

I am grateful I have this place to imagine a better version. A better version of what?

For one, driving a car. Recall Ben Dorr encouraging us to think of all fellow rush hour drivers as children of God? I'm actually using that. Daily. I only work 5 miles from my house. Every day in Mile 1 a car speeds by me. Child of God I Think. Mile 2 a car speeds by me and changes lanes too closely in front of me. Child of God, I think. Mile 3 a car speeds by me, cuts me off and makes me brake hard to miss.

I'm not saying child of god anymore.

I can imagine better. My goal is to get to mile 3 in 2019.

Or a better version of Business. Politics. Discourse. Civility. Being here in this place slows me down, makes me look at my week. How did I behave with my colleagues? When facing Sophie's-choice business issues, how did I do last week? When considering political viewpoints different from my own, how did I do?

I can imagine a better version of myself. A better version of community, justice and social peace.

Or a better version of giving. Have you ever heard a cry for help? Like a swimmer caught in a rip tide cry for help? Or figuratively been the swimmer? Because of NR mission support, I had the opportunity to run to trouble. Tornado Relief in Joplin and Norman, hurricane Relief in Biloxi.

Imagine being better giving your time.

So much imagining going on in the pews, I don't want Bob and Susan to think I'm not listening to their Sermons.

But just 3 thoughts to leave you with.

- 1- Did you know that NR's Mission history is to *find* or *start* new Missions? ELM, Helping Hands, Northridge Without Borders as just 3 examples. They didn't exist. We imagined better.
- 2- Do you consider yourself the employer here? Think about it. We, y'all, all y'all have 7 employees to support. Imagine their lives, careers, talents growing the Church.
- 3- Did you know that the Northridge's membership has been nearly constant *for years*, but the number of pledging families and individuals has *decreased* each of the recent years? I imagine that's not sustainable.

So when you pledge to support this Church and its Missions in 2019, Imagine being someone who personally answers a cry for help, imagine being an employer, Imagine a strong Church being there next year.

I need that place to imagine better. Northridge and its members make that place for me. And I am grateful for you and this Church.