

NORTHLAND
CHURCH

EASTER EDITION 2021

ENGAGE



MARY MAGDALENE: The First Christian Evangelist

DR. TERESA LEE MCCASKILL

On Easter Sunday, we celebrate a fundamental aspect of the Christian faith. The Apostles' Creed states that Jesus "suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried," but the story doesn't end there. The creed goes on to say, "On the third day He rose again." These events equip Christians to proclaim: Hallelujah! He is risen!

At Northland, we walked through Holy Week somewhat differently this year. On Good Friday, we explored the pain and darkness of Christ's crucifixion. Yesterday, for the first time in Northland's history, many considered the bleak landscape of what is traditionally known as Holy Saturday. This commemoration helped us imagine the profound realities that accompanied the cold, dark tomb of death where Jesus' physical body lay on the day between His crucifixion and resurrection on Easter morning.

During Holy Week 2021, we tried to envision how our first-century brothers and sisters experienced that week based on the gospel accounts that recorded them. These biblical writers identified various eyewitnesses who watched Holy Saturday miraculously turn into Easter Sunday.

One crucial figure who receives special mention in our service today is Mary Magdalene. Eminent theologian N.T. Wright observes that Mary Magdalene was the first Christian evangelist. This follows from John's gospel account of Easter morning in which Jesus revealed Himself to this woman before he did so to anyone else. Jesus then urged Mary Magdalene to go to the rest of the disciples with the good news. Why did God choose her? Why not Peter or John?

Wright notes that in the law courts of Jesus' day, a woman's testimony was unreliable. Moreover, Mary had a known background of emotional instability as a woman who demons had once possessed. However, as Wright goes on to note, "God calls surprising people to do extraordinary things." This is where you and I come in. Each Christian has their dark night of the soul where we realize our need for the love and light of Christ. Perhaps you had a Mary in your life who told you about Jesus. Because of this experience, you may already know the new life that He died to give to you and everyone who believes in Him.

If this has happened to you, why not consider following in Mary's footsteps? Go and tell the good news. Jesus is alive!

HE IS RISEN!

**HE IS RISEN
INDEED!**

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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)***

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WORSHIP TIMES

Online and On Campus

Saturdays 5 p.m.

Sundays 9 & 11 a.m.

Spanish interpretation is available at the 11 a.m. service.

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



TRANSPARENT PRODUCTIONS PRESENTS



THE Farewell SHOWS

2 NIGHTS LIVE IN ORLANDO



APRIL 22 & 23
NORTHLAND CHURCH
ORLANDO (LONGWOOD), FL

NORTHLANDCHURCH.NET/TENTHAVENUENORTH

A WITNESS TO GOD'S FAITHFULNESS

LEDONNA ALMON

My personal history with Northland Church began 42 years ago when I attended the Northland Barn Dance, a church-wide square dance, with friends. It was there that I first met JT, my future husband, who had been attending Northland for several years. He had been sent by his pastor from a different church to help a new nondenominational church start a singles ministry. By the time I began attending, Northland had graduated from meeting in the library of English Estates Elementary School and had grown to 125 people meeting in the school's cafeteria. Northland was truly a community church, with high involvement and participation from all who attended. Each week, all the equipment to be used in the service had to be unloaded from a storage trailer, tables had to be taken down, chairs set up for the service, the piano lowered from the stage, and Thom Willis' drums set up to be used for worship. Of course, it all had to be reversed after church. Thankfully, there were teachers who voluntarily offered their classrooms to be used for children's classes.

What I remember most about those early days at Northland is that regardless of what church background you might have

come from, or whether you were unchurched, curious, or a new believer, the church was a place of hearing the truth of God's Word, learning how to live it and apply it to your everyday life, and sharing what you learned with others. It was a place where discipleship was part of your life, whether you were learning what that meant, how to live it out, or how to pour into the lives of others. Small groups were an essential part of growing in faith and community with each other. We formed lifelong friendships, benefited from people teaching and pouring out their lives into us, and grew in our faith. We had the opportunity to both be discipled and to disciple others as well as to be mentored and mentor others in learning to live out our faith in Jesus through the power of his Holy Spirit.

As people served others and invited them to "Come and See," the church grew both numerically and spiritually. Due to the exponential growth, we eventually outgrew the space needed to serve both adults and children. The decision was made to begin looking for a space to purchase and that search led to a run-down roller skating rink in Longwood. I remember skating there as a 12-year-old. Not too much had changed





when the church bought it. The strobe light still hung from the center of the Rink and the old carpet still remained. Thankfully, there were people ready to tackle the renovations and begin the slow transformation and hard work of turning The Rink into a place of worship. However, the change in location also brought to light differences in what people felt God was calling them to do. Our Pastor felt called to lead a smaller group of people and congregation so Orlando Community Church was formed. Many who shared that view and calling left to be part of beginning that new church.

It was hard to have friends and people we had become close to no longer be a part of our church life. Everything felt unsettled. As others left to attend other churches, I remember struggling with the changes. JT and I prayed and talked about what we should do; both of us sensed God had called us to stay. There was a scripture from Isaiah 43:18-19 that God used to encourage me during that time:

"Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing. Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the desert and streams in the wasteland."

But I wasn't alone in God impressing that particular scripture on me. The next Sunday, our Co-Pastor shared that God had been impressing Isaiah 43:18-19 on him and his wife and they sensed God calling them to Washington, DC. While it was affirming that God was speaking, it was not the application I thought He was conveying to me! Now we had an old roller skating rink, a smaller group of attendees, and both of our pastors being called elsewhere. Another scripture from Isaiah was being taught in real-time:

Isaiah 55:8-9 says, "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts."

As only God can orchestrate, the Pastor Search Committee

**"Forget the former things;
do not dwell on the past.
See, I am doing a new thing!
Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?
I am making a way in the wilderness
and streams in the wasteland."**

– ISAIAH 43:18-19 (NIV)

that had been established recommended Pastor Joel Hunter to the Governing elders to become the next Lead Pastor of Northland Community Church. It was during one of his first Sundays preaching that Pastor Joel shared how God had begun stirring his heart months before the Search Committee first talked with him and one of the passages of scripture God used was from Isaiah 43:18-19. When I heard him read the same passage God used to encourage us to stay, to encourage our Co-Pastor to go, and to encourage Pastor Joel to come, it was such a faith-building time in my life. I had a much more real sense of what the faithfulness of God looked like in my life, in our church, and in the Kingdom.

Over the next several years, we had the privilege of seeing what new things God was creating within the body at Northland. Small groups continued to be a place to grow in studying the Word of God and living in community and

fellowship with others. As our children began to reach the preschool years, a group of us moms got together and began a preschool setting where our children could play, learn about God's love, and offer support and encouragement to the moms themselves. Since each mom needed to help in creating as well as implementing this start-up preschool, we called it the Northland Co-op. Our first day, we had two classes with 8 children each. We never dreamed how it would grow, become a place to invite neighbors to join with us, and provide lifelong friendships for both the children and the parents.

It was also during those early years that one of the first Bible studies for women was offered in the Rink. I remember showing up to find I was the only attendee and my teacher was one of the Elder's wives. I assumed we would not be meeting; I assumed wrong. She faithfully taught, mentored, and listened to me over the next 10 weeks. It was a transformative time in my life. It also was a beautiful model lived out for me in how to mentor others. Sometime later, another elder's wife came to me and asked me if I would consider leading a Bible study and support group for the moms involved in the Co-Op. My love for studying God's Word and total dependence on Him to lead me as I led the group was another faith-building time in my life. Little did I know that it would be the first of many women's Bible studies I would both attend and have the opportunity to facilitate over the years to come. Presently, I have the privilege of facilitating The Women's Bible Study at Northland along with 16 other facilitators. I love each and every lady that comes. We grow in our knowledge and understanding of God's Word, we pray for each other, we laugh together and we share in the tears and sorrows as well. Nothing brings me greater joy than the time spent Monday mornings and Tuesday evenings with these women in God's Word.

I have also been able to experience the joy of being a part of the Flourish mentoring and discipleship journey. God is at work teaching us both as we meet one on one. I would highly recommend Flourish to any woman who desires to grow in her faith whether it is to be a mentor or to be mentored.

JT and I often reflect on the journey of our lives and how Northland and the people we have met and shared life with along the way have been used by God in countless ways in our lives and the lives of our three children as they grew up. It is such a joy to now have our oldest grandson attending the Co-Op. Even as we find that once again, Northland is searching for our next Lead Pastor, I have the assurance that God is again "doing a new thing." Having the privilege of being a part of the Pastoral Search Committee has allowed me to see Him at work in the lives of His people, to experience His presence in the prayers of those seeking His will, and the incredible faithfulness He assures us of that He will Shepherd His people and care for His sheep at Northland Church. His Story continues and it is being part of that History that is both humbling and amazing.



Toil transforms Skate City into house of worship

By Tom Pinnock

OF THE SENTINEL STAFF

LONGWOOD — Church pews now cover most of the floor that was once filled with kids zooming around in circles playing shoot-the-duck, crack-the-whip and other roller-skating games. Gone forever are the days of the frozen Zero bars to munch on, and couples only skate tunes.

The popular hangout of the 1960s is becoming a popular Christian worship center of the 1980s. Good-bye, Skate City; hello, Northland Community Church.

"When I first heard about some nutty people buying a roller-skating rink, I started salivating," Pastor Joel Hunter said.

"I said to myself 'those are my kind of people.' "

At the time, Hunter, 38, was the pastor of a large United Methodist Church in Indianapolis. He had spent 7 years there, helping it to grow from 200 to 900 members.

But despite the security and happiness that he had in Indiana, Hunter felt that it was time for a new challenge. It was in that spirit last year that he packed up his wife, Becky, and their three boys and ventured to Central Florida where he found work in an old roller rink.

He liked what he found.

"God is doing something significant in Central Florida," Hunter said.



BARBARA VITALIANO/SENTINEL

Hunter by former roller rink: 'God is doing something significant in Central Florida'

But as Hunter points out, there are benefits that come with a group sweating and toiling together.

"It gives them a great feeling of doing hands on stuff for the Lord," Hunter said.

"And it brings us all closer together."

On occasion, even Hunter rolls up his sleeves and hauls out a clump of trash or carries in a bundle of boards. With a boyish grin, the pastor says that is all he is allowed to do because he doesn't know which

ing is a big improvement from the days when congregation prayed at the English Estates Elementary School.

That is where the members gathered for nearly years before moving to the new location 1½ years ago.

On Sundays, nearly 300 people file into the building for worship services. According to Hunter, most of those are professional people who don't feel c



LEAD PASTOR SEARCH

NATALI REYES, PASTOR SEARCH COMMITTEE MEMBER

In May of 2020, I received a call from interim senior pastor, Gus Davies. He asked me to be part of a “Succession Planning Committee.” He explained what the Committee was and asked me to pray about it before accepting. I called later to accept. At the time, I didn’t comprehend everything that it entailed; I don’t think any of the Committee members understood how involved this process would be.

