





Hey friends,

Thank you for all your prayers over this past year. It is a honor and joy to hear you say 'I'm praying for you.' One thing that I love about our cultural end-of-year rhythm is reflection. It's easy to ask ourselves what happened in 2018 and reflect on how things went. So I want to do just that and share some things that happened because of you. God hears our prayers and uses them in his kingdom. It is truly mind-blowing.

Iron Works turned 1 this past year. I told my staff last January that success for Iron Works means faithfulness and fruitfulness. I'll briefly think about God's story, worship, and community life.

Story-formed :: In 2018 I preached on parables of kingdom and judgement, spiritual disciplines, various biblical theophanies, and the letter of Colossians. I am kicking off 2019 by preaching on Living Liturgy: A New People to help my people grow more literate in why we worship the way we do. [You can read more here.](#)

Worship :: Worship is a big deal for us. Thankfully God has brought amazing musicians to play music for us, and we have a number of people who serve our church as liturgists and scripture readers. We average 75 people each week in worship. We started 2018 with only a dozen volunteers. That pace of serving was a recipe for burnout. Thankfully we

now have 40 volunteers serving on our music, kids, and greeting teams. God has heard our prayers for new servant hearts, and we've felt this wonderful answer in the form of rest.

Made into a New Family :: We started 2018 with two community groups, multiplying into 4 later in the fall. Community groups are the primary means of leadership development, discipleship, and pastoral care in our church life. I currently don't lead any of these groups and coach the leaders. We have 40 people engaged in our community groups. As we enter 2019 one of these community groups is disbanding due to people's season of life (young kids/young parents).

Lastly, we had some donors come together to sponsor a challenge gift for our first ever Christmas offering. We have a number of newcomers who love Iron Works but trepid for one reason or another about financially giving to the church. The Christmas Offering, challenge and stretch goal combined was \$17,000 total. The one term and condition of the Christmas Offering is that this had to be new or increased giving. In other words, it was in addition to regular giving. As of today the total Christmas Offering is \$16,800. (The offering is open until Sunday, January 6. So I will make the final announcement then.)

As we move into 2019, here are the items I am praying over:

- *Increased financial giving by our church.* Next month we anticipate a \$2,000 a month loss in external giving. When I share the 2019 budget in next Sunday's congregational meeting, I will share this news and challenge the church to give. We also have to renovate the basement, which would enable us to be more hospitable with two more bathrooms, a useable kitchen, and space for kids church and fellowship. That's a BIG item, presumably in the \$100,000

range. I'm cautiously hopeful that the Christmas Offering is indicative of people's hearts.

- *Deeper Discipleship and Leadership Development.* Iron Works won't particularize into a self-sustaining, self-led church for another 18-24 months at the earliest, but I am starting our first long term discipleship cohort that will meet on the last Sunday morning of every month. All staff, community group leaders, and ministry team leaders are joining me for this time together.
- *Community Outreach.* One weakness, due to our youth, of Iron Works is a lack of community service and engagement. In February, we are hiring a part-time staff person to assist me in organizing and mobilizing Iron Works in this area. I'm thankful to our sister church, Iron Works Phoenixville who is giving a part of their church planting fund to this endeavor of ours. I am hopeful this will help us tangibly demonstrate the way of Jesus for the good of West Chester.