

JUMP IN. MAKE WAVES.



Cannonball

Students



Letter From Ethan

For more than 150 years we have witnessed what God can do when God's people trust in Jesus and jump all in. Each of us has benefited from the waves of ministry impact that God has accomplished through First Christian Church. We've seen God transform lives, heal marriages, invite people into community, and comfort the suffering. These stories were made possible by the faithfulness of our God and by the faithfulness of God's people who came before us. They planned for these stories, and prepared for them by investing in the work of God in First Christian Church.

And now, like a kid on the edge of a diving board, it's our generation's turn to jump in and make waves.

A cannonball isn't something you can do halfway, or by timidly sticking your toes in the water. A cannonball requires full commitment - going "all in." And once you take that leap, you will send waves of impact across the water as you immerse yourself in that jump.

It's the same way in our lives with Christ! Following Jesus invites us to a fully committed life - a life that is surrendered to God's ways and purposes so that we can create kingdom-building waves of impact in our church, our community, and our world. We believe God is calling us to do a cannonball - an "all in" commitment that will result in a ripple effect of ministry. What steps of faith is the Lord calling you to so you can truly jump in with Jesus and the mission God is doing through FCC?

God is going to do great things through these next two years and beyond as we all jump in together and say,

Cannonball!

A handwritten signature in white ink, appearing to read 'Ethan', is written over the background image of water ripples.

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Where we

The story of First Christian Church is a story of **faithfulness, sacrifice, and mission**. God's faithfulness has inspired the sacrifice of God's people to the mission that God has given us. The mission to go everywhere (including Johnson City) and make disciples of everyone, baptizing and teaching them to obey Jesus.

e've been.

Our church's history can be summed up by 3 fifty-year periods. Each began when FCC made a major strategic ministry decision and jumped all-in on the mission God had given them. And then, we saw ripples of impact expanding far beyond those time periods, reaching us even today. These ripples are a testimony to the faithful power of our God working through the humble work of God's people.

1871-1921

Context.

A young town emerges at the intersection of railroads, commerce, and new opportunity. Johnson City would quickly grow to be the most influential town in our region.

The Jump.

Four families saw the need for a church built on God's Word and their faithful service. Their vision was profoundly simple. They sought to embody the church as described in the book of Acts, founded on the authority of scripture as their only rule for faith and practice.





The Splash.

A church was born on November 12th, **1871**, with four families gathering to read a chapter of the book of Acts and share in the Lord's Supper in mutual fellowship.

In December of **1879**, we dedicated our first building and launched a cutting-edge ministry strategy called Sunday School that would prove to be the heart of our discipleship strategy for the next 100 years and beyond.

By **1888**, our active membership had grown to 120 souls, even as we were actively sending people out to support the launch of other churches in the new communities that were emerging throughout East Tennessee.

In **1905**, our building was completely lost to a fire, leading to a year of meeting in the local opera house before a new building could be constructed on an improved lot the following year.

By **1920**, our church had doubled in size twice over, maximizing the capacity of the new building and drawing members from every corner of the growing Johnson City. The church was ready for a new Jump.

1921-1971

Context.

Johnson City is growing in size and regional influence. With the launch of ETSU and the founding of JCMC in 1911, Johnson City is becoming a college town filled with young families and a growing professional community.

The Jump.

Under the leadership of William Sweeney, the church pledged themselves to the 5 year campaign: “Organized to Evangelize.” This included the commitment to attend, serve, learn, and invite. Today, we aim to do those same 4 things. We call them the DNA of FCC, as we strive to worship, serve, disciple and tell.





The Splash.

1921-1926 FCC set out to plant 5 churches in 5 years, but instead, planted 12 churches in 10 years. During this time, FCC sent out more people than in FCC's total attendance. As people came to FCC, they were challenged with a mission, many immediately going out to make that mission happen. These churches are our partners in ministry today, including Grandview CC, Walnut CC, East Unaka CC, FCC Greeneville and so many more.



1934 Even during this season of planting churches and sending people out, FCC continued to grow. We met this need for increased space with building expansions in 1924 and 1934.

1942 Under the ministry of Mr. Fife and Dr. Dampier, a radio ministry launched and grew on WJHL radio. For decades, we used the airwaves to share the gospel with thousands in our region.

1948-1951 As the church grew, the leaders recognized the inadequacy of our worship and children's spaces and undertook an ambitious project to build a 600-seat sanctuary, with a full gym and kitchen in the basement.

1967 Seeing the need for greater care for our top generations, FCC donated the land and led other churches to launch Appalachian Christian Village, which serves hundreds of our beloved neighbors today.

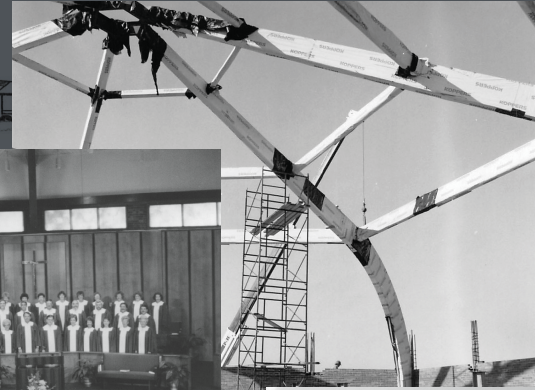
1971-Present

Context.

The city continues to expand to the north and west. New schools are being built and plans are announced for a new highway, and even a brand new mall.

The Jump.

FCC's leadership made the bold decision to move from downtown Johnson City to our present day location. At the time, this area was filled with cornfields. However, with knowledge of the upcoming highway development and the construction of a mall, FCC's leaders felt compelled to make a strategic change. They hoped and prayed that this shift would reach and bless more people in Johnson City.



The Splash.

1972 Our radio ministry turned into a TV ministry that continues to this day. Countless people continue to have access to worship and the hope of Christ through our TV ministry.

1992 Continuing the vision of our move north, we expanded our capacity for discipleship with the construction of an education wing in 1992, and then a new entry and office spaces in 2005.

2013 Love Month launched as an annual event in which hundreds are moved into action to serve our city in tangible ways, as the hands and feet of Jesus.

2013 Our youth group continued to grow and moved into its own home in the Mountcastle Center, just down the hill. From the Refuge, they continue to reach new people and train the next generation for the leadership of God's church.

2017 The SEND campaign raised 1.3 million dollars to give away for the purpose of raising up new leaders for God's church. With these funds, we launched a new ministry program at Milligan University and expanded our internship and residency programs.

2021 We celebrated our 150th anniversary; rejoicing in what God has done through FCC, believing that our best days still lie ahead, and trusting that God will still move in our day as He has time and time again in our history.

Where we are now.

Our church's history demonstrates how the faithfulness of God's people in the past continues to bless us today. All the good that we have experienced and everything we see around us we owe to the hopes, dreams, and prayers of those who went before us.

You see, someone planned for your story at FCC. They set out to make it happen.

They **prayed** for someone like you to show up and worship God.

They **prepared** to greet you on a Sunday morning.

They made sure they had enough room to **invite** you into a group and welcome your children into a classroom.

They formed a team to **care** for you in crisis.

They **invested** in a church building by the cornfields in hopes that God would bless this space and fill it with people.

They **planted** more churches and expanded our local capacity because of their unwavering desire to reach more people.

These stories tell us about 150 years of people running a strong race; going all in for God. And our ministry today is built on the legacy of those who have gone before and jumped all-in. They sacrificed and prepared for the ministry that we see around us today.

Our programming spaces are filling up fast and soon we will have no more room to welcome new people.

Our region needs more churches and our church must again serve as a leader in church planting and church support.

The current generation of church leaders is rapidly aging and we must engage to train and inspire the generation to come.

Our core infrastructure that has served us well will not serve us for the generation to come.

The need for the gospel in our community is as urgent as ever.

It's time to jump.

And now it's our turn to jump all-in. It's time for us to take the leap of faith, just like those before us. It's time for us to bless this church in such a way that the impact ripples beyond our generation and is felt for years to come. So let's jump in. Let's go all-in and trust God to make the biggest splash possible.

Let's cannonball!

Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith.

- Hebrews 12:1-2



Our Primary Goal: Jump All-in.

