill the requirements of God's law.

### OBSERVATION

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### APPLICATION

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### PRAYER

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## DAY 18

### SCRIPTURE: Ephesians 4:29-32 (NLT)

<sup>29</sup> Don't use foul or abusive language. Let everything you say be good and helpful, so that your words will be an encouragement to those who hear them. <sup>30</sup> And do not bring sorrow to God's Holy Spirit by the way you live. Remember, he has identified you as his own, guaranteeing that you will be saved on the day of redemption. <sup>31</sup> Get rid of all bitterness, rage, anger, harsh words, and slander, as well as all types of evil behavior. <sup>32</sup> Instead, be kind to each other, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, just as God through Christ has forgiven you.

### OBSERVATION

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### APPLICATION

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### PRAYER

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## DAY 19

### SCRIPTURE: Matthew 5:13-15 (NLT)

<sup>13</sup> "You are the salt of the earth. But what good is salt if it has lost its flavor? Can you make it salty again? It will be thrown out and trampled underfoot as worthless. <sup>14</sup> "You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. <sup>15</sup> No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house.

### OBSERVATION

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### APPLICATION

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### PRAYER

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## DAY 20

### SCRIPTURE: Acts 1:6-8 (NLT)

<sup>6</sup> So when the apostles were with Jesus, they kept asking him, "Lord, has the time come for you to free Israel and restore our kingdom?" <sup>7</sup> He replied, "The Father alone has the authority to set those dates and times, and they are not for you to know. <sup>8</sup> But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you. And you will be my witnesses, telling people about me everywhere—in Jerusalem, throughout Judea, in Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

### OBSERVATION

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### APPLICATION

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### PRAYER

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## DAY 21

### SCRIPTURE: Matthew 24:4-14 (NLT)

<sup>4</sup>Jesus told them, "Don't let anyone mislead you, <sup>5</sup>for many will come in my name, claiming, 'I am the Messiah.' They will deceive many. <sup>6</sup>And you will hear of wars and threats of wars, but don't panic. Yes, these things must take place, but the end won't follow immediately.

<sup>7</sup>Nation will go to war against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in many parts of the world. <sup>8</sup>But all this is only the first of the birth pains, with more to come. <sup>9</sup>"Then you will be arrested, persecuted, and killed. You will be hated all over the world because you are my followers. <sup>10</sup>And many will turn away from me and betray and hate each other. <sup>11</sup>And many false prophets will appear and will deceive many people. <sup>12</sup>Sin will be rampant everywhere, and the love of many will grow cold. <sup>13</sup>But the one who endures to the end will be saved. <sup>14</sup>And the Good News about the Kingdom will be preached throughout the whole world, so that all nations will hear it; and then the end will come.

### OBSERVATION

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### APPLICATION

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### PRAYER

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**PRAYER**

## PRAYER

Undoubtedly the most important aspect of the Rise Up faith journey is prayer, asking the Holy Spirit to lead us. Although the desired outcome of this process is our ability to have more space for the future and to be more effective in reaching people, the process to get there is a spiritual and faith-filled one. The process we want to undertake, if done right, will help each of us grow closer to God as we seek Him, hear His voice, step out in faith and obedience and follow Him into the future.

The Devotional section in this Faith Journey Guide will help you through your personal journey of prayer and surrender. A prayer that we encourage everyone in our church family to pray in this season is, "God, what do you want to do through me?"

God, what do You want to do through me?

**IT IS IMPORTANT THAT WE AS A CHURCH BODY ALSO PRAY FOR OTHERS. WE CALL THIS INTERCESSORY PRAYER. INTERCESSORY PRAYER CAN BE DEFINED IN TWO WAYS:**

- Praying for those who cannot or will not pray for themselves.
- Going to God to plead the case of another.

**HERE ARE SOME PRAYER POINTS THAT WE'LL BE PRAYING IN THIS SEASON AS INDIVIDUALS, COMMUNITY GROUPS, AND AS A CHURCH:**

- That God would continue to help us see people come to faith and mature in Christ.
- That we would grow in our Heart for God, Heart for Each Other, and Heart for Our World.
- That God would move through us to serve others well.

- That God would help us love Eastern NC and the world in a greater way.
- That we would plant more “city” churches in our region and world.

