



ANNUAL BUSINESS REPORT

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<u>Annual Pastor's Report</u> Preached on Sunday, April 23, 2023 Based on Psalm 23 & John 10:7-14 For fiscal year May 1, 2022 – April 30, 2023

I don't think many of us would consider being called a "sheep" a compliment. In fact, in our society today, to be labeled as a sheep is to be considered un-intelligent, easily influenced, and unable to think for yourself. To be called sheep is a big criticism. No one wants to be a sheep in the way that we talk about people as sheep today.

Yet, according to our scriptures this morning, we are sheep. Now, we don't mind the thought of Jesus being our shepherd. In fact, many of us here would say Jesus is our shepherd, we follow him. We like Psalm 23, which we read earlier this morning. We like the thought of the Lord as our shepherd, the one who guides us, provides for us, and protects us. It's a nice thought.

In fact, both scriptures we read today are encouraging scriptures. In John 10 Jesus declares "I am the good shepherd," and Psalm 23 is incredibly comforting and positive. We like these scriptures that describe the Lord as our shepherd, and we as his sheep.

Many of us have Psalm 23 at least partially memorized, though likely from multiple versions, but it begins like this: The Lord is my shepherd, I shall be in want. (I lack nothing). That statement right there is extremely powerful. Maybe it speaks less of physical circumstances than an inner perspective and faith, but it is powerful. If the Lord is truly our shepherd, if we truly trust him for our every need, then we will lack nothing. Can you imagine not being in want? Can you imagine wanting nothing more in life than what you have? Living in contentedness. Living in complete trust of the shepherd is to not be in want.

Reading on, we read, He makes me lie down in green pastures. That sounds nice. Just to rest in the presence of abundant food, knowing the shepherd is there. Everything I need is there. He leads be beside quiet waters... he guides me along the right paths... it all sounds wonderful.

And even though I walk through dark places, hard places, painful places, there is nothing to fear for He is with me. He comforts me and protects me. His goodness and his love will be with me all the days of my life. It's a comforting psalm.

We also read from John 10. Jesus says, "I am the gate, whoever enters through me will be saved." Jesus is the way to salvation. There is no other way to true life, only through Jesus. Those who come to Jesus will go in and go out and find pasture. Though the figure of illustration of Jesus being the gate gets a little complicated with this going in and out, what it tells us is, with Jesus, there is great freedom and there is abundant provision. Those who are saved need not worry.

He says the thief comes to steal, kill, and destroy, but I have come to give life, and give it to the full. Fullness of life. Abundant life. Those who are saved are not simply waiting for a future salvation, but are living in the salvation they have received. Abundant life. As Peter writes in his letter to Christians everywhere, those who belong to Jesus have grace and peace in abundance.

In John 10, Jesus also says, "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. The good shepherd knows the sheep and the sheep know him."

Jesus, our shepherd, died that we may have life. Not just survival, not just the opposite of death, but life abundant. Life to the full. He died that we may experience the abundance of love, grace, and peace that come through Him. He is our good shepherd because even now we live in the salvation that comes through Him. He laid down his life for us in order that we might be

transformed by the abundant grace, peace, and mercy that he gives. Jesus' teachings and this psalm are to be our present lived experiences! They are to be true to us today, for those of us who believe in Jesus for salvation. The Lord is our shepherd.

Some of us are thinking, this is really great news! This is good stuff! Both comforting and encouraging. I want that in my life. In fact, we are probably all thinking that is what we want. We want to not worry. We want to experience the abundance of grace and peace. We desire that.

Some of us this morning, if we take just a moment to reflect on our own lives... some of us this morning are thinking, is this true? We don't doubt that Jesus is the way to salvation. We don't doubt that we are saved because Jesus laid his life down. But we consider our own lives and we wonder, "is this what abundant life looks like?" Is this fullness of life? My life doesn't feel like green pasture and still waters. My life doesn't feel like abundant grace and peace. I don't feel content.

Where is the blessed freedom found in Jesus? What am I missing? Where has this gone wrong for me? My life isn't a life of frolicking in green pastures and dwelling near still waters. Life isn't grace and peace, it is stress and anxiety. It isn't grace and peace, it is burdensome and busy. I follow Jesus but I don't know this grace-filled freedom. Some of us might feel trapped today, trapped by life itself. Trapped in simply trying to get through this day, this week, this season.

