



a **YEAR** *in* **REVIEW**

FOR THE
CITY.

FOR THE
CAMPUS.

FOR THE
GLORY
OF CHRIST.



for the CITY

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“DO THIS EVEN MORE”

Written by Mark Vance

In his letter to the Thessalonian church, Paul wrote this word of encouragement:

“About brotherly love: You don’t need me to write you because you yourselves are taught by God to love one another. In fact, you are doing this toward all the brothers and sisters in the entire region of Macedonia. But we encourage you, brothers and sisters, to do this even more.” (1 THESS. 4:9-10)

A similar word of encouragement comes to my mind for Cornerstone

Church. When I look at the grace of God at work in our church this past year, all I want to say is, “Do this even more.” I don’t have a word of rebuke calling for repentance; I don’t have radical new ideas of what I hope God does in us; instead, I have a simple prayer for God’s grace to enable us to continue on a path of faithfulness and fruitfulness.

This “Cornerstone Year in Review” magazine is full of stories of God’s grace at work in our midst. May God give us all the grace to continue on this path together, to “do this even more.”

a reflection

from one of our elders

BRANDON PATTEN

Elder of Cornerstone since 2016

Corrie and I have been married for 16 years. We have three children: Addie, 13, Charlie, 11, and Jack, 9. We have lived in Ames and been members at Cornerstone since 2009. Corrie is a pediatrician at McFarland Clinic and I am a dentist at Ames Family Dental. I have had the privilege of being an elder at Cornerstone for the last six years. We were drawn to the unique ministry outreach opportunities and next generation focus of Cornerstone. The relationships we have enjoyed at Cornerstone have been a rich blessing to us.

Here are a few of the other blessings we are celebrating today at Cornerstone:

01

Emerging from the COVID-19 pandemic and into the “new normal” has been incredibly difficult for so many organizations and businesses. With that said, as a church family and by God’s grace, we have grown stronger and healthier, and the future looks incredibly bright!

02

There is a palpable vibrancy of spirit-enabled life in our church. It is so encouraging to see people drawn to the word of God, receive it, be changed by it and live faithfully, as a result. It’s not perfect living, but faithful living.

03

There are so many examples of people living faithfully in our midst — from sacrificial investment in the schools to foster families caring for children that need families, youth and Salt ministries and Celebrate Recovery. So many areas of life are impacted by the gospel that brings hope to a fallen world.

My most frequent and consistent prayer for myself and Cornerstone is that we would be faithful with what God has entrusted us with here and now. It is a stewardship we do not take for granted and I pray we continue to be a faithful presence in Ames and to the ends of the earth.



FROM LEFT:

Brent Haverkamp,
Alex Tuckness,
Brandon Patten,
Troy Nesbitt, Shane
Rothlisberger, Mark
Vance, Doug Hensley,
Jared Van Cleave



for the
CITY

**in the
past year**

42 people were served, including 25 children, through the Home For Awhile program

45 Salt students regularly volunteered at Mitchell Elementary

Over 8,000 lbs of food were donated to the Story County Emergency Food Pantry

Over 3,000 school supplies were donated to Story County students

13 schools were supported through the Winter Gear Drive

\$1,200 in gift cards were given out

HOME FOR AWHILE

Written by Patricia Ewing

I have always loved to thrift. Though I don't need any more "stuff" at my house, I can't pass up a good deal, and love the hunt. My thrifting hobby and Home for Awhile were a perfect match. Somewhere, along the line, I got connected with Gavin and Cathy Simmons who were gathering household goods and setting up apartments. I started contributing items. After a time, I was asked if I would like to participate in the Home for Awhile ministry. I accepted. We now have a closet at Cornerstone to store all the household items. I search thrift stores, garage sales, and a Facebook group for free things. I have even been known to do a bit of dumpster diving. Cornerstone members also contribute. My Home for Awhile partner, Kevin Little, does the heavy lifting when furnishing an apartment and picks up the furniture that I find. When the families

leave the apartments we provide them they can take whatever they need, so it's possible that we might have to entirely furnish an apartment each month; thus we have the need for a lot of "stuff."

