



LOOKING AHEAD

In 1954 a man by the name of Roger Bannister shocked the sports world. He did what every one had said was impossible—he ran the mile in less than four minutes.

But less than a month later a little Australian by the name of John Laddie ran the mile in 1 ¼ seconds less than what Bannister had. Talk about excitement. The whole sports world looked forward to when Bannister and Laddie would race against each other.

Several months later the Dream Mile took place. Toward the end of the race John Laddie was comfortably in the lead—everyone knew he was going to win, no doubt about it.

But coming around the final turn, in his own words he said, “I began to think, ‘Where is Bannister?’” That thought grew so loud in his head that just before the finish line he couldn’t resist looking over his shoulder.

In that moment of hesitation, Roger Bannister passed him and crossed the finish line first. Laddie said, “If I hadn’t looked back I would have won the race.”

There is nothing wrong with remembering our past because it’s been a good past. Hopefully we learn and grow from the remembering. But it’s keeping our eyes on our purpose that will win the race.

On this day of the Celebration of Ground Breaking for the remodel of the Worship Center and addition of the new entryway, we are reminded to remember our purpose and look to the future.

Who we are and who we will become as a church is in the here and now and the decisions we make for the future.

After years of talking about it, you the church family, made the decision to embrace the future. With this remodel we are saying to our community—to every business on Montgomery, to every apartment complex, to every neighborhood—we are here to stay.

We have been an active and vital part of community for many years. As Jesus told those first disciples, “You will be my witness in Jerusalem, in all Judea, and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth,” we are called to minister to our city, our state, our country, and the world.

In the name of Jesus Christ we are going to continue to be a church right here. We are going to continue to provide ministries however and wherever we can. Let me share some things with us today of how we are doing this.

For several years Del Norte Baptist Church has been in the top 2% of the 45,000 SBC churches in giving to International Missions. We help support 5000 missionaries.

We are one of the top 10 churches in NM in supporting the 5000 North American missionaries. We continue to be involved in helping start new churches around our state.

We send a mission team to another country every year—medical, construction—always evangelistic.

Every Sunday morning we provide a Bible study hour for all age groups. We also provide 3 different worship services—a traditional, a contemporary, and a Spanish language service.

Our church family is very involved in local and international ministries. We have adopted Gov. Bent elementary and McKinley middle schools.

At the beginning of each school year we provide back packs chock full of school supplies for children whose parents or guardians cannot afford to buy them We give boxes full of school supplies to McKinley Middle School.

For several years we provided tutoring for Gov. Bent students. We give Thanksgiving baskets to families from the school. This Christmas season Payless Shoes is going to partner with us to give shoes to needy children of Gov. Bent school.

And that’s just the start. Let me just go down a list of other ways we minister in our community:

Every Valentines the church melodrama entertains sold out crowds for four nights. One half of the proceeds are always given to a local charity.

Every week teams from the church serve at the rescue mission; we collect coats for the mission and we also collect items for Joy Junction.

Our church facilities, including the rooms in this building and the Conference Center are used throughout the year by many diverse groups and organizations including:

...Oasis, a community adult continuing education organization; by ACE, an alcohol and drug intervention program; by My Chronic Disease groups; by Soyka violin and Steinbeck piano classes;

...by baseball, basketball, soccer, and ROTC groups and organizations; by CASA movie days for senior adults; by the Fine Arts Dept. of APS for training; by quilting and crafting groups. Also the National Ham Operators organization has used our facilities.

Wayland Baptist University has held their graduation ceremonies here in past years. We have sponsored Health Fairs and Safety Fairs.

Our children's choirs programs are second to none and attract children from around the city. Each Christmas season we offer a Christmas Camp, a free night for parents to bring their children so the parents can get out for a while.

The Alcohol Anonymous group, they call themselves the 'Brown Baggers,' meet across Hendrix street and use our parking lot with our permission. The Baptist Convention, both state and national, use our facilities for their training events.

Whew! There's more, but you get the idea. What is it that makes a church special? Many are tempted to answer, "Because of what it does for me."

This is not true of the Del Norte Family. What makes our church special is that we are not selfish. There are many pluses to belonging to this church, but we live to serve others.

We understand we are here to touch our world with Jesus Christ, to be good neighbors, to be involved with our community, and to serve our community, city, country and world.

So my charge to this church family is simple—keep it up! Keep on keeping on with what you are doing. We are remodeling to better serve. The remodeling makes a bold statement—we are here to stay, and we are here to serve.

One of the purposes of a church is fellowship. Fellowship comes from a Greek word, koinonia—having all things in common. This is who we are—a fellowship of servants with a common faith, here to serve and to minister.

Let's continue on keeping the main thing the main thing.