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**For I have plans for you, says the Lord, they are plans for good
and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope.**

Jeremiah 29:11

But the noble man devises noble plans, and by noble plans he stands.

Isaiah 32:8

(This information was shared at both worship services on September 16, 2007)

September 16, 2007

To our Fellowship Family,

I speak for Fellowship's Board of Elders when I share that the two Scripture passages above frame the prayers and approach of our leaders at this unique time in Fellowship's history.

From the moment we announced Jamie's possible call to Scottsdale Bible Church, we were reminded that our faith leads us to the firm belief that the months ahead can make us stronger, empower and unleash our faith and gifts, bring us together, and demonstrate that God has a plan for Fellowship, and each of us. And He will never, ever, forsake us.

The Board of Elders has used the last six weeks to pray, organize, listen, and pray some more. Our emotions are now turning to *expectancy* and a sense of *excitement* as to what God may have in store for us. It has been a joy to connect with so many of you and hear your ideas and feelings. We have learned a great deal about the grace and faith of our church family, and the godly "filter" that you are using to process this news. How God has blessed our church!

We aim to communicate consistently and fully in the months ahead. In any business or organization, it is often misperception or incomplete information that leads to confusion or hurtful conversations. With a series of regular communications -- during church services, on our website (www.fellowshipcleveland.com) and informal conversations -- we aim to reduce that.

Here's the news we can share right now:

Search Team Chair and Team Selected

John DuRoss has accepted the Board's invitation to chair a 7-person Senior Pastor Search Team. John has a special set of gifts that includes Elder, teacher, husband/father, and successful business executive. But at the core, he is an individual keenly in touch with his faith and relationship with Jesus Christ. And his vision for Fellowship is firmly entrenched in our values and mission. Six individuals will join John on the team, having been carefully and prayerfully selected by the Board and John: **Karen Brooks, Peter Conway, Pete Donoghue, Kirt Kirtland, Tom Sharda, and Ellyn Wilkoff.** Our prayer is that God molds this group into a rich and trusting team in the coming weeks, with an extra measure of discernment and wisdom.

First Things First: Fellowship in Prayer

The Board believes it is imperative to launch the search and transition activities with prayer, and we'll do exactly that during the weekend of **September 22-23**. The Search Team, Staff and Board will meet Saturday morning for a prayer retreat; we will introduce and pray for the Search Team at Sunday morning services on September 23; our 24-Hour Prayer Team will pray during the weekend; and Lud Golz is organizing a **Concert of Prayer Service for 7PM Sunday** where the church family will have the opportunity to pray for our leaders, staff and team, Jamie and his family and our church. Furthermore, the Elders will pray for specific needs of individual members of the church family that evening. Please join us for this unique and special time.

A Time to Listen and Reflect

A significant event in the life of the church provides an opportune moment in time to listen, re-affirm our vision and mission and get a sense from you the characteristics and gifts that our next senior pastor might need. In October, we will ask for your input by forming 8-10 Search Advisory groups, representing a cross-section of our members, ministries, and age groups. These groups will meet in a small group to share their views with the Search Team, and will be engaged later in the search process as candidates visit. A *church-wide written survey* will supplement what we learn from the small group interactions.

A Time to Count our Blessings

Fellowship today is a much deeper, stronger and diverse organization than when Jamie arrived six years ago. By expanding our staff team and helping our attendees find their gifts, we have added numerous *new ministry programs*, such as WOW, Acts of Kindness, worship teams and musicians. We have excellent children's and teen programs, have broadened our missions participation significantly and built our network of small groups. Beyond programs, our *facilities* and creative and technical capabilities have been expanded significantly. We're on *solid financial footing*, without significant debt. We are *a church family* that has doubled in size, but more importantly, is rich in *spiritual maturity, and emphasizes connections with ministries and one another*.

Our Faithful and Talented Staff

At its Board meeting in August, the Elders were moved to unanimously affirm the quality and commitment of our staff team. We are truly blessed with professional, faithful, dedicated and passionate individuals. Soon after Jamie's announcement, the team huddled to discuss their values and unity and re-committed themselves as a team to Fellowship's core values (G.R.A.C.E) and vision (Win-Build-Send). This act touched the Board; it was symbolic of a group that was focused on more than their individual ministries or issues, but were thinking more broadly and selflessly. Our staff team pours their lives and careers into our church every day; and their adjustment in the weeks ahead will be more significant than ours. Please pray especially for them, and their families, and offer them an extra ounce of grace and love during this time.

The 2008 Faith and Family Speaker Series!

Many of you have asked: Who's going to preach? A planning team is being established, under Stephen Burks, to identify and invite a variety of area and nationally-known preachers, authors, leading Christian speakers and musicians to preach and teach in the months ahead. We'll hear periodically from Lud Golz, Aaron Tredway, and André Bernier, as well. The transition time provides an opportunity for us to bring guest speakers and expose our church and the Valley to a number of teachers. As we begin to identify Senior Pastor candidates in the Spring, we will include them in the series schedule. Many of you have provided ideas for speakers already. If you have a suggestion for a guest, please provide it to Stephen or Engelina Koberna.

Children's Ministry Search Team Established

A search team for our Children's Ministry (CM) Pastor has been established. The team has begun by interviewing CM leaders. We are very grateful for the work of leaders and dozens of volunteers who organize and run programs for our children during both services each Sunday. This year, a second curriculum has been added.

Releasing Jamie with Thankful Hearts

At last week's Board meeting we set Jamie's last Sunday with us for **October 21**. We spoke of our love for him, affirmed and released him with thankfulness, joy, and expectation to the place in the kingdom that God has guided him to. We'll celebrate with Jamie and Kim. Stay tuned for details.

Finally ... What You Can Do

If you feel you want to "do something" you are not alone. Here's a suggestion: Begin to think of the time ahead as a time to engage, try something, make a connection, or step up. Consider the next few months as a time to experiment, do something different, or stand in the gap.

There are two things we can all do every day: First, *pray consistently* for wisdom, ordered steps and for protection from evil for our staff and leaders, our church, the Scottsdale church, Jamie and his family. And second, *share information accurately* and support one another. If you hear someone who doesn't have the facts, or has misinterpreted them, help them with grace. After all, that's what Fellowship and our faith is all about.

In Christ and for the Board of Elders,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Bill Murschel", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Bill Murschel, Chair