Our Primary Goal is 100% Engagement

That **each and every person at FCC** would engage fully in the Cannonball initiative by jumping in with their whole lives. Cannonball is about discipleship - growing into the likeness of Christ together. We invite every person to engage with God, engage with God's Word, and ultimately take that leap and jump all-in.

Jump into Faith

What area of life are you holding back and needing to release in full surrender to Jesus? What next step do you need to take that moves you into a place of greater dependence on God? Is your life marked by a radical obedience, demonstrating that you are being conformed to the image of Christ and not to the image of the world?

Jump into Life

Will you commit in these two years to Live the DNA as a follower of Jesus who Loves God, Loves Everyone, Makes Disciples and Tells your Story? Pray for the ministry impact of FCC over the next two years. Ask God that together we might prepare the church for the next fifty-years of ministry impact.

Jump into Generosity

As you deepen your understanding of the love and provision of God, are you moving towards an eternal perspective on all of your time, talents, and treasures? Does the way you give truly reflect the priority Jesus should have in your life? Will you make a legacy gift and a full commitment designed to partner with God in waves of ministry impact? What is your next step of obedience to Jesus in this area?

Our Secondary Goal:

Wave of Ministry - \$6M

(over two years)

This encompasses all of our core ministry over the next two years. We are trusting God to continue growing the ministry of First Christian Church to all generations through worship, service, discipleship, and evangelism.



Make Waves

Wave of Impact - \$1.3M

We will make an immediate ministry impact in four areas that have been core to our mission strategy over the last 150 years and will be in the years to come. These investments will go beyond our normal ministry budget and will be designed to make an immediate ministry impact that sends out waves for years to come.

Ministry Development

We will make another major investment in future ministry leaders through gifts to regional partners and internships and residencies.

Local Compassion

We will respond to growing needs by expanding our care for the hungry and unhoused in our city.

Church Planting

Just as we have for more than 100 years, we will continue to invest in new churches in our region and around the country.

Missionary Support

To improve our relationships with our global mission partners and strengthen the missionary zeal of our congregation, we will launch a new rhythm of mission trips and global service projects.

Wave of Legacy - \$6M*

To prepare for the next fifty-years of ministry, we will begin work on a major campus update and expansion. This expansion will include every area of our building and all of our infrastructure. This will update and modernize our building and provide long overdue expansions to our capacity to serve those God is sending to our church. Our core building has been blessing our ministry for the last fifty years and we will be establishing a home for the next fifty.

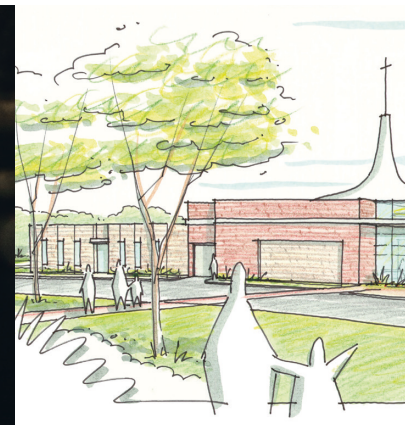
Expanded Sanctuary

As a legacy gift to the next generation, we will update and expand our worship center and back stage, increasing capacity by more than 60% and replacing outdated technology with tools that will meet our needs for decades to come.

Modern Children Spaces

Our Elementary spaces will expand and move upstairs to accommodate years of growth and modernize these space for generations to come.

The nursery will move nearer to the sanctuary, allowing the Early Childhood ministry the room it needs to expand as we grow.



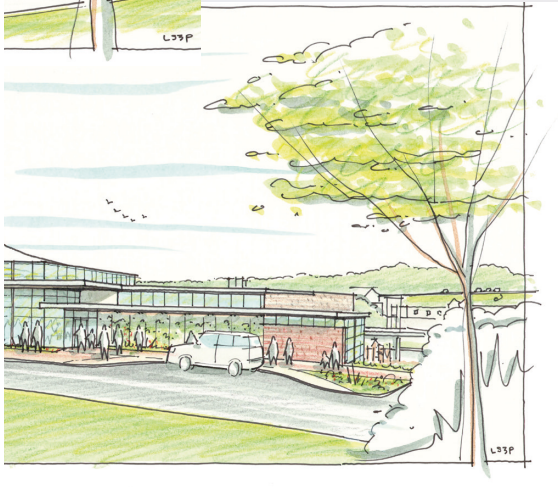


Youth and Adult Discipleship

Starting with a redeveloped CLC and outdoor worship space, our rooms for youth and adult discipleship will be expanded with modern technology to meet our growing needs.

Lobbies, Entrances and Campus Unity

Our overall campus unity will be improved with simplified entrances, a clearer connection to Mountcastle Center and a larger internal lobby that will connect the whole building.



Secondary Goal Total - \$13.3M

If we commit ourselves to the primary goal of 100% engagement, we trust that God will work through us to invest \$13.3 million over the next two years to expand our ministry, impact our region, and begin the development of our new facility.

*The total cost of the anticipated capital project is \$14-18M. The difference between what we raise as part of the Cannonball initiative and the total cost will be addressed through construction phasing and financing.

One Fund

Rolling our giving into one.

It's possible that you've been a part of church campaigns in the past where you were asked to give a second gift "above and beyond" your regular giving. In fact, we've done that here at First Christian a few times over the last 150 years.

As much as these have been wonderful seasons in our church's history, we've found that "above and beyond" giving is potentially confusing to people who don't have a baseline for their "normal giving." It also has the potential to diminish the significance of the ongoing generous giving of so many people that moves our mission forward in every season.

We have one fund because we have one mission. This giving isn't separate from anything else. We're all asking ourselves if God comes first and if we trust God to bless our generosity. This challenges every person in the church to their next step of generosity.

The Cannonball Initiative will last two years. In those two years, every gift given to FCC will go to the Cannonball Initiative— to help us make waves of ministry, waves of impact and waves of legacy. We've included a **sample commitment card** so you can see how a "one fund initiative" works. Please take the time to use this to prepare your giving, but don't worry, you'll get a new card on Commitment Sunday, which is on March 3rd.

sample commitment card



April 2024 - April 2026

Giving Chart

As you pray for how God would ask you to give during this time, use this gift chart as a discipleship tool. Pray for every gift on the chart, asking God to move all of us to deeper levels of trust and generosity. And then pray for your gift. Allow the chart to inspire and challenge you towards a season of sacrificial generosity, as we seek to go all-in and make waves.

Pray Persistently

Pray that God will work in the hearts of people at First Christian and that we will listen with the intent to respond.

Commit Fully

Be part of the 100% engagement by saying YES, and encouraging others to do the same.

Celebrate Loudly

God is going to do amazing things in your life during this season. Share His handiwork enthusiastically with everyone!

Give Generously

Live and give in a way that stretches you to take your faith to a whole new level of generosity.

Weekly Gift	Monthly Gift	Total Gift
\$50	\$200	\$2500
\$25	\$100	\$1250
\$15	\$60	\$750
\$10	\$40	\$500
\$5	\$20	\$250

Your Giving

Initial Giver

An Initial Giver is someone who decides to give for the first time, out of a response to God's Word about giving. This is someone who decides to give something and trust God and the leaders of the Church with this gift. They experience the initial joy of putting Jesus' words into action (Matthew 7:24).

Consistent Giver

A Consistent Giver is someone who decides to give something and to give it on a consistent basis to exercise the discipline of giving as a disciple of Jesus. Often, someone who decides to make their gift an online recurring gift will be someone who is learning the joy of consistency. Non-online givers can be consistent givers as well of course, it just requires more discipline. They experience the joy of excelling in this grace of giving. (2 Corinthians 8:7).

Priority Giver

A Priority Giver is someone who understands the preeminence of Christ and that He is before all things – that all things were created by Him, for Him, through Him, and to Him. This giver places such a significant priority on their giving that it drives their spending and their saving, as opposed to their spending and saving driving their giving. They experience the freedom of serving “one master” and declaring Jesus is first. (Matthew 6:19-24 and Colossians 1:15-20).

