

Proposal for **Get out of the Boat** Mini-campaign

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Based upon the story of Peter and Jesus walking on water, John Ortberg wrote a book entitled *If You Want to Walk on Water, You've Got to Get out of the Boat*. You'll hear more about that book and forward-looking ministry in the days ahead. On Sunday, September 26, 2010, I will preach a sermon "If you want to walk on water..." based on Matthew 14.22-33 which will be the theological kickoff for this campaign. For right now, I want to posit a *Get out of the Boat* financial campaign for the month of October. There are five Sundays in October which allows us to look at the five parts of the membership vows that we take when we join the church: to support the church with our prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness.

The **Get out of the Boat** theme will be evident throughout the month of October as I and the other two preachers that month (Chuck Killian and Jack Benfield) will challenge the congregation to remember its vows and to take steps of faith to be more involved with those five aspects of our membership vows. Naturally, a part of that will be a commitment to the budget of the church for 2011 and for the Celebrate Campaign. But I want to be able to ask for a mini-fall campaign to take care of some of the things that many of the committees of the church have forwarded as needs that should not have to wait for a new year. In fact, some of these needs have been obvious for some time and have not been addressed for one reason or another. They are being addressed, little by little, stepping out of the boat in faith toward Jesus. These are things that we need right now as a church to forward the ministry of the church, to attract folks to our fellowship, to help all of us grow in our total faithfulness to the church. Yes, we will be asked to contribute money (which we would want to collect in a very short period of time—ideally by the end of the month of October) which would be over and above what we have budgeted even for this year. Simply put, most of these items that are listed below have already been forwarded by various committees of the church and special work teams that are excited about the immediate future of our church in areas of youth, children, technology, and music. These are all achievable short-term goals which can make a marked difference in how we serve Jesus in this place we call Garner UMC.

How did we discover the needs?

First of all, the staff and I have been studying the scriptures for 40 days with a book entitled *Treasures of a Transformed Life* by John Ed Mathison. The book, and our discussions, have stretched us spiritually and caused us to look within ourselves and to the work and activity of our church. We believe strongly that each person in this church is a minister—and that each person can and will help us to move forward. I believe that we are ready to grow and that we all know that we need to grow---spiritually, numerically, and in many other ways. I began to ask questions. I have formed several different groups to converse with me about the church and its future. I intentionally asked folks who are not currently chairs of committees---and for the most part not on committees at all. This was done not in a manner to circumvent our church leadership—far from it. We will need our leaders to help lead us to "get out of

the boat.” In fact, I am going to ask all of the committee chairs to join with me and members of the staff in a special study of John Ortberg’s book in the near future so that you may hear what I have heard.

I believe that in order for the church to grow, we must be centered on Jesus Christ in all that we do. We must be convinced that Jesus is the Lord of our lives and we must be willing to invite persons to know Jesus here at Garner UMC and to be discipled in the process. We have to make good first impressions, work together as a team (the body of Christ) and trust in God’s power.

These are some of the needs as they have been expressed so far. The time is right for us to clarify our vision and move forward in faith. I recognize that we have many on-going matters before us that might seem to be “more important” like staff salaries, paying off our monthly indebtedness, paying down our debt all together. But I believe that if we can show how God can work in these things that are listed below, it will give us confidence to trust him in the big things that are before us.

The Needs as we see them and the rationales behind the requests before us.

--First of all, I asked staff members to help me think about how we can make our church more “visitor friendly.” We retrained our ushers, greeters, and others to go out of their way to be more friendly. We opened the TIKI booth as a place to gather and to receive information. We have an ongoing plan to enhance and improve the way that we greet one another in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. Part of being “welcoming” is to make sure that people can find their way around. As a first time visitor myself, I recognized that there are few if any signs to direct folks around our huge and wonderful facility. People do not read minds...but they will read signs. So, signage will be an important part of this campaign. Also, as a first-timer, I couldn’t help but to notice that some areas had become trash piles (like down in the courtyard and the fellowship hall). We gave fair notice and have begun to clean those areas up.

