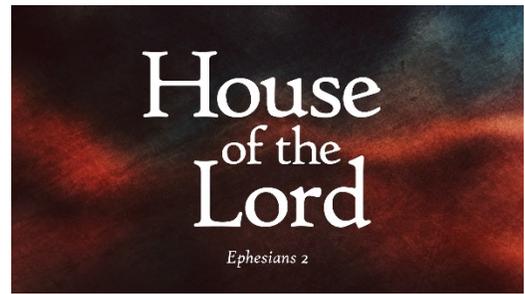


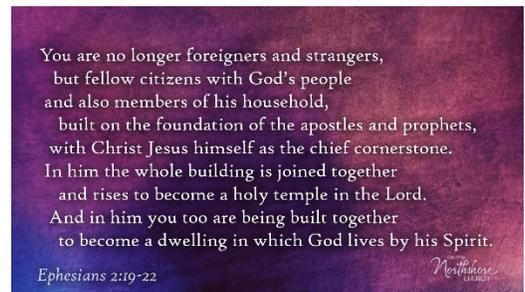
# House of the Lord

I have a message for this special day that I'm calling *House of the Lord*. We've been singing a song with that title over the past several weeks; we sang that song today. It isn't mere coincidence; yep... I stole the title for today's message.



Let's begin by reading, out loud and standing together, the last four verses of Ephesians 2:

you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household,<sup>20</sup> built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.<sup>21</sup> In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord.<sup>22</sup> And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.<sup>1</sup>



I suspect that when we think in terms of *God's House*, we think of a physical building, a church building. In our common vernacular, I suspect that most people think of the primary definition of *church* as a physical structure. We commonly say, things like “that church on the corner,” “the church where we were married”, or even “I'm going to church” and we mean a building, a place or space dedicated to worship. While that may be culturally correct, it is not theologically correct.

Throughout the New Testament we can find out all sorts of things about the Church, including theological descriptions, metaphors, the eternal future of the Church, Church leadership (pastors, deacons, teachers), instruction for worship, and the Church's mission and job descriptions. But there is nothing about church buildings in the New Testament, no specifications, no regulations... not even a mention. While God's people throughout the ages had significant buildings (along with meticulous specifications for those building detailed in Scripture), including the Tabernacle and Temple, the headquarters city of Jerusalem, and synagogues... under the New Covenant, the Church was not at all focused on physical buildings.

<sup>1</sup> [The New International Version](#). (2011). (Eph 2:19–22). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

That isn't to say that our buildings aren't important; it just is an indicator that our buildings are not of primary importance... not even important enough to get a mention in the New Testament. So, from a New Testament, New Covenant perspective, Church always means something other than (even superior than) mere buildings. The same is true of these *House of the Lord* phrases in our text, these buildings, this temple, this dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit. <sup>2</sup>

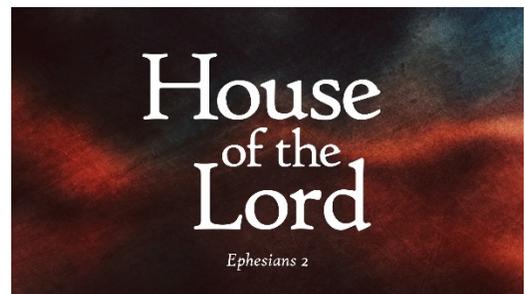
The *House of the Lord* is not merely a building, it is a people... a people on a mission, filled by the Holy Spirit... a people with a purpose. We see a key word that helps us grasp the meaning in verse 19, reading

You are ... fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household<sup>3</sup>

A household is a people, a family. God calls us to be members of His household, His family.

We could think, for example, in contemporary terms of the *House of Windsor*, the British Monarchy. The *House of Windsor* has, and occupies, all sorts of buildings, spectacular castles and palaces and such... but the *House of Windsor* are the people, the family, the heirs.

We Christians, we who believe... we are the *House of the Lord*, we are the *House of Jesus*. We are royalty in the *House* of the King of Kings and Lord of Lords. God lives by His Spirit in the *House of Jesus*, those who believe and follow Jesus. The Spirit doesn't empower buildings (or even programs or structures or organizations or bylaws for that matter); the Spirit empowers people.