The Succession Planning Committee was made up of a group of twenty individuals and was divided into four teams. A “policies” team, in charge of drafting resignation and termination policies; a “plans” team, in charge of drafting the emergency succession, transition, and non-emergency transition plan; a “prayer coordination” team, in charge of continually monitoring and assessing the prayer needs of the committee and communicating the prayer needs to the Pastors, Elders, Staff, and Congregation; and the “job description” team, made up of the entire Succession Planning Committee.

In August of 2020, the plans, policies, and procedures were established, and the Succession Planning Committee broke into a smaller group called the “Pastor Search Committee.” This Committee was made of nine individuals, including governing elders, church staff, and congregants. We all had different backgrounds and most had full-time jobs, but we all had a common purpose. We reviewed resumes, watched sermons, read questionnaires, interviewed pastors, had meetings before and after each interview, but most importantly, we prayed. The members of the Succession Planning Committee would meet via Zoom every Tuesday morning before work and pray for our congregation and future pastor.

Our meetings would start as early as 6:30 a.m. and end around 8:15 a.m. or start around 6:30 p.m. and sometimes

end close to 10:00 p.m. Since May, the Pastor Search Committee members have met more than eighty-one times.

Out of the nine individuals on this Committee, I had never met four of them, but that didn’t prevent us from experiencing unity in Christ. We became close and got to know each other’s families in the process. There was a member whose daughter would always hug him in the morning as soon as she woke up despite the fact that he was on a Zoom call, another member who would always ask for a break around 8:30 p.m. to read a book to his daughter and put her to bed, and another whose husband would always walk in the room to bring her a new cup of coffee. A computer screen did not prevent it from feeling like we were a family.

We also had many differences of opinions, but we respected each other and deferred to one another. We admitted when we were wrong, allowing our personal opinions or preaching style preference to get in the way. We apologized when we needed to. There was a lot of humility in this group. We worked and laughed together and occasionally saw each other choke up and get teary-eyed. We shared prayer requests and praise reports when God sent us blessings.

I often wondered why I was selected for this Committee, but once a Committee member shared that God knew the Pastor Search Committee didn’t need her, but that she needed this Committee. I couldn’t agree more. This Committee has brought me closer to Jesus. Jesus said that where two or three gather in His name, He is there with them. I can honestly say that I’ve felt God has been with the Pastor Search Committee and good things are going to come out of this family.

Pray along with us by following us [@NorthlandChurch](#) or visit us online at NorthlandChurch.net/LeadPastorSearch



TAKING THE CHURCH OUTSIDE THE BUILDING

What COVID has taught us about virtual connection

REBECCA LANG, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FOR COMMUNITY LIFE

Remember the call like it was yesterday. The young lady was studying in Israel. She had recently moved to the other side of the globe and called to ask about joining a virtual small group. She grew up at Northland, and while she loved her time in Israel, she was missing the comfort and familiarity of her Northland family. She worshipped with us online, but was craving the community she had grown accustomed to, studying the Bible and growing in her walk with God.

While I was empathetic, I had trouble understanding why she thought she could fill the void with virtual connection. As a person who feels lonely when my family is in another room, I couldn't wrap my mind around meaningful connections being fostered by sitting alone in front of a computer. In my mind, there's nothing better than gathering together in a friend's home, sharing a meal, laughing together, talking about hard things, and turning together to Scripture. I kept asking myself, "How in the world is she going to 'find community' here while she's over there?" Then, COVID happened.

COVID caused us all to reevaluate our lives. The loneliness of lockdown restrictions has us questioning things on a much deeper level. The polite question of, "How are you?" has evolved to "How am I?" Over the past year, isolation has been unrelenting. Though restrictions have lifted to some degree, many people are still working remotely, others have lost their jobs, and we've watched friends and family struggle with the virus. Sadly, some have passed away.

These are the kinds of gut-wrenching difficulties that drive us to ask those deeper questions: "What is the source of my security?" "How can I persevere through this season?" "Where or who can I turn to?" God uses these trials to show us just how much we need Him and others.

I've spoken to people who found Northland while searching to ease their suffering during this pandemic. They recognized their need for God. Nothing else has quenched the void, nor the pain they've experienced--the physical, emotional, and mental decline that has slowly taken its toll. Most of those people began by connecting with us for online worship. But, as the pandemic dragged on, the desire to connect with others beyond worship continued to grow. The need to move our church's front door from the church building to inside our homes became urgent.

Our pastors, staff, and ministry leaders were challenged to reimagine how to minister to and serve our congregation in a quarantined world. Beyond streaming our worship services, how would we help our congregation remain connected to God and one another, while continuing to grow spiritually?

We worked with ministry and group leaders, helping them transition their gatherings to virtual. They were determined to serve and care for each other and those God had placed under their leadership. Some group leaders took on additional responsibility when we launched Easter Groups, leading their small group AND starting an Easter group. Stories began pouring in!

"We had a person from North Carolina join our small group last night."

"A Northlander who moved to New York joined our online class and shared what an answer to prayer it was to be able to remain connected to her church home even while moving so far away."

“Our small group held a special virtual candlelight gathering for Christmas.”

“Our weekly prayer gathering never stopped. We just moved from the prayer room to a virtual room and continued gathering together through Zoom to lift up the prayers from our church family.”

We began streaming daily devotional content, our kids' worship services, Bible studies in student ministries and our Co-Op teachers took their classes 100% online. Our Community Art Connection daily art program went virtual and we continued to serve our friends and families who live with disabilities in creative and engaging ways. Our Care ministries like Celebrate Recovery, GriefShare, even counseling sessions, moved online ensuring continuity of the care and support that God has called us to provide to those in vulnerable seasons of life.

The examples of God's faithfulness through keeping His church connected virtually are endless. We had five new partners join our latest Belong & Grow session from

all over the world! These are folks who truly consider themselves Northlanders and consistently worship with us online. Thanks to so many of our classes, groups, and ministries being offered virtually, people can dive deeper into our community.

It's been incredible to see how God has used our leaders to help people feel known, seen, heard, and loved. It seems counterintuitive for this to occur during a time when physical connection is so limited. I've come to realize that in this virtual world, the intentionality we've had to practice to reach people is not at all unlike the intentionality that our Father uses in His constant pursuit of us through the Holy Spirit. It draws us closer to Him. In this COVID-weary world, through God's grace, we've drawn closer to one another in ways I don't believe we ever thought would be possible. When my 78-year-old mother-in-law told me she had joined her weekly bible study via Zoom, I knew that was something only God could do!

Church will never look the same. The Church has moved outside of the building alone and into the homes of believers worldwide. Geography is no longer an obstacle to connection and community as it once was. These days, people can find "church," and more importantly, God, in their own backyard or half-way around the globe.



Inside THE NUMBERS

KIRK LEFF, CHIEF OPERATING OFFICER

When you turn to the Stewardship report you typically see numbers and try to determine how your church is performing to the stated need, but stewardship goes much deeper and far wider than that snapshot in our financial timeline. As we round the corner of a full year dealing with a not seen in our lifetime pandemic, it is more important to focus on what God has accomplished through your generosity, than it is to simply look at the numbers.

In April of 2019, we added Jean Cope to our staff as Facilities Director. Jean is a highly skilled Mechanical Engineer whose career accomplishments include Process Engineering for NASA and Sherwin-Williams as well as Reliability Centered Maintenance for Universal Studios Resort. More important than her distinguished career is her commitment to Jesus and her call to serve others in all aspects of her life. Since our campus is our largest financial asset as well as representing a significant part of our budget, having Jean join our staff was a game-changer. Since her arrival in 2019, Glenn Garton, our Finance Director, Jean, and I have been working together to develop a comprehensive campus management plan that will enable us to forecast the plant, property, and equipment needs over an initial five-year plan and ultimately one covering ten years. We began allocating funds toward this effort with my first budget (2019). Through Jean's great skills we have accomplished this critical plan, now we are planned versus reactionary. Why is this important? It is exactly what stewardship is all about, wisely managing those things entrusted to you. In doing this, we were able to properly allocate funds to the complete needs of our campus over a predetermined timeline. One big benefit to this approach is we have and will continue to reduce our overall spending.

As we entered the current fiscal year (July 1, 2020 - June 31, 2021), we took our most in-depth look at all our spending. We implemented a new organizational structure to support Gus' vision, as our Interim Senior Pastor, to become a disciple-making church. We added greater oversight to Rebecca Lang, our Executive Director of Community Life, enabling us to be more responsive to the needs of our congregation. Our HR Leadership has transitioned to Marie Badders, another incredible "God is in control" story. Marie brings over 17 years of HR experience with the City of Altamonte Springs which included the role of Deputy Director, Human Resources.

The budget we are working under is the third budget developed since I joined Northland as the COO. We have made adjustments to all three budget cycles with these principles in mind.

- Properly fund each ministry to ensure they have the resources to meet their objectives.
- Replace contracted work with in-house skills by both staff and volunteers wherever possible, but with no reduction to the needed result.
- Prioritize and review our operational needs with the mindset of "Can we deliver as good or better results through better spending choices?" A few examples related to this principle include this addition of the Engage magazine. By embracing the skills already in place at Northland and leveraging our technology resources, we are no longer required to outsource this publication. Over the next three years, we will save an estimated \$177,650 in printing and production costs. Money which can be repurposed for spreading the Gospel message of Jesus within our community and throughout the world. Another example is that we are in the process of upgrading our worship service lighting system to LED. This was done for two reasons, the life of the system calls for it, and the beneficial return on the investment over time. This process will be completed by September of this year. A final example would be the move from contracted housekeeping to staff-based housekeeping. We made that move in February 2020, with the objective of reducing our annual spending in this area by 23%. As we just completed 12 months, we have in fact reduced our overall spending. It hasn't been at the 23% level, but our current spending includes all the processes we have put in place to provide the safest environment possible during this pandemic. As an added bonus, Housekeeping has become a ministry team here at Northland.

Now, look at the numbers on the chart shown as part of this article. It only reflects the top line needs. Northland is a living and breathing body of believers that can plan for the future but must be flexible enough to move when God says move. We are prayerfully joined together and working as God has directed us in calling our new Lead Pastor. We have



adapted our approach to engaging with our congregation and the greater community with much more robust use of technology but still doing so at the personal level. Not reflected in that number are where we have used our campus to provided food drives, COVID testing, community service opportunities, special drive-thru celebrations, concerts featuring some of the top Christian artists, a place for the special needs ministry "Community Arts Connection" to thrive, a place in which our Co-Op School and LifeHope Childcare can minister to young children, incredible support for our COVID-19 Benevance, 121Hope, and Christmas House. These are only the highlights.

