NORTHLAND CHURCH

ENGAGE

FALL 2022



ENGAGING PEOPLE TO BE FULLY ALIVE IN JESUS

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OUR VISION:

ENGAGING PEOPLE TO BE FULLY ALIVE IN JESUS.

Jesus made an amazing declaration: *"I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."*

For Northland, our aim is to see the Life movement Jesus launched continue into the 21st century.

The scope of what He came to do is way more than inventing some religion and introducing a thing called church that happens in buildings on Sunday mornings. It's a goal aimed at the renewal of the cosmos and it starts with us as His image bearers.

The Gospel enables us to dance as human beings to the glory of God — to do that in community, to do that in our culture, and to see salt and light unleashed by the church, not just by yelling orthodoxy at a culture, but by also demonstrating vibrancy.

Put simply: We believe the church is more than a place you come to on Sundays … it's people. People fully alive in Jesus — not just lung-breathing, heart-beating life, but abundant, thriving Life that can only come from Him.

"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full."
– John 10:10 (NIV)

CULTURAL ENGAGEMENT AND THE MESSY MIDDLE

During our series Transitions, Pastor Josh mentioned the term "messy middle" to explain how he goes about engaging culture and cultural issues; it's how God's church engages a lost world. **Page 4**





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Northland has been called to build the Church through its relationships with global churches and missionaries throughout its 50-year history. **Page 14**

WORSHIP TIMES

Online and On Campus

Saturdays . . . . . .5 p.m.
Sundays . . . . . 9 & 11 a.m.*

*American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation provided in person and online (via the Access Ministries Facebook page).

* Spanish Translation available in person.

Welcome TO NORTHLAND

We are so glad you're here! Whether this is your very first time or you're returning, we hope you feel welcomed and sense the presence of God.

Back in the spring, we welcomed our new lead pastor, Dr. Josh Laxton. Josh and his family have since moved to the area and settled into their home. Pastor Josh is full of life and plans for Northland, and it is clear that God has called him to be with us. We are grateful to the Governing Elders and to the Pastor Search Committee, who spearheaded what ended up being a very long search. We look forward to what God has in store for us. We believe the wait was worth it!

Pastor Josh has introduced the phrase "towel holder" into our vocabulary. Our service and love is to reflect the kind of service and love Jesus demonstrated on the cross. To be a towel holder is to serve. There are so many areas to serve within each of our ministries, check them all out at **NorthlandChurch.net/Serve**!

We are excited for this new season in the life of our church. Ecclesiastes 3:1 tells us, "There is a time for everything, and a season for every activity under the heavens." Just like the leaves on the trees in fall, we are also in a process of renewal. With King Jesus as our head, we face the future with anticipation and hope. Together, we'll learn what it means to glorify God by joining in His mission to redeem a people from all peoples.

May God richly bless you in this season and in every season. ■





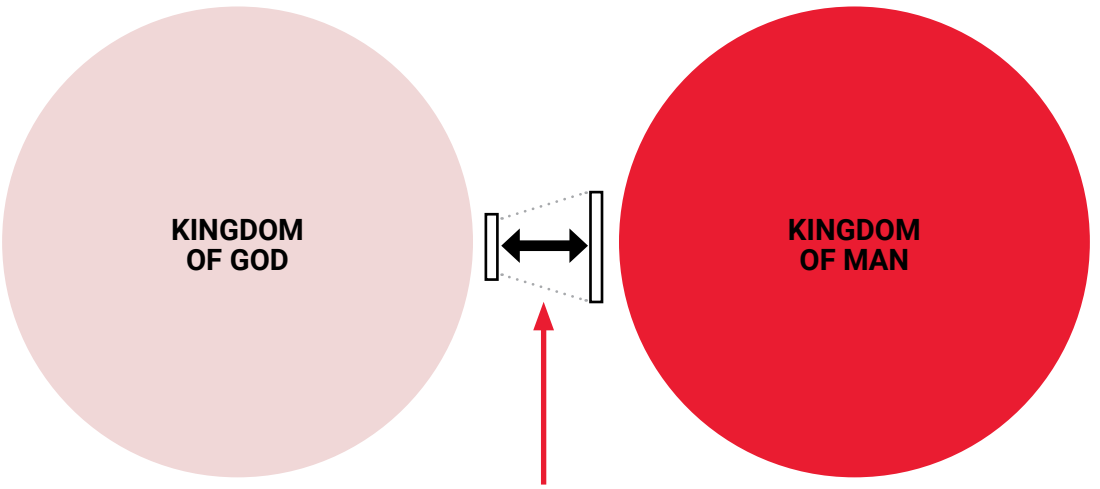




CULTURAL ENGAGEMENT AND THE *Messy* MIDDLE

BY DR. JOSH LAXTON, LEAD PASTOR

During our series Transitions, I mentioned the term "messy middle" to explain how I go about engaging in culture and cultural issues; it's how God's church engages a lost world. Here's an image that helps explain the messy middle.



This is the space where so much division takes place between the people of God.

If I had to guess, I would say many (if not most) believers don't have a cultural engagement theology or strategy. I would assess that many engage culture based on what they learned from their parents or pastors or their own (cultural) presuppositions. In other words, they have a default cultural engagement theology and strategy.

What goes into developing a cultural engagement strategy? Having spent the last fifteen years studying this, I would say there are at least three key elements in developing a cultural engagement strategy. The three elements are a robust missiology, a rough eschatology, and a rudimentary understanding of the role of government.

ROBUST MISSIOLOGY. What is the mission of God? After understanding God's mission in the world, you begin to build a missiology (the study of God's mission) for the church. It is very important to keep in mind that the mission of God gave birth to the church—not vice versa. Thus, the church's mission flows from God's mission.