## THOSE FAR FROM GOD

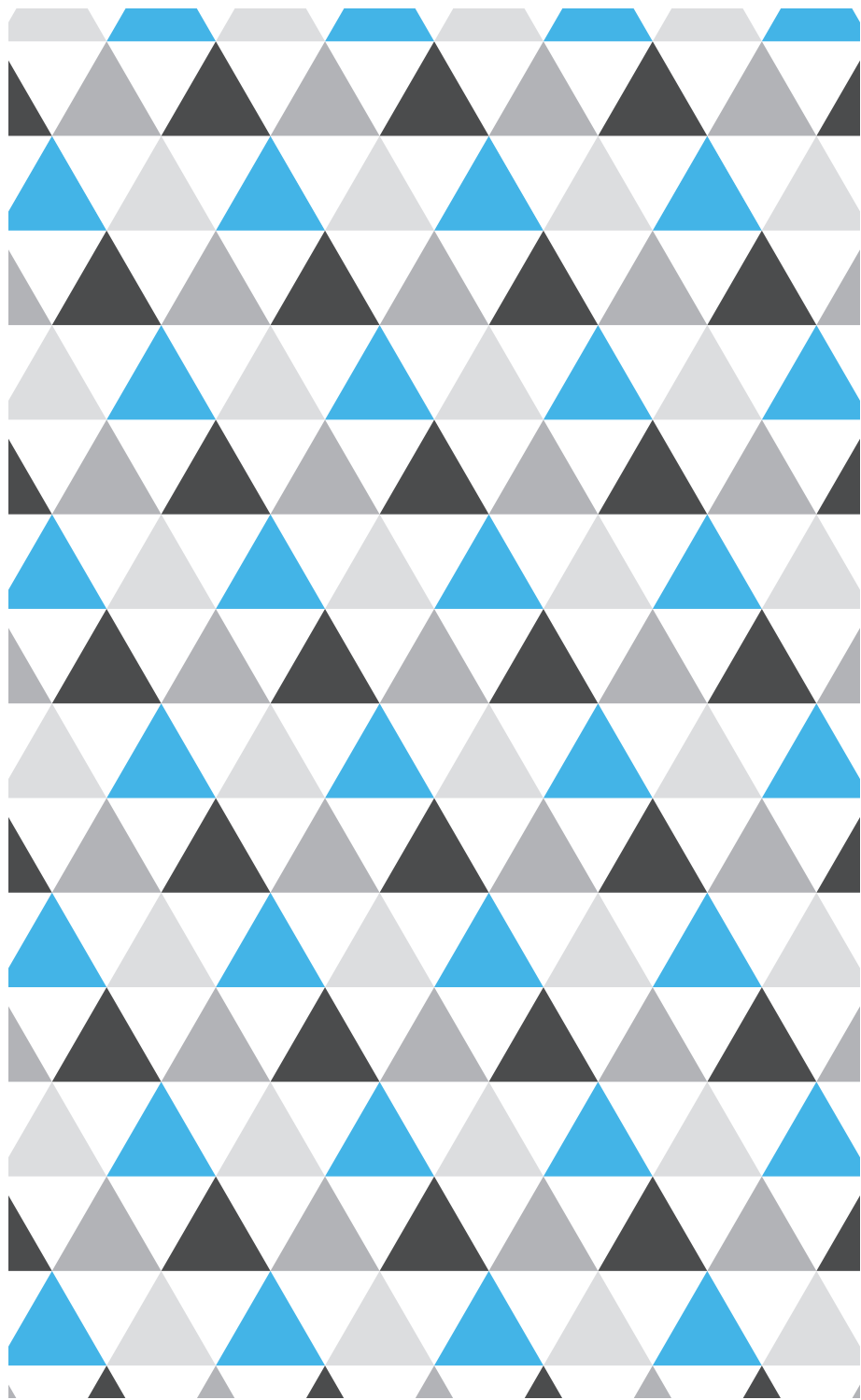
Rise Up is all about reaching people who are far away from God. We are expanding the building so that we can continue to build people. We have many reasons to pray, and many of those are people who are far from God right now.

- Pray that those who have never known the peace and power of life in Christ encounter God through our church family, that we would celebrate all God is doing in our church everywhere we go, and that we would reach more people than ever before.
- Pray that lost people will flood into our church as we increasingly make more room for them to come and know the love of Jesus.
- Pray that we tangibly love our city through compassion, care and service.