A final but very important number is our mortgage balance. It is now down to \$8,281,367. Because of the way our mortgage was originally established we are benefiting from the market's low rate of interest. Our current rate is 1.78%. We are working very closely with SunTrust, now Truist, our mortgage holder, to review all aspects of our mortgage should the need arise to make adjustments.

We are confident that God will provide for all our needs. We are thankful for each one of you who supports Northland through your prayers, your willingness to volunteer and serve, and your financial generosity. If you have never supported Northland financially or haven't in a while, please prayerfully consider doing so.

FISCAL 2020-2021 (JULY-JUNE) GIVING VERSUS NEED UPDATE

Total Need \$8,874,055

Need To Date \$6,274,482

Received To Date \$5,702,783

Percent Funded 92.4%

*as of 3/25/21

WAYS TO GIVE

Give via mobile text.
Text "northland" to 77977.



Download and use the
PushPay App.



Give online at
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or use the Northland App.



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it in any of our tithe boxes.



You can track along with us at
NorthlandChurch.net/GivingUpdates

WATCH AND PRAY

JOHN TARDONIA, PASTOR, CARE & COUNSELING

On the night Jesus was arrested, He invited His disciples, Peter, James, and John, to come with Him to the garden of Gethsemane, where He would engage in an intense time of prayer before His crucifixion. Overwhelmed with sorrow, Jesus poured His heart out to His Father, asking if there was a way to avoid the cross, but quickly yielded His will to obey the will of His Father.

Jesus clearly indicated to His disciples that He desired for them to keep vigil and walk with Him through His final hours. He said;

**“Watch and pray so that you will not fall into temptation. The Spirit is willing, but the flesh is weak.”
(Matthew 26:41)**

During Lent, we are encouraged to walk with Jesus, watching and praying along the way as we witness the ultimate demonstration of love and sacrifice made on our behalf (John 15:13).

Traditionally, the Church has recognized something called the Stations of the Cross. These are specific moments that Jesus experienced en route to the cross. We invited you to spend some time during this season to engage with some of these moments with Jesus on the way to the cross.

**Spend some time engaging
in each of these moments in Scripture.**

Pause to reflect on your own life and pray.

JESUS IS CONDEMNED TO DEATH

(Matthew 27:15-24)

- Here we recognize that we deserved to be condemned because of our sin, but we give thanks that Jesus was condemned on our behalf. (John 3:18; Romans 8:1)
- How do I respond to unjust accusations within myself or from others?

JESUS TAKES UP HIS CROSS

(John 19:17)

- What cross are you being called to carry these days?
- Consider the cross you may be carrying right now. Ask for strength and perseverance to faithfully press on.

JESUS MEETS HIS MOTHER

(John 19:26-27)

- Read Mary's Prayer in Luke 1:46-55
- Consider how hard it would have been to let go of her son to be crucified.
- Pray about who God would have you open up your home or heart to.

SIMON OF CYRENE HELPS CARRY HIS CROSS

(Luke 23:26)

- Do you find it difficult to ask others for help?
- Out of pride and self-sufficiency, do you wall people off that want to help?
- Is there a burden on someone else that you can help carry?

JESUS SPEAKS TO THE WOMEN OF JERUSALEM

(Luke 23:27-31)

- What does Godly sorrow lead to? (2 Corinthians 7:10,11)
- What did Jesus promise to those who mourn? (Matthew 5:4)

JESUS IS STRIPPED OF HIS GARMENTS AND MOCKED

(Matthew 27:27-31)

- Can you think of a time when you or someone you knew was mocked publically?
- How important is it to view others with dignity and respect?

JESUS IS NAILED TO THE CROSS

(Matthew 27:33-34; Psalm 22:16)

- Give some thought to your sin that was nailed to the Cross, canceling out your debt. (Colossians 2:14)

JESUS DIES UPON THE CROSS

(Luke 23:44-49)

- The final breath of a dying person is the ultimate in what it is to surrender.
- What are some things you need to surrender?
- Take a moment to sing the hymn "When I Survey The Wondrous Cross."

JESUS IS TAKEN DOWN FROM THE CROSS

(Luke 23:50-55)

- When was the last funeral you attended?
- Is there some you know that lost a loved one that could use a call, a note, a hug?

JESUS IS LAID IN THE TOMB

(Matthew 27:57-61)

- Spend some time in silence, taking in all that happens from Jesus' arrest to the stillness of His body in the tomb?
- "My soul finds rest in God alone, my salvation comes from Him." (Psalm 62:1)
- "Be still, and know that I am God; I will be exalted among the nations, I will be exalted in the earth." (Psalm 46:10)



HOW IT STARTED. HOW IT'S GOING.

Northland joins forces with Open Doors Counseling Center to address mental health in the middle of a pandemic

SCOTTY ALDERMAN, CREATIVE PRODUCER AND COUPLES THERAPIST

HOW IT STARTED

It was just over a year ago when all of our lives changed radically in a matter of days. The pandemic has affected us all in various ways—of course, death and critical illness, job insecurity—if not job loss—and having to rethink how we can work and go to school given the constraints of social distancing. Not surprisingly, we've seen our collective mental health suffer in ways we have no reference for in time.

A piece in Nature Magazine quotes the Center for Disease Control numbers, "More than 42% of people surveyed by the US Census Bureau reported symptoms of depression in December in 2020, an increase from 11% the previous year." Similar numbers exist for increased anxiety disorder symptoms—the psychological cousin of depression. Presumably, to cope with mental and emotional stress, substance abuse has sharply been on the rise as well. 60% of participants in a study conducted by the International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health reported an increase in alcohol use throughout 2020, and 47% of the participants claimed their increase in drinking was a direct result of the stress of the pandemic. More and more data is collected every day, and the picture is not an encouraging one.

As a therapist—in addition to contending with my own well-being and that of my family—I've seen firsthand the distress in my clients' lives. Even in psychologically resilient or 'high-functioning' people, the stressors associated with where we've been over the last 13-14 months have simply been too overwhelming. Additionally, that unsettling feeling

of not being sure when we can expect all this to be fully over has a disorienting effect as well.

Yes, there is quite a bit of bad news from a mental health perspective, and there's no way around that or any point in minimizing it. However, we are not people who "grieve as others do who have no hope" (1 Thes 4:13). God's promises are true, and He makes provision for us in desperate times.

HOW IT'S GOING

At the turn of the year, like everyone else, I held out some hope to turn a mindset corner, if not a literal one in terms of coronavirus and vaccines. And, to a degree, it seems we have. More of us are back at work and our kids are making their way back to in-person learning. The population has started the process of vaccinating, and there is hope on the horizon. That said, we're not entirely out of the woods yet.

One way God has orchestrated and equipped Northland for caring for the mental and emotional well-being of our community has been through a partnership between Northland and Open Doors Counseling Center.

As you may have seen—either through renovation work taking place in The Rink building or social media posts—Northland has been on a journey the last several months with an established local private counseling practice, Open Doors Counseling Center, to provide a greater, more comprehensive level of care to our community on Northland's campus.

My friends Ben and Aubrey Hutchings launched Open

Doors Counseling Center in 2013. They became a principal counseling resource in the community as experts in working with children, primarily using a therapeutic approach called 'play therapy,' to help children process difficult feelings in a safe and emotionally secure environment. Currently, Open Doors conducts over 150 play therapy sessions per month. Over the last several years, Open Doors has expanded to include clinicians who serve a variety of populations—adults, couples, families, teens, and children suffering from anxiety, depression, complex trauma, marital distress, and more.

There is much more to the story of how the partnership between Northland and Open Doors was formed. In short, the leadership of Northland recognized a need to make changes in how we were operating the Care Center and providing mental, emotional, and spiritual care. Through a years-old relationship with Ben and Aubrey Hutchings, conversations started to take place in August of 2020

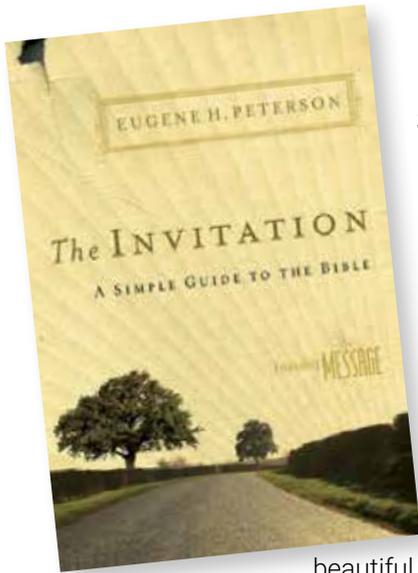
about what it would look like for the Care Center to discontinue as a Northland-run operation and for Open Doors to occupy the Care Center office spaces as a second location for them, as well as become an autonomous and self-sufficient private counseling practice providing mental health services right on Northland's campus. Those conversations and plans continued, and in March of 2021, Open Doors held a 'soft launch' with the first clients coming into the space to receive mental health counseling. I, along with previous Northland's counseling interns—Gary Beckman, Cristina Carmona-Portocarrero, and Somer Benjanin have joined the Open Doors staff, now totaling 13 clinicians in all. More information on all the services provided can be found at www.opendoorscc.com or under Pastoral Care on Northland's website. If you or someone you care about are in need of counseling, please do not hesitate to reach out.

For more information about the Open Doors Counseling Center, visit them online at OpenDoorsCC.com



PASTOR'S PICKS

Learn more about our pastor's favorite book recommendations



SEAN COOPER
"The Invitation,"
by Eugene Peterson

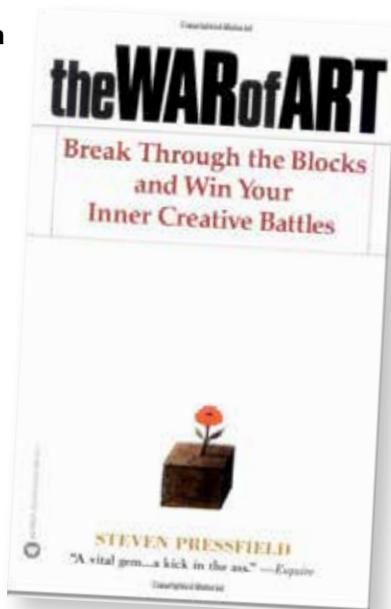
Peterson's ability to summarize each book of the Bible in a few short pages is super helpful to me! I enjoy hearing his perspective, a pastor himself for 29 years, and his thoughtful take on each book. Peterson is someone who preached and wrote through a

beautiful lens of God's grace, and

his words help remind me of what's most important from God's Word. "When we submit our lives to what we read in Scripture, we find that we're being led not to see God in our stories but to see our stories in God's."

