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community called Chain of Lakes Church. Today as you pray, pray that the community called Chain of Lakes will be a blessing to each other and to the world.

Tuesday, February 7

Read 1 Chronicles 29:1-9

The English word, "church" comes from the Greek word, "ekklesia." The Old Testament was originally written in Hebrew, but it was translated into Greek. The word in verse 1 that is translated as "assembly" comes from the Greek word, "ekklesia." So it's as if David was giving this talk to the church.

The church is an assembly of people gathered in the name of God. In this story David was encouraging the assembly or the church to give offerings to the Temple. Raising money in the church is not original to churches in the 21st century ☺

The last verse of this story is especially moving. "Then the people rejoiced because these had given willingly, for with single mind they had offered freely to the Lord." Today as you pray, substitute the words, "the people of Chain of Lakes" for the word, "people." Our gifts, of course, are much more than financial gifts. Pray that we at Chain of Lakes will freely give all of ourselves to the Lord.

Wednesday, February 8

Read Matthew 18:15-20

In the New Revised Standard Version verse 15 is translated, "If another member of the church sins against you ..." In the New International Version verse 15 is translated "If your brother [or sister] sins against you ..."

A church is often described as a family. The metaphor doesn't fit completely as churches

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are called to grow in people more than families are called to grow in people. However the idea that we are brothers and sisters in Christ is powerful.

Do you see others at Chain of Lakes as your brothers and sisters in Christ? How would our community look if each person saw the other as a brother or sister in Christ? Today as you pray, pray that each of us will grow in our understanding of being part of a family at Chain of Lakes Church.

Thursday, February 9

Read Acts 2:37-47

This is one of my (Pastor Paul's) favorite passages in the Bible. I read it to the seven families who met me for the first time at Chain of Lakes; I preached on this story at the Grand Opening; I'll always reflect on this passage at significant times at Chain of Lakes.

The spiritual energy in this early community practically jumps off the page. The promise mentioned in verse 39 is the promise of the presence of the Spirit and the promise of salvation. The people loved each other so much that they couldn't help but share what they had with each other. People loved spending time together with each other. God couldn't help but add people to this church because the deepness of connection was so great.

This is a vision for us at Chain of Lakes. Today as you pray, pray that we will live into this vision as a church.

Friday, February 10

Read Acts 5:1-11

The word, "church" is often found in the book of Acts—in this chapter the word appears for the first time. The word, "fear"

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in verse 11 could just as easily be translated "awe." The people weren't afraid of what was happening—though they probably became afraid a bit later when the church was persecuted. Instead the people couldn't believe what was happening around them. They were in awe of what they saw.

We've probably had times when we've been in awe of what we saw happen at a church. We've probably already been in awe of what we've seen happen at Chain of Lakes Church. A three word synonym for awe is wow. Whenever we say the word, "wow" the presence of God is not far behind.

Today as you pray, pray that we will say "wow" quite often at Chain of Lakes Church.

Saturday, February 11

Read Hebrews 10:19-25

The last two verses in this passage are worth committing to memory.

"And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching."

At Chain of Lakes we've expressed this verse through our Core Value of "Joyful Love." We say that we are released to love each other with joy because of what God has done for us.

Think what a powerful community any church would be if everyone provokes each other to love and good deeds. Wow! Today as you pray, pray that we at Chain of Lakes Church will continue to provoke each other to love and good deeds.