One's cultural engagement theology and strategy will originate from an understanding of God's mission and then will seek to understand how the church serves as a vehicle for advancing His mission on Earth. I know there has been (and is) much debate around the *Missio Dei* (mission of God) and the church's role in carrying out that mission. Regardless of what you conclude, know that it affects your engagement strategy.

ROUGH ESCHATOLOGY. Some may find it strange that eschatology (theology of the end times) is a key element in developing a cultural engagement theology and strategy, as it is typically seen as a tertiary theological issue. But if you've ever studied eschatology, you know it is a complex subject. If you're like me, you've probably been asked, "Are you pre-mil, post-mil, or a-mil?"

The reality is—just like missiology—there are various faithful eschatological camps. Is the world going to get better or worse? When does the rapture happen? Is there a rapture? Does the church usher in the millennial reign? Where do people who do not place their faith in Jesus go? These questions and more are eschatological in nature and thus inform and impact our present engagement strategy.

"THEREFORE, I BELIEVE WE ARE LIVING IN THE "ALREADY" BUT "NOT YET" KINGDOM OF GOD."

While I would certainly see myself in one of the camps, I have made it a point to sketch out a rough eschatology around the idea of God's Kingdom. God's Kingdom originated in the Garden, was foreshadowed in Israel, was inaugurated at Jesus' first coming, is reflected in the church, and will one day be consummated on earth at Jesus' second coming. Therefore, I believe we are living in the "already" but "not yet" Kingdom of God. And the church is a signpost, a reflection, a movie trailer that provides just a glimpse of the Kingdom of God.

Whether you know it or not, your understanding of the future gives (or should give) shape and formation to the present.

RUDIMENTARY UNDERSTANDING OF THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT. Why would having a rudimentary understanding of the role of government be a key element in developing an engagement strategy? Because the church's cultural engagement strategy is always executed within an earthly governmental framework.

In my study of both the Old Testament and New Testament, it is quite interesting how God's people, from the position of exiles, never sought to actively transform the government or governing structures of the city or nation in which they lived. For instance, Daniel (nor his friends) never sought to transform Babylon, Jesus never sought to overthrow Roman rule and occupation, and Paul never sought to change Rome or Roman policies. Yet, full of faith, Daniel embraced the punishment of the lion's den. Jesus famously uttered, "Render unto Caesar that which is Caesar's and God that which is God's," and Paul penned, "Let every person be subject to the governing authorities."

My conclusion in studying both the Old and New Testaments, the cultural engagement strategy of the people of God should be able to work within any kind of governmental system. In other words, the cultural engagement strategy of the people of God should be able to cross borders, boundaries, cultures, and thus systems of governments—just like the Gospel. But, may we never forget, as Christ-followers, that our earthly citizenship should never exceed our citizenship in God's Kingdom.

For Americans, we live in a democracy—or better yet, a constitutional republic. So, what does it mean to actively participate and engage in democracy from the primary position of a citizen of God's Kingdom?

This is a loaded question and one that will require a robust missiology, a rough eschatology, and a rudimentary understanding of the United States government.

At least from where I sit, a lot of the current friction, factions, and fighting seen among churches and Christians today is over cultural engagement. And I don't foresee anytime soon where there will be consensus of full acceptance by Christians or churches with regards to how God's church engages a lost world.

To help bring some clarity in this area, our current sermon series will seek to develop a robust understanding of God's mission. In doing so, I hope this series provides the foundation for how we understand what God has been doing in the world since the very beginning, as well as inform our present thinking about how we, as a church, engage and participate in God's mission. ■

MAKING AN IMPACT THROUGH SERVING



BY KATIE CRAWFORD, COMMUNICATIONS PROJECT MANAGER

One of the most quintessential summer activities growing up is attending camp. Whether through church, scouts, or sports, we all have many fun stories about attending camps in our youth. However, camps cost a pretty penny nowadays. The average cost of summer camp programs in the United States ranges from hundreds to thousands of dollars. Such a hefty price tag can put a severe financial strain on families and make it difficult for students to attend these incredible programs.

In late 2021, Northland shifted café operations to let a different ministry take ownership each week and therefore reap the financial benefits that came with it. So we had two needs: We needed people to run café operations on the weekends, and students needed a way to pay for their scholarships to summer programs.

"After looking at our scholarship account and knowing how many families had financial needs coming out of the pandemic, we knew we wouldn't be able to just pass out scholarships to everyone who asked," said Student Ministries Administrator Kim Andrescik. "Café takeover came at the perfect time. It provided our students a way to 'work' and earn their own scholarship money. Many of our students found a sense of pride through earning their own money rather than just asking for a scholarship."

Kim informed the families that this would be their new method of providing scholarship help. She emailed out the dates each month to the families and let them know that whoever worked the café would divide up the proceeds amongst themselves to go towards retreats and camps.

"Café takeover has been a huge benefit to our single moms," said Kim. "I know it helped Aiden Holton and over a dozen other students, who never would have been able to attend camps this year without this fundraising effort."

Aiden Holton shared his experience fully funding not just one, but two summer camps through his service in the café.

Tell us about your experience volunteering in the café!
Aiden: *It's pretty fun, especially when your friends are volunteering with you. It's very exciting when you're volunteering to make money for your trip. I paid off two trips, one for MFUGE and one for Student Life. So I did it all for free. It's very fun and exciting when you accomplish it, and when it's done, you get to relax a bit and enjoy it.*

What called you to serve in the café?
Aiden: *I've been here for nineteen years, and people have always served me and molded me into the person I am today, so this is my way of giving back. From a physical standpoint, I'm very broke, so I like when I don't have to pay for stuff.*

In May, singer-songwriter Matthew West held a concert at Northland as a part of his "The Brand New Tour." Typically, the café is open during events, with only light snacks and drinks available for purchase. A small team of students volunteered to work this Thursday night event. They were blown away by the response they received from those in attendance.