Journey

Surrendered Giver

A Surrendered Giver is someone who recognizes that Christ surrendered His whole self for us, and therefore we desire to surrender our whole selves to Him, in love (Ephesians 5:1-2). This giver would say, “My giving is not just changing my spending and saving. It’s also changing me!” They also look at what they’re not giving away and ask, “Is it surrendered too?” This informs how they use everything they’ve been blessed and entrusted with – whether that be through direct monetary giving or through a God-honoring use of an existing resource (i.e. honoring God with the use of your home, etc.)

Eternal Giver

An Eternal Giver is someone who sees the eternal impact of their giving – on them and on others – not just the immediate programs and ministries it helps accomplish. This giver has been captivated by the knowledge that the more they are led to “do good, to be generous and ready to share,” the more they “take hold of that which is truly life” (1 Timothy 6:19). This encourages them to keep growing! They make all decisions (big purchases, savings, giving, relationships, areas of service) in light of how it will affect their eternal impact.

FAQ

Q: What are you asking me to do?

A: First and foremost, we are asking you to engage fully by jumping in with your whole life. That's our primary goal - that we would grow in the likeness of Christ together, and jump in by engaging with God and God's word. Come to Students Nights during this season, if you aren't already. Spend time in personal reflection with God by doing the daily devotions. Pray and seek God's leading.

We are asking that you make a sacrificial commitment to gospel-centered generosity - whatever it is that God leads you to do - follow God's leading.

Finally, we ask that you prepare to be amazed. We serve an awesome God. He is moving in huge ways, and we anticipate an unprecedented impact from our collective Cannonball commitments—something only God can do. Please mark your calendar for our Advance Commitment Night, February 18, and prepare to experience a life-changing worship service that will forever be remembered as a defining moment for our church and for our own faith.

Q: How long is my commitment?

A: We are asking that everyone make a two-year commitment, which is 24 months. The fulfillment period for your commitment will begin on the weekend of April 7th, 2024, and will culminate in April of 2026.

FAQ

Q: How can I give?

A: We have several options for giving. One is our giving envelopes that are available each weekend at all of our services. You can also give online at fcc-jc.org/give or give through Text-to-Give by texting GIVE and a dollar amount to 423-592-5700 (e.g. - GIVE \$25).

*Q: What if I have never even given to
First Christian before?*

A: Cannonball was crafted specifically with you in mind. Cannonball is a “one fund” generosity initiative, meaning that everything given to God through Cannonball is a contribution that will go towards the initiative. Cannonball is a call to sacrificial, gospel-centered generosity for absolutely everyone. If you have never given before, this is your chance to get in the game with a committed sacrifice.

Q: What if I am new around here?

A: Cannonball is about the vision for our church and our personal discipleship in giving as followers of Jesus. We believe that the local church is one of the most compelling missions to give towards, and we would really love for you to make us your home and join us in Cannonball. If you are ready for it, this is a perfect time for you to put a stake in the ground and make this your church. We want you to join in on this adventure of living out the mission God has for us.

Q: If we are jumping into Cannonball, how does this change my tithe and any of my “above and beyond” giving?

A: During this two-year period, every contribution to God through Cannonball is a contribution to our generosity initiative. This means that everything from our general ministry budget (which is anything BUT general!) to our special community events, our mission work locally and globally, and our building improvement projects will all be fueled through the Cannonball initiative. So every single dollar given within the next two years will fuel this life-changing mission!

Q: Are there additional financial ways that I can give towards Cannonball besides cash?

A: Be creative as you explore ways you and your family can give towards the Cannonball Initiative. You might have some stuff, savings, or ways you can serve that God has blessed you with and just might be calling you to give.

Q: What if I can't give financially? Are there other ways I can still support Cannonball?

A: Our vision for Cannonball is something that goes beyond just financial giving (though that is a part of it!). It's full participation in the work that God is doing in and through the Cannonball Initiative. This can take many forms, such as prayer over Cannonball, helping serve in our many ministry areas during this two-year period, and sacrificial giving. If you are not in a place to do one of these things, consider making a commitment to another. Cannonball is not just a commitment to giving, but to the transformative work God is doing both in our church and in those who make it up.

Q: I have more questions!

A: Great! For your first stop, check out our website at fcc-jc.org/cannonball, where you can find more information about the Cannonball Initiative and get connected to the right person if you have more questions.

How to Use This Guide

This booklet is a guide to your full participation in the Cannonball experience. Here are a few of the important sections that will guide you through this season:

Study the Vision

The first several pages of this guide are designed to remind us of where we have been as a church and guide us to think about where we are headed next. Look through these carefully as we consider our role in the ongoing ministry of First Christian Church.

Worship Weekly

Our worship each Sunday is a key part of the Cannonball experience. Use the sermon notes page to keep track of what God is teaching us and if you must be away from service, connect online so that we are moving through this experience together.

Daily Devotions

To jump all in, we will need to go to God every day by investing in prayer and the word of God. Set aside some time each day to quiet your spirit, open your Bible, and read the indicated passage. Use the daily devotion to focus your reflections and challenge yourself to bring your life before God. Then close your time in prayer.

Group Study

Jump into Student Night! During Student Night, you'll be able to wrestle with what God is showing you in your quiet times, dive deeper into what teaches about following Jesus, and learn with and from others who are on this Cannonball journey with you. Student Night happens every Wednesday from 6:30-8:15 pm in the Mountcastle Center.

How to Lead a Cannonball Group

1) Invite people.

There are people in your life who will only join a group if YOU invite them. List below who you will invite to your group:

2) Email Janet Galante at jgalante@fcc-jc.org so the FCC Groups Team can be praying for your group.

You'll also be added to an email list with tips on how to lead each week of Cannonball.

3) Go all in.

Commit yourself to doing this fully. Do each week's devotions. Let God work in your heart.

Here is what you'll find in each study:

Prepare

Each section opens with questions to help you connect your lives and experiences to the topic for the week. Use this time to share as a group, and to focus on the topic for each session.

Video Teaching

The opening questions are followed by a short video segment designed to briefly introduce the theme for the lesson. All videos can be accessed at www.fcc-jc.org/cannonball.

Reflect

Each video is followed by reflection questions. Don't feel bound to answer each one. The goal is to give each person a chance to respond to the material in the video. The questions are present to assist in that conversation.

Study

This is the foundation of each lesson. Having gathered our attention to the topic, we turn to scripture to shape our thoughts and spur us to action. Each reading is followed by questions to help your group understand the text.

Respond

God's Word invites us to respond, and cannonball discipleship requires action. We'll take time to listen to God and discern our next steps. Don't let this group time pass by without figuring out what action God is calling you to today.

My Cannonball Group

MARKS OF A GREAT GROUP:

Inviting

Great groups invite others to join, even after the series has started, and they welcome new participants by “bringing them up to speed” on what has gone before. Pray for those people in your group and also pray about those who need to join in.

Commitment

Stay committed by praying for one another and being fully present in Cannonball. You encourage the success of the group with faithful attendance and communication when you will be absent.

Confidentiality

Make your group a safe place to share by respecting the privacy of those in your group. Give them the freedom to share by promising to keep everything in the group confidential.

Courtesy

Conversations should include everyone, not just one or two of the most forceful talkers. Avoid easy answers and don't dismiss the opinions of those who disagree.

My Cannonball Group

Group Roster

Take a minute to share names and appropriate contact information.

Meeting time/location: _____

Names / Contact Info: _____

Our Cannonball Prayer

Use the space below to come up with a prayer for your Cannonball Group. You'll spend time writing this together during your first meeting.

Week 1: Everybody's Got to Jump

Sermon Notes - 1/28/24



An action step from today's message: _____

Devos:

January 29

Matthew 4:18-22

Jesus' first disciples left everything to go follow him. They went all in. Imagine looking ahead and seeing the steps to the diving board - just you and the board. Now is the time to make your decision -do you jump in? Over the next 6 weeks, we will look at what it means to plunge into the work of God's kingdom, to wholeheartedly jump into the pool of God's work. This is an invitation for you to live a life solely devoted to God's kingdom with cannonball-like faith.

Take a minute to recall times when you were faced with a choice: "Should I jump in or watch from the edge?" What did you do in those situations? Why? Which response comes more easily to you?