## 100% PARTICIPATION

- Pray that everyone who calls our church their home will prayerfully pursue God's will for them.
- Our goal is not that everyone would give equal amounts, but that everyone would give equal sacrifice as God directs them. Let's pray that God would lead each person as to what that means for him or her.
- Pray that God will prepare our hearts for what He will require of us.
- Pray that God will reveal to us what financial resources we should give, that a spirit of sacrificial giving will prevail, and that the theme “not equal gifts, but equal sacrifices” will be clear.
- Pray that everyone is impacted spiritually through the Rise Up faith journey.

*“Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.” -- Ephesians 3:20-21*





## FAQS



## FAQs

### WHAT IS RISE UP?

RISE UP is our 3-year generosity initiative to make room for more people to come as they are and be forever changed by the love of Jesus. We are at the midpoint of our initiative, so we want to strengthen our original commitment and challenge new attenders to join us on the journey! Through RISE UP, God is calling us to partner with Him by investing ourselves and our resources in greater levels of commitment that will impact Wilson and the surrounding area of Eastern North Carolina today, and for years to come.

### WHY ARE WE DOING THIS NOW?

There is a time for everything. Our church was portable for 19 years, meeting in homes and rented facilities for our gatherings. In 2010, it was time for God to miraculously make it possible for us to purchase the former Regal Cinema. We spent the next few months remodeling as much of it as we could afford, launching our first worship service at our new property on May 1, 2011. Within a year, our attendance doubled.

We always told the Lord that if He entrusted us a building of our own, we would use it seven days a week to help people in our community and He soon took us at our word. In 2013, a small school for special needs children came looking for a place to meet. So, we started renting some of our classroom space to them. In 2014, we heard about an African American church that lost its home, so we rented the unused theater room to them. They rented from us for two years before finding a place of their own. In 2015, we launched a new campus in Rocky Mount that we call Eastgate Community Church. In 2017, we began renting a permanent space. We sent some of our best leaders to launch and grow this new outreach.

Within five years the special needs school has grown from 6 to nearly 90 students. The growth of the school and the growth of our own children's ministry moved us to hire a contractor and remodel another one of

our unused theater spaces. So, in August of 2018, we opened up a new children's educational wing and built a beautiful new playground outside. We also noticed that God was trusting us with special needs kids, so we trained new volunteers and began advertising to the parents of these under-served children and families.

Now, it is time to look to the future. We asked a consultant to tell us how many people we could potentially reach were we to maximize the usage of our current property. So, he drew up a multi-phased master plan that fully utilizes our current building, adds an additional building and a refurbished parking lot. He concluded that we could easily reach up to 2,000 people if we fully used what God had given us. With the completion of the first phase, the children's educational wing, it's time to prepare for phase two.

### WHY DO WE NEED TO GROW?

The church is the family of God. And healthy families grow. Every time a family grows it requires an adjustment. The single person has to adjust to married life. The young couple has to adjust to having a baby and becoming parents. The firstborn child has to adjust to a younger sibling, and so on.

Our church family is the same. Just as parents sometimes may wish that their children wouldn't grow so fast, so we may cling to a similar sentiment for our church. Yet, the truth is, no parent would truly wish their children not to grow. The would be unhealthy and selfish. Neither should we wish that our church family wouldn't grow.

Besides, the Lord Jesus has commanded us to make disciples of all nations. As we are obedient to Christ's command, we will grow. As a result, we will need to make space for them at our Wilson campus, at our Rocky Mount campus, and at future locations in Eastern North Carolina and throughout the world as the Lord leads us. Every family should have a home with room for every member.

## HOW WILL MAKING ROOM FOR MORE HELP US GROW?

Available seating at our optimal inviting times is a challenge. We have discovered that service times outside the Sunday morning window of 9-11AM aren't as effective. So we need to increase our seating for adult worship by offering a new worship venue during the sweet spot hours people want to attend church. With the need for social distancing, this has become an urgent need.

Also, guests have expectations that regular church goers might not see as important. We've gotten used to our church home. We know where it is, how it looks and smells, we like it just fine. But many in our community still don't know we exist. Guests have trouble finding us, they pull into the rundown parking lot, walk into the overcrowded lobby, and have trouble finding a seat for their family of five. First impressions matter.

We must improve our curb appeal and make our lobby more welcoming for people to hang out and experience a loving community like they've never encountered before. We must continue to provide a compelling and safe place for children. We've expanded our classroom space for K-5th grade. Now we must enlarge and enhance our nursery. With our plan to repurpose the theater room - we not only get additional worship space, we expand ministry opportunities for students, for fellowship, and for outreach events.