"The War of Art," by Steven Pressfield

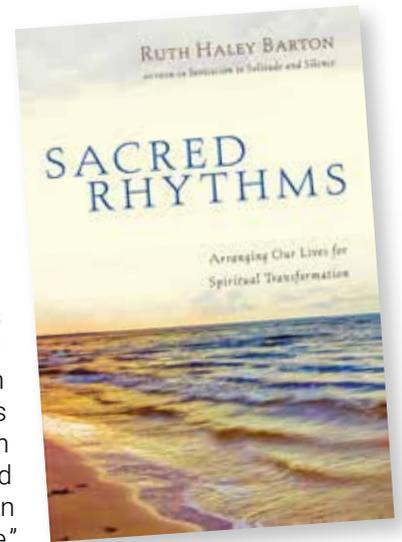
This book is always in arm's reach for me, and I read portions of it every year. It's a quick read, and my personal copy is full of highlights, dog-eared pages, and sticky notes. Pressfield has an amazing way of inspiring readers to fight resistance and be a creative force in our world. If you are looking for a nudge toward starting that new project you have put off, don't read this book before bed!



JOHN TARDONIA
"Sacred Rhythms," by
Ruth Haley Barton

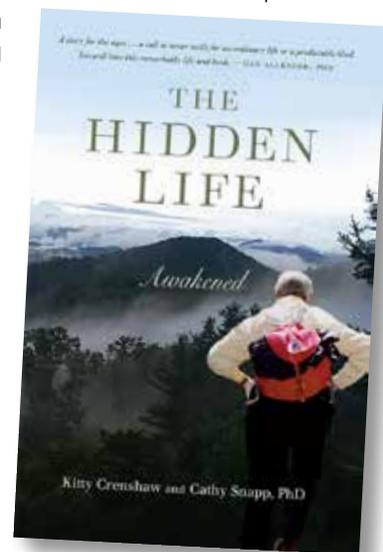
Suppose you feel that you are always in a hurry, tired, and disconnected from your own heart. This book is for you. Ruth Haley Barton coined the phrase "Christian Fatigue Syndrome," which describes the

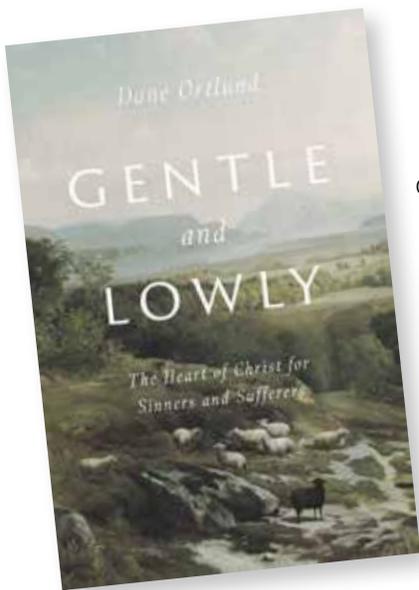
Christian who is busy doing good things but living from an empty place. Ruth uncovers and explores ancient disciplines that believers have practiced for centuries. These sacred practices help open us up to our heart's deepest longing to bring about spiritual transformation. You will find helpful exercises at the end of each chapter to guide you in developing new practices that will keep you more centered in Christ and living out of an overflow of grace.



"The Hidden Life Awakened," by Cathy Snapp and Kitty Crenshaw

This book tells the story of a remarkable woman named Betty Skinner who lived through a period of deep depression and discovered an intimacy with God that few believers ever find. The authors tell Betty's story alongside illuminations that Betty shares that are rich in spiritual depth. In addition to rich insights from Betty is some of the latest neurological research on depression from Cathy Snapp. One of Betty's greatest joys was to lead others on spiritual retreats in the North Carolina mountains, where she mentored others into a richer and





deeper relationship with Christ. I had the privilege of meeting Betty a couple of years ago, now in her mid-nineties. The visit and her writing continue to invite me to an awakened heart.

KEVIN URICHKO
“Gentle and Lowly: The Heart of Christ for Sinners and Sufferers,” by Dane Ortlund

I have connected more deeply and genuinely with Jesus through the Lenten season because of this book. Dr. Ortlund provides a multi-faceted and diligent dive into one of my favorite Scripture passages, Matthew 11:28-30.

Do you wonder how the Lord sees you and feels about you when you sin? Do you struggle with the fear that God is angry with you and frustrated that you can't seem to get your life together? The author claims, “Jesus does not throw his hands up in the air when he engages sinners. He is calm, tender, soothing, restrained. He deals with us gently.” The text does an amazing job of making sure that the Good News of the Gospel is applied to our journey as believers, not just as the way to become a Christian.

I'm currently working through a chapter at a time with a group of friends. Each of us is being touched by the text in unique ways while becoming more Christ-like disciples through every discussion together. This book will help you understand the longing heart of our Savior, along with his empathy and power to help through His deeply loving heart. He is our advocate, very close in the midst of our darkest struggles. Written in a classic form of devotional literature, I encourage you to take it slow (relatively short chapters) and savor the truth about Jesus that this book contains.

Written in a classic form of devotional literature, I encourage you to take it slow (relatively short chapters) and savor the truth about Jesus that this book contains.

“Wintering: The Power of Rest and Retreat in Difficult Times,” by Katherine May

While you won't find this title on any typical Christian book list, I've found it to be a treasure trove of wisdom



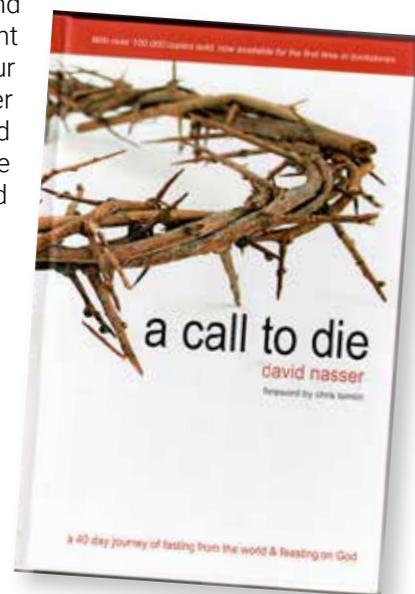
and well-timed guidance. Arranging the text around the months of a Northern hemisphere Winter season, the author shares personally and vulnerably about her journey -- learning to rest and surrender while adapting and healing. “Wintering is...a fallow period in life when you're cut off from the world, feeling rejected, sidelined, blocked from progress, or cast into the role of an outsider.” This timely treatise (actually a Christmas gift from a dear friend) was a perfect touchstone and companion through the pandemic blues.

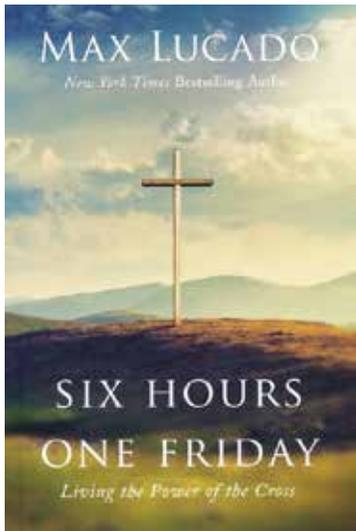
Written prior to the current coronavirus limitations, this book is quite affirming and pragmatic in addressing loneliness and frustration to which most of us can relate. As an example of practical application (especially if you struggle with insomnia), one of the November chapters contains a fascinating (and historically-rooted) perspective on a middle-of-the-night watch where “space is made in the blackest hours to repair the fragmented narratives of our days.” I'll never look at 2 a.m. journaling the same!

Ms. May served as a capable leader and guide through my wintering journey, convincing me that “we are capable of coming back again...not only restored but capable of bringing more that we brought before: greater wisdom, more compassion, and increased capacity.” She ends the book by inviting us to “name our personal winters: grief, rejection, depression, illness, shame, failure, despair.” As I followed her advice, God's grace and love were even more present and real to me. While our rather brief Florida winter is long gone, you may find this book (as I did) to be surprisingly helpful and fitting to our times.

ROB HEMPHILL
“A Call to Die: A 40 Day Journey of Fasting From the World & Feasting on God,” by David Nasser

I challenge people to walk through this devotional leading up to Easter, but it's great anytime. This was a book that made me stop and re-evaluate what my relationship with God looked like. It is manageable reading divided by 40 chapters and leaves you to answer some tough questions at the end of the day. This is going to cause you to think differently about the way you approach your walk.





“6 Hours One Friday,” by Max Lucado

I love pulling this book out during the week leading up to Easter Sunday. It was recently developed into an online study. It's a good reminder that our lives have a purpose beyond. It reminds us that the grave is not the final stop. It reminds us that according to Christ, our death is just the start of something great. There is a

truth greater than all the losses and troubles we've seen through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. This book dives into the meaning of His last hours on the cross. Our life has purpose and meaning as we are forgiven and loved by a Savior who died for us. The author drives home the point that the empty tomb proclaims that death does not have the final word.

"Together... My Journey With God," by Brian Stout

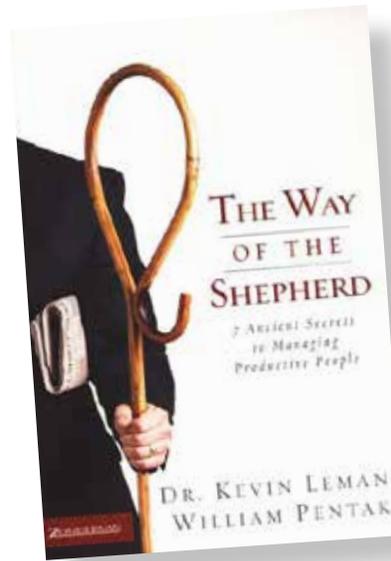
This is the latest and most encouraging book I've read during this pandemic!

I think that during the past 10-12 months, we have been so bombarded by uncertainty, discouragement, and isolation that we have, in some fashion, lost our way. It has caused many to ask, Is God even still working? Yes, He is!

This book is nothing but encouraging stories of how God has worked in Brian's life and Haiti's ministry.

the mid-2000's having led teams with him to Haiti. Over the years, we've developed a friendship and continued to keep up with the mission efforts there firsthand. I've always left my meetings with Brian so encouraged that God is still in the miracle business.

A story even took place at Northland Church that encouraged Brian in his calling to this ministry.