January 30

John 21:2-7

Peter saw Jesus and couldn't resist jumping in to meet him. Will you make the jump? Let's make the jump together by going all in for Cannonball. Commit yourself today to invest in this series.

What would it look like for you to fully embrace Cannonball? Make a plan for when you'll do the devotions every day. Set a reminder on your phone or mark your calendar. How will you dive in with others? Clear your schedule on Sunday mornings so you can attend services. Commit to showing up for Students Nights each week and going on this journey with your small group.

January 31

John 12:24-26

When someone leaps off the diving board for a cannonball, there is no going back. The person is fully committed to the water. In a similar way, our walk with Jesus should be fully committed to him. Jesus calls his disciples to immerse every area of their lives in God's plans and purposes. There is no dry spot on a cannonball disciple. When we are devoted to God, our lives are radically different from others.

Think of ways in which you aren't fully soaked in God's work. What parts of your life are staying "dry?" How is God calling you to follow him this week?

February 1

Colossians 1:15-23

Jesus Christ is before all things, and in him all things were created. Everything else is meant to come after him. He is the Creator and Lord of our lives.

What does it look like to live this way? What things currently hold the top spot in your life, sometimes even above Christ, that often impact the larger decisions in your life? To put it another way: what are the things in your life around which everything else revolves? What would it look like for Jesus to be the center of your life around which everything else revolves?

February 2

Luke 14:25-35

Every choice brings both opportunities and costs. Every path chosen means another passed by. Jesus wants his followers to know that following him leads to an "all in" relationship of cannonball discipleship. Only a fool leaps into a cannonball hoping to stay dry, and Jesus says the same about those who say they will follow without considering the cost.

This text probably startles and challenges you. Jesus used some startling overstatements to shock us into paying attention. He wants you to notice that you can't do a cannonball without getting soaked. What does this mean for your life?

Group Study

As your group gathers for this experience, it's likely at least some members will be joining for the first time or the first time in a while. Share your names, any needed contact information and tell a bit about what brought you to the group. LEADERS: Keep track of who is and is not part of your group during Cannonball and engage those who miss two weeks in a row.

Look over the information on pages 27-30 to discuss the plan for your time together and your expectations for your experience.

- Share which mark of a great group is the most important to you.
- At the end of today's lesson, you'll write a prayer for your time together.
- Plan to commit to your group and to the time it takes to make the group work.

Prepare:

- Have you ever done a cannonball? Do you remember the last time you did a cannonball off a diving board? How long has it been? Share with the group what you felt after you made the jump. Are you a cannonball professional? Tell the group a story about the largest wave you've ever left in your wake after a cannonball.
- Life has moments where we must take risks that require us to go full send like a cannonball does. What's the last risk you took? Why did you take it? What was the result of that risk?

Reflect:

- What kind of words come to mind when you think of a cannonball? Discuss with your group some of the necessary steps needed to complete a cannonball. How is it a good metaphor for the kind of following Jesus asks us to do?
- The speaker described the impact you and this church could make if we lived together as cannonball disciples who were “all in” and making waves. What potential impact excites you most?
- What excites you (or maybe even scares you a little bit) about this 6 week Cannonball spiritual journey we are jumping into as a church community?

Study:

Jesus’ most basic command to everyone he met in the early days of his ministry was, “Follow Me.” However, he was consistently clear that following him would not always be easy and frequently would be hard. He was (quite literally) going places and any who would follow him would have to be ready to stay on the move. In this text we see that not all who heard the call to follow were ready to go.

Read Luke 9:57-62.

- Why wouldn’t Jesus compromise with these potential followers? Have you ever felt tempted to offer a deal to God, to suggest that you would follow God later, only part of the way, or in a few areas?
- What do we learn about the call to become a cannonball disciple in this passage?
- How is the kind of followership Jesus requires more like a cannonball and less like wading? How is it different from joining a club or playing on a team?

Most of Jesus' teaching responded to specific situations or questions. Sometimes he would stop to teach his disciples and the gathered crowds at greater length. In one of Jesus' most famous sermons, he describes a radical way of life for anyone who would follow him. In this reading, we get a taste of this radical life as he describes a very different approach to money.

Read Matthew 6:19-21 & 24.

- What does it mean to “store up treasures”? What counts as “treasures”?
- On a scale of 1-10, how radical is the instruction to not “store up treasures”? Why or why not? Is this reasonable advice to follow?
- Jesus offers a principle, “For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.” How could changing the way you use your money change your heart as well?
- What things currently hold the top spot in your life? How does your money reflect where your heart is?
- Jesus says we cannot serve two masters. What masters are we tempted to serve? How do these masters keep us from being cannonball disciples?
- Jesus explains that we cannot serve God and money (or wealth). What does serving money look like in a person's life? Do you agree with Jesus that these two loyalties will always be in conflict?
- What change would you need to make to serve and be devoted to God instead of money?

Respond:

Cannonball discipleship requires action. We're called to learn from Jesus and do what Jesus says. Don't let this group study time pass by without figuring out what action God is calling you to today.

Take a few moments to reflect on these questions quietly. Then open up a time for people to share.

Jesus still calls to all people, “Follow me!”

How are you answering that call in your life today? Whether you are taking a first step or your next step, how do you need to follow Jesus beyond where you have ever been before?

To go “all in” I need to..

The biggest obstacles are..

What’s an action step for you from today’s lesson?

Invite everyone to share. Then, turn to page 30 where it says “Our Cannonball Prayer.” Write a simple 1-2 sentence prayer together for your group. Use the questions below to help you.

- What do we hope God will do in us over the next 6 weeks?
- How do we hope to be transformed?
- What do we hope God will do through us because of Cannonball?
- Where do we want to see God work in us, in our church, and in our world?

Then, have someone pray this prayer over the group to close.

Week 2: Change Me

Sermon Notes - 2/4/24

An action step from today's message: _____

Devos:

February 5

Romans 6:3-14 & Romans 12:1-2

This week we are focusing on the truth that before God works *through* us, God first works *in* us. Through Jesus, we are given a brand new life. We are set free from sin and united with him. We are completely and totally made new. Romans 12 describes a beautiful high-impact life that makes waves everywhere it goes. It starts with the decision not to be conformed to this world, but instead to be transformed in the newness of Christ.

What does it mean for you to not 'conform but be transformed in the newness of Christ'? Has your life been changed by Christ? If not, why do you think that is? How do you need to be transformed so that God can make waves with your life?

February 6

John 3:1-21

Jesus' words here are radical. It is something we should never lose sight of here. Jesus does not want his followers here to just try harder or do better next time. Instead, Jesus calls us to be born again. To live a completely new life. To be so radically transformed that it is impossible to explain through natural means.

Followers of Jesus demonstrate this through baptism. When we are immersed in the waters of baptism, we die to our sins, and when we emerge, we are made alive in Christ. Yet our journey with Jesus does not end with baptism. Our calling to be "born again" is a daily calling. In what ways are you living this out currently?

When your friends and family look at you, do they see someone who has been born again? How might you better live out this truth in your life?

February 7

Luke 5:27-32

Levi made a cannonball commitment by leaving everything to follow Jesus. Before he went on to do anything else, he ate with Jesus. It didn't matter that he was considered a corrupt tax collector. Jesus still called him to be all in. Wherever you are today, you are invited to do a cannonball and follow Jesus.

Consider our primary goal on page 13 - that 100% of us would be all in for Jesus. What does this look like for you? What excites you about this?

February 8

Philippians 3:10-14

Paul strove to know Jesus more and more every day. He realized that there are always more steps we can take to know Jesus and participate in his death and resurrection. Paul never stopped "pressing on."

Do you feel like you have arrived in your walk with Christ? Or are you pressing on to know Jesus more? What specifically might it require for you to acknowledge that Jesus isn't finished with you as a disciple? Are there any immediate steps you need to take?

February 9

Ephesians 4:11-16

Doing a cannonball means we're called to grow into the likeness of Christ, to transform and "become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ." This equips us to do the work of God. At FCC, we aim to live like Jesus by doing four things: worship, serve, disciple, and tell. We call this the DNA of FCC because it's what Jesus' life looked like. This has been our mission since 1921. Look ahead at our DNA on page 44. Choose one step you could take to mature more into the likeness of Christ.