We can testify that the Lord is our shepherd but we have a hard time testifying to the contentedness the psalmist speaks of. We have a hard time living into this abundant life.

Jesus said he came that we would have life and have it to the fullest. The Psalmist writes about the blessedness found in living with the Lord as our shepherd... then why isn't that the experience of every Christian? We believe the scriptures are true, but why isn't this our experience?

Well, because somehow, we allow the enemy in to steal our joy. Somehow, we've been deceived into listening to others who aren't our shepherd. And as we try to follow Jesus *and* these other voices, we aren't living in the abundant grace and peace that come from Jesus. We tell ourselves that we are following Jesus, but are actually listening to the voices of our culture, so we end up destroying some of the very things Jesus died to give us.

We've listened to the voices that tell us we must be rugged individualists, not sheep. We've listened to the voices that tell us we must be self-sufficient, that acknowledging we need help is weakness. We believe the voices that tell us we must be strong. We must be people of power. We must be confident and not back down from others. That is what our culture values, and that has found its way into the church. Jesus says blessed are the meek, but so many listen to the voice of our culture that says blessed are the powerful, for they control things.

God is a god of abundant resources and yet we believe in the myth of scarcity. If we don't work hard we won't have what we need. And so we hoard resources, worry about our finances, worry about worst case scenarios... as if we believe that we are solely responsible for our survival. It's as if we believe God doesn't have enough for everyone, so we better get ours while we can. We also act as if God doesn't have enough love for everyone, so we must prove ourselves to be better than others so as to earn God's love.

We've listened to these voices so much that we don't know the difference between God's approval and human approval. And we think the wealthy are the most blessed by God. The successful must be doing something right for God to give them an easy life. And so we seek success as the world defines it- wealth, position, influence, appearance. We are too busy being busy that we don't have time to lay down in green pastures or walk beside still waters...

And as much as we hate it, we wear our busyness as a badge of honor – look at how hard I work! Look at how full my schedule is! No one will call me lazy. No one will suggest I don't know how to work. We take pride in filling our lives so full that we don't have time to enjoy our life, to enjoy our families...and we pat each other on the back for our busyness and hard work, and we may even resent those who don't work as hard as us...

Instead of listening to our Shepherd we listen to the voices that tell us to constantly compare ourselves to others. And the more we listen to those voices the less we live in the contentedness of our Shepherd. Instead, we find ourselves trying to measure up, prove ourselves better, or prove others not as good. We've listened to those voices that only speak the negative things, and so we dwell on the bad instead of the good. We assume the worst about others rather than the best. We find ourselves listening to the one who comes to steal our joy and love, the one who destroys relationships...

I know, we didn't try to listen, I know, we didn't realize we were listening to the wrong voice, but in doing so, maybe we've lost touch with the shepherd. Jesus says his sheep know his voice. [pause] Do we still know Jesus' voice? Do we still know the voice of the shepherd gives grace abundant?

And really, that is why I'm preaching it this way this morning...even I've wrestled with this in my own heart and my own life this week as I've been preparing to preach. Acknowledging the tension of the truth of scripture and the experience of our lives... And I don't doubt Jesus who says he came to give abundant life... so the problem must be with us...

Do we still know the voice of Jesus in our lives? Can we distinguish his voice from the voices that call us to the successful life? The good life? Do we know the difference between the American dream and the "Abundant life that comes from Jesus?"

Jesus, the good shepherd, laid down his life for His sheep. He laid his life down for us, because as sheep we can't save ourselves. We are helpless and powerless on our own. Sheep cannot live abundant lives through their own efforts or our own successes. We cannot defend ourselves from the lies and the attacks of the enemy. While we were powerless to save ourselves, Jesus died on that cross that we must have abundant life.

Everything we read this morning in the scriptures is true! It may not speak of our current lived experience, but it is all true! God's grace and love are abundant, and he offers them to us that we might live in His abundant grace!

He didn't die simply to give us a life that is a few degrees better than life without him. He died that we might have transformed life. Jesus laid himself down for us that we might live in the fullness of his grace and peace. That we might experience heaven on earth as we live in the fullness of his mercy and love even now. God created all things, and his creation is good! And loving relationships with people are good and pleasing to God, and they give health to our lives. Life with Jesus as shepherd is a life of transformed desires and complete trust in the Lord.

