



# CATCH THE VISION

## MOVING FORWARD IN CELEBRATION AND FAITH

THE BUILDING CAMPAIGN NEWSLETTER OF  
CREEKSIDE EVANGELICAL FREE CHURCH OF MERCED  
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### God Is On the Move

By Pastor Steve Muncherian

Warm greetings in the name of Jesus our Savior and Lord.

*"Leading people into a relationship with Jesus Christ and equipping them to serve God."* Since the beginning this has been our purpose as a congregation.

In the Spring of 2006 we stepped out in faith to tear down the old sanctuary and build new. We held our first service in the new building on March 2007. Since that time an incredible amount of ministry has taken place in the new facility.

With the new facility our focus still remains ministry. Sharing on the occasion of our 10th Anniversary, founding pastor Bill Smith said this, *"There are*

*always dreams when a new congregation forms. People have different expectations but we have found that our church has an important part to play in the ministry of Jesus Christ in this community."*

Looking back at the last years of ministry it is exciting to see how our commitment and faith has been used and multiplied by God as He has used this congregation to play an important part in the ministry of Jesus Christ in this community. Lives have been changed forever through ministries to men, women, children, and families, Youth Groups, Sunday School, AWANA, Family Camp, Sunday Night Live, Mexico Outreach,

STEM, Life Groups, and on and on. God has blessed us tremendously and has used us miraculously.

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Youth meeting in the new Youth Room



First Service of Worship in the new sanctuary

### INGATHERING CELEBRATION Sunday, December 6, 2009

**Service of Worship**

**9:30 a.m.**

**Potluck and Praise**

**11:00 a.m.**

### The Priority in Prayer

From the Prayer Committee

What is the most powerful tool that we have with which to build our church and our church community? Is it not the bulldozer that knocks down the walls or the arms of 20 men which tear out the planters?

No, it is none of these. The

most powerful tool is the prayer of a 5-year old, and a 70-year old, and the prayers of many more people just like you.

What follows are segments of one of Pastor Steve's sermons focused on prayer.

The complete text provides you with the rest of the story. It is well worth the brief time to read it in full at

[www.efcmerced.org/prayer.html](http://www.efcmerced.org/prayer.html)

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### God Is On the Move (from page 1)



Worship in Room 10

We see God at work today. Praise God for those who have recently made decisions to trust Jesus as their Savior. Younger families are coming into the congregation. Our children's and youth ministries are growing. We feel a renewed spirit in our worship and times together for prayer and Bible study. There is an awakening desire to reach outward into our community with the Gospel. God has strategically placed us in the heart of a vast and growing mission field. Merced is a city which, by the addition of the UC Merced and other newcomers, is changing

dramatically almost every day. We see these changes happening around us. The character of the city is not the same as it was just a few years ago. The city looks different. The people are different. Merced is a growing city where the vast majority of people do not know Jesus as their Savior.

I believe that God has placed us here with purpose. He has laid before us a great opportunity. There is before us an open door to be used by God to change lives for eternity. To move boldly into this new century and be used by God in the lives of

our friends, family, and community. Like those who gathered 24 years ago, it is our opportunity to step forward with faith and commitment. To tear down and build new facilities is not about steel and stucco. Its about expanding ministry opportunities for "Leading people into a relationship with Jesus Christ and equipping them to serve God."

Let us be in prayer together as we step forward in faith. Let us consider our commitment to be used by God. May we together continue to follow Him to where He will lead us. ☞

### The Priority of Prayer (from page 1)

*Pray in the Spirit.  
Pray alert.  
Persevere in prayer.*

**Pray at all times.** Always be in communion - in communication - with your Lord (1 Thessalonians 5:17). He is always with you and listening!

**Pray using all kinds of prayers:** adoration, praise, thanksgiving, confession, petition. God listens to His children no matter what or how we pray (Philippians 4:6; 1 Timothy 2:1).

**Pray in the Spirit.** This prayer starts with God. God initiated our relationship with Him. God enables prayer. He desires for us to pray (Romans 8:26,27).

**Pray alert.** Pray with our eyes open - to the needs of those around us, pray for those in need. Praying alertly also means that we're awake to the

temptations to sin that we face. So we pray for God to keep us from evil (Mark 13:33; 14:38; Acts 20:51; 1 Peter 5:8).

**Persevere in prayer.** Keep praying. Stick to it, don't quit, do not give up. Robert Law said: "Prayer is not getting men's will done in heaven. It is getting God's will done on earth."

Prayer has a crucial role in bringing God's invisible power into the visible experiences of life. As we continue forward together, by faith pursuing what God has laid before us, prayer must be foundational to all we do. ☞



### Q & A with Steve York

#### Catch The Vision: What changes have you seen with the new facility?

Steve York: You can tell a lot about what a church cares about by where they spend their resources. Young people come to our church and see the new youth room and they hear the message: "You are important to us. We built this for you." Both in our visiting youth and in our own young people, I see the growing awareness that they are loved, that they are important, that we as a church are really interested in investing in them.

#### CTV: Can you remember what the old youth room was like?

SY: I remember old, musty, beat-up couches. I remember trying to engage 20 youth in activities and feeling like we were trying to cram into a phone booth.

#### CTV: How has the new youth room enabled ministry?

SY: One of the purposes of our Sunday Night Youth Group is to provide an atmosphere conducive to building relationships. The new youth room has been an important part of making this happen. Once in a while at a youth event I'll stand back and take a look at the 'whole picture': the youth room is full of youth enjoying different activities: a few students are playing pool, others ping-pong... some are at the air hockey table and others are sitting in at the tables just 'hanging out'.

#### CTV: What challenges are facing our youth today?

SY: Young people are searching for caring community. They are surrounded by other students at school who are offering community, but it is often offered on the condition that they choose the pleasures of this world over following Jesus. Our young people need to experience authentic community in which they are accepted and loved for who they are... and encouraged to walk with Christ in a hostile world.

#### CTV: What is one of the most exciting things happening among our youth?

SY: Our young people are growing in Christ and seeing that God has called them and is equipping them to reach out to their friends.

### From the Campaign Committee

By Vinton Thengvall, Chairman  
Campaign Committee

Isn't it great to celebrate what God has done! Over the last two years in the new building I have been amazed at the changes. At times it doesn't even seem possible that we have been able to do so much with the facility. These are exciting times at CEFC Merced!

Last month the congregation met and voted to go ahead with a campaign to move us forward into future ministry. You will

be hearing more in the weeks ahead about "Moving Forward In Celebration And Faith".

Our committee has met twice with Steve Johnson from the EFCA home office. We will continue to meet over the next several months. The committee members are: Pastor Steve Muncherian, Pat Martin, Michael Rench, and Janelle York. These people are helped by many other willing volunteers. Thanks to all!

Above all, we serve our great God and Savior Jesus Christ. He has placed us here and given us a vision for what He can do in us.

"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 ☞



The roof going on!