Group Study

Prepare:

- Who is your favorite superhero who transforms and why?
- What's the biggest transformation you've ever undergone? (Physical, character, beliefs, etc.)

Before we focus on the splash, we've got to make sure we're rocks, not corks. The speaker tonight talked to us about the difference between rocks and corks.

Corks and rocks have very different relationships with the water. Corks move with the waves; rocks make waves. The same is true for our interaction with the world around us. Sometimes we just bob along, listening to the advice, "Don't make waves. Just go with the flow." We're corks. But true Christ followers don't have this option. We are called to resist the waves of our culture and transform the world around us.

Reflect:

- The speaker talked about being a rock instead of a cork: transforming the world around us rather than changing with the tides. Does this come naturally to you? When are you most tempted to be a cork instead of a rock?
- We're not the first to use this image of going all into the water - Jesus uses it. Maybe one of the things you need to consider is taking the next step of getting baptized. If you're thinking about getting baptized and haven't yet, what has held you back?
- The idea of transformation can seem daunting. The truth is that sometimes transformation is big, but other times it comes through multiple small changes within us over time. Does this idea of small changes resonate with you? Do you feel like you have already been transformed once, or do you believe that you are still being transformed day by day?
- What is the most difficult area for you to allow God to begin to bring change?

Study:

Romans 6:3-14

This scripture encourages us to allow God to call out who we are in Christ now, a new creation. We can drop all areas of our life that are sinful and walk in the freedom and transformation given to us in Jesus. Sin is any choice made in fear or selfishness that diverts us from a path of surrender to the Holy Spirit.

- Before God does a work through us, he does a work in us. This is demonstrated through baptism. According to verse 4, what does baptism symbolize?
- How does Jesus change the effect of sin on us?
- Have you been baptized? What led you to make that decision? The Bible teaches us that one of the ways we demonstrate going all in with Jesus is through baptism. If you're thinking about getting baptized or if you have questions about baptism, reach out to your small group leader, Blake, Megan, or Adam. This is a next step we're all encouraged to take as we jump into life with Jesus.

Acts 2:37-47

In Christ, we have a new life - and that includes a new way of relating to one another. This passage is one of the most profound and transformative points in scripture in sharing with us what a church community could potentially look like.

- This passage lays out a clear path from God. In verse 38, what does Peter tell the people to do? What does he say God will do?
- Verses 42-47 display how a community was transformed by God. List the actions this group of believers took.
- Our primary goal for Cannonball is that we would jump all-in in faith, life, and generosity. How did this community in Acts demonstrate that they were jumping all-in? How did they jump all-in in each of these three ways?

Respond:

In 1871, four families saw the need for a church built on God's word. They sought to embody the church as

described in the book of Acts. FCC began when they gathered on November 12th, 1871 to read a chapter of the book of Acts, share in the Lord's Supper, and to have mutual fellowship.

God worked in them, and because of that, we're still experiencing the work of God that happened through them. Today we want to allow Jesus to work in us.

Look back to page 13 and read about the primary goal together.

The primary goal is 100% engagement in 3 ways:

We are called to jump into faith

- Look back at Romans 6. How does Paul describe what it looks like to jump into faith?
- What would it look like for you to jump into faith today?

We are called to jump into life.

For us, this means living the DNA:

We love God as worshippers: This means we make it a priority to show up to worship each week, setting aside specific time to center our lives around God.

We love everyone as servants: This means we serve others regularly by getting on a serving team and serving others in the community like we are right now as part of the Love Month service projects.

We make disciples as disciplers: This means we actively seek to become like Jesus, by getting together with others and pointing each other toward Jesus - like you are doing right now by being in a Cannonball group.

We tell our stories as missionaries: This means we tell people what we've seen God do in our lives and invite others to open themselves up to the story God has for them.

- How are you currently living the DNA?
- What do you need to do next to live the DNA?

We are called to jump into generosity.

- Look back at Acts 2. Through the Holy Spirit, the people were transformed in how they related to others and to God. This led to radical generosity. Have you experienced this kind of generosity?
- How does this passage challenge you to jump into generosity?

Take a few moments to reflect on these questions quietly. Then open up a time for people to share.

What parts of the primary goal come more naturally to you?

Which parts are harder?

To fully engage 100% I need to...

The biggest obstacles are...

What's an action step for you from today's lesson?

Invite everyone to share one thing that stuck out to them from today's lesson. Then, using this prayer from Ephesians, pray over the group and the next steps that they have identified.

For this reason I kneel before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth derives its name. I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.

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 3:14-21

Devos:
February 12

Genesis 12:1-5

“Leave everything and go.” Those were God’s instructions to Abraham. That’s a cannonball! But notice, God’s call to cannonball commitment comes with a promise. If Abraham goes “all in,” God will bless him and use him to bless the entire world. We are still blessed by the ripple effect of Abraham’s cannonball.

This whole initiative is about going all-in with the mission of God to make a lasting impact in the world. Are you ready to do the same? Abraham did this by leaving everything and moving. In your prayer today, ask God to give you a vision for how you can take the plunge and make waves of lasting impact.

February 13

2 Timothy 2:1-2

The early church planter Paul created a ripple effect that we’re still experiencing today, and he expected other Christians to do the same. In this letter, he challenges Timothy to invest in others so they can share what they have learned with others. When we teach people who can teach others, we are seeing not just the first ripple of impact but looking beyond to see the second ripple.

Can you see your second ripple? Can you see how your investment of time, service, and money will create an ongoing pattern of change? Think about a plan to make a second-ripple splash.

February 14

Matthew 14:22-36

Doing a cannonball is scary. And cannonball discipleship changes everything. Peter made the jump, but then saw the obstacles and it made him afraid. He lost sight of Jesus as he took the jump.

What scares you about the Cannonball vision? Do you trust God will catch us as we make the jump? How can you keep your eyes on God as you dive in? Pray that God would help you trust his power today.

February 15

Hebrews 11:8-19

Vision gives power to our lives. The book of Hebrews has an entire chapter of heroes and heroines who followed God's vision with their faith even if they never saw the impact with their eyes. When we see the destination, we can jump into the work of God and enjoy the faithfulness of God to the fullest; just like Abraham.

Abraham's faithfulness created a legacy of impact for generations beyond his lifetime. Take a look at the cannonball vision (secondary goal) on pages 15-18. How would our cannonball today leave waves of impact for generations to come? What legacy do you most want First Christian Church to leave from this season of our ministry?

February 16

Hebrews 11:39-12:3

We are living in the ripple effects of those who came before us. Because 4 families gathered in 1871, because the church built this facility and committed to reaching Johnson City, we get to worship together here today. We are living in the waves of their ministry. Now we are called to throw off whatever holds us back, and run our own race. How do the legacies of the original families of FCC impact you today? Who else's legacy of faithful ministry has impacted you? How? What legacy do you hope to have on future generations? What do you need to do to bring this about?

Group Study

Prepare:

- During your lifetime, who are the people who have made the biggest impact (in your life, in your community, nation, world, etc.)? What did they do that set them apart? Was their impact positive or negative?
- What are you doing today that you think might still have an impact 50 or 100 years from now? (Career, family, generosity, service, etc.)

Reflect:

- The speaker asked us all to consider our impact at two levels: as a church and as individuals.
 - If FCC didn't exist, would anyone else notice or miss us? How can we be sure?
 - Now apply this same question to your life: if you moved away, would your neighbors notice? Why?

Before we move on to our study look back on pages 15-18 to read about the secondary goal for the Cannonball initiative. Look through it carefully and notice which parts motivate you the most. If you have questions, be sure to reach out through your group leader and ask them.

- Share with the group what parts of the vision excite you most.
- How will this vision make a splash and leave ripples of ministry impact for years to come?

Study:

Jesus' followers were remarkable people - sometimes remarkably impressive and sometimes remarkably normal. They doubted, disappointed and denied Jesus. They blundered, bungled and bickered. And in every case we learn a bit about how Jesus might interact with us. This text reveals the disciples in a sadly typical kind of argument, "Who is the greatest?"

Read Mark 9:33-35.