## WON'T I GET LOST IN THE CROWD OF A LARGER CHURCH?

No, not if our church continues to follow the paradigm given in the 1st century church to grow big and small at the same time. Remember what the Scripture says,

*"Day after day, in the temple courts and from house to house, they never stopped teaching and proclaiming the good news that Jesus is the Messiah" (Acts 5:42).*

As we grow in Sunday attendance, we will need to launch new community

groups that meet in homes. We will continue to follow the rhythm of the 1st century church-- meeting in the "temple courts and from house to house."

Sundays are like big family reunions with grandparents, uncles, aunts and cousins. We won't know them all as well as we do our immediate family, but we know we are all members of the same tribe. However, our community groups that meet in homes are more like immediate family. We know them like parents and brothers and sisters.

As our church grows, you won't get lost in the crowd. you'll always have your community group family and you'll have the small service teams that you serve on with others in the church.

### **HOW MUCH MONEY DO WE HOPE TO RAISE?**

We need to raise \$1 million to accomplish the scope of Phase 2 of our building plan. We began the 3-year Rise Up generosity initiative 18 months ago, so now we're at the half-way mark. We've raised nearly half of the money by giving sacrificially above our normal tithes and offerings. We know that this will take much sacrifice and faith on our parts, but we believe that God is calling us to fully utilize the property He has entrusted to us to reach more people with the Gospel. We also believe that the God who calls us to this great work, is also the God who will enable us to do it.

### **COULDN'T THIS MONEY BE SPENT BETTER ELSEWHERE?**

We have always been a church family that lives within its means. After all, we met in homes and rented facilities for 19 years, persevering until the Lord enabled us to purchase a church home. We support dozens of local, domestic, and international ministries. We spends thousands of dollars annually in benevolence and missions. When someone in our community expresses a need, we don't just give them money, we get to know them, offering to pray and share the gospel with them. We are the church.

So no, we don't think this money could be spent better anywhere else.

Our church handles all of its finances with integrity and multiple layers of accountability. Besides this, the church is God's plan for reaching the world with the Gospel. He doesn't have a plan B. The church is a better investment than the government, better than any other non-profit, or NGO.

God has entrusted this property to our church family. Shouldn't we be willing to give sacrificially so that it is used to its fullest potential? We want to make room for reaching more people, inviting them to come just as they are and be forever changed by the love of Jesus.

### **WON'T WE NEED TO ADD NEW STAFF TO SUPPORT A LARGER ATTENDANCE?**

Yes eventually, but only as we can afford it. We plan to continue raising up lay staff and building volunteer ministry teams to help carry the increased ministry load in the meantime. Plus, by launching new community groups, we will be able to expand our span of care in order to offer pastoral support to everyone.

### **HOW WILL THIS BE MORE OF A SPIRITUAL JOURNEY THAN A CAPITAL CAMPAIGN?**

Because our goal is 100% engagement in taking the spiritual journey together, not in raising \$1 million. We will be preaching through the purposes of the church and asking our church family to respond. We believe that how we handle the time, talent and treasure that God gives us is a spiritual matter. So, we will be challenging everyone to prayerfully trust God by growing in their personal investment into His kingdom. Not everyone will be able to give the same, but everyone should be willing to prayerfully consider giving more.

Radical generosity is our goal for everyone. We want to move people up the generosity ladder to experience the freedom and joy of being a generous giver and investor in God's kingdom. If everyone fully engages in the spiritual journey together, then whatever we raise, we will be thankful.

Yet, we are trusting that our people will Rise Up and give above their tithes and offerings enough to build phase two.