-- Secondly, I created councils to involve more folks in decision making on a grass roots level. A youth council and a children’s council have been formed. The youth council has met and the children’s council will meet later this month. In addition, we are reforming the current JOG worship service and have had several listening sessions with various groups. In meeting with them, the persons chosen all mentioned that they wanted to have more “ownership” in their spaces downstairs and in the CLC in our facility and they signaled that they are willing to work to make that happen. Some of the issues raised were acute enough to start work on them right away, like space for the cribs, etc. in the baby nursery (which is used by the ESL nursery folks in the Fall). Other needs are listed below as ways to help enhance the ministries of children and youth.

--Thirdly, I have asked the staff and many laypersons to tell me where we are in reference to enhancing our worship experience with video and other technological matters. I have received a tentative report which needs more input.

--Fourthly, I found out that the youth and young adults wanted to have a major named band to come to Garner Church so as to invite even more youth and young adults to our great church. I did that, not knowing that we needed a 50 amp service to make that happen. Again, I am listing the needs here that have come from all of those directions to the Trustees.

The Needs and their Rationale

Purchase of an AED (automated emergency defibrillator): This is a real need that could save a person's life. With the average age of our congregation currently pretty high, and with the use of our CLC for basketball by persons of all ages, this device can simply save lives. There is enough money in several of the "900" accounts that can be combined and used to purchase at least one of these and have it installed properly right away.

Church Signage: Several of our staff members have approached our buildings from all directions as if they were new visitors to our facility (which is an every Sunday fact....and a fact that occurs throughout the week). The staff will present to the Trustees a detailed explanation of where the signs need to be and the anticipated costs thereof.

Nursery upgrades: We heard right away about challenges in the nurseries of the church—not so much about staffing, but about the ambience of the places now set aside for the nursery. They are in the basement, a place that is perceived to be damp and dreary. Plus, there needs to be two distinctly different nurseries for a church our size: a toddler nursery and a crib nursery. Up to this point, the crib nursery has been rarely used because it looked quite frankly like a dumping ground. Part of the reason was that other groups use those rooms and it is difficult to keep them clean and bright for our own parents and kids to use on Sunday mornings (and other times when we have church gatherings). So, immediately, we have begun to rectify that problem. The children's coordinator has formed a children's council and they have already done the following: cleaned up the rooms and made them more attractive; designed cabinets in which to hide the cribs from usage during the week (as well as the ugly block wall which had been previously damaged by water); chosen paints; and are enlisting volunteers to help with curtains throughout the children's area. More and more the children's council will be taking ownership of their rooms. One thing that we will also see in the near future is that the children's library will be moved out of the fellowship hall to one of the children's rooms where it will be used more often. The overall costs to the church for these projects are actually not that much, but the investment will be well worth it. To grow, we must have a children's area that is attractive, safe, and well-staffed.

Fencing for the playground and the new 'dry retention pond.' The Town of Garner is working on a formal proposal with the Trustees for an easement so that they can build a dry retention pond. In the process, they will be fencing in part of the area and giving a one-time contribution of about \$5000 which will be used to upgrade the fencing around the playground.

A 50 amp electrical service for the CLC. The band that we are bringing in on October 16 needs this service....and so too will future bands. In fact our current band could use this service and has been making do with patchwork electrical service which is limiting what groups, etc that we can have in the facility. Again, we could rent a temporary set-up, but in the long run we would do well to fix this....otherwise we will have to call in an electrician every time that we have a big-time event in our church. We want the CLC to be the place to be—so that other groups also will want to rent out our facility. We have received one estimate to have this done the "right way" which would cost about \$5000. This was something that was unanticipated perhaps when the CLC was built, but has been a

practical need from the beginning. It is possible to “patchwork” this or to rent such a service, but in the long run, it would be advantageous to have it installed.

Fellowship hall renovations. One of the most used parts of the church is the downstairs fellowship hall. Right now, the area that has been in the past an “altar” area and is now storage and the children’s library needs some serious attention. The children’s library will be moved soon to one of the larger children’s rooms downstairs in the “old building.” What a group of persons have envisioned is to make two walled in areas: one to house the chairs and tables and the other to house an adequate resource room for our children’s ministry (which they simply do not have right now). The construction of these walls can be easily done by church volunteers---and the cost will be nominal. In addition, we will build a storage room at that same end of the fellowship hall going out to the first pillar in the courtyard (where trashy stuff has previously been stored).