I don't participate in choosing the families for the apartments; nor do I ever meet them. But I do know they don't have a home — and maybe haven't had one for a long time. My favorite part of setting up an apartment is to make it homey for them. I always ask the age and gender of the kids so I can try to use appropriate bedding; and I like to color coordinate the bathrooms, hanging up towels and washcloths so it looks inviting. I want it to be more than a temporary shelter for them. When they walk in, I want them to look at it and say, "We're home."

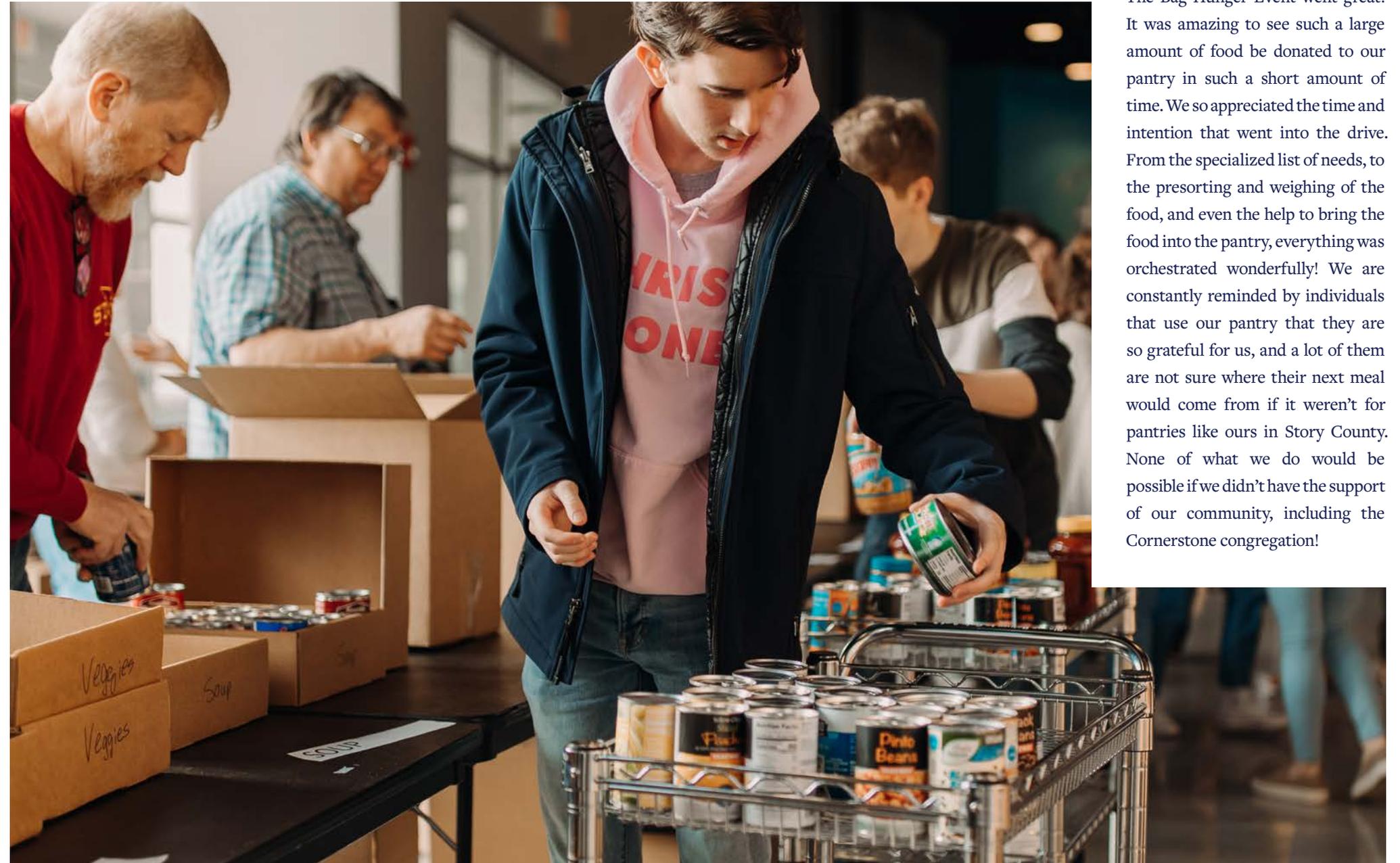


CITY MINISTRIES

BAG HUNGER

*Written by MICA's Story County
Emergency Food Pantry*

The Bag Hunger Event went great! It was amazing to see such a large amount of food be donated to our pantry in such a short amount of time. We so appreciated the time and intention that went into the drive. From the specialized list of needs, to the presorting and weighing of the food, and even the help to bring the food into the pantry, everything was orchestrated wonderfully! We are constantly reminded by individuals that use our pantry that they are so grateful for us, and a lot of them are not sure where their next meal would come from if it weren't for pantries like ours in Story County. None of what we do would be possible if we didn't have the support of our community, including the Cornerstone congregation!