GUS DAVIES

“The Way of the Shepherd, Seven Secrets to Managing Productive People,” by Kevin Leman and Bill Pentak

I highly recommend business and church leaders to read this book. This book revitalized my calling to lead people as a pastor. The focus on the heart,

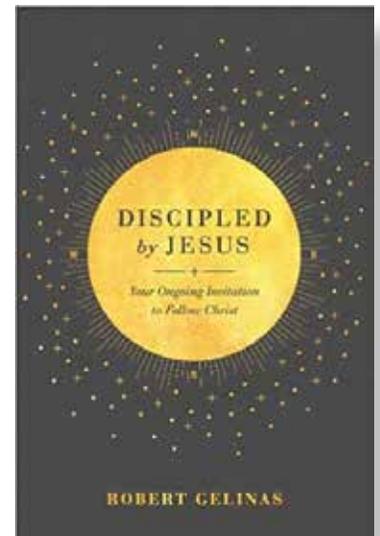
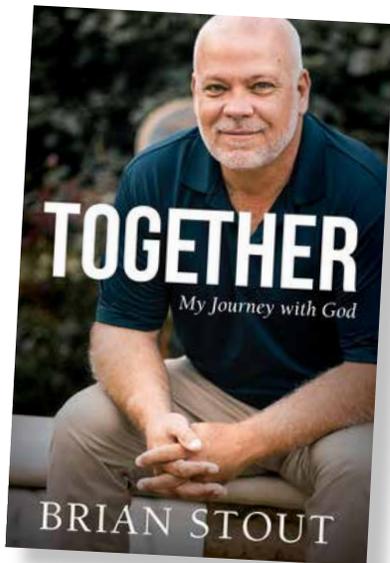
character and passion of anyone leading people with excellence will result in loyalty. Lessons from the responsibilities of a leader as a shepherd brings out the best in people you lead. A shepherd has to be very resolute, work very hard, and be equipped with the staff and rod to guide the sheep. People need leaders who know their condition in order to care and control them for productive services.

The authors write from personal stories and experiences with mentors and coaches who shaped their personal and professional lives by shepherding them.

“Discipled by Jesus. Your Ongoing Invitations to Follow Christ,” by Robert Gelinas

Pastor Robert takes a revolutionary approach to Jesus Christ's command for us to be His followers. This book, like any sound and solid writings on making disciples, gives us correct biblical and theological exegesis, stories, and principles to apply. The language he inserts here is for our much needed course correction in discipleship. To keep pointing us back to Jesus who is the one that disciples us not just our programs. The Messiah is the one and only one disciple maker.

I added this to my collections upon the recommendation of another pastor.



You can find all of these titles and more in our Northland Bookstore. For store hours, visit us online at NorthlandChurch.net/Bookstore.

MORE THAN A STORE

BETHANY DURYS, COMMUNITY LIFE ADMINISTRATOR

Did you know we're blessed to have one of the two remaining local brick-and-mortar Christian bookstores right inside our church? Sadly, over the last few years, all the Christian bookstores in our area have closed. Not only have we lost these wonderful bookstores, but we've lost ministry outposts. The ministry of a Christian bookstore goes beyond helping people find just the right resource for the next step in their spiritual walk. The team of staff and volunteers serves a critical role in ministering to the people in our community, connecting with customers through prayer, and helping people navigate complex issues along life's journey.

We asked some of our congregants what they love about the Northland Bookstore, and here's what they had to say:

"It has provided me with direction and resources to go deeper and take the next step in my faith walk." - Carroll.

"I love being able to physically touch the pages before making a decision. I look forward to sitting on the floor and looking over the introduction, the index, the table of contents, and even the foreword of Christian books." - Charlene.

"I love the people. Knowledge is wonderful, but it's moreover the staff are happy to see you, I know their faith is strong, and they listen to your needs. And for such a small space, they have a tremendous collection for people at all stages of their faith walk." - Bob.

"I get to do church every time I walk in there. Whether it's a Tuesday afternoon and I need a birthday card or a Sunday after church, I get to talk about God and laugh and just be the church within those walls. It's a safe space and I've always enjoyed it. The staff have taken the time to build relationships with me and I just feel very at home in our bookstore." - Jenny



"I think the staff are true salt-of-the-earth people and hope that they remain a conduit to seeking His truth." - Gregory.

Did you also know that you can support the Northland Bookstore not just with your purchases but with your time as well? Our bookstore volunteers are an amazing group of people who love the Lord and love others.

"As a volunteer, I have experienced numerous conversations that have encouraged me as well as seen how God allowed me to encourage someone else. The stories of how God is working in people's lives have been amazing." - LeDonna.

"The bookstore has given me the opportunity to minister to the congregants on a weekly basis. I so enjoy getting to know all the people that come into the bookstore. Sometimes it's just a friendly hello, other times an opportunity to pray for the hurting. The bookstore gave me a purpose to be intentional with my time and share the love to Christ to others. It also got me to get to know more people so I could have community and fellowship with them. Some of my dearest friends are people I met in the bookstore at Northland! There is a community of believers that encourage and lift me up every time I walk through the doors." - Tina.

"If you are looking for a way to contribute to the life of your church, consider volunteering in the Bookstore. ... From the first day I walked in, I knew that God had called me there." - Nancy.

So, what are you waiting for? If you haven't been in the bookstore for a while or ever, stop by soon! Pray about whether God would have you serve in the bookstore. Be part of this critical ministry and be a blessing to others while getting blessed yourself!

If you have questions or want to talk to someone about serving in the bookstore, email our Bookstore Manager, Donna, at Donna.Kannon@northlandchurch.net or give them a call at 407-949-7199.

MISSIONS

MATT SHILES, MISSIONS DIRECTOR

6 Ways to Reach God's World

Created by OMF International and Perspectives on the World Christian Movement, these six categories allow us to focus on how we can make a difference for God's Kingdom. Listed below each category are some ways you can get engaged with Northland and others in the community. I would encourage you to read through each one and prayerfully consider 2 or 3 ways to engage. Our engagement will change over time, so listen to where God is leading you during this season. Consider who you might share this with; family, friends, small groups, or discipling relationships are all great places to start. Please reach out to me for any additional conversation or questions, Matthew Shiles at Matthew.Shiles@NorthlandChurch.net

LEARN

- **Mission courses**
 - Introduction to Missions – a 6-week introductory course to learn about God's heart for the Nations.
 - Perspectives on the World Christian Movement – a 15-week experience to learn about the Biblical, Historical, Cultural, and Strategic lenses in which we can view God's purpose for our lives.
- **Visit missions agencies online and in-person** – Ethnos360, CRU, Pioneers, Wycliffe, Third Mill, and others.
- **Read missionary biographies** – YWAM has a great series called "Christian Heroes: Then & Now."
- **Previous Engage articles and website content**

PRAY

- **Prayer for Missions** – Every third Saturday from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m., we pray for our supported missionaries, partner churches around the globe, local ministries, and missions.
 - **Thursday night weekly gathering** – 6 to 7 p.m.
 - **Additional resources**
 - JoshuaProject.net – Subscribe to receive Unreached People Group of the Day email

- OperationWorld.org – The Definitive Prayer Guide to Every Nation
- PrayerCast.com – Prayer videos spoken by residents of that country

GO

- **Short-Term** – SomedaysToday.net – Although this year and last have created tremendous uncertainty regarding overseas trips, we can still prepare in the waiting. Learn and pray about upcoming trips. Prepare by reading [Foreign to Familiar by Sarah A. Lanier](#) and other books that will help before you go.
- **Medium and Long-term** – If God has ever placed it on your heart to go for several months or even longer, let us know! We can help guide you in connecting to missions organization opportunities.

SEND

- **Support short-term team members and long-term missionaries** here, there, and everywhere. We can guide you to relationships that will impact the Kingdom. Both money and prayer support is vital to the long-term success of those going.

WELCOME

- **Missionary Hospitality** – includes offering housing, transportation, and hosting of gatherings.
- **International Students** – includes housing and hosting local students during holidays.
- **'Welcoming the stranger'** by participating in the Refugee Church Alliance with other local churches and organizations.

MOBILIZE

- **Equip others** by using your gifts of administration and passion for multiplying efforts here. This is an opportunity to help others go deeper so that we can go wider. Join alongside our Serve Days, Mission courses, and prayer gatherings.



Engaging Survivors to be Fully Alive in Jesus

MEG JOHNSON, 121HOPE MINISTRY LEADER

1 21Hope is deeply grateful to the many people who financially contributed to Giving Tuesday and championed its creation, as well as to those who are now contributing their time, knowledge, and expertise to helping survivors of modern-day slavery. Through prayer and petition, 121Hope exists to eradicate human trafficking and point the aching soul to the grace of God's healing hand.

Our victim advocacy team has worked with 113 survivors in six years. Throughout this journey, we have learned that each story varies by way of pain and suffering. Each rescue varies by method and community response. And each life longs for a champion to stand by their side on their long, arduous journey of healing and restoration. Victim advocacy work can be difficult, daunting, messy and at times unsuccessful. But so too can it be inspiring, undaunting, orderly, and successful.

Because of you, our Northland champions, 121Hope has pivoted the work of ongoing projects to concentrate on ensuring survivors are surrounded by disciples of Christ and receiving the message of God's purpose for their lives. These 121Hope volunteer "champions" are amplifying important Christ-life messages of love, acceptance, goodness, kindness, and honor to the survivors they encounter. There are beautiful moments captured in our hearts of survivors laughing for the first time in years and feeling that life is going to be more than okay.

Because of your generosity on Giving Tuesday, 121Hope

plans to host the Rise Up Retreat in the Fall of 2021, a three-day weekend focused on creating a safe space for survivors to connect, heal and grow. We plan to meet in a beautiful environment and help women discover what it means to value their voices, create healthy relationships and rise up to lead with their unique gifts. And thankfully, we will be able to offer full scholarships for all participating survivors due to your kindness and heartfelt generosity. The Rise Up Retreat was laid on the heart of 121Hope leaders more than two years ago but due to financial shortfalls, it was not a viable

option. On December 1, 2020, you rose up and championed a ministry that sees good over evil, light instead of darkness, and feels victory over defeat. We believe in the value of life and we believe in the value of Engaging Survivors to be Fully Alive in Jesus. **To learn more visit 121Hope.com or contact Meg Johnson at Meg.Johnson@NorthlandChurch.net**

Our victim advocacy team has worked with 113 survivors in six years.

These 121Hope volunteer "champions" are amplifying important Christ-life messages of love, acceptance, goodness, kindness, and honor to the survivors they encounter.

GET TO KNOW SOME CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES VOLUNTEERS

Amazing

KATIE CRAWFORD, COMMUNICATIONS COORDINATOR

Children's Ministries is often regarded as just childcare, but it is so much more than a place for children to play for an hour. In addition to having fun, they are building the foundation of their faith and getting to know who Jesus is, which would not be possible without our incredible children's volunteers. Our Children's Ministries has been through so much over the past year. Children's Ministries now requires even more volunteers to make each weekend happen due to safety regulations.

I had the privilege of speaking to several Children's Ministries volunteers in preparation for this article. Each of them has different backgrounds and has served for different amounts of time. Holly Faries began volunteering with her daughter when she was a sophomore in high school, over fourteen years ago! Holly has served both in the Children's Ministries and Security. Madeline Anderson started coming to Northland ten years ago and serves on our Cut-Ups' team, which cuts out shapes and patterns used for crafts and worship services. Gary Beckman has served for over seven years, and Florence King joined our children's team just over a year ago.