So, us people in Kenmore, are an expression of the *House of the Lord* dating back to 1955. Pastor Wayman led the first service, the first Sunday in 1955. Thirty people gathered that day, not in a particularly sacred space, but rather in the Kenmore Community Club House (as far as I know, the same building that remains nestled among the breweries, just down the hill, next to the Burke-Gilman Trail). There is nobody here today that was in that service 65 years ago... but there are several who remain part of this congregation who go back many decades.

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<sup>2</sup> [The New International Version](#). (2011). (Eph 2:22). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

<sup>3</sup> [The New International Version](#). (2011). (Eph 2:19). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

By September of 1955, the congregation dwindled to just Pastor Wayman and his family, but he stuck to the work to which God called, and the congregation grew to over 150 during the first decade of Kenmore Assembly of God, during the 13 years that he served as founding pastor. The congregation moved to this property, in the first part of this building, what is now part of the fellowship hall, in 1959. The original parcel of property was purchased for \$2,250, much of the original lumber was salvaged from a church building originally used by Richmond Assembly (now Shoreline Community Church), and the blueprints were off-the-shelf from AG headquarters in Springfield (the Harvester Plan).

There have been lots of changes over the 65 years:

- Pastors changed (I'm the eleventh lead pastor if I counted right)
- Congregations merged
- Churches were planted (apparently the Assemblies of God Church in Issaquah, what I believe is now Eastridge, was planted in 1965 out of Kenmore)
- Missionaries sent and supported
- Property was bought and sold
- The building grew through several phases
- Programs, ministries, and outreaches flourished
- We even went online

Kenmore became part of Cedar Park twenty years ago. Laurie and I helped out during that first year when Joe Fuiten preached and served as pastor; we brought members of a worship team from Bothell (an intricate dance to cover the preaching and worship for 2 services in Bothell with one timed in between in Kenmore).

It was a joy for Laurie and I to come to Kenmore six years ago, along with most of the congregation from Pleasant Bay Church, a branch of Cedar Park that we founded and led since 2002. There are folk still part of our congregation who go all the way back to that first service on January 6, 2002... and several others who go a long way back to those first years.

We are grateful to the Lord for these six years, the lives changed, people baptized, and many served through outreaches including the Kamps, Market, and expanded Food Bank. When we came six years ago there was no way to know how long this season would last; we came with the commitment to serve as long as the Lord directed. If someone would have said then "how about these six years with this sort of ministry, completing 20 years as pastors part of Cedar Park" we would have said, of course, yes!

All of that to say, while the Church Universal, through the ages and eternal, in all of its various expressions, remains unchanged as the *House of the Lord*... things change in our congregations, in our direct and local expressions of the *House of the Lord*. Things are, of course, changing at the close of our time together now. The property is already changing and will change a lot more in the coming weeks, and the building will change... and the congregation will change, this *House of the Lord* is getting shaken up.

It is not, at all, unusual over the course of a Christian life, for us to make changes, to *shake things up*, regarding our Church affiliations, our places in a congregation... but that is usually at **our** initiative. Over the course of my Christian life, I have called 6 churches home (averaging a change every 7 years, which I've heard is the average among Christians of our ilk). The changes for me have all been a matter of the Lord's direction to new ministry opportunities, often associated with a move (Chicago to Minneapolis to Boston to Seattle).

I know this feels different to many, since this *shaking-up* of things is not something that any of us are doing, but perhaps it feels like it is being done **to** us, as construction is making the property inaccessible, and Cedar Park is refurbishing the building, as well as reorganizing, rebranding, and relaunching the church in Kenmore.

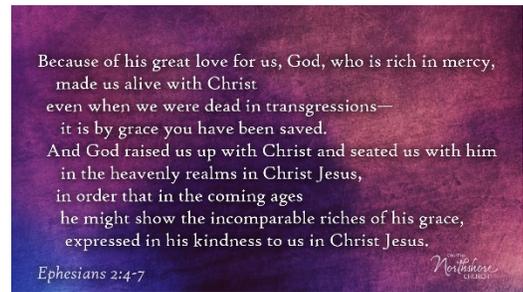
As we wrap things up today in Kenmore, I know that many will *go along with the program*, worshiping at Cedar Park's Bothell campus for the coming months, and then be back here when the parking is reconstructed, the building is refurbished, and new leadership is in place to lead a rebranded church, hopefully by the end of this year. Others will take this as an opportunity to make a change, to plug into an altogether different congregation.