FROM LEFT: Jess, Caedmon, Payton, Josephine (Jo), Easton, Reagan, and Jason

ADOPTION & BLESSING

Written by Jason Crawford

“To redeem those under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba, Father!” So you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then God has made you an heir.”

GALATIANS 4:5-7

Adoption. A most unfortunate blessing. A blessing birthed out of tragedy. Adoption should cause us to pause and say, “this is not how things should be.” Whether through death, poverty, abuse, or a variety of other issues brought on by the curse, a child is separated from their birth parents and raised by another.

From the moment God formed our family, adopting a child has always been something we felt called to do. We always envisioned having two biological children, and then adopting a young child. But as the old saying goes, “Man plans, and God laughs.” Over ten years ago, after having

two biological children, and as we began the adoption process, we would discover we were having a surprise third biological child. At the same time God was slowly softening our hearts to the potential of adopting not one, but two children. In a short time, our plan of three kids turned into five.

As a family of five, living off of one salary, we had no idea how we would provide for five children, let alone pay for the expensive process to adopt. In faith, we took the first step in obedience, and God was faithful. Even though the process was far from easy, God never failed to provide. Financially, mentally, and emotionally, he sustained us when we could not sustain ourselves. When the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) — where our children are from — prevented our children from leaving the country, God found a way. Countless obstacles were put in our path, but God fulfilled His will.

The trip home, and the first few months with our children, would test our trust in God. Our son, who we were told was five (we would later find out he was seven), tried to run away from us multiple times at the airport, and a few more times his first

few weeks of being home. He was a scared child, in a foreign land, with no real way to tell us what he was feeling. And yet God was faithful.

All of our children would slowly adjust to the “new normal,” and our adopted children quickly learned English and were able to verbally communicate with us. We were feeling blessed beyond what we deserved. But God wasn’t done blessing us through our children.

A few years after our adopted son arrived, we saw a post on Facebook from another family who had adopted from the DRC. The mom said that her son remembered having two brothers, who he thought had been adopted, and proceeded to give a few details of his past. A past that sounded very similar to our son’s past.

After talking with the other family a bit more, we decided to do a DNA test, and lo and behold, they were brothers! And if that wasn’t enough, the other family had named their son the exact same name we’d given our son.

God has a sense of humor.

A year or two after finding our son’s brother, the other family

located the boys’ birth mom. We had been told that our son’s parents had died. In reality, our son and his brothers were taken from their family and adopted out. So we now have that connection with, and are able to help support, his birth mother.

We could not have written a story as exciting as what we’ve gone through. And we are excited to see what else will be added to the story in the future.

We often hear, “what you have done is such a blessing for your kids.” Yet as I reflect, it’s been us who have been blessed by God through our children. It is our kids that have reminded us of our relationship with our Savior.

We were once lost in our sin. Orphaned from our heavenly father, and not deserving anything from him. Yet He chose to adopt us as his own and make us heirs to his kingdom. Just like our kids, we are not perfect, and we have our issues, but God never stops loving us or calling us his sons and daughters.

So even though adoption is birthed out of tragedy, what a blessing it is to be able to look at our heavenly father and call Him “Abba! Father!”

WINGS OF REFUGE

Written by Kay Rice

We all know that evil exists but most of us believe that we and our loved ones are safe and secure, separate from the tragedies that simply happen to other people in faraway places.

My first wake up call to the reality of sex trafficking in this country came several years ago as I was reading a National Geographic article about a U.S. truck stop where human trafficking was rampant. Those images haunted me for a long time but I felt powerless to help. It was easier to focus on more positive pursuits and avoid something so dark and sinister.

God kept nudging, so I became a supporter and advocate for International Justice Mission (IJM) — a U.S. organization that rescues human trafficking victims from around the world. This was a good start but deep down I knew I should be more intimately involved.