Life with Jesus as shepherd is a life of contentedness, pastures and still waters, living without fear of the hard things. The hard things still come, but our shepherd walks with us through the valley! This is the life I desire...Surely his goodness and love will be with me all the days of my life.

But until we are willing to acknowledge we are sheep in need of a shepherd, we can't experience it. Until we lay our pride down, we won't hear his voice. We won't know the green pastures and still waters until we can ignore everything in us that tells us we aren't sheep.

Until we learn to listen to the voice of the Lord instead of all these other voices, we won't know abundant life. Until we trust in his abundant grace for us and for others, we won't know how to live in that grace.

But we desire it today! We want to live the abundant life with the Lord as our Shepherd!

So today, let us lay down our pride and acknowledge we are sheep in need of the shepherd.

Listen for his voice. Maybe we have to learn his voice again. We learn his voice as we study the scriptures. We learn his voice as we pray. We learn to follow the shepherd by spending time with the flock of sheep who follow Him. The people we spend our time with influence the voices we hear...

The scriptures are true. His grace is enough for us, experience his grace anew today. The Lord is my shepherd, I lack nothing. He makes me lie down in green pastures, he leads me beside quiet waters, he refreshes my soul. *He guides me along the right paths* for his name's sake. ⁴ Even though I walk through the darkest valley,^[a] *I will fear no evil,* for you are with me; vour rod and vour staff. they comfort me. ⁵ You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies. You anoint my head with oil; *my cup overflows*. ⁶ Surely your goodness and love will follow me all the days of my life, and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Morgan Church Finance Report For Period Covering 05/01/2022 to 04/30/2023

Inflows

Building Fund	\$1,000.00
Caravan Registration Fees	\$383.28
Children's Ministries Offering	\$40.00
Credit Card Cash Back	\$296.79
Deputation Other Missionary (In)	\$536.00
Facilities Expense Share	\$2,345.50
Faith Promise	\$10,065.62
Interest Inc	\$3.14
Local Benevolence Offering	\$215.00
NMI Offering	\$1,444.32
Rental Income	\$5,400.00
Tithes	\$160,577.46
Wednesday Meals	\$359.42
Youth Ministries (In)	\$4,001.36
Total Inflows	\$186,667.89

Expenses

Buildings & Property	\$31,419.17
Denominational Budgets	\$11,885.00
Ministry	\$18,907.66
NMI Expense	\$11,864.14
Operations	\$24,698.61
Staff Salaries & Benefits	\$103,382.72
Total Expenses	\$202,157.30
Deficit for Period	\$15,489.41



Morgan Church of the Nazarene has enjoyed three consecutive years of financial surplus, with total giving and income exceeding expenses by a comfortable margin. However, for the fiscal year ending April 30, we experienced a reversal of that trend, ending the year with a significant deficit, as our giving was down while expenses increased.

Jim Goss

Morgan Church NMI (Faith Promise) Report For Period Covering 05/01/2022 to 04/30/2023

Inflows

		\$ 500.00
Deputation Other Missionary (In)		\$536.00
Faith Promise		\$10,065.62
Local Benevolence Offering		\$215.00
NMI Offering		\$0.00
Alabaster	\$544.32	
Compassionate Ministries (World-wide)	\$500.00	
Deputation	\$320.00	
District Benevolence (Navajo, other)	\$80.00	
Total NMI Offering		\$1,444.32
Total Inflows	:	\$12,260.94
Expenses		
Local Benevolence		\$1,126.05
NMI Expense		\$0.00
Alabaster	\$544.00	
Books	\$103.53	
Child Sponsorship Expense	\$360.00	
Compassionate Ministries (World-wide)	\$1,000.00	
Crisis Care Kits	\$101.00	
Deputation	\$500.00	
District Benevolence (Navajo, other)	\$125.00	
Faith Promise Expenses	\$65.61	
Missionary Christmas Fund	\$150.00	
Missionary Health Care	\$200.00	
World Evangelism Fund	\$8,715.00	
Total NMI Expense		\$11,864.14
Total Expenses		\$12,990.19
Deficit for Period		\$729.25

Annual Trustee Report 2022-2023

My position as a trustee summed up is to watch over the physical side of the "church". I only served a partial term due to a member moving away, however we have done much this year even in the short amount of time I've been a trustee. From installing a new sound board and getting members trained how to use it, to the church work day where a few potential hazards were repaired and our parking lot was worked on. We are truly blessed to have so many physical blessings and wonderful people to help maintain them.