- When have you argued about who is the greatest? What was the topic (sports, politics, literature, entertainment, food, etc.)? What were the standards for judging?
- What standards for greatness does our society use today?
- What standards might the disciples have used for judging their greatness? What might this reveal about their priorities when initially following Jesus?
- What new standard for a high impact life does Jesus give? Would someone watching your life think that you are pursuing this kind of greatness? Why?
- How are the ripple effects of someone's life different when they live with Jesus' kind of greatness in mind?

There are two parts of a splash: the big wave and the long term ripple. The early church leader Paul, made a big splash in dozens of cities by starting churches that transformed their communities, and he was committed to make a long lasting impact. One way he made a legacy was writing letters. In this letter to his protege Timothy, he shares his plan for making more than merely a one time splash but also leaving a lasting legacy of ongoing impact.

Read 2 Timothy 2:1-2.

Fill in the blanks: _____ writes to _____ encouraging him to teach _____ so they can teach _____.

- Describe Paul's simple strategy for long term impact. Where do you see yourself in those blanks? Are you learning, teaching, or teaching teachers?
- Paul is teaching Timothy to make a multi-generational impact. Who do you know that is intentionally living in a way that will make a multi-generational impact? What are they doing?
- If you have time, keep reading through verse 14 to learn more about Paul's strategy for leaving a legacy and making a longer term impact. What stands out to you as different from how we typically view leaving a legacy? Is there a particular convicting challenge that stands out to you within this passage?

Respond:

Through the next two years of Cannonball, we hope that FCC will leave a legacy that will bless future generations of the church. Today is your chance to prayerfully consider the legacy that God has for FCC, for your small group, and for you.

Take a few moments to reflect on these questions quietly. Then open up a time for people to share.

What kind of legacy does God call us to?

What's a legacy you hope to have?

For some of the Cannonball vision items, you will watch what happens, but as part of God's people, some of these vision items will include God calling you to be part of what happens. This means the vision for the church is also a vision for your life. In which of these areas are you called to be the vision in action?

What's an action step for you from today's lesson?

Invite everyone to share one thing that stuck out to them from today's lesson. Then revisit your group's cannonball prayer on page 30. Is there anything you would like to add or change? Close by praying your group's cannonball prayer together.

Devos:

February 19

Luke 18:18-27

The rich young ruler had devoted a large part of his life to obeying God's rules. But Jesus recognizes that this man isn't willing to follow him with cannonball-like faith. Even though he followed the rules, he wasn't ready to follow Jesus. Was the security of wealth too tempting? Was he afraid to give it all up to follow Jesus?

What are your sources of security and how might they be an obstacle to following Jesus? Is your faith about following Jesus or just about following rules? Talk to God about the choices you must make to follow Jesus with a cannonball faith. Will you say yes to the invitation to follow or will you walk away sad?

February 20

2 Corinthians 9:6-15

God has given us what we own. We are called to give generously to others and to the work of God's people. We begin investing in a mission that is bigger than ourselves. Paul teaches that this generosity not only benefits others, but it also "overflows in thanksgiving to God." A cannonball disciple is one who invests in the next steps of God's work... financially, emotionally, and spiritually, so that God might be glorified and praised by all people.

Is your giving a chore or a cheerful gift? Does it help your perspective to remember that God is the source of our ability to give and praising God is the outcome of our generosity?

February 21

Luke 12:13-21

Some people struggle with spending too much, and other people struggle with saving too much. Both are indicators of our desire to want to live the American dream and control our situations rather than to turn them over to God in surrender. Do you resonate with this passage and struggle with excessive saving or excessive control over the future?

Which makes a bigger splash - a life of saving or a life of generosity? Why is it important to realize that our savings account can make a splash for our lifetime but our generosity can make a splash for decades to come?

February 22

Deuteronomy 6:4-12 & Deuteronomy 8:10-18

Moses' instructions to God's people include "remember & don't forget". Why do you think it is so easy for us to "forget the Lord and all that he has provided for us"? How have you seen God provide for you in the past?

Moses warns the people not to become proud because it is God "who gives you the ability to produce wealth." How does it change things to recognize that all we have is from God? Spend time in prayer thanking God for what you've been given.

February 23

1 Timothy 6:6-10, 17-19

This passage contains both promises and warnings. We're warned that our wealth doesn't last forever, and it can even lead us into evil. Yet, when we are cannonball disciples who go all in, we're promised that we can take hold of the life that is truly life and we can have treasure that will last forever.

These teachings carry eternal weight. What does 1 Timothy teach us to do with the resources we have? What does that mean for you? What happens when we love money? How do we avoid falling into that trap?

Group Study

Prepare:

- Have you ever sacrificed (given up something good) for something or someone? Was that sacrifice worth it? Would you do it again?
- Share a time when someone was generous to you. What did they do? What was the impact of their generosity?

Reflect:

- The speaker said, “God doesn’t want generosity from us. He wants it for us.” Do you agree? Why do you think God wants generosity for us?
- We often get the relationship between our heart and our money backwards, thinking that our money follows our heart. Jesus teaches the opposite. What does this tell us about the discipline of generosity and the danger of greed?
- The speaker said that the principle of firsts is vital to giving in a way that anchors our hearts to God. What is the principle and how could it function in our lives today?

Study:

Read 2 Corinthians 8:1-7.

The churches in Macedonia model our goals through this Cannonball Initiative. Goal #1 is that 100% of us would engage deeply with God to jump into faith, life, and generosity.

- What does Paul say led to the people’s generosity?
- What can we each do to “truly turn our lives over to the Lord”, as it says in chapter 8 verse 5?
- What are the people instructed to excel in? How are we striving to excel in those things through the Cannonball initiative?

Read 2 Corinthians 9:6-15.

- How does verse 7 describe how we ought to give? How does that change the impact of our giving? What motivates our giving when it is done in this way?
 - Do you see your giving in that way? Why or why not?
- Paul shares about the evangelistic power that exists when we give accompanied by our confession of the gospel of Christ - that other people will see why we give and will praise God because of it. How can we give in a way that leads others to praise God?
- How does this passage challenge you to refocus the impact of your giving as you think about why and how you give?

Read 1 Timothy 6:6-10, 17-19.

- What are we to be content with in this world?
- How would your life change if you were content with only those things?
- What does this passage warn us about the love of money? What can it do to us?
- What are we encouraged to do with our wealth?

Respond

Give your group a few minutes to reflect on these questions personally.

In your life, what have you spent the most money on?

What motivates your financial decisions such as clothes, a new gaming system, or other stuff?

Do you make these decisions based on your desire to have a legacy of generosity and to use assets for kingdom purposes? Or do you make these decisions for other reasons?

Do you currently use your money in a way that anchors your heart to God or to the world? What would be required to make sure that your pursuit of and use of wealth was a part of your worship and made you closer with God?

To go “all in” with my generosity I need to...

The biggest obstacles are...

Now allow space for those who want to share to do so. If you are in a large group you may want to break up in smaller groups for this sharing.

What’s an action step for you from today’s lesson?

Invite everyone to share one thing that stuck out to them from today’s lesson. Then pray over these next steps to close.

Devos:
February 26

Mark 12:41-44

How do you measure the value of a gift? The price tag, the resale value, the social statement, the fun, or is it the thought that counts?

The world's economy starkly contrasts with God's kingdom. By many measures, the widow gave the least, but Jesus reveals the truth about God's kingdom: God values a gift for its sacrifice because this demonstrates complete dependence on the Lord.

This is how God calls all followers to give: open-handed, open-hearted, and fully trusting. What would it look like for you to follow the widow's example as a part of your Cannonball Commitment?

February 27

Philippians 3:4-9

A cannonball has many obstacles: cold water, fear of heights, pain or just the wrong clothes! When dressed in our best suit, or with our hair nicely done, we don't want to cannonball. The same is true in our lives. Good deeds and success can actually become obstacles if we are too impressed with ourselves to commit to God's work.

Consider the perspective of Paul: Nothing we have earned in this world compares with knowing and serving Jesus Christ. What do you need to take off or set aside so you can plunge into the purposes of God?