Tell us about the Matthew West concert!
Aiden: *That was the best turnout yet! We were just selling snacks and it was only four of us. That night alone, I was able to pay off the rest of my high school trip and all of the trip to serve with the middle schoolers. It was very hectic at some times, we kept ordering pizzas because people kept ordering it, so we had to keep buying it.*

Through serving at this one event, Aiden was able to pay for the rest of his MFUGE trip and for the entirety of his trip to serve the middle school students.

What does it mean to you to be able to attend these events through your service?
Aiden: *It gives me a sense of accomplishment. You deserve a reward for hard work. Being able to attend both of these trips without putting financial pressure on my mom since I was able to pay for it myself. It gives me a sense of maturity and responsibility because I did it all on my own.*

So the next time you grab a cup of coffee or a bite to eat from the café, remember that you are contributing to stories like Aiden's and helping our ministries flourish. ■

OFFERING *Hope* TO THE UKRAINIAN PEOPLE

BY MEG JOHNSON, MISSIONS MANAGER

It is a challenging dawn. Two families hurriedly gather their personal belongings. The mothers cradle their most precious bundle - children whose lives are threatened by forces beyond their control. They head into the unknowing streets, searching for safety. One family made this journey 2,000 years ago. For the other, it was this past February. Both stories are recorded in history and etched in our hearts with searing pangs for these refugee families.

According to the United Nations, more than 8.4 million Ukrainians have fled the country, while another 8 million have been displaced within it. Nearly half of the refugees have settled in neighboring Poland. 90% of those fleeing are women and children, while their husbands and fathers remain to defend their homeland. It has been marked as the largest refugee crisis of the 21st century, and the world is watching in bewilderment.

In times of war, the Church has quickly mobilized humanitarian aid throughout the world. Here at Northland, we have a rich legacy of ministering to the displaced and suffering peoples in some of the world's most hopeless places, thanks, in part, to our global partners on the field. Recently, Northland's leaders and Missions department learned how the Church would position itself in response to the plight of Ukrainian refugees, with special emphasis on the struggles of widows and orphans and the displacement of Christian worshipers. A special collection was raised, and you responded by donating $5,338.70. In addition, $5,000 was given from the Missions budget to a total of $10,338.70 given to Ukraine partner ministries. We want to highlight some of the amazing ministry work enabled by your gift-giving to three of our global partners.

Music Mission Kiev humanitarian aid supplies: Each week, 455 widows, of which 110 are homebound, along with orphans from Starsa Basan, receive food and medicine. This is a big undertaking since some medicine has been difficult to locate, purchase, and deliver. Ten medical kits were purchased and delivered to one of the widow's sons, who is serving on the front line. We understand the medical supplies are being used on civilian and military injuries. The widows themselves collected fifty of their own food vouchers and sent them to soldiers who

Pastor leading Music Mission Kiev Widow's Bible study gathering in Kyiv, Ukraine.





A widow who will be delivering food vouchers to other widows living in her district.

needed food. One of the soldiers is a member of the Kyiv Symphony Orchestra and Chorus, and he has been to Northland three times. In the past four months, several eye surgeries for widows have been paid for, which is a common need for the elderly. Church planting in Western Ukraine has taken root with three pastors shepherding the internally displaced people.

Friends of Ukraine's primary mission is to help widows and disabled orphans. During this difficult time, they are helping to secure shelters for the displaced and offer medical support to these disadvantaged populations. Friends of Ukraine has also broadened their mission scope on several fronts - to support the daily life of soldiers by distributing hygiene kits, rebuilding family homes that were destroyed by bombs, and providing humanitarian aid delivery and distribution.



Humanitarian aid delivery.

Mission Poland is helping Ukrainian families find new homes in Warsaw along with meals, Bible training, and tangible services to meet their needs. Our Northland family members, Joe and Anna Losiak, have faithfully served the Polish nationals for twenty-eight years. The Losiak's recently reported that they spoke and taught at twenty Polish churches, all with Ukrainian arrivals. They are working with local pastors to rent or buy youth hostels to house several hundred.

Much unrest has happened in the past few months but let us not forget how God orchestrated the massive diaspora of people throughout history so they may find Him. These stories include Abraham's exodus to Canaan, Jacob and his family's migration to Egypt during the great famine, the Israelites' exodus from Egypt, and Jesus' time in Egypt as a boy to escape King Herod's persecution.

Although God is ultimately the one orchestrating exoduses for His purpose, our role in the Great Commission is never stagnant. Believers should be living on mission, and the Northland family has faithfully shown that the Church will carry out restorative work - at home or abroad - to help people flourish as God intended. We remember Paul's words to the Romans that we shall "not be overcome by evil and injustice, but to overcome evil with good" (Romans 12:21).



The Losiak Family.

Your prayerful giving has helped our frontline partners ease the hardships of the Ukrainian refugees while connecting the masses to our Lord and Savior, who was once Himself a refugee in a foreign land, lest we forget.

To learn more about these partners and ways you can pray for Ukraine, visit NorthlandChurch.net/Ukraine. ■

PONCE INLET *Home Church*

BY BRADLEY NOLFF, COMMUNICATIONS DIRECTOR

Joe and Donna Leonardo attended Northland for many years back when they lived in Lake Mary. In 2010, they moved to Ponce Inlet. The couple knew they would miss Northland the most, so Joe and Donna began watching the services online. Shortly after the move, they met another couple, the Teaseleys, who also previously attended Northland and now watched online. The four decided to gather together each week to watch the services. Little by little, another couple would join, and another, and another. They now average between twenty and thirty people each weekend. Every Sunday morning at nine, the group gathers in the community center of their condo complex for worship and sometimes a meal after. Early on, Joe got some pushback from the condo complex about using the space for worship, but Joe was on the board at the time and smoothed things out by making a case for their gathering.