God called each of them to serve in Children's Ministries in different ways. Holly had felt called to serve at Northland by Pastor Joel and Pastor Vernon being transparent about how much help they needed in Children's Ministries. It wasn't until her daughter had a community service requirement for school that she took the leap and started serving. Madeline taught elementary-aged children for forty-five years, so she knew she wanted to serve with children. Gary felt God pushing him to get connected beyond just attending weekend services and loved working with children. Growing up in Sri Lanka, Florence felt blessed to grow up in a Christian family and wanted to shape other children's faith foundations just as her parents had done for her.

Our children's volunteers are so passionate about what they do. They love these kids so much and go above and beyond to care for them. Gary loves how much he learns

from the children week after week. "The level of depth and biblical knowledge they have always astounds me, plus we have so much fun!" says Gary. "Being able to watch these children explore a deeper relationship with Christ is something that never gets old." Our volunteers treasure the relationships they have with each other as well. Gary spoke about the life-long friendships he's made through Children's Ministries. "I went from someone who was slipping in and out of church unnoticed to someone who was a valued member of the team from the moment I joined Children's Ministries," says Gary. Madeline spoke about what a blessing her fellow volunteers were to her when her husband died six years ago. They supported her and continue to pray as a group.

Holly loves having an impact on the children's faith. "I want them to be able to love God the way I do," says Holly. She spoke about her three-year-old granddaughter and how much she can learn and retain even at such a young age. "If we have that awesome opportunity and ability to get that message into them when they're young, then it's

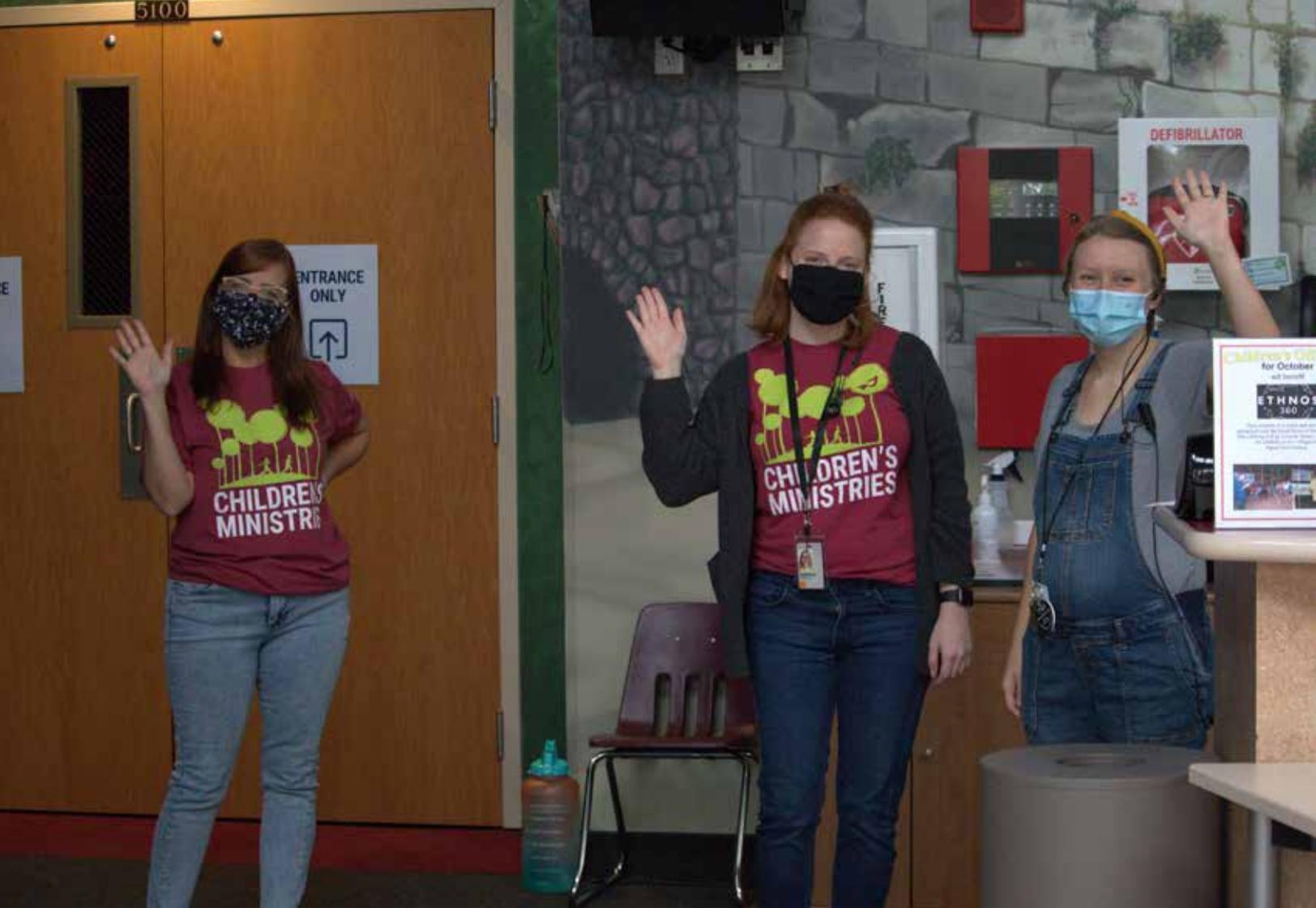
"Being able to watch these children explore a deeper relationship with Christ is something that never gets old."

—GARY

something they grow up with that's just natural to them," says Holly.

Florence loves their smiling faces. "I work in a high-stress life (as an attorney) and they remind you of the joy of Christ," says Florence. "They remind you that no matter what is going on in life, that you can still smile about it. You see God's love through these kids every day. It reminds you to smile. It's what I love about kids. It reminds you that you can see God through anything because no matter what is going on in their life, they remember to smile."

These volunteers were gracious enough to share some of their favorite Children's Ministries memories, each of



which is truly incredible. Holly's favorite is when kids she had in her class when they were in kindergarten came back to volunteer as teenagers. Gary's favorite is being able to watch kids deepen their relationship with Christ. He even spoke of kids bringing friends, family, and parents to Christ as well. Florence's favorite was being able to connect with a difficult child who she knew because he'd gone to school with her daughter. She was able to communicate with him in a way none of the other teachers could. At the end of the year concert, Florence saw him again, and he was so excited he ran over to hug her. Not only do your kids mean so much to these volunteers, but these volunteers mean so much to your kids.

COVID caused a lot of changes within Children's Ministries. Even though worship services returned to campus in the summer, it wasn't until the fall when Children's Ministries could reopen with safety precautions in place. Our volunteers have gone above and beyond to keep your kids safe. The kids have also handled this situation very well. Volunteers rave about how well they

follow the rules like wearing masks, washing their hands, and physical distancing.

We would love to have you be a part of bringing the love of Jesus to the children here at Northland. We are looking for teachers, helpers, greeters, safety patrol, and more. No experience necessary! We'll provide everything you need!

"I wish people knew how rewarding it was not just for the kids but us, and I think more people would do it," says Holly. "And you don't have to be a pro! They give you everything you need. If you can read, you can teach Sunday School. Cause I was afraid of it, and I'm an instructor!" Florence loves how Children's Ministries is a family within a family. What an incredible team we have that loves these kids so much.

If God is calling you to serve in Children's Ministries, visit NorthlandChurch.net/Children.



CHILDREN'S CHURCH UPDATE

BY PROFESSOR VON HIMMEL

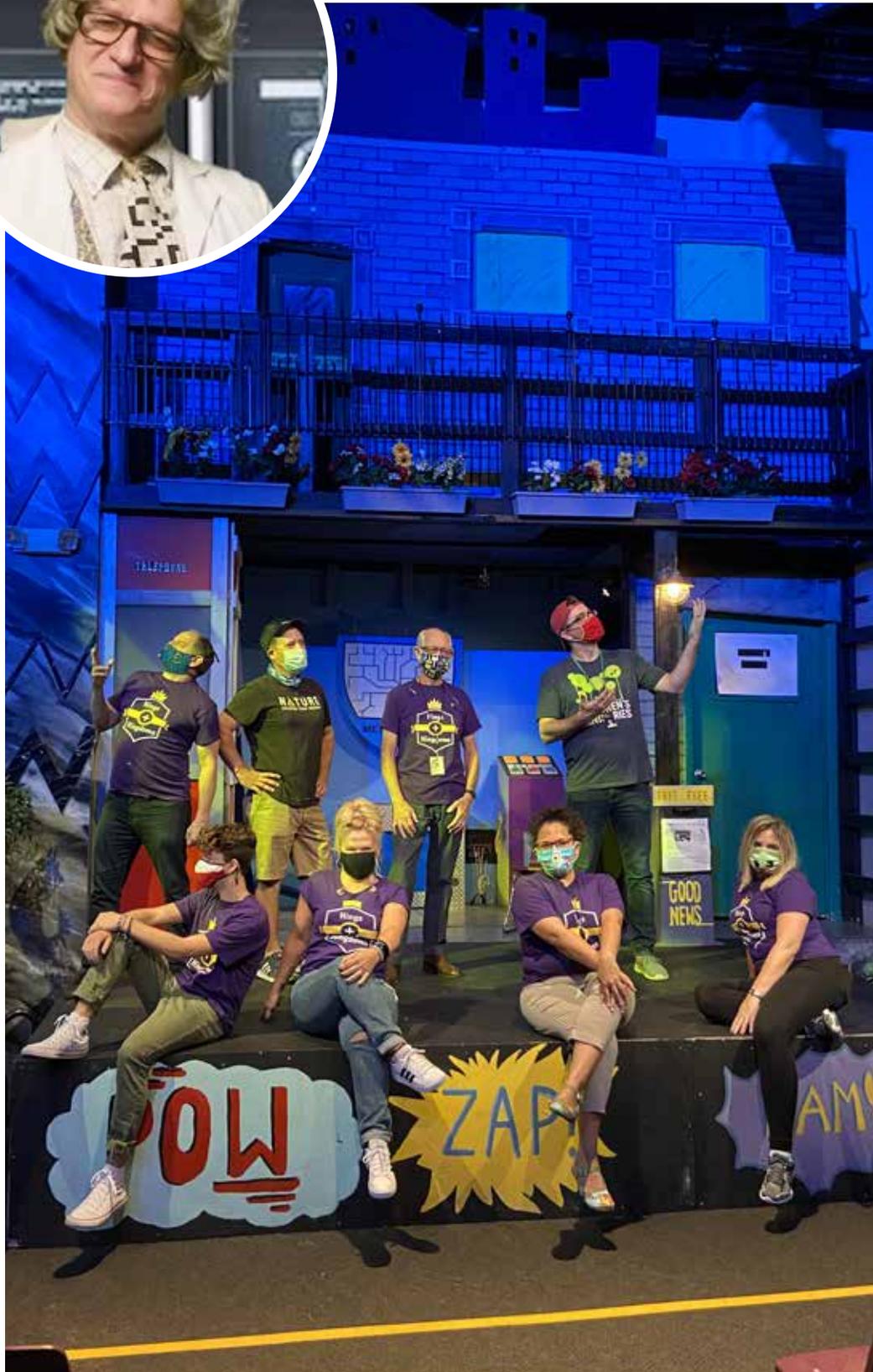
Hello, hello, hello!