Next, I became part of a state-wide network of anti-human trafficking agencies which

collaborate to bring public awareness and help victims right here in Iowa. This, too, was another great step — just not enough to fulfill my passion to help victims in a more personal and Christ-centered way. When God brought Wings of Refuge to Ames, He brought clarity and confirmation that this was where He wanted me to serve, and my life has not been the same.

The tragedy of sex trafficking now has a face, a voice, a personality. I've met rescued survivors and God has allowed me to play a small part in helping them find safety, worth and hope through Jesus. What was missing from all my other “good intentions” was the importance of introducing damaged souls to the Savior who brings total healing.

Currently, Wings of Refuge has two restoration homes in the Ames area where women “leave the life” of sex trafficking to find a fresh start. The mission at Wings is to provide a safe, Christ-centered atmosphere of healing: heart, mind, body and soul. The vision is that each survivor will know she is valued, has hope and is loved by Jesus.

I have had the privilege to serve on the Wings Board of Directors for four years. I get to walk alongside men and women from area churches who have also been called to come together as the body of Christ to protect and nurture the hurt and vulnerable. It's seldom easy for our staff who tirelessly and patiently help our women take small steps forward. Trauma care is complicated, messy and life-long. Our board tries to shepherd this ministry by praying and caring for our staff, the women we serve, and bringing awareness that sex trafficking is real and it happens faraway and close to home.

Volunteering with Wings has opened my eyes to the marginalized around me. Those are the ones predators target. No little girl says she wants to grow up to be a prostitute; life circumstances often give her no other choice. I believe my experience at Wings has helped me be kinder and more sensitive to the needy around me. I'm also grateful to be part of Cornerstone Church which generously supports Wings and other local missions.



VAN MINISTRY

Written by Scott Thompson

I've had the great pleasure to drive the 15-passenger Cornerstone Church van to pick up people (who don't have their own transportation) for worship service on Sundays. I am thankful for Haven Carlson as my co-pilot most of the time, and for Terence Rice, who is driving now, too. It's been quite a joy! There are just such a variety of unfortunate situations where one finds themselves without transportation, and it's wonderful being able to fill the void. But it has gone beyond just being a “ride to church.” For the most part, it has been a regular group of riders on a regular basis, which has fostered a spirit of camaraderie and an openness to also be able to share concerns, needs, and prayers... and just good ol' fellowship in the Lord. I love the people that ride in that van! And then there's also that new person to pick up, and the relationship that ensues. It's always an adventure. A good adventure. God is good.

“If anyone has this world's goods and sees a fellow believer in need but withholds compassion from him—how does God's love reside in him? Little children, let us not love in word or speech, but in action and in truth.”

1 JOHN 3:17-18



GOSPEL-CENTERED FUN

Written by Corrine Lawler

Cornerstone Kids has been a gift to our family! It allows my husband and me the blessing to worship & learn in church without worrying about our children. The Cornerstone Kids team and volunteers provide a safe, fun, educational, and gospel-centered environment; a place we feel confident they are cared for and secure on Sunday. The Cornerstone Kids program also equips our family with resources to help improve Bible literacy and gospel-centered conversations in our home. They have provided us with monthly memory verses, Advent and Lent activities to do as a family, and material to promote engaging family discussions around what we all learn at church. The staff know and love our kiddos and are such a valuable resource to us as we shepherd our children; this collaboration is a true picture of the body coming together to raise up the next generation to know and love God, His Word, and the people around them.



KIDS

ENERGIZED SERVING

Written by Evan Kluch

I think my favorite part about volunteering at Cornerstone Kids is the energy the kids provide. Each child is a little vessel of compact energy and when you find their favorite activity they bring the excitement in full force. One of my classroom's favorite games is the game of statues. In this game, they all make funny poses and act like statues. I've seen everything from intense games of statue rock, paper, scissors, to a scary claw statue. It is my job as the seeker to find the ones that move, proving to me they are imposters.