"It's a family," Joe shares. "The Teasley's spent a year on a mission trip in the Philippines, and the Home Church supported them with prayer and some hard-to-come-by supplies. Others serve in a variety of community charities or ministries." The Home Church is mostly older, retired folks, so they walk through many life transitions with people. "We've had people battling cancer and spouses who've passed away. It's humbling to see people grow so much in the Lord through these life situations." One of their attendees is a retired Lutheran minister and a missiologist. Other congregants have participated in many of Northland's ministries even from afar over the years, such as the Prison & Jail Ministry.

The pandemic was difficult on their community. There were obvious health concerns with mostly older people, but it was also difficult for the Home Church as we searched for a new lead pastor. But just like those of us in Longwood, they remained faithful to the church body and God's timing, and now, Joe feels a "renewed excitement" for their Home Church—an excitement that many of us share. Pastor Josh's energy is contagious, and his Biblical teaching each weekend keeps people coming back for more and wanting to invite others. They're focusing on inviting others right now



as a Home Church.

The pandemic has taught them a lot, especially about the importance of community and the gathered church. Joe shares, "I think that's a lie of the enemy that we can do this on our own." These people "do life together," as most of them all live in the same condo complex. They even have two Bible studies each week, one for men and one for women.

Recently, the Ponce Inlet Home Church adopted R.J. Longstreet Elementary School in Daytona Beach to provide back-to-school backpacks. This school has the most homeless kids in Volusia County. They did some research and found out that Walmart has a program for community outreach, and together they packed 27 backpacks for the school!

Joe is a humble man, and while some would call him the "leader" of the Ponce Inlet Home Church, he merely sees himself as a participant. He doesn't do everything, and each member pitches in—from setting up the room to bringing coffee and snacks to organizing game nights. "People are faithful to get there even before I do."

"In the beginning, people would call us all the time asking if they could join while they were at the beach on vacation, and we would get a lot of visitors." Their Home Church is exceptionally welcoming and hospitable. Joe would encourage anyone to stop by if you're in the area.

Are you an online worshiper and looking to start a Home Church? "Anyone on the fence about starting one should do it. All you have to do is invite someone." If that's you, Joe and our team would love to help you get started. Simply email us at **hello@northlandchurch.net.** ■



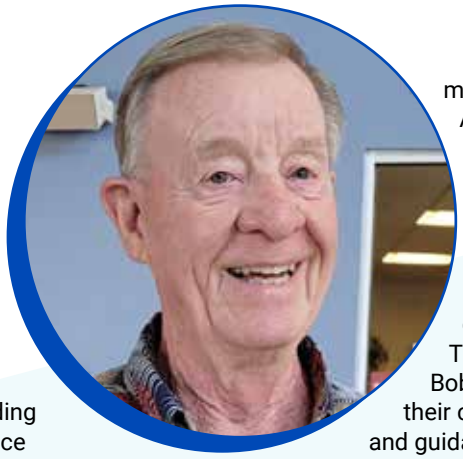
Above: The Ponce Inlet home church goers deliver backpacks to the school.

Below: Ponce Inlet Home Church gathers for Easter Sunday.



VOLUNTEER Spotlight

BY KATIE CRAWFORD, COMMUNICATIONS PROJECT MANAGER



George Schmid
Facilities

George Schmid has attended Northland for thirty years and began volunteering around twelve years ago. He has done hundreds of hours of labor, including Daddy Daughter Dance setup, exterior building repairs, and painting. Even though he is eighty-seven years old and quips he has "some artificial parts," he is still just a phone call away. The Facilities Department counts on him regularly for painting and even small engine work. George is always willing to help with a cheerful attitude.

Bob and Amy Carpenter
Greeters

Bob and Amy Carpenter have been part of our Connections team for almost a year. After taking Belong and Grow, they realized they could serve their church and the people walking through the doors by becoming greeters. Since then, Bob and Amy have gotten to know many of the people they regularly see each week, and it is not uncommon for those coming into the sanctuary to stop a few moments and ask how they are doing. A few significant health challenges in the past few months have not slowed down their eagerness to be in community with their congregation. Amy was recently on bed rest and asked the doctor to release her for a few hours, specifically so she could come in and serve on Sunday morning! The heart of compassion and resilience Bob and Amy model for everyone shows their complete dependence on the strength and guidance of the Holy Spirit. Our Connections Team is honored to serve with them.

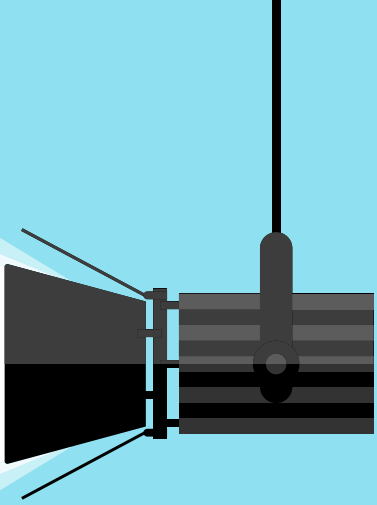




Ann Clark
Church Online

Ann Clark stepped up to the plate during 2020 to serve as an online host on our website. In a time when so many people were isolated and disconnected, Ann provided warmth and community. Ann has remained devoted to our online congregation, faithfully serving as a host on our website every weekend at the 9 a.m. service. She cares so well for each and every person that worships with

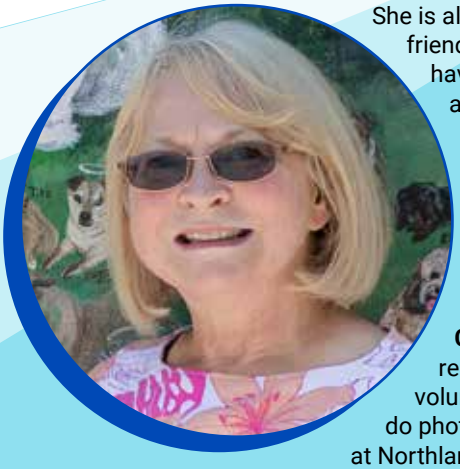
us online and is dedicated to creating the best possible experience for them. Ann has such an incredible heart for Jesus and for serving His people. The Communications Team is so grateful for her!



