

Let me be the first to welcome you to this brand new year—WELCOME to 2008!

I'm not sure how each one of you feels about this past year, as I know that many of us have had to face some very difficult challenges. I truly hope that nobody has felt alone in all they had to endure. As a family, we are called to grieve together with those who are hurting and feeling the pain of loss, and I pray that God would continue to knit our hearts together so that this becomes even truer of us with each passing season.

I am praying that we are all facing the New Year with the courageous determination to be even more Christ-like than we have ever been before. This is what our mission statement of "Loving One God, Loving All People" is all about, my fellow saints.

As we head into this New Year, I wanted to speak about something that has been one of the (many) kinks we are trying our best to iron out. That is the upkeep of this building which God so graciously blessed us with nearly 16 years ago. Hey, I just realized that this building is a teenager, which helps me to understand why the rooms can get so messy! ☺ (Don't get too mad at me, my faithful Youth peoples—you know I love you...) Many people have noticed that things are not getting taken care of around here quite like they used to. I want to remind everyone that in the past 5 months we have more than doubled our weekend attendance, and the Building is getting used for so many different ministries that keeping track of all of the rooms has been an adventure, to say the least. Just ask our wonderful office staff! ☺ All of this has happened with 4 less staff members, so it has to be God! Nevertheless, this means that all of us on Staff are trying to tie up the many loose ends, and it's going to take some time to do that. Please be patient with us as we continue to find our balance in all the new things God is bringing.

The upkeep comes down to 3 separate issues: custodial, maintenance, and projects.

*Custodial* – John & Nancy Sedin have been heaven-sent! For many, many months now, the two of them have been coming in twice—and sometime three times—a week to take care of as much as they can. And now we are fortunate to have another amazing guy, Bob Deprater, volunteer 4 hours a week to help get things ready for the weekend!

*Maintenance* – We have had several people over the past months come out and take care of ongoing maintenance issues that have arisen. Most of you know Mick McClish, and you know how valuable he was in keeping this place in good working order. We don't have Mick anymore, so we will have to rely on volunteers in many instances to keep this place working and presentable.

*Projects* – Because we haven't had the resources to take care of many of the things that are getting well-worn, we have a pile of deferred-maintenance to take care of. We have formed a "Building & Grounds" team to help us prioritize what needs to get done and how. Some things that have been taken care of are the roof (thanks to Danny Peterson's guys), the sidewalk (thank you Mike and Julie Clapp!), clearing out the attic, and getting Portable A ready to be used (mostly Norm and John Gross). Other issues that are being addressed are the parking lot, the carpet, sound system, and many others.

Basically, what I want to encourage us to do is *be a family* and to each pitch in and help whenever we can. If you use a room, clean it up. If you use the kitchen, clean it up. If you borrow something, put it back. You know, all those rules we try to implement in our own homes! ☺ Let's take care of this amazing building God has blessed us with and let's be part of all that He is up to in this next year!

