

A big change

Hey all!

I just wanted to update you all on a big change coming up in the new year.

As you may know from my sermon, “The Fence to the Pathway,”¹ God is impressing in our church an emphasis on spiritual formation (maturity) and reaching people on the fence. The *fence* refers to anyone who is not moving forward in their apprenticeship to Jesus, or is simply stuck, both in and outside the church. It certainly does include those *outside* the church. In other words, we have a fresh vision for people who do not normally go to a church.

In the recent months, it seems like God has answered that renewed passion by sending people to our worship gatherings, even though our normal modus operandi is to be sent out to where people are in our normal contexts. But Sunday’s have seen a lot of visitors and first timers. In fact, on few occasions does a Sunday go by when I do not meet someone who just started visiting. This is amazing! What we are experiencing is really special. And I don’t want to take it for granted. I want to open up space for all these seeking hearts to find God among his gathered people. And I know that many of you desire this as well. But with the blessing of more people comes something we must approach wisely and compassionately.

A decades old fact about churches is that when a worship auditorium reaches 80% capacity,² it actually repels visitors (people on the fence), who feel that there is no room for them. We are currently at that capacity, which means we are also now turning people away. In fact, some of you have seen this first hand. While I love having a crowded energetic auditorium (what preacher doesn’t!), it breaks my heart that there is no available room for people to come find God and interact with His people. So the staff and I have researched all the available options, and the best one (long term) is to offer two gathering times on Sunday!

The purpose of this letter is to let you know that **we will be moving to two services**, and are targeting **January 2018** as a potential start time.

We believe this will not only allow more room for people on the fence, but open up even more opportunities on a Sunday for people to gather with us. We are essentially breaking down as many barriers to people experiencing Christ as we can. As a side benefit, it will also provide much needed opportunity for our Sunday teams to worship on the same day that they serve, thereby cultivating more healthy rhythms and keeping people from burning out. This is in step with one of our core values of *slowing down to be with Jesus*.³

¹ For the full length sermon, go to <http://realitysb.com/sermons/from-the-fence-to-the-pathway/>

² This number is now a bit outdated—it is more like 70% today

³ See all of our Core Values here: <http://realitysb.com/about/vision/>

We just announced all of this on November 12th. Now we begin the process of recruiting and training more teams to serve in Sunday morning ministries. This is where you come in. Now is the best time to start asking God where he would have you serve, or to just ask us where the needs are. There are plenty! And this means there is a place for you in this church. We will launch the two gathering times in January, after people are back from their vacations. And if during the Summer, our attendances falls off, we will consider moving back to one service temporarily.

You are a vital part of the church body life! We want you to know where we are headed, but we also want you to engage in the mission God has set before us. It;s an exciting time to be a part of the body of Christ. If you have any questions or concerns, you can ask me, Allen Pugh, or any team member (look for a lanyard). We would be happy to answer any questions you may have!

I am excited for the season ahead, with fresh and contextualized vision from our God about what it looks like to be a local church in this fascinating, yet hungry city we live in. And I'm excited to see what this change will help us accomplish together.

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen. (Ephesians 3:20-21)

- Chris Lazo