Connie Rollins and Chase Byerly
Photography

Connie Rollins and Chase Byerly are part of our volunteer photography team here at Northland. Between special events and Sunday services, they have helped capture the many smiling faces of Northlanders throughout recent months.

Connie Rollins has been capturing photography at Northland for many years. From graduations to Joy Prom, Connie always brings a keen eye for creating amazing images. She is always a friendly face to have around and brings her passion for photography with her every time she volunteers.



Chase Byerly recently started volunteering to do photography at Northland but has already had a huge impact. His creativity and passion for photography show through in the images he captures. He recently took some great pictures of our worship night and has been instrumental in helping us purchase a new camera lens.

We would like to sincerely thank Connie and Chase for all the time and effort they have given us to capture all of the special moments at Northland. Next time you see a beautiful photo posted to Northland's Social Media, you can likely thank Chase or Connie!



Cara Sorokowsky
Children's Ministries

Cara has taught three-year-olds in children's church for more than five years. She has a heart for the kids, and they love her. Cara is welcoming to everyone and a joy to be around. Some of the words we think of when we think of Cara? Faithful, not only is she faithful on Sunday mornings, but she serves every Easter and Christmas Eve! Flexible, she uses what's on hand and makes it fun for the kids, including making her own playdough! Team Player, she is always supportive of what we are doing in Children's Ministry. Positive, she always has a kind word and a smile on her face. We are so thankful for Cara. She is an important part of our Children's Ministry Team, and we are blessed to work alongside her. She is one of those teachers that the kids can't wait to get to her class! She is impacting our preschoolers, and we all love her dearly! ■





Reconnecting WITH MISSIONARIES AND PARTNERS

BY MEG JOHNSON, MISSIONS MANAGER

World Relief Sudan

God uses ordinary people to perform extraordinary things when living on mission. They may employ different ministries to accomplish their tasks, but God's command is never-changing; never-ceasing: to proclaim the Gospel and make disciples of every nation. In the same sentiment, Northland has been called to build the Church through its relationships with global churches and missionaries throughout our fifty-year history. Spread out a world map, and you will find Northland-supported workers engaging people to be fully alive in Jesus. We are grateful for our thirty-two global workers and families that serve the Lord as well as our eight global partners, most of them churches.

Our Missions team recently had the opportunity to hear stories and powerful testimonies firsthand when several of our friends visited Northland. It's been years since COVID thwarted our in person visits, and it was good to



Training the most vulnerable women to earn a better income through food processing training in Sudan.

see the Jesus-filled disciples in our presence. We want to offer you a glimpse into the extraordinary work being done for God's kingdom. These are just a sample of the in person connections made over the last few months.

Two partners from World Relief visited Northland several months ago and shared updates of our mutual partnership in Sudan. World Relief is a global humanitarian organization that brings sustainable solutions to the world's greatest problems - disasters, extreme poverty, violence, and mass displacement. In doing so, they empower the local church to serve the most vulnerable. Their teams witnessed more suffering than ever due to COVID, conflict, and climate combined, but the work continues. The church is growing and being strengthened through adversity. Please pray for their work to continue to be Spirit-led and inspired.



The Faus Family.

Another meeting included the Faus family. Since 1990, Northland has supported the work of Mark Faus, who has faithfully served in various roles with Mission Aviation Fellowship. Serving first as a missionary pilot in Indonesia and in various countries in Southern Africa, he then assumed leadership and management roles in that aviation ministry and later in mission hospital ministries. Now with the SIM mission, Mark and his wife, Jana, use medicine as their platform for spreading the Gospel and offering critical health care to villagers without direct access to care. They visited Northland in June and shared reports of Muslims who had entered their mission hospitals in Bangladesh for the first time and then proceeded to embrace the Gospel message and become believers. During the pandemic, they were tasked to sustain the global workforce of SIM's medical missionaries who stayed in overseas roles. They were blessed to see God's hand of safety and health upon every one of their 320 missionaries, seeing that not a single medical missionary contracted COVID. Mark recently assumed a new role as SIM's Global Governance Consultant. He is tasked to train and advise the boards of directors in each of SIM's seventy ministry countries and the boards of the church denominations associated with the SIM. Mark highlighted one story from the Chikwakwa Rural Health Center in Zimbabwe. The Health Center is located in a very isolated region and serves as the only source of healthcare for over 15,000 people. Realizing that the Center had no PPE and medical supplies during the COVID crisis, the SIM COVID Project that Mark managed provided funds for purchasing vital medical supplies to protect the health workers and treat the most ill with COVID. Undoubtedly, considering the economic distress of Zimbabwe, this financial assistance had an incredible impact on healthcare in that remote region. The provision of supplies opened doors for the National Church to minister spiritually to the Health Center staff, patients, and the local community, enabling purchasing and distribution of Bibles and spiritual lesson materials. Such a response not only demonstrated the love of Christ to many in need but also provided spiritual healing to those in a medical crisis.

That same week, we were blessed by the presence of a global worker in the Middle East who has faithfully gone where few go. This worker found a way to use her medical training to serve a restricted Muslim nation. Her journey led her into the home of a Muslim family with whom she speaks the Gospel while sharing meals and tending to the sick. She remains steadfast in her calling to take the Gospel to the unreached. We were even able to connect her with Mark and Jana to explore how their work can complement each other.

