



## Hope that Endures

Well y'all, we've almost done it! Made it through another year of pandemic, social unrest, questionable national (and some local) leadership, and the regular aches, pains, and the medical procedures of daily life! I hope that doesn't sound negative because I don't mean it to be. But I am a realist, and just like we say that 90% of success at work is just showing up, I think sometimes life in general is a little like that too. And I'm here to say to our Plus Generation, "THANK YOU" and "CONGRATULATIONS" for the way you have shown up in 2021!!! I don't mean just "showing up" for church and our Plus Generation activities, although that has been extremely important and something for which I am truly grateful. No, I just mean congratulations for making it through all the difficulties, keeping your faith intact, and trying your best to smile through it all and be an encouragement to me and to all those around you!

Our Plus Generation is a constant source of hope and blessing for many of the families in our church and community. Just your enthusiasm on Sunday morning, your constant prayer support for our staff and church family, and the legacy of faith that is the foundation on which Christ built the church. I never ask a younger adult to help me with a Plus Generation activity that they don't accept with a big smile and a grateful heart, just happy for the opportunity to give back a little bit to a group that has been such a positive influence over their children and family. All of the musicians and performers that come to the Young at Heart lunches constantly tell me what a blessing it is to be with such a fun and encouraging group (and they ALWAYS agree to come back!).

As I read through the Fruit of the Spirit in Galatians 5, I'm reminded of all that our Plus Generation brings to FBC Grapevine. The love, joy, kindness, faithfulness et cetera! But I can't overlook the "big word" in the middle of all those characteristics. . . longsuffering! And along with all those wonderful attributes that you bring to our church and community, I think the thing that I want to express my thankfulness to you for this Christmas is just that, your demonstration to me and to all of us of your willingness and ability to "endure all things!". COVID, economic uncertainty, civil unrest, losing friends and family, you've seen it all, and in 2021 you have persevered through the things that this world has thrown at you! So, this season I want to celebrate and acknowledge your longsuffering, "your willingness to keep on keeping on" and remind you that the life to come is so much different than the life we now experience. I know you already know that, because many of you tell me how you long for it! But until we get there, in the meantime, continue to be the light that guides so many, and know that Jodi and I love you, and that it is a privilege to serve alongside you!

Merry Christmas and Happy 2022!