Work on the courtyard/basement area. We’re getting a group of creative minds together to talk about some kid/youth friendly ideas like cut-outs, paint here and there, and a storage area where we used to have trash and garbage. This area has so much potential to be more “friendly” towards kids, youth, and their parents. We believe that some of the work that we envision can be easily a Scout Eagle project or a community service project by Girl Scouts.

Youth room improvements. The youth council has been meeting together and visiting other youth rooms in an effort to make their room have their own “touch.” The Council will soon be presenting its hopes and dreams to the Trustees with pictures and diagrams. Most of the work can certainly be done by the youth themselves. The church may be asked to provide some lumber and paint, but the youth, their leaders, and their parents can do most of the work. (Like they have done on work teams outside of the church).

Technical updates. Once Kristy Foushee returns from vacation, she will gather together a “tech” committee to look at some needs. Most of the sound equipment is adequate, but we simply do not have the capacity to seamlessly use video, slides, and other things which we will be using with more frequency in all of the services. Some equipment simply needs to be modernized. They already know that they need a church-dedicated video camera, a dedicated laptop for both the sanctuary and the CLC, and two TV monitors mounted so that the choir can see the videos which will be used with more frequency in the sanctuary. Costs will be determined in the near future.

Parking Lot and sidewalks. Simply put, there are a number of places throughout the church parking lots that need to be patched now before they become major maintenance down the road. An estimate can be received easily enough, but that has not been done in the past because of “lack of funds.”

Banners in the CLC. In visiting other similar family life centers in our area, one common theme has been banners that have been installed not only for visual effect, but for sound help as well. We have a major sound issue of reverberation in the CLC which can be rectified with these professionally made banners. We would ask families to consider purchasing a banner in honor or in memory of someone. We’ll recognize those purchases with a “leaf” on the tree in the alcove area.

Disaster response. We need to remember that the American Red Cross has designated our facility as a place that can be used as an Emergency Shelter. The Administrative Council in the past agreed to let it be so used. This might mean that we have combined worship services if a Sunday falls during an emergency “season.” But we see this as being an opportunity to worship God together even in the midst of the storms. We are meeting with the ARC representatives in the near future to see if there are upgrades to our facility that need to be done.

The Little Bus. If there is still a need to “pay off the bus,” then we would put this in the campaign also.

Timeline for Action

Finance Committee meeting on August 5, 2010

Concept of the overall needs and “campaign” presented to the Finance Committee to get the “ball rolling.” This is only a preliminary look which simply gives other bodies of the church the OK to keep working and to bring back to the Trustees and the Finance Committee detailed proposals, costs, etc before we move forward.

Called Trustees meeting on August 10, 2010

Overall needs presented to Trustees with preliminary requests...Again to keep the Trustees in the loop and to ask them for permission to continue the conversations about these matters that need to be done. Trustees will be asked to accept AED purchase immediately and to determine the best place to put it. Trustees will also be asked to approve recommendations from the youth.

Trustees on September 7, 2010

Will have all estimates and reports from the various committees. A budget to meet those needs will be formulated and presented to the Finance Committee.

Sermon during Worship on September 26, 2010

Pastor Bill will give the theological reasoning and inspiration for us to move forward at this time. “IF you want to walk on water, you have to get out of the boat.”

Finance Committee Meeting on September 30, 2010

Dealing with the budget for the campaign and the overall budget for 2011.

Each Sunday in October....congregation will be challenged to support the church with prayers, presence, gifts, and service.

Administrative Council Meeting on October 10, 2010

Deal with budget for campaign and overall budget for 2011.

November will be the Get Out of the Boat Campaign

We will ask for “lead gifts” in advance....We’ll present the needs before us and ask for funds to be used to forward this overall effort. At the same time, persons may want to do something with an individual flavor—like a banner for the CLC.

The Campaign will start on November 1 and hopefully end with Thanksgiving Sunday, November 21—when we’ll announce the results. And Give Thanks to God for his Almighty Blessings.