We are grateful for our missionaries and partners that serve the Lord in many remote parts of the world. From medical missions to student outreach to Bible translations and beyond, Northland has offered financial gifts and prayerful relationships with some of the finest. Through them, we have witnessed incredible fruit in the Kingdom. ■

LIFEHOPE CHILDCARE

Testimonies

BY KATIE CRAWFORD, COMMUNICATIONS PROJECT MANAGER

LifeHope Childcare was created to address single parents' needs in overcoming life's challenges. LifeHope serves a great purpose in the lives of those impacted by this ministry. Here are a couple of those stories from LifeHope alumni.

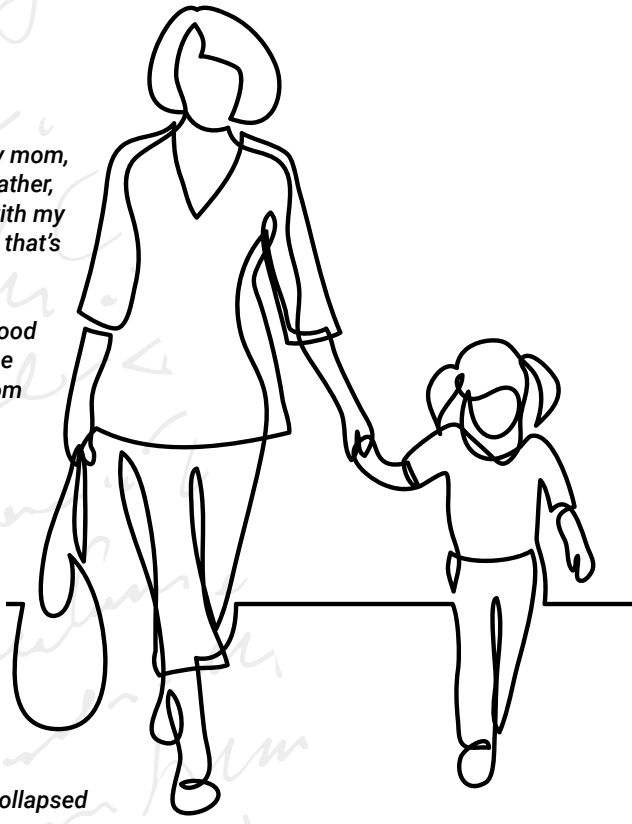


On July 30, 2005, I was sentenced to 130 months in federal prison with four years of supervised release. I had never been in trouble with the law before this indictment, nor was I a likely candidate for prison, as they would say. I was a single mother of three beautiful children and lived a comfortable life. I experimented and quickly became addicted to cocaine and alcohol, and my life went downhill.

I lost custody of my children and, for a time, was homeless. Prison was a life-changing experience for me. It not only saved my life but also allowed me an opportunity to love myself again. I was so broken and didn't know who I was anymore. I had an awesome family, but addiction separated me from them. I served my prison time involved in the church. I did the music for the Christian services, which was odd because I'm not a music person, but in prison the ministries are very limited. I furthered my education and received a certificate in Business Management and Drug and Alcohol Treatment Specialist. I excelled in my job and was quickly promoted to the payroll department that serviced multiple prison facilities. I found my self-worth again. My dream was always to find a good church home and a husband and serve those inside the walls.

I have yet to find a husband, but I have been super blessed with a church home that has welcomed me with no judgment and has shown me that there are options. Since becoming a part of LifeHope, I have grown so much. Shortly after being home, I became pregnant with no hope and no idea how my future would play out. God placed me in the hands of LifeHope, and it has been a life-changing experience. I have a job that I love, but I am not fulfilled. I know that my calling is to help those reentering society. I would not have been as successful had I not had my support. I know many walk out of those gates without support, and I desire to be God's hands and feet to those. There is a strong need for such a program.

B.B.



When I was a year old, my dad walked out on me, my mom, and my two siblings. We went to live with my grandfather, a Baptist preacher. I remember being on the steps with my grandmother when I asked her how to be saved, and that's how I came to know Christ.

I was four when I was molested by my mom's childhood friend's oldest son. It repeatedly happened every time we would stay the night or go on family trips. My mom remarried, and my stepdad didn't like her friend, so they stopped communicating. My stepdad had three boys, and my mom had two boys and me, so I was the only girl. My stepdad would be day by day with his moods, so some days he would be nice, and other days he would be upset at me, and I didn't know why.

Once I started to date, I never picked the right guys. After splitting with an abusive ex, I met my oldest son's dad. When I found out I was pregnant, we thought the right thing to do was to get married. However, he realized he wasn't ready for a wife and kids once we were married. Our marriage collapsed within the year.

My next husband, I'd known for a long time. Everything was great until he got into drugs. Despite the physical and mental abuse, I stayed with him on and off for seven years.

The day we were supposed to get divorced, we decided to give it one more chance, and each broke it off with who we were seeing. Shortly later, I found out I was pregnant. I didn't know who the father was. He begged me to get an abortion. I said no. Six months into my pregnancy, he transferred the money he made to his business account and drained our bank account.

Penniless and pregnant, I moved out. I was in and out of the hospital with kidney stones. They later found a tumor on my kidney and that the baby was not getting enough blood and was not growing at the rate he should have. If the blood flow stopped or got lower, he wouldn't make it to birth.

I knew I turned too far away from God. I needed to come back. Only He could put back these broken pieces of the wreckage of my life and hold me up if I lost my baby. Walking through Northland's doors, I found all the hope I needed: LifeHope.

My health declined throughout my pregnancy, and I discovered I had kidney cancer. The baby's blood flow would be okay one day and decline the next. I had an emergency C-section at thirty-five weeks. After what felt like forever, I was able to see him and knew who the father was. I spent six weeks recovering, then went back again to remove the kidney cancer. At the same time, the baby's father was doing drugs and jumping from job to job.