February 28

Luke 19:1-10

It is easy to give lip service to change, to feel a need to take a stand but never actually stand up. We need a plan in order to follow through on good ideas. Zacchaeus was a man with a plan. He does not commit to be generically better or nicer. He makes a specific plan to give to the poor and to give back what he stole. Now that is a serious cannonball!

This Cannonball Initiative is an opportunity for you to do more than just think nice thoughts about committing to God's work. You should make a plan, share the plan, and work the plan. First plan...then plunge. Take time today to start making a plan to committing to God's work.

February 29

Luke 22:39-44

"Do you know what you're doing?" is a favorite question of parents everywhere. As kids (and as adults) we often find ourselves deep into something with no idea what we are doing or how we got there. Jesus knew what he was doing. His great cannonball of sacrificing himself for us was not a mistake or confusion. He knew that he gave up everything for our sake, and he chose to do the will of God.

God asks all of us to make that kind of know-what-we-are-doing cannonball. God does not trick us into following him. God wants us to think, decide, and declare for ourselves, "Not my will, but yours be done." If you are ready, pray these words to God today: "Not my will, but yours be done." Write them down somewhere where you'll see them.

March 1

Joshua 24:1-15

There are times to prepare and times to decide. Joshua led the people of Israel through the final preparation stages before entering the land God promised. Their preparations led to a big decision.

These last few weeks have been a similar preparation. You have planned for a cannonball; the question is...will you? God has given vision to his people. Now, we are called to action. You have planned, will you plunge? If you haven't already, go to page 67 and complete the exercise before Sunday.

Group Study

Prepare:

- Are you naturally a planner or an impulse person? What are the benefits and risks of these personalities?
- What does commitment mean to you? To what are you committed?

Reflect:

- When you plan ahead, what tools do you use? How have these helped you make and follow through on good commitments?
- Are you surprised that Jesus cared as much about careful and thoughtful commitment as he did about passionate and spontaneous commitment? Do you value one over the other?
- What happens when we make our commitments to God with our heart, but we don't attach planning to our passion? Have you ever made this mistake?

Study:

Jesus had a reputation for associating with anyone, but even with that reputation many were surprised to see Jesus share a meal with Zacchaeus. As the Chief Tax Collector, he was an ally to the invading Romans and an extortionist, but he did one thing right - he gladly welcomed Jesus. Luke records this story as one example for each of us today.

Read Luke 19:1-10

- Jesus says that he came to seek and save the lost. What do you think this means? How does this relate to a rich and powerful man like Zacchaeus?
- How does Zacchaeus declare his decision to change his ways? What are the risks about making such a specific declaration (especially when others are listening)?
- What are the strengths of making such a specific commitment?
- How does this specificity motivate both action and faithfulness to the desired commitment?

The people of Israel had been fighting their enemies for years to take the land God had promised to them. The fighting was ending and they would soon be spreading out to settle in the land. Before they did, Joshua gathered them together to make a very important choice. Now that they are free from slavery and established in their new land, will they stay faithful to the God who rescued them?

Read Joshua 24:14-18.

- Joshua knows that this will be a difficult choice. What are the distractions and obstacles he anticipates? How does he prepare them for this difficulty?
- Joshua tells the people to serve with faithfulness and to throw away their former gods. What gods would we throw away? What are the things we worship instead of God?
- Why do the people choose God?

The people had years of seeing God's miraculous power, learning God's law given through Moses, and worshipping God. Joshua wasn't rushing them with a last minute surprise when he challenged them to make their choice that day. Sometimes, we have years of experiencing God's provision and learning about God's vision, but we still need to be confronted to stop delaying and choose today.

Respond:

Tonight is your first chance to make your Cannonball Commitment! We're going to regather after group time and we'll have an opportunity to make our commitment! This moment is a great way for us to lead the way as our whole church prepares for Commitment Sunday. It's okay if you aren't ready to make your commitment, but if you are - let's do it!

Let's take some time to remind ourselves of some things that will help our planning and preparation.

Take a look at the One Fund and Giving Chart on pages 19-20.

- What questions do you have?
- What would it look like for you to Pray Persistently, Commit Fully, Celebrate Loudly and Give Generously?

Take a few moments to reflect on these questions quietly. Then open up a time for people to share.

Read over the categories of Your Giving Journey on pages 21-22. Which category do you fit into?

What Cannonball commitment is God leading you to today? Use the space below to write down the ways you think God might be calling you to go all in.

I will jump into life by...

I will jump into faith by...

I will jump into generosity by...

What do you need to plan in order to be ready to make a strong commitment to the Cannonball Initiative?

- Do you need to examine your budget, your calendar, your faith?
- Do you need to talk to your family or friends?
- How will you turn your good intentions into intentional action?

To go “all in” I need to...

The biggest obstacles are...

What's an action step for you from today's lesson?

Invite people to share. Then, pray for everyone's preparations and commitments to come.

This Sunday will be a great day.

We will come together to commit our hearts and lives and wealth to the work of God's kingdom through FCC. This will be a great celebration of God's faithfulness to work through God's people. Don't miss this wonderful worship service and opportunity to bring a sacrifice of worship to God!

Be sure to complete the exercise and reflection on the following pages before Sunday, March 3rd.

Exercise & reflection to do before commitment weekend:

A cannonball is an act of faith that involves your whole life. As you prayerfully think about your life and where God is calling you next, use the pages provided to make a plan. Perhaps you already know your commitment. Fantastic! Write it down and be specific. Like Zacchaeus, don't shy away from a big step of faith.

If you don't yet know your commitment, it is time to make a plan so you can fully dive in on Sunday. Use this space to acknowledge the planning you still need to do. Be specific, set aside the time, make a plan, and then plunge into action.

List out the financial commitments you currently have.

Now write out the commitment you are planning to make for the Cannonball initiative.

Where does it fall in the priority of these other commitments?

Do you need to change or modify one or more of these other commitments in order to be able to fulfill your Cannonball commitment?

What if you wanted to raise your Cannonball commitment? What would that require?

Is there a financial commitment you currently have that appears to be prioritized above your ability to make a truly surrendered giving commitment to help move God's mission forward and jump in to make missional waves?

If someone who didn't know you looked at your financial commitments, what would they say you value?

Would that statement be true about you? Or is there something that needs to be modified?

If you keep this commitment over the next two years, what type of spiritual growth can you see happening in you?

How will you leverage this change to influence others to live their lives more closely with Jesus and express more love to others?

Go to page 19 and pray over the Commitment Card. If you are ready, fill it out.

Pray over your commitment as you prepare to surrender your card on Commitment Weekend. Prayer is the most important thing in this whole process, and prayer is what gives us the heart of Jesus within us. Now let's do this, Church. Let's do our Cannonballs of generosity and Jump In and Make Waves!

Week 6: Cannonball

Sermon Notes - 3/3/24

An action step from today's message: _____

Devos

March 4

Psalm 51:10-15

The word “repent” means to turn to a new direction. This Psalm describes how David had to repent from serious sin and, after he repented, he gave praise to God in celebration. Over these past 5 weeks, we have learned that being “all in” for God’s kingdom means turning from certain things in our lives and turning to the vision of God. This process can be scary and nerve-racking. But when we turn to the mission of God, we can enjoy a genuine celebration for the work God is doing among us.

What are some of the parts of your life that you have turned from in order to fully celebrate the work of God? Take a moment to praise God for the opportunity to commit to God’s work.

March 5

Acts 16:19-34

Any follower of Jesus will face rocky waves at some point in time. The church planters (people who start new churches) Paul and Silas encountered this firsthand. Their cannonball for the mission of God led them straight to a prison cell. But as they faced these rough times, they celebrated by singing hymns and praying to God. Their overwhelming joy at the work of Jesus overpowered the problems (trials) they faced in prison.

It is easy for rocky waves to cloud the vision God has for us. What are some of the rocky waves you anticipate from your cannonball? How can you keep focused on God’s vision through the trials you may face? Be sure to share your Cannonball Commitment with someone who can celebrate with you in good days and in difficult days.

March 6

2 Corinthians 5:16-21

When Paul, who wrote this letter, calls us a “new creation,” what he’s saying is more than that we get to have a fresh start. Instead, what he’s getting at is that, when we live in Christ, we become part of the work of creating God’s kingdom on earth. When we make our Cannonball commitments, we become a part of making the world the way God intended it to be.