### WHAT CAN I DO?

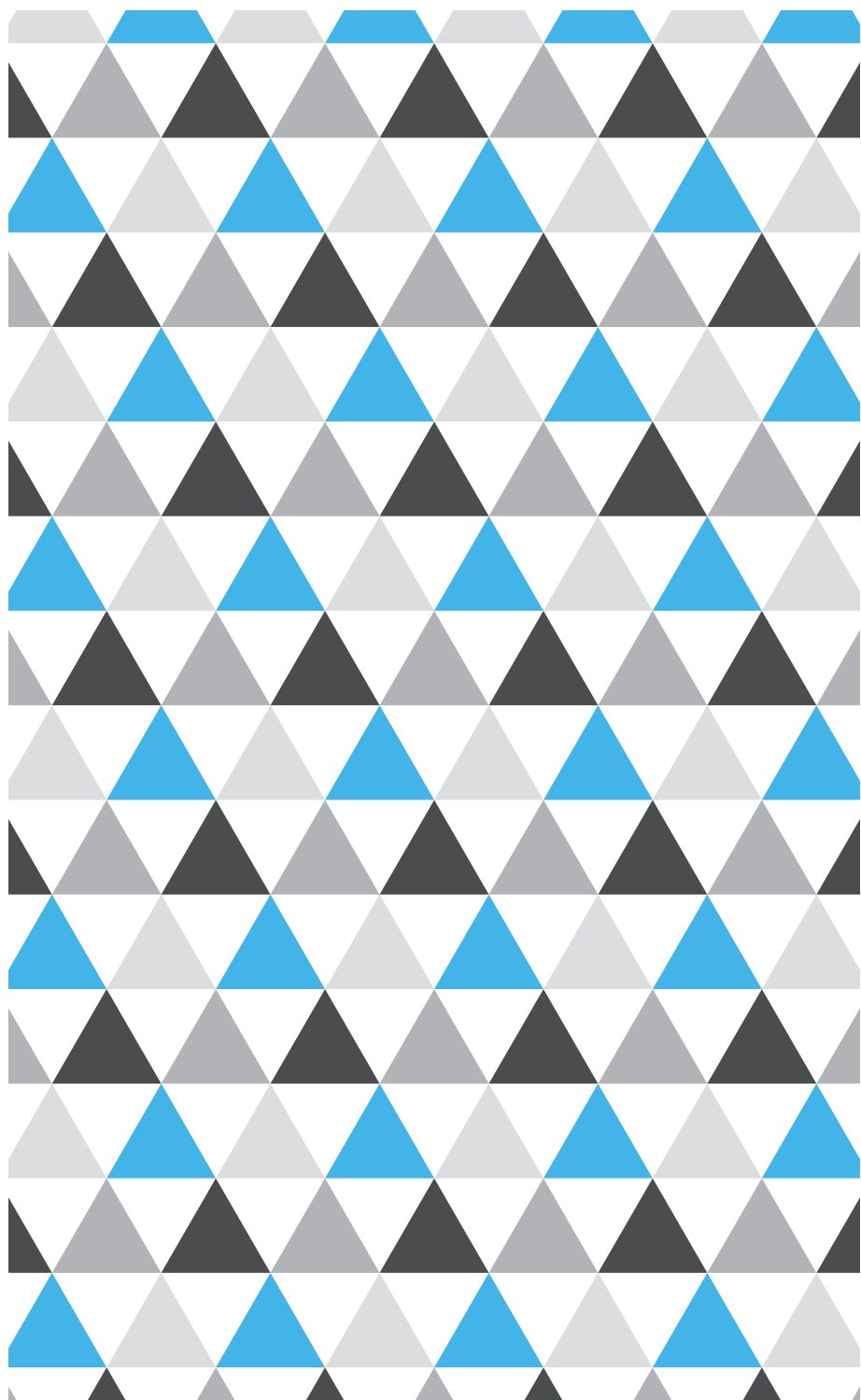
We love this question. It reveals a servant's heart of unity and willingness. What can you do? Engage fully in the Rise Up journey. Let us be like the returning Jewish exiles who were challenged to rise up and rebuild the walls of Jerusalem by the vision God had given to Nehemiah. Accept the challenge to own this vision and calling of God. We must walk this out in unity as a church.

Start by praying for people in your life yet to be reached. Pray for what God would want to do in and through you to reach them. Stop asking what the church should do to reach them, as if the church were some institution. The church is God's family. The church is us, so let's be the church!

Ask God to speak to your heart and simply respond to his leading when the time comes on Commitment Sunday. Take the time to go through the materials we will provide to prepare us to hear from God. Be diligent to participate in all aspects of the Rise Up Generosity Initiative.

Remember, our goal is 100% of our church family participating in prayer and sacrificial generosity when the time comes, so that together, we accomplish what God desires from us and for us.







