****INTRODUCTORY LETTER**

*OPTION 3*

*This letter could be mailed to every member. It could also be customized and mailed only to members who have been absent for some time. Customize to fit your situation. It is simply meant to be a sample of what could be shared. This letter could be signed by the pastor, congregational president, or an elder.*

Dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

**On Sunday, October 20th, we will celebrate *Welcome Home* Sunday. Our hope is to have our entire church family—100% of our members—come together on that day.**

It happens: a believer stops going to church. It could be for a number of reasons.

* He had a disagreement with someone else at church. It could even have been with the pastor.
* His life got busy. Weekends were chocked full of sporting events and other activities. Church was lost in the hustle.
* He simply didn’t feel like it one Sunday. That made it easier to skip the next Sunday… and the next. Soon, not going to church was the new norm.

Note what I wrote: “It happens. *A believer* stops going to church.” One does not become an unbeliever the moment he stops going to church. However, Scripture does say, **“Faith comes from hearing the message**” (Romans 10:17 NIV). If I remove myself from regular contact with God’s Word, my faith will slowly die. I won’t feel it, because my faith is not tied into my nervous system. I will probably still remember the Lord’s Prayer, some Bible passages, some hymn verses. However, remembering those things is NOT the same thing as having a living, saving faith. That type of faith “comes from hearing the message” on a regular basis.

Moreover, when one stops going to church, they lose the connection to the Christian community that our Creator designed us to need. Christ intends for the Church to function as a family.

*Welcome Home* Sunday is meant primarily as a celebration of that Christian family. How great would it be to have a packed church… to see smiling faces you haven’t seen in a while… to shake the rafters with the joyful singing of that many saints. However, *Welcome Home* also serves as a great opportunity for those who have stopped going to church to come back.

Maybe it is someone you know: a sibling, a son, a friend, someone you used to serve with on some church committee. You know this individual has not been in church for a long time. They might not realize it, but they are harming themselves spiritually. In love, might you reach out to them and encourage you to come with you on *Welcome Home* Sunday. Assure them no one is going to look down on them for having been absent. We will simply be happy to have them back home. Welcome home!

However, maybe it is you who have stopped coming. Again, it happens. *Welcome Home* Sunday is the perfect time to come back. Jesus has things to say to you—good news… the gospel! He wants you to know the peace and security you only have by dwelling in his home. Welcome home!

So, can you please set October 20th aside? Do not plan any trips that weekend. If you have something going on that day, have it start after worship. Again, we want to have 100% of church’s name members present on that day—one big family, knit together by Christ’s grace.

Your brother in Christ,

Name