

Evergreen Update
Pastor's Conference
1/30/18

Good morning all,

I pray your conference has been productive and that you are encouraging and strengthen each other in the Word. I was asked if I would send a brief update on a few items or topics at Evergreen.

Finances:

-This always seems to be a key in recent history. People thinking/saying/knowing Evergreen doesn't have a plan with money and their belief is Evergreen is the "sinking ship" or "the bottomless pit." When starting this year, we had a goal to be out of debt, build emergency funds, and create a budget that was understandable for all. Without going into too much detail we have created a financial plan short and long term plan to maximize what the Lord continues to bless us with. Our Association approved a restructure with our Mortgage company to consolidate our debts with our mortgage and create emergency funds that not only gain interest for us but also lowers our monthly payments. We have put countless hours into restructuring our budget and line items to fit onto one page for all to see our income vs expenses in a much easier way. What initially looked like a 3-5-year phased plan could be as operational as mid-February.

-Our donations have been a huge blessing as well. As of the Association Report our donations were ahead of goal by almost \$130,000. There are high and low times in the year when donations fluctuate. So, we cannot assume these numbers are sustainable. However, this is a great conversational piece to share with others. To believe that we will not need to go hand out to congregations asking for money. My approach to the year has been "I do not want to guilt anyone into giving, my goal is to share the great things Evergreen is doing and hope you want to be a part of it." We still have quite a few Association congregations that don't have Evergreen in their budgets. I would encourage starting with as low as 3%. Just to show others what being part of our Association means.

-We will also be moving Endowment money into a different company. Roughly \$200,000 which will be matched by 20% (+\$40,000). How awesome.

-We are also creating a first ever Annual Named Scholarship at Evergreen. Again, great things.

Media:

-Our newsletters/magazines have been 1st effort in better communication between Evergreen and our congregations. Next year we are hoping to add quarterly or even monthly videos (similar to WELS connection.) We are also considering adding bulletin inserts with up to date info as well. Would love to hear feedback about any of these options.

-Our grade schools have been receiving our Eagles Edge videos (hopefully they are sharing them). They are put on by our students and specifically focused towards our grade school students (others can share also).

-Congregation Visits – I have been getting around quite a bit. The competitive part of me would like to get to everyone right away and all in a year. Realistically that can't happen. However, I have been making a point to visit the congregations that have been reaching out to me asking for one (for better or worse). Just say hey we would love to have you come talk at our congregation and we will work on a date.

-Individual Visit – I continue to meet with people (not just donors) but people who are influential. I want to share all these great things with people who have history or bad blood with a part of Evergreen. I want them to see the change and know their input is what we are focusing on changing.

Word of Mouth:

-Leading into the word of mouth. I believe everything revolves around word of mouth. Enrollment, donations, volunteering, everything. I think that when people are communicating the negatives of a school people associate only negatives to the school. As you look at the past communication of Evergreen (financial struggles, international program failures, staffing issues) people are talking about all the negatives Evergreen's ministry had. People aren't hearing about the great things our teachers are doing, or the baptisms, or family's that came to faith through Evergreen. Accreditation or Scholastic cups. And it starts with our pastors, our teachers, our congregational leaders, and our families. My goal isn't to convince you or persuade you to promote Evergreen. I want to show you, factually, that Evergreen is and always has been a great school. We just have only been communicating what the devil wants us to focus on. I would love to share more with you all. But for now, I pray for your churches, schools, bible classes, preschools, and witness opportunities. We all share one ministry and one goal. To grow God's Kingdom. It is a privilege to share this ministry with you brothers.