# COMMITMENT GUIDE



## COMMITMENT GUIDE

### SO WHAT IS YOUR INDIVIDUAL PART IN RISE UP?

Beyond praying and serving, we're asking you to consider what role God would have you play in giving toward Rise Up. From the beginning, our church has been marked by people who were willing to sacrifice their resources and time so that others could discover the love of God. We know that God hasn't given everyone the ability to give the same dollar amount, but He does call each of us to bring all we have - *"not equal gifts, but equal sacrifice."*



### GOD'S GUIDE FOR GIVING

The Bible has a lot to say about giving and the promises attached to it. Giving is a responsibility and a privilege. With that in mind, here are four Biblical principles on giving from 1 Corinthians 16:1-2:

*"Now to Him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen." -- Ephesians 3:20-21*

### FIRST, EVERY BELIEVER IN EVERY CHURCH SHOULD GIVE

Giving is a universal principle. The apostle Paul told the Corinthian believers, "Follow the same procedure I gave to the church in Galatia." In other words, Paul is saying, "They did it in Galatia - you need to do it in Corinth." They did it in Macedonia, and we need to do it here. Every church should do this. It was not just something the Corinthians were asked to do; it is asked of every believer. No believer is exempt from giving.

## SECOND, WE LEARN THAT GIVING IS TO BE DONE CONSISTENTLY AND REGULARLY

"On the first day of every week," Paul said, "set aside a sum of money in keeping with your income." The idea is to consistently take a percentage of your income and set it aside for the work of God. This is what the Scripture tells us to do. And then, as you do this, you are able to invest it in His kingdom.

## THIRD, GIVING IS A PERSONAL ACT

Notice that Paul says, "each one of you should set aside a sum of money." Paul's point is that every one of us should set aside money to give. Even children ought to be taught this. Giving to God's work is a personal act for every believer.

## FOURTH, WE SHOULD PREPARE OURSELVES TO INVEST IN THE WORK OF GOD

The apostle Paul told the believers put aside some amount of money in relation to what you have earned and save it for this offering. Paul is saying to prayerfully consider how much to give. Do it in advance. It should never be a last minute or flippant practice. Paul also says, "in keeping with your income." In other words, not all of our gifts will be equal, but our sacrifice should be. Our giving should be in proportion to what we earn. Giving is an opportunity to be an obedient Christian. Take it seriously, but do it cheerfully. Always ask and allow the Holy Spirit to lead you.

## DISCOVER OUR CHURCH'S GOD-GIVEN VISION AND YOUR GOD-GIVEN CALLING

If we want to reach the people around us, we need to make an opportunity for them to be reached. We need to expand and build out to make room for more people. We need to create an experience that will change their lives. We can do this, but not without you! You will be astounded at what God does through our sacrifices as a community.

*But what you may not expect is what He does in you through sacrifice.*

The process of determining your Rise Up commitment can help you grow spiritually like few others things can ...if you really allow Jesus access to your heart, not just your bank account.

### CAN YOU IMAGINE?

Can you imagine what it will be like to see our newly enlarged nursery, a second worship venue to make room for more adults, that also provides space for our youth and other events, and our new, enlarged bathrooms in a remodeled lobby with an new entrance, and an improved parking lot with curb appeal? Can you imagine realizing that God has enabled you to give more than you ever dreamed possible over three years. Realizing also that your heart expanded as you became more open-handed and generous. And most of all, that you helped open the door for hundreds of people to discover a relationship with Jesus that they couldn't have imagined?

### SO WHERE DO I START?

The best place to begin is by talking with God about what's on your heart and mind, specifically in relation to this giving commitment. Be honest and open with Him about where you are, but make sure you spend some time listening to what He has to tell you! Go through the DEVOTIONAL section of this Rise Up Faith Journey Guide and get God's perspective.

## 1. DELIBERATE - TALK WITH GOD

First, we ask that you go to God and ask that His will be done in your life. It's important that you are striving to follow the direction the Holy Spirit has for you and that you find doors He wants you to walk through.

## 2. DEFINE - WHAT SACRIFICE LOOKS LIKE FOR YOU

What changes can you make in your life that will better enable you to invest in what you believe in? How can you give in ways that will make a difference in you?

*"I will not present burnt offerings to the Lord my God that have cost me nothing." - 2 Samuel 24:24*

## 3. DETERMINE - A STARTING POINT

Rise Up is based on this idea: "not equal gifts, but equal sacrifice." In other words, not all of our gifts will be the same amount, but every one of us can meaningfully invest in proportion to the resources God has given us to work with. Your three-year commitment is to be a demonstration of the definition of sacrifice that God has revealed to you.