- Maintained facilities
- Scheduled professional services when needed
- Put together project quotes
- Planned work days for needed maintenance
- Oversaw finances including budget issues
- Oversaw the collection and counting of tithes

Personal reports

Well, it's been about a year, since I've been elected as a trustee to the board. It's meant a lot to me to be able to serve my church. Some of the projects that I was able to complete in the past year were; moving compassionate services from the basement up to the main floor for easier access. Installing windows in all the doors for our classrooms and having the church re-keyed to all the same keys. God has been moving me in my life to have productive conversations with believers and unbelievers alike, and to be able to testify to them about all that the Lord's done in my life.

Respectfully Submitted, Shawn Schrum I began serving on the board of trustees last May. It's been rewarding to be able to serve God and my friends at Morgan Nazarene through this ministry by helping to maintain our facility and trying to make sure it is a safe, functional place for us to worship and enjoy fellowship.

I believe that God has blessed us with capable and willing workers on the committee. Shawn did the greatest part of the work on facilities through the summer and into the fall last year and I was able to do a little more through the winter. Caleb joined us a few months ago after Steve Toohey moved to Nebraska and immediately became a reliable and capable member of the team.

Respectfully Submitted, Jim Goss

I was asked to fill in on the board as a trustee member this past January and went into it knowing very little about what I was actually signing up for. The first meeting made me realize it was very similar to my days in 4-H however there was one key difference (other than the age of the members). The prayer... the peace and presence of the Holy Spirit on those meetings when the meeting begins is very tangible, you can feel your worries of the day just slip right off... its an amazing blessing and proof that God is working in this church.

As a young man I thoroughly enjoy working with my hands in a physical way and serving others. therefor this has been a great fit! Even before I was a member of the board I was able to be of some help when it came to the sound board and computer installations. Since joining I've been able to be a part of the planning for our all church work day, budgeting for this oncoming year and a few other small projects. in all these things, it's amazing to see how great our Lord God really is.

Respectfully submitted, Caleb Christensen

Annual Stewards Report 2022-2023

The only lasting treasure is the one we give away. The only lasting treasure is people, the only thing eternal. As Stewards, it is our duty to the church to engage as many people as possible to help do God's work and receive His blessings. We use God's resources in His way to fulfill as His instructs and guides.

- Engaged God's people to do God's work
- Gave comfort and encouragement where needed
- Funeral Dinners
- Ministry Dinners on Wednesday nights
- Assisted with Communion and as Ushers
- Compassionate Services

Personal Reports

"When did I see You hungry, naked, thirsty, needing visitors, hurt and needing shelter? Whatever you did for the least of Mine you did it for Me." It is said that you can never outgive God and it is a blessing to try. Along with the ministries we have in our church, the towns of Fort Morgan and Brush also have unlimited places to volunteer and give of yourself. From helping at Rising Up to Food Bank of the Rockies, helping kids with bicycle needs and money needs to fulfill their ministries and having parents and grandparents come and say thank you is in itself God saying, "well done". People helping people with love and being the Jesus they need in their lives is our job as Christ followers.

Respectfully Submitted, Richard Lapp

This is the first year that I've been a church board Steward. There's been quite a learning curve for me as I took on the role of being in charge of church dinners. Considering the fact that I don't cook, its been amazing to see these dinners come together with some great cooks and organizers. God has blessed this church with some great volunteers who have willing hearts to serve the Lord.

Respectfully Submitted, Curt Christensen

Annual NYI Report 2022-2023

As NYI President, I was, in part, responsible for the teenagers that come into our church each week. I was able to build relationships with these teens and get to know them on a unique level. Through these relationships and regularly meeting together on Wednesday nights we were able to disciple and equip these teens to live as Christians out in the real world. This year we have had a more consistent group of teens. We had a young group of mostly 7th and 8th graders and we had such a good time. We laugh, play games, and learn together. They really are a fun group. They have grown in knowledge and understanding in their relationship with God and it has been a joy to see.