Last year, I had $21,000 in debt, no savings, twice divorced, scared for my health, and my son's dad in jail. I lost hope. I thought I'd never escape the damage I got myself into. I turned everything over to God. Today, I purchased my second home, paid off all my credit card debt, and had enough savings to pay for unexpected expenses. I'm engaged and took on the "bonus" mom responsibilities with great pride. My situation is forever changed due to the direction that LifeHope put me in, and I'm forever grateful! ■

S.G.

A LOOK BACK AT OUR "RAISE THE ROOF" GIVING CAMPAIGN

BY DR. TERESA MCCASKILL WITH FINANCE DIRECTOR, GLENN GARTON AND OUR LEAD PASTOR, DR. JOSH LAXTON

In June, we held our Raise the Roof Giving Campaign and set the goal at $1,000,000. Everyone came together, made sacrifices, and learned about the goodness and greatness of God. We asked Glenn (GG) and Pastor Josh (PJ) about the process. Here is what they had to say.

Did you really think we could raise a million dollars?

GG: No, not really. It seemed like an over-the-top kind of ask, given where we had been over the last few years. But I see now it's more about where we are going than where we have been.

PJ: I truly believed that we could. I didn't have any expectations whether we would or we wouldn't. I just believed that based on the people I'd met and what I'd heard about the generosity of Northlanders.

What were some of the more extensive purposes behind the RTR campaign?

GG: I saw it as an opportunity for the congregation to engage with the future vision of Northland in a tangible way. It was kind of a vote of confidence in leadership and trust that we are pursuing what God is doing and is planning to do among us and in our community.

PJ: I saw two big purposes. One was to gauge where our people were, mentally, emotionally, and even financially, and see if they were tracking where we were and where we believed God was taking us. Second, the campaign would allow us to make some much-needed capital improvements without touching our financial reserves.

Did you have a particular prayer that God answered with our RTR campaign?

GG: One of my prayers was that many would take part, no matter the amount. The numbers show that God answered my prayer. More than 50% of the donors that gave throughout the fiscal year gave to RTR. I also prayed that God would bless our congregants financially so they might have the ability to give. One of our significant donors to the general fund in June indicated that they had been blessed with a great year in their business, and I felt like it was a direct answer to prayer.

PJ: My particular prayer was, "God, will You give me an awareness of where our people are." I've been extremely grateful to see how our people have responded to this campaign. The generosity expressed by Northlanders truly surpassed my expectations.

RTR has made it possible for us to replace the roof of the Rink. We'll also be able to make some inside refurbishments there and in the Early Childhood area. What about the work in the café? Let us in on your dreams for how the money raised will do good for God's Kingdom in that space?

GG: I'm excited to see the café open up more to the public, specifically in how it could be used to minister to adults with special needs. I also envision it as a place where people can explore what it means to be a Christian. We can serve

and love them as Christ would and perhaps have excellent music and other resources available to help them on their spiritual journey.

Josh: Each of the projects funded by RTR will facilitate a portion of God's vision as we take part in His mission. The café has so much potential for doing good for God's Kingdom. Once it is open and fully operating, I envision people from the community, perhaps those who don't see themselves attending a worship service, coming and enjoying coffee, lunch, or dinner. This could be a great stepping stone to welcoming them on the weekends for a church service.

We've heard that some chose to give in unique ways. Can you tell us a couple of short stories about some unorthodox gifts?

GG: Several gift cards were donated. I think it is really special that these people would pass on these gifts to their church when they could have spent it on themselves.

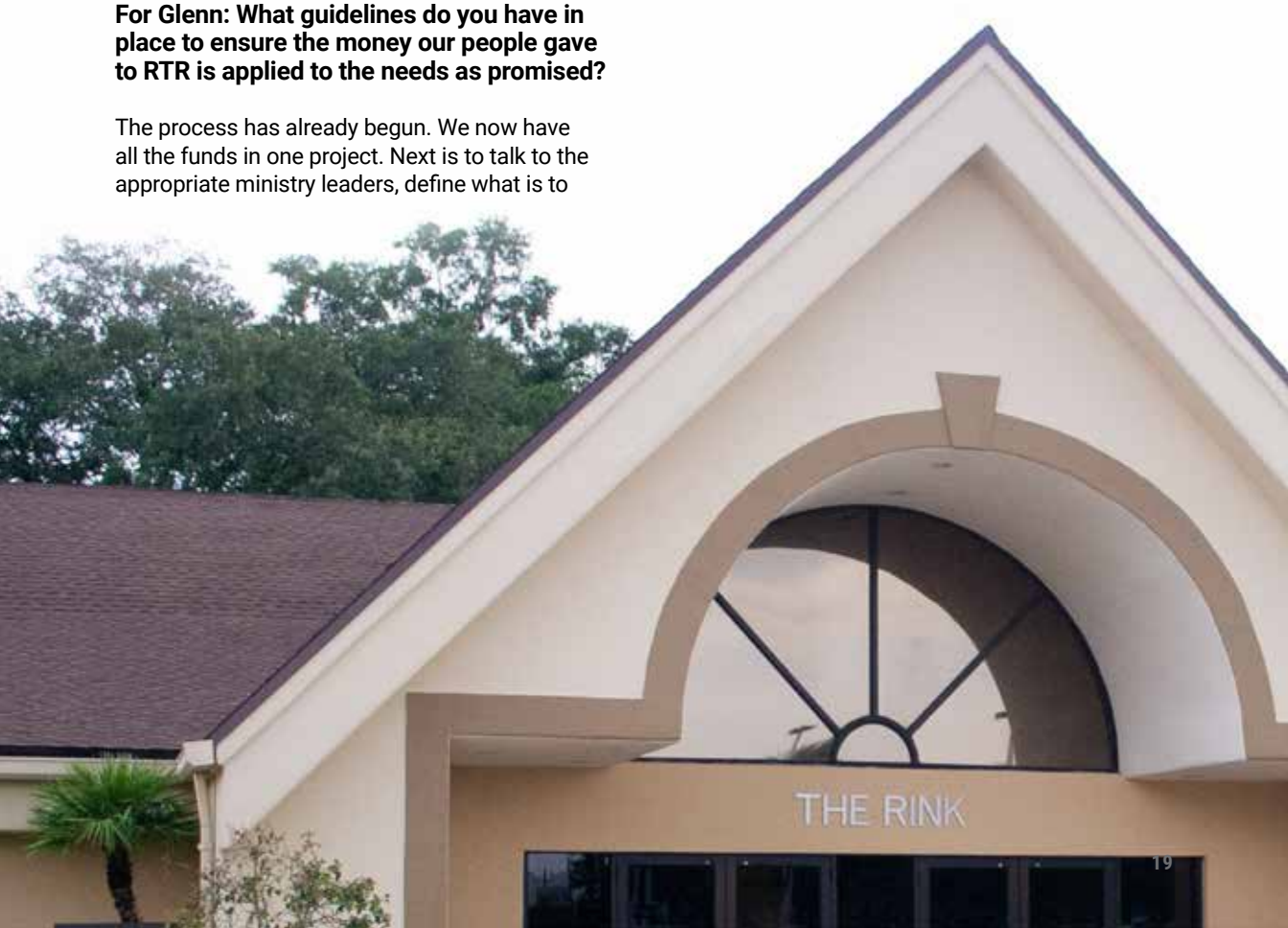
PJ: My favorite was hearing about students bringing wads of cash, putting it into an envelope, and then giving it. I love that.