Please don't take this as some sort of opportunity to take a break from church. I know some feel hurt by the shaking-up, that somehow the Church has left you... but the Church has not left you; you remain, we remain, as members of the *House of the Lord*.

We are not members of the *House of the Lord* because of this building, these people, Cedar Park, the Assemblies of God, or any other program or structure. The beginning of Ephesians 2 reminds us why and how we are included in the *House of the Lord*, reading:

because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy,  
<sup>5</sup> made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.<sup>4</sup>

It is by grace, the grace of Our Lord Jesus Christ, the initiative of God, that we are welcomed into the *House of the Lord*.

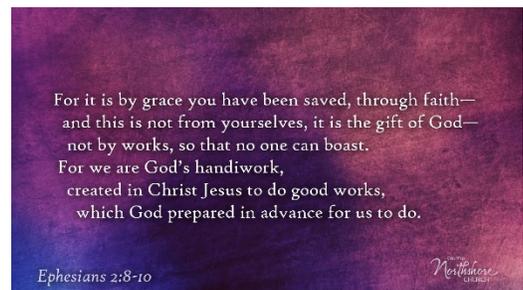


It is not by any program or structure, and certainly not by our works. It is by grace.

<sup>6</sup> And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus,<sup>7</sup> in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.<sup>5</sup>

By grace, through faith, our citizenship has changed. We are no longer mere citizens of this world, but citizens of Heaven, members of the *House of the Lord*. We are no longer dead, but alive... alive for eternity with God. While our work remains here for these natural lives, we live here now as ambassadors of our eternal home.

<sup>8</sup> For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—<sup>9</sup> not by works, so that no one can boast.<sup>10</sup> For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do.<sup>6</sup>



We are reminded that God stands outside of time, that our futures are as plainly in view to God as our past and present. If you are uncomfortable with the *shaking*, uneasy with change, know that God is not surprised. The good work done in Jesus' name yesterday, and the work that continues today, are evidence that God has more for us tomorrow and all the days and decades to follow. Whatever transition lies ahead, whether merely weathering the disruption and changes at Kenmore for the coming months, or a new adventure, we can look forward with faith and excitement that the Lord has good things in store.

<sup>4</sup> [The New International Version](#). (2011). (Eph 2:4–5). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

<sup>5</sup> [The New International Version](#). (2011). (Eph 2:6–7). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

<sup>6</sup> [The New International Version](#). (2011). (Eph 2:8–10). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.

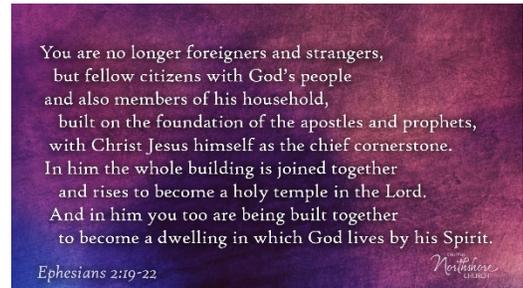
Thank You for allowing us to serve for these years in these ways; it has been an honor and privilege. Laurie and I are especially grateful to those who have served in leadership, deacons and ministry leaders, and pastors including Steve who has been with us from nearly the beginning in the days at The Chapel. Here in Kenmore we are so grateful for the work and partnership of both Allison and Jenni who have shouldered much of the most exciting outreach work.

Regardless of this change, this shaking-up of things, we remain

members of his household,<sup>20</sup> built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.<sup>7</sup>

We are the House of the Lord.

Before we get on to a bit of a reception in a few moments, let's end in singing, in declaring our part in the House of the Lord, proclaiming our confidence in His grace and leading, and affirming our joy in House of the Lord.



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<sup>7</sup> [The New International Version](#). (2011). (Eph 2:19–20). Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.