We thought it would be helpful to explain what commitment is and is not. A commitment is a heartfelt, Spirit-led decision to embrace the vision of our church, and it is something that you make between you and God. A commitment is not a contract or a legal agreement. It's not between you and the financial department at the church.

Your starting point should begin by praying about what you can give above and beyond your regular tithe or percentage giving. Generosity begins when we stretch beyond what is required (tithe) to what God places in your heart (generosity).

#### 4. DECIDE - CREATE A PERSONAL GIVING PLAN

Prayerfully plan a three-year plan of giving that goes above and beyond your regular tithe. Remember, we are not just constructing buildings; we are investing in people - bringing the message of Jesus to our city and our world.

Prayer is something to keep coming back to throughout the different parts of this process. Even in the nuts and bolts of sorting out financial questions, this is a faith journey. It's not about guilt or obligation. Remember, the idea isn't to figure out a mathematical formula, it's about giving Jesus access to your heart and letting Him lead you in your financial decisions. The Holy Spirit desires to walk with you through this journey. Why don't you get started by praying our Rise Up prayer?

**"Jesus, what do you want to do thru me?"**



## PERSONAL GIVING PLAN...WHAT IS MY STEP OF FAITH?

In the end, rising up to join God in the impossible is about more than simple math – it's about trusting Him to do the impossible. As seen in the Bible, God often taps people on the shoulder and asks them to do something that contradicts conventional wisdom.

Where is Jesus calling you to rise up, to go higher and deeper than ever before? What's the step that forces you to trust God in a new way? Where is He asking you to trust Him without a safety net – so that you can experience His ability to “catch you” in a way that radically transforms your heart and faith?

*“Faith is the confidence that what we hope for will actually happen; it gives us assurance about things we cannot see.” – Hebrews 11:1*

**Mark your calendar for November 15, 2020.** It's our Commitment Weekend, where we'll be turning in our Rise Up commitments together as a church. The real journey will begin from there as we faithfully bring Him our sacrifices over the next three years – and watch Him accomplish more than we could ever ask or imagine.

**Rise Up is not about equal gifts,  
but equal sacrifice.**

## GIFT PROFILE GUIDE

What will it take for us to be successful in receiving the last \$500,000 of our \$1 million in commitments? Studying successful campaigns in other churches, a very typical distribution of gifts can be found. Using that typical distribution and applying it to our church, we find a “model” distribution of gifts that it will take for us to be successful. This also underscores the Biblical principle of *proportionality* – that each of us is “called” to give according to how we’ve been blessed with financial resources!

This “tool” also underscores another Biblical principle of stewardship, the principle that decisions about giving should be made in *prayer*. Look at the chart below and pray the Stewardship Prayer, “Lord, what do You want to do through me?” Then ask the Lord, “Where do You see me (or us) on this chart?” (At what “level” of giving?) God will tell you – just ask!!

NUMBER OF GIFTS AT LEVEL	MONTHLY GIFT	GIFT LEVEL	TOTAL AT LEVEL	CUMULATIVE TOTAL
1	\$2,775	\$50,000	\$50,000	\$50,000
2	\$1,667	\$30,000	\$60,000	\$110,000
3	\$1,250	\$22,500	\$67,500	\$177,500
4	\$833	\$15,000	\$60,000	\$237,500
4	\$667	\$12,000	\$48,000	\$285,500
5	\$417	\$7,500	\$37,500	\$323,000
7	\$333	\$6,000	\$42,000	\$365,000
9	\$250	\$4,500	\$40,500	\$405,500
10	\$167	\$3,000	\$30,000	\$435,500
20	\$83	\$15,000	\$30,000	\$465,500
46	\$42	\$750	\$34,500	\$500,000

Sacrifice is always required to follow the Lord. For us to expand our capacity to equip people and continue to make a difference in our city and around the world, it is going to take some real sacrifice. It's going to take some shifting in priorities, in spending and in giving. If we want to reach the people around us, we need to make an opportunity for them to be reached. We need to rise up and build to make room for more people. We need to create an experience that will change their lives. We can do this, but not without you!

### REMEMBER THE GOD FACTOR

Don't put yourself in a box! As we move forward into the future of our church, what are your dreams? What if God chooses to bless your future too? We think He will. So, don't forget the "God factor" that could adjust your commitment because of a new job, raise, promotion, etc. God has shown how He can take a commitment made in faith that was a real stretch for someone and bring in the resources to meet it.