It is I, Professor von Himmel! We have had a very busy and productive year! Since April of 2020, our team has produced weekly virtual services complete with a fun opening greeting, worship music, crazy characters to teach you the Bible lessons, and even an optional craft lesson! It's our way of helping you learn more from the King Who Teaches in the comfort of your own home!

You must be thinking, "Wow! That sounds like a lot of work!" Well, that's just the tip of the iceberg! Since lockdown began, we have brought you weekly devotionals! Our faithful staff: Ms. Marisol, Mr. Robert, Mr. David, and Ms. Lola created five devotionals a week for over twenty weeks! We even had some visits from some of our amazing cast of characters, like Ranger Reggie and Safari Sam, Sir Praisealot and Squire Gus, Capt. Billy Ocean and his nephew Cody and countless others.

As a summer treat, we released our first-ever virtual VBS called, Scoutabout: Out of Service, featuring me, Prof. von Himmel, my nephew, Skyler, and some visitors from the Bible.

In the fall, we produced a weekly news program: The King City Report, where we brought you Good News from our King. And now, in 2021, we have launched our latest exciting program: Space Probe, a show where we probe the past, present, and future to get a greater understanding of God's Word! It's hosted by yours truly, Prof. von Himmel, and my co-host, Dr. Sominex!





Dr. Sominex:
Did someone call me?!

Prof. von Himmel:
Dr. Sominex! I didn't know you were here.

Dr. Sominex:
I was taking a nap in the editor's office.

Prof. von Himmel:
I was just telling the kids about Space Probe!



Dr. Sominex:
Oh yeah, it's a great show! We're learning all about how the Holy Spirit of God gave the early disciples the power and courage to build the first-century church!

Prof. von Himmel:
And we're meeting some very unique characters along the way!



Dr. Sominex:
You should tune in. You can find Space Probe and all of our content at NorthlandChurch.net/Children.

Prof. von Himmel:
Thank you, Dr. Sominex! You may go back to your nap.

Dr. Sominex:
That's the best news I heard all day! (snores)



Prof. von Himmel:
Well, that about covers all that we've been working on. Parents! There's so much happening in Children's Church! We have so many amazing classes and resources for your kids, explore them all at NorthlandChurch.net/Children.



CHECK OUT "SPACE PROBE," a midweek children's devotional that teaches kids all about the stories in the Bible, as told by super fun characters!

You can find "Space Probe" and all the other children's resources we offer online at NORTHLANDCHURCH.NET/CHILDREN.



PRAISE THE LORD, ALL YE NATIONS

HEATHER SUBBERT, DIRECTOR OF ACCESS MINISTRIES

Attend any Sunday 11am service, and you will see our ASL interpreting team hard at work on the left side of the stage. ASL, or American Sign Language, is just one of more than 350 unique sign languages from around the world. ASL isn't a simplified version of American English, it is its own language with its own grammatical structure and syntax, different from a spoken language.

ASL is expressed by movements of the hands and facial expressions that cannot be explained but must be experienced. Watch our own ASL team as their hands move with beauty and grace to the worship music or how they capture the words of the message with their facial expressions.

But their interpretation efforts go beyond these graceful movements; the work this team does is vital in reaching the Deaf and Hard-of-Hearing population in our community. They serve so others can have access to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Not only are the people who are Deaf and/or Hard-Of-Hearing congregants able to attend and participate worship in person, but our interpreting service is live-streamed on the Access Ministries Facebook page every Sunday morning, making the service accessible to even more people online.

We are blessed to be able to offer this service through our team and because of the efforts of many who helped Bible translation become a reality for ASL.

Sadly, of the 350 signed languages worldwide, 98% have no Bible translation. This means that less than 2% of Deaf people around the globe have experienced the Gospel message in their own language.

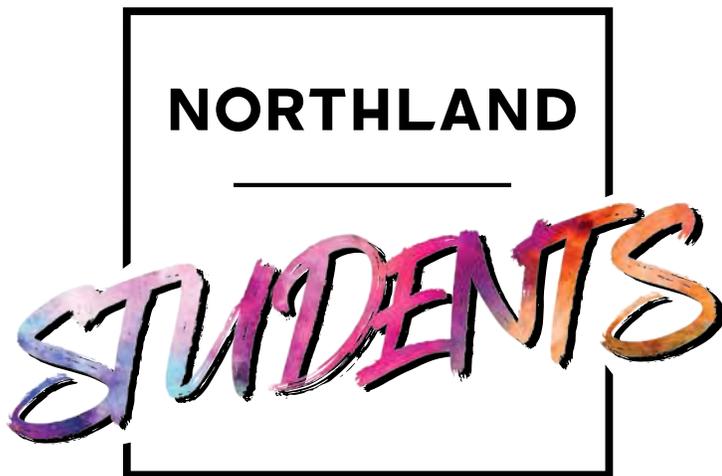
As people who believe in the Great Commission, we should find that statistic unacceptable. There are amazing organizations, like the Deaf Bible Society, who are working hard to change that number. Their mission is to ensure that the truth of God's Word is clearly communicated in

sign language videos with the Deaf community and culture in mind.

You can help. Join us on Sunday mornings at 11am either in-person or online to see the interpreting team in action. Sign up for a Sign Language class to learn to communicate in ASL. Visit deafbiblesociety.com to learn more about how to be an ally in our community and throughout the world. There are steps each of us can take to make our Church and our community more inclusive and welcoming. Let's join together in prayer, in acceptance, and in understanding, to make sure everyone has the opportunity to know Jesus and His incredible love!

**Learn how you can be an ally
by visiting DeafBibleSociety.com**





HIGH SCHOOL

YOUTH GROUP

Every Sunday Night 6:00 to 7:30 p.m. in the Rink

We will provide a safe environment to hang out and grow together. Get ready as we open God's Word, worship, and find creative ways to engage. Student Ministries Pastor, Rob Hemphill, will have a challenging message, and students will have time to connect in small groups.

MFUGE

**Who's ready for camp?! WE ARE!
AND DON'T WORRY ... Registration has been EXTENDED!**

Who: All High School Students (Completed 9th -12th grade)

When: July 11-16

Where: Mobile, Alabama

Cost: \$450

Register online! To reserve your student's spot, you must submit your \$60 camp deposit by April 30th.

MFUGE is a hybrid of camp and missions. Every moment spent at MFUGE is intentional. Camp programming is designed to take students out of their normal routine and place them into an environment focused on life-change through a relationship with Christ.

WE ARE PUMPED FOR SUMMER!

Mark Your Calendars for our HUGE Summer Kick-off back in The Rink for MS and HS!

June 13th—Crew Nights for HS Students 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

June 16th—Fusion Nights for MS Students 6:00 to 8:00 p.m.

MIDDLE SCHOOL

SMALL-GROUP VIRTUAL BIBLE STUDY

Every Monday, 7:00 to 8:00 p.m. This small group Bible study will be online with occasional off-campus events to be determined. Students will meet with friends weekly to dig deeper into God's word and join in community with each other online! All students must be pre-registered. Zoom details will come soon.

PKG UNPLUGGED

Every Wednesday Night, 4:00 to 6:00 p.m.

Calling all middle school students who love video games! Join us for PKG (Powder Keg Games) as we explore the question, "How do we use Gaming for the Gospel?" Come hang out before LUG starts!

Contact James Li at James.Li@NorthlandChurch.net or Austin Bowlin at Austin.Bowlin@NorthlandChurch.net for more info.

LUG!

Every Wednesday Night, 6:00 to 7:30 p.m.

Beginning April 14, LUG will move back to the Rink! Join your friends and us every Wednesday for LUG! We will have games, giveaways, worship, and a message from our Student Pastor, Rob Hemphill.

Doors Open @ 5:45 p.m. for 6th - 8th graders

STUDENT LIFE CAMP

EXTENDED DEADLINE!

Who: All Middle School Students (completed 6th - 8th grade)

When: June 21-25

Where: Southeastern University

Cost: \$350

Register online! To reserve your student's spot, you must submit your \$60 camp deposit by April 30th.

We believe God uses summer camp to grow students in their commitment to follow Jesus and develop their relationships with each other.

What a week! Your student will spend the week with their favorite LUG leaders engaged in amazing worship, small group Bible study, and awesome team-building games & activities built around strengthening relationships. God remains center-stage in every aspect of Student Life Camp, and we will have a blast while we do it! Student Life Camp exists to serve the church in its mission of making disciples.

HAVE QUESTIONS ABOUT ANY OF THESE EVENTS?

Contact Alex Anderson at

Alex.Anderson@NorthlandChurch.net

or visit our website NorthlandChurch.net/Students

UPCOMING SERIES

PASTOR SEAN COOPER

AFTER *God's* HEART

Have you ever asked yourself: “What does God really want from me?” If so, you join the company of many others in Scripture who asked similar questions. In the Old Testament, God clearly stated that He was looking for “a man after His own heart.” In fact, the whole of the Bible is a story of God’s desire for heart-connection with His people. Amazingly, we see time and time again the way God loves His people and wants a close relationship with every one of us. God says in the Pentateuch, the first five books of the Bible:

“But if from there you seek the Lord your God, you will find him if you seek him with all your heart and with all your soul.” (Deuteronomy 4:29, NIV)