Highlights from the year:

- Rummage sale in May to help raise money for events
- Teen camp at Golden Bell in June:
 - 3 teens and 2 adults
- Wednesday nights
 - We averaged about 8 teens
 - o Advent series
 - Lent series
- Sunday school
 - We started a preteen/teen Sunday school class this year. We have anywhere from 1-2 teens
- WaterWorld in August
 - o 5 teens, and 2 adults
- PowerSurge at YMCA of the Rockies in November
 - o 3 teens and 2 Adults and 2 College/career
- Main Event in Loveland in March
 - o 6 teens and 2 Adults
- Volleyball night and Game Nights
 - Back to school game night

The most fulfilling thing from this past year was getting to meet new teens and being able to create and build relationships with them. It is always a blessing when the teens see me, several yell my name and come running to me. I have enjoyed spending time with them and joining in laughing with them about silly things. The teens that we have are such a joy and I am blessed to be a part of their lives and to watch them grow.

I've seen God work in countless ways this last year, too many to count. God is at work in and through His people in mighty ways. One example is on Wednesday nights, seeing the teens form a community, where everyone is welcome and everyone matters. Most of this is the teens doing, and is such a great example of how the body of Christ should be.

Respectfully Submitted, Andrea Davenport

Annual NMI Report 2022-2023

As we wind up another fiscal year at the church, I realize that I have almost finished my first, ever term as local NMI President. When the year began last May, I was somewhat overwhelmed by the responsibilities of the office: Obtaining the reading books for the kids, preparing to present missionary lessons quarterly in Childrens Church, hosting missionaries for deputation, promoting special offerings, and preparing for Faith Promise Sunday. I almost forgot – the Colorado District Navajo Christmas project, too. With God's help (and much help and encouragement from Pastor Kent and others in the church) I was able to complete the tasks. Thank you to all who helped in this work!

Summary of our efforts:

- In June, attended NMI conference at District Assembly in Colorado Springs.
- October: Hosted David Ackerman and family for deputation and had fall Alabaster offering.
- November: Received gifts for Navajo project and traveled to Gallup to help distribute them.
- February: Promoted and received spring Alabaster offering.
- April: Faith Promise with Pastor Taw Taw Soe.
- Every fifth Sunday, presented children's missionary lessons about work in Asia-Pacific region.

Many times this past year I found myself so focused on the details of what needed done, that I lost sight of the big picture – to keep the local church informed of the missions work of the Church of the Nazarene and to promote prayer and financial support for those efforts. Even though I have at times felt that I was "in over my head" in this job, I feel very privileged to have been able to be part of this work. I continue to be open to God's leading and want to be faithful to go where He leads.

Respectfully Submitted, Susan Goss

Annual Children's Director Report 2022-2023

As children's director, I have worked faithfully this last year to lead children, their families, and, those working with me in ministry. I continue to learn how to better disciple those God has placed in my care, rather they be children, parents, or ministry volunteers. This has been a year of great growth for me in this endeavor. However, I continue to seek better ways in which I might create and encourage discipleship in every area of ministry I'm involved in.

Main Responsibilities:

- Sunday Morning Children's ministries such as
 - Children's Church
 - o Family Sunday
 - Sunday School
 - Oversee Bible Quiz
- Caravan Director
- Caravan Guide
- Leading and training volunteers in my areas of ministry
- Calling and connecting with the families in my areas of ministry
- Calling and connecting with volunteers in my areas of ministry
- Planning and carrying out outreach ministries such as
 - Family Cookout
 - Pinewood Derby and Dinner
 - o Ice Cream Social
 - Leave a Mark at Landmark

This year I have been encouraged to see relationships develop and strengthen within our Caravan volunteers as the guides connect outside of Caravan. It is a blessing to see them building friendships that go beyond our Wednesday nights of serving together. I pray that as we move into a new church calendar year we may continue to seek opportunities for us to connect and build relationships that grow us together as followers of Jesus! God is clearly at work and it is encouraging to see and to be a part of!