For Glenn: What guidelines do you have in place to ensure the money our people gave to RTR is applied to the needs as promised?

The process has already begun. We now have all the funds in one project. Next is to talk to the appropriate ministry leaders, define what is to be done, and get the quotes we need. Then, we'll present a distribution plan to the governing elders for each project. After this information is reviewed, we'll create separate projects so that we can track the spending against the allocation.

Pastor Josh, what plans do you have to preach about giving at Northland?

I definitely have plans to do an entire series around generosity. But I want people to realize that generosity is not just about financially giving. Generosity is a lifestyle manifested in how we spend our time, talents, and resources. So, we'll be doing a series around the backstory of generosity this fall. In short, I think our giving is going to be indicative of what God does. I have a couple of ideas in mind: Our giving should be reflective of who we think God is. So, if we think God is this generous, enormous, big God we worship, our giving should be proportionate to who we think God is. I also think our giving is an investment into what we want to see God do. So, if we want to see God do tremendous, overwhelming, abundant things in and through us, I think that's going to be indicative of our giving. So, our giving is an investment into what we hope God would do in and through us. ■



HOW ACCESS MINISTRIES IMPACTS FAMILIES

BY KATIE CRAWFORD, COMMUNICATIONS PROJECT MANAGER

Access Ministries strives to create a welcoming environment for individuals with disabilities and their families. From children all the way to adulthood, Access Ministries offers an array of services for families.

The Kemp family began attending Northland in 2014. The church was recommended to them as a great and supportive place for families with special needs. Heather Subbert, former Director of Access Ministries, was vital in connecting with the Kemp family and making them feel welcome. She has continued to be an incredible support to the Kemp family.

As the Kemp family continued attending Northland, they were connected with other families within Access Ministries.

"Being involved in this ministry made a positive impact on our lives as we have engaged with so many volunteers who have loved on our family," said Randy Kemp. "The lifelong relationships have been a blessing through both good and challenging times."



Randy and his wife, Cassaundra have been married since 2005 and have four children. Read more about Randy at ***NorthlandChurch.net/RandyKemp.***

The weeks, months, and years that followed the Kemp family's initial attendance have been remarkable. They know that as a family of children with special needs, they are created in His image.

So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. *- Genesis 1:27*

"In many aspects involving our children, our Heavenly Father is using them to help us to be "conformed to the image of his son…" (Romans 8:29)" said Randy. "We are so grateful for Northland Church and the vision for EVERYONE to be Fully Alive in Jesus!

Northland Church and Access Ministries are thrilled to have Randy on staff as Access Ministries Director to continue serving families just like his own. ■



NEW TO NORTHLAND?

Do you have questions about God, Northland, or anything else?

Fill out our digital connect card by texting "Northland" to 97000. We are here to answer questions, help get you involved, pray with you, sign you up to volunteer, or just to give you a virtual hug. Questions? Email **Hello@NorthlandChurch.net** or visit **NorthlandChurch.net/New**.

WORSHIP TIMES

ON CAMPUS AND ONLINE

Saturdays . . . . . 5 p.m.
Sundays . . . . . 9 and 11 a.m.

American Sign Language (ASL) and Spanish interpretation are available at the Sunday 11 a.m. service.

FOLLOW US

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Josh Laxton

Lead Pastor

Josh is a Tennessee native who has been serving the local church in vocational ministry for over twenty years. He has a B.A. in Biblical Studies and Operational Management, Masters of Divinity in Evangelism, and PH.D. in Missiology. Josh served as Co-Director of the Billy Graham Center at Wheaton College, Co-Director of Lausanne North America, and was an adjunct faculty at the Wheaton College Graduate School of Ministry, Mission, and Leadership.

Josh is passionately in love with King Jesus and committed to extending His glory throughout the world by proclaiming and demonstrating the Gospel.

Josh and his wife, Joannie, have been married for nearly twenty years, and have three children, Caleb, Ellie, and Luke.

Read more about Pastor Josh at NorthlandChurch.net/PastorJosh or scan this QR code.

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oviedocounseling.com

Open Doors Counseling
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opendoorscc.com

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Minister on Duty (MOD)
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Prayer
Pray.NorthlandChurch.net

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Belong&Grow

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NorthlandChurch.net/Serve

GROWING AT NORTHLAND

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- **Adult/student**
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