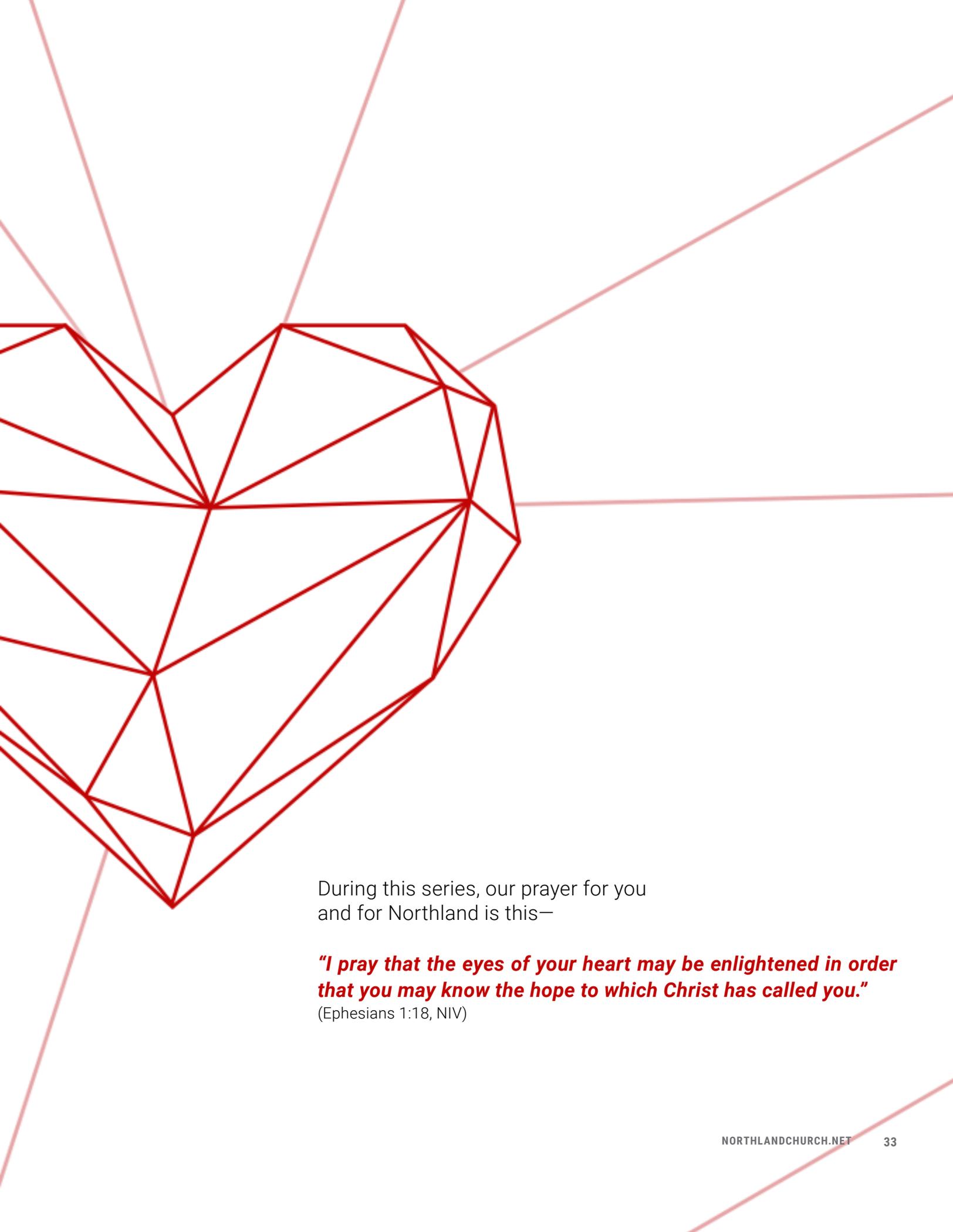
Our new teaching series launches the weekend after Easter, and we are calling it “After God’s Heart.” Together we will take an eight-week journey through the life of King David, someone who was passionately pursuing to know God and make Him known. Our desire is to do what the wisdom books of Scripture teach us, to:

“Let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart.” (Proverbs 3:3, NIV)

Whether you have read the stories of David before or this is your first time, we are excited to see the way his life provides many examples of how we are to live our lives today. As a man who chased after the heart of God, we desire to walk in those same footsteps today. Just as Jesus taught in the gospels—

“Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.” (Matthew 5:8, NIV)

God loves His people, and the Holy Spirit is continuously working to make that love known. The Church around the world continues to seek out ways to grow in God’s character and obey His commands. That’s what it means to be a disciple of Jesus! As a community of faith, we are following Christ together, growing more and more into the image of our Creator, and making Christ’s love known to the world. Join us as we seek God’s Word together through the life of King David and learn how to follow Jesus with all our heart.



During this series, our prayer for you
and for Northland is this—

***“I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order
that you may know the hope to which Christ has called you.”***

(Ephesians 1:18, NIV)

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](mailto>Hello@NorthlandChurch.net) or visit NorthlandChurch.net/New.

WORSHIP TIMES

LONGWOOD and NORTHLANDCHURCH.NET
Saturdays 5 p.m.
Sundays 9 and 11 a.m.

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

ACCESS MINISTRIES

We have programs and services for individuals with disabilities. Find out more at NorthlandChurch.net/Access. Details: Heather Subbert at (407) 937-1828 or Heather.Subbert@NorthlandChurch.net

FOLLOW US @NorthlandChurch



Governing Elders

Danny Gordon
Chairman
407-937-1762
Danny.Gordon@NorthlandChurch.net

Pastor Vince Taylor
Vice Chairman
407-937-1769
Vince.Taylor@NorthlandChurch.net

Mike Kemp
Finance Committee Member
407-937-1765
Mike.Kemp@NorthlandChurch.net

John Cortines
Human Resources Committee Chairman
407-937-1761
John.Cortines@NorthlandChurch.net

Dr. Nick Maroulis
Human Resources Committee Member
407-937-1766
Nick.Maroulis@NorthlandChurch.net

Chris Storms
407-937-1763
Chris.Storms@NorthlandChurch.net

Owusu Amaning
Human Resources Committee Member
407-937-1764
Owusu.Amaning@NorthlandChurch.net

Contact Info

530 Dog Track Road
Longwood, FL 32750
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Hello@NorthlandChurch.net
Main Phone
407-949-4000
Main Fax
407-949-4020
Northland Bookstore
407-949-7199



Gus Davies
Interim Senior Pastor

Pastor Gus was born in Sierra Leone, West Africa. His foundational years of discipleship commenced after he trusted Christ at a Youth For Christ rally. He and his wife, Jeneba, have been partners in the ministry since their marriage in 1984—Colossians 1:28-29 has been their goal for life and ministry.

Pastor Gus and Jeneba earned scholarships to receive their masters in Christian Education at Reformed Theological Seminary. While in America, their first daughter was born. After moving back to Liberia when the program was done, their second daughter was born. He and Jeneba both taught courses at the African Bible College.

Pastor Gus and his family returned to America for a year to assist at a church in Deland. Although he had opportunities to continue ministry in Deland, he and

Jeneba were reminded of Colossians 1:28-29 and decided to return to Sierra Leone.

In Sierra Leone, Pastor Gus served as the National Director of Youth for Christ and as national pastor and church leader at a local Presbyterian Church. He and Jeneba planted three other churches around the city.

Pastor Gus and his family returned to Florida in 1996, after the outbreak of the civil war in Sierra Leone. The warm welcome they received from Northland assured them that this was the body of believers they would call home. While at Northland, Pastor Gus has served in numerous roles.

Most recently, Pastor Gus was appointed Interim Senior Pastor, beginning July 1, 2020. Pastor Gus believes this role will strengthen and stretch him. He longs to finish strong with a legacy that Jesus is building His Church at Northland and beyond with the people He redeemed. He desires to see the fruit that abides in His Kingdom for His glory as we continue to worship, witness, and declare His Name.

Care and Counseling

Crisis Phone line
407-949-7187

Oviedo Counseling Clinic
407-244-3308
oviedocounseling.com

Open Doors Counseling Longwood
407-900-3218
opendoorscc.com

Minister on Duty (MOD)
407-949-4000

Prayer
Prayer request line 407-949-4000
Pray.NorthlandChurch.net

Connecting at Northland

First Steps
Michelle Rattigan 407-937-0545
Michelle.Rattigan@NorthlandChurch.net
Text "Northland" to 97000

Belong & Grow Partnership
Barbara Olsen 407-949-7183
Barbara.Olsen@NorthlandChurch.net
Northlandchurch.net/Belong&Grow

Volunteer Opportunities
407-949-4000
Volunteer@NorthlandChurch.net
NorthlandChurch.net/Serve

Growing at Northland

New Believers
Susan Gurnett 407-760-6979
Susan.Gurnett@NorthlandChurch.net
Text "NewtoGod" to 97000

Discipleship
Susan Gurnett 407-760-6979
Susan.Gurnett@NorthlandChurch.net
NorthlandChurch.net/Disciples

Small Groups
Bethany Durys 407-937-0541
Groups@NorthlandChurch.net
NorthlandChurch.net/Groups

Classes, Studies and Ministries
Barbara Olsen 407-949-7183
Barbara.Olsen@NorthlandChurch.net
NorthlandChurch.net/Ministries

Family and Student Ministries

Children's Ministries
Debbie Blahnik 407-949-7162
Debbie.Blahnik@NorthlandChurch.net
NorthlandChurch.net/Children

Student Ministries
Alex Anderson 407-949-7295
Student.Ministries@NorthlandChurch.net
NorthlandChurch.net/Students

College & Young Adults
Bethany Durys 407-937-0541
Bethany.Durys@Northlandchurch.net
NorthlandChurch.net/YoungAdults

Access (Disability) Ministries
Heather Subbert 407-937-1828
Heather.Subbert@NorthlandChurch.net
NorthlandChurch.net/Access

Local and Global Missions
NorthlandChurch.net/Missions

Mission Trips
Matthew Shiles 407-937-1768
Matthew.Shiles@NorthlandChurch.net
SomedayIsToday.net

Disaster Response
Judy Head
Judy.Head@NorthlandChurch.net
NorthlandChurch.net/DisasterResponse

Prison and Jail Ministry
Matthew Shiles 407-937-1768
Matthew.Shiles@NorthlandChurch.net

121Hope Anti-Trafficking Ministry
Meg Johnson 407-937-0547
Meg.Johnson@NorthlandChurch.net
NorthlandChurch.net/121Hope

Homelessness
Thomas Denove
tmdenove@gmail.com
NorthlandChurch.net/Homelessness

Pastoral Services

Baptism

- (Infants to 5-years-old)
Diane Jones
Diane.Jones@NorthlandChurch.net
- (Grade School)
Debbie Blahnik 407-949-7162
Debbie.Blahnik@NorthlandChurch.net
- (Adult/student)
Julie Meeker 407-937-1772
Julie.Meeker@NorthlandChurch.net

Weddings
Kevin Urichko 407-949-7166
Kevin.Urichko@NorthlandChurch.net

Funerals
Julie Meeker 407-937-1772
Julie.Meeker@NorthlandChurch.net

Pastors

Gus Davies
Interim Senior Pastor
Gus.Davies@NorthlandChurch.net

Sean Cooper
Outreach Pastor
Sean.Cooper@NorthlandChurch.net

Marshall Hall
Worship Pastor
Marshall.Hall@NorthlandChurch.net

Rob Hemphill
Student Ministries Pastor
Rob.Hemphill@NorthlandChurch.net

John Tardonia
Pastor, Care and Counseling
John.Tardonia@NorthlandChurch.net

Dr. Kevin Urichko
Family Pastor
Kevin.Urichko@NorthlandChurch.net

**NEW SERIES STARTING
THE WEEKEND OF APRIL 10**



AFTER *God's* **HEART**

SEE MORE ON PAGE 32.