What waves might your Cannonball commitment have—in your life, in your family, in your community? Pray for God’s faithfulness, that your commitment might be part of making your part of the world more like God’s kingdom.

March 7

Hebrews 10:19-25

The Cannonball commitments we’ve made over the course of the last six weeks have been deeply personal—they’ve been between you and God. But, the journey to make these commitments has also been taken together, as a church. We have been meeting together and supporting each other through this process—and that doesn’t end now that the decisions are made. We can continue to encourage each other in this “new and living way.”

Who are some of the people you can be encouraging as they make cannonball decisions? Make it a priority this week to encourage someone you know who has made a cannonball decision.

March 8

Luke 15:1-10

The heavens rejoice over every cannonball decision that is made! This may seem farfetched, but Jesus reassures this truth through these two stories. Deep plunges that are taken by Christ-followers are recognized by the heavens above. When we climb the steps of the ladder, stare out into the horizon and toss ourselves into the water, we can celebrate with the angels in the heavens because of the work God is doing on the earth.

As you consider cannonball decisions you have yet to make, be sure to know that the angels are waiting to celebrate as you continue to plunge into the life God has for you.

Group Study

This week's session is an opportunity to celebrate the many cannonball commitments with a cannonball sized celebration. We hope this initiative has been a milestone in your life of faith, and the right thing to do at an important milestone is to celebrate!

Plan ahead a way to celebrate—a way to meaningfully mark the commitments the members of your group have made during this season. Incorporate these four things into your meeting this week in order to make this a special, fun experience for your group.

1. Choose something to share.

There are lots of different ways to celebrate, but most of them involve coming together to share an experience. Some ideas for things to share include:

- A dinner party
- A hike
- A bonfire
- A worship night
- A dessert potluck

Talk to your group and decide what your group would have the most fun gathering around for this last meeting.

2. Set the tone.

Call this what it is: a celebration! Turn on your favorite playlist; put balloons on the mailbox; decide to dress up; or even simply make a point to welcome each other with warmth as you arrive. Whatever you choose to do to mark this occasion as festive, each member of your group should come ready and excited to celebrate.

3. Reflect on your experience.

Spend some time, in the midst of your partying, to remember what you have done together and what God has done for you in this cannonball journey. Use these questions as your guide for this conversation, but feel free to tell stories or invite other reflections as they come up.

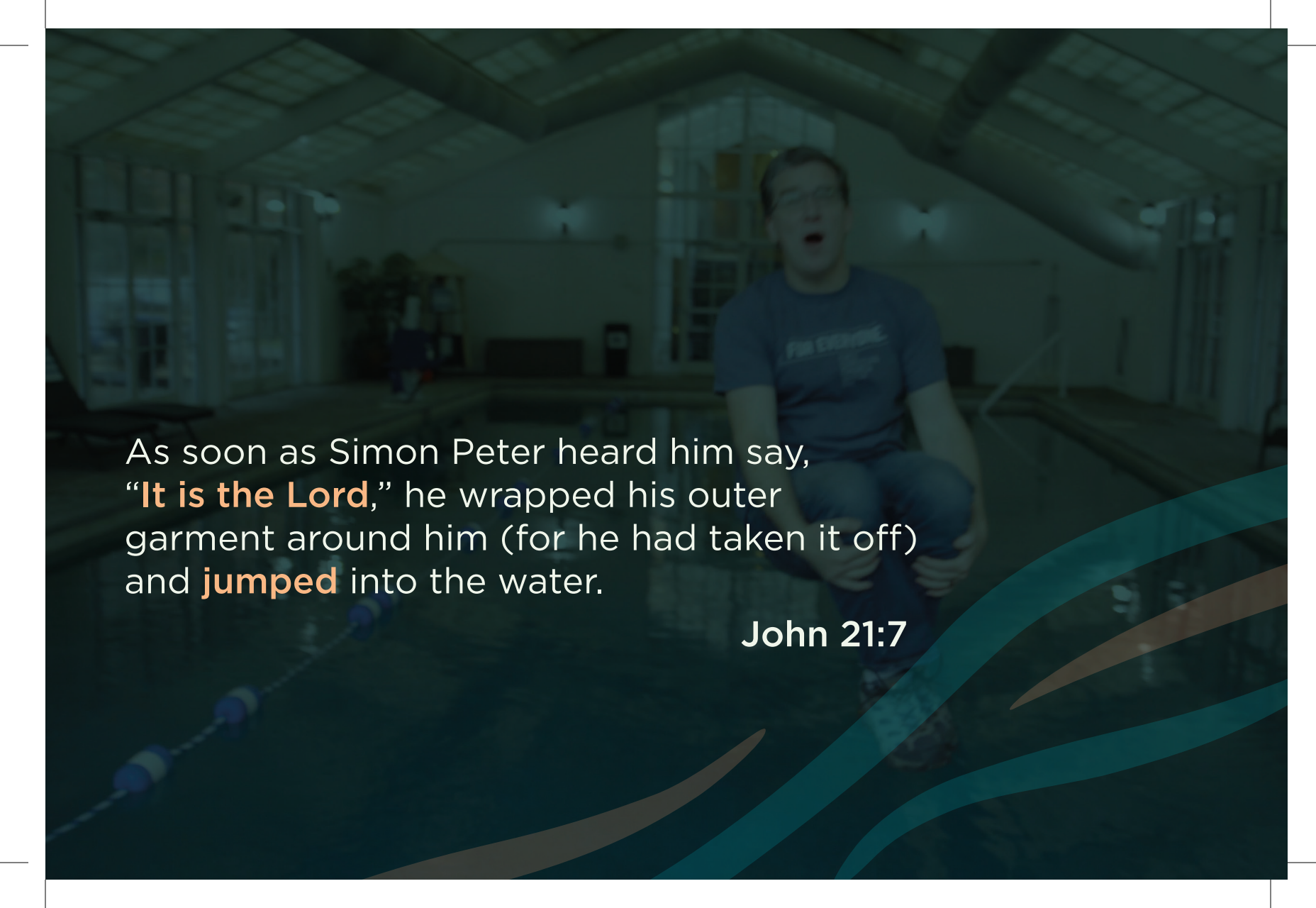
- a. What were your expectations when you joined a cannonball group?
- b. Have you encountered anything unexpected over the course of the last six weeks? How has God surprised you?
- c. Is there anywhere in your life that you are already beginning to see the impact of the commitments you have made?
- d. Was there one lesson, devotional, sermon, or challenge that stood out to you as particularly meaningful throughout this process?
- e. What is one new thing you're hoping for in the wake of this new commitment?

4. Give thanks.

As you close your time together, take some time to express gratitude for this cannonball journey you took together. Speak words of encouragement to each other, and thank God for this experience. Consider:

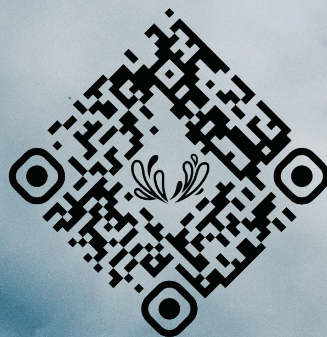
- a. Who is one person here that you need to thank?
- b. Is there anyone not here that you need to thank for their encouragement, wisdom, or support in this season?
- c. What is one thing you are thanking God for after this experience? How has God been faithful, loving, generous, or present with you?

If it makes sense for your group, close your group in prayer. Thank God for the time you've spent together, the commitments made, and for the opportunity to come together and celebrate. And pray for God's continued faithfulness to your group—that they will get to see the impact of their commitments.

A man in a blue t-shirt and jeans is sitting in a swimming pool, looking towards the camera with an open mouth as if speaking. The background is a large indoor pool with a high ceiling and large windows. The image is dimly lit and has a dark teal overlay. In the bottom right corner, there are decorative wavy lines in shades of teal and brown.

As soon as Simon Peter heard him say,
“**It is the Lord,**” he wrapped his outer
garment around him (for he had taken it off)
and **jumped** into the water.

John 21:7



fcc-jc.org/cannonball

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