Respectfully Submitted, Stacey Fajardo

Annual Nursery Coordinator Report 2022-2023

Nursery looked different this year than previous years. It wasn't uncommon for us to not have any kids in the nursery. No kids are in the nursery on Wednesday nights and every other Sunday we may have one or two kids. This news can seem discouraging but in it's own way it is uplifting. We have a nursery schedule of helpers that allows for everyone to only miss one service every two months! Nursery is covered every Sunday and no one is getting burnt out from doing it once or twice a month! I found a new appreciation for nursery as new families with babies come in and trust us to care and love their baby for service time. How special it is that they can have a break from caring for their child, they can be present with God in service while knowing their baby is in good hands. It really is a ministry.

Major things and projects:

- Get a schedule made so the help is spread evenly every month or two
- Keep things organized
- Communication between helpers is important
- Fellowship, listen and see each family that comes with their child

The most fulfilling part of my position is seeing families and nursery helpers get to know each other and look forward to seeing each other, brought together by their child. It's fulfilling to know that the parents can go to service and be fully in service and not worry about their child. It's fulfilling to know the child is being loved and well taken care of by people who volunteer and want to help take care of little ones to help out the parents. Seeing all the pieces fit together is the best. God answered my prayers in the last year when it comes to nursery. A year ago I was in the nursery every Sunday that I wasn't leading worship, I was never just in service to be in service. I was getting burnt out of the nursery and needed help. Upon reaching out and asking several people, the nursery now has about 7 regular helpers meaning we only miss one church service every month or so. God has worked in bringing us a new family this year with their 6 month old baby as our last 2 year old just turned 3 and moved out of the nursery. Making a schedule for nursery can be stressful and difficult, but God always answers prayers, it works out and I am so blessed to have the ladies helping that I do.

Respectfully Submitted, Brianna Everhart

Annual Worship Leader Report 2022-2023

Everybody worships in different ways. Some worship through music, other through scriptures, some from sermons and others through outdoors and other activities. Sometimes leading worship can be too focused on the musical aspect and I believe that is an improvement the music team has made in the last year.

Having people read scripture between songs, being thoughtful with the music behind scripture reading as well as being thoughtful of the words in songs for certain messages. Growing myself in the last year to be more thoughtful of what songs we sing and aware of the attitude of worship on Sundays can be summed up to being prepared, thoughtful and present/aware. This past year has had some bumps when it comes to helpers. A new sound board, a new media program and with some people moving, it left the music department spread thin in the sound booth, but God had a plan and new people stepped up and others took on even more ways in which they can help. Working closely with church members is such a blessing, we remind each other what the point of worship is. It is not to perform, it is not to be perfect but it is to worship and give glory to the God who gave us our talents and our lives so we may worship Him.

Major things and projects:

- New Sound board and media program
- We have had trainings for the new things
- More and more people getting involved

The most fulfilling part is when people let me know that the songs really spoke to them or that the Spirit was really moving and that the way music was done helped do that. Seeing people be moved and touched affirms that worship is important and I get the pleasure of helping someone worship and hear or feel God's presence. This last year I feel I have seen God work the most in the hearts of our church. A year ago some people would have never volunteered to help with music, but God opened doors, minds and hearts to allow us as a team to become closer as well as bringing new people in to add to our team. It's been an encouraging year and I am excited to see what the next year will be like.

Respectfully Submitted, Brianna Everhart

Annual Worship Leader Report 2022-2023

Over the past year, I have been a part-time worship leader, sharing the responsibility with Brianna Everhart. I have enjoyed bringing the congregation to the footstool of the throne of God in worship and song. I have found that our worship and singing can be the bridge between heaven and earth, and scripture says, "the Lord inhabits the praises of His people." I have been encouraged by the volunteers on the worship team as I have watched them grow and mature in this ministry. I am also encouraged by the positive remarks from the congregation on our hearts to present the worship music. We have also incorporated a new computer, media and sound system for the church programs.

Main Responsibilities:

- Choose the songs prior to the upcoming Sunday
- Design and enter the songs into the media system
- Ensuring we have volunteers for each position every Sunday
- Practicing the program prior to Sunday School
- Leading the worship service, reading of scriptures
- Set up and closure of sound and media systems
- Leading music during special events
- Running sound and media during Caravan, Funerals, Special Events

The most fulfilling thing for me this past year is noticing and feeling myself grow in maturity as I continue to serve the Lord in this capacity. I hope others feel the same as they are part of this team and ministry.

Respectfully Submitted, Jake Fajardo