Another one of our favorite games is Ninja. Essentially, we become Ninjas. We love to sneak our way to the South Auditorium as ninjas, hiding against the wall and staying quiet. Once we make it to the auditorium, however, it becomes one crazy dancing party. When I say it becomes crazy, I mean these kids can dance, and they dance like no one is

watching. But I am watching and it is so much fun! We then get to sit down and learn God's Word through a video that always makes the kids smile or laugh. We finish off our time by discussing the video and how we can love one another more like Jesus. All in all, time with the kiddos is something I will always cherish because I love watching them learn about God, and do it with a smile on their face!



in the past year

There are, on average, 375 kids on Sunday mornings

Over 200 members have served, with about 120 serving on any given Sunday

Over 300 kids went to Hidden Acres for Cornerstone Kids Camp. The Salvation Bell was ringing throughout the entire week!

About 300 kids attended and 200 volunteers served during VBS week

Over 70 families participated in Parent Commissioning



A PRIVILEGE TO SERVE

By Jaime Anderson & Emma Burgason

YOUTH

What a privilege to lead the same small group for the last seven years. There have been three specific girls that have been involved in our group for the entirety, as well as a number of others who have joined along the way. Watching them grow over the years has been an absolute joy.

They started out as squirrly sixth graders, barely making it through a single prayer without giggling, and now there are certain weeks that we, as leaders, sit back and watch them lead entire discussions with an enormous amount of grace and truth. They've grown into wise, mature ladies who are quick to encourage one another in their struggles and challenge others to love God more. They've impacted our lives just as much as they'd claim we have impacted theirs.

We have grown to be like family. Between the two of us, we have gotten to announce five different pregnancies to them. We treasure their part in this season of our lives. Every Wednesday night we've spent together has been special, but we feel extra significance this year, knowing our time together is coming to a close.

We will forever cherish the relationships we have formed during our years with them. Neither of us predicted this would be our story when we decided to start leading seven years ago, but it is a true testament to God's faithfulness. He's provided for each of us in a variety of different ways, and has allowed us to fully commit to being present throughout these girls' years in Cornerstone Youth. We are forever grateful.

"We will forever cherish the relationships we have formed during our years with them."



AN INTERVIEW with the Seventh Grade Ballard Boys Connection Group

Ok, tell the people who you are.

CalLEN: We're the seventh grade Ballard Cornerstone Youth small group!

AIDEN: Children of Jesus

LEIF: We are crazy monkeys with big foreheads.

ZACH: Just a big group of guys who hangout, learn about God, and make each other laugh.

DYLON: Um, 7th graders.

What did God do in your lives this past year at Cornerstone?

AIDEN: He has made new church plants, I believe.

LEIF: He (God) brought me to Him and because of him I was baptized!

DYLON: He helped me get closer to my family.

What are some of the favorite memories you had from the past year?

CalLEN: When all of us went to the lake and had a bunch of fun!

AIDEN: Just the first night being back & the excitement of that.

ZACH: Connect Night and when we play games, some Fortnite, and hide & seek outside.

LEIF: Probably the fall retreat.

Keeping in mind the distancing of Covid year, how have you been impacted by the friendships within your small group?

CalLEN: I found more friendship in this group than any other place.

AIDEN: They're like family. I can always rely on them.

LEIF: Well, it's been pretty nice, I am close with these guys and can trust them and tell them anything.

DYLON: They helped me stay closer to friends from school.

What is one lesson you have learned from Youth?

CalLEN: Friendships are cool, but you should always keep your eyes on God.

LEIF: When we did the brokenness thing a couple weeks ago, that impacted me. We live in a broken world because of sin and we all try to escape that brokenness with different things, but the only way out is Jesus.

ZACH: Being quiet and listening to your leaders helps a lot. (Leader: *laughs* you're saying that just because I'm asking you!) No, It's true.

DYLON: Treat others the way you want to be treated!



in the past year

The highest ever Fall Retreat attendance with 150 high schoolers & 207 middle schoolers

29 students and leaders went on a service trip to Minnesota

30 students & leaders served at Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota

CELEBRATE RECOVERY

Written by Kevin Little

I have witnessed so many stories of God's faithfulness this year, but one sticks out to me in particular. As I've been getting more involved with the Celebrate Recovery program at Cornerstone Church, I've been placed directly in the lives of some of the most amazing people who want God's grace and Jesus' love to change their lives. (Side note: Anonymity is an important guideline in any recovery program, so I've asked this person if I could share our story from this year. He agreed.) One such person is the man whom I sponsor, Marcus. I've never been a sponsor before for someone directly as it relates to a recovery program, but it has been the best thing that's happened to me and has opened the door to a great friendship. He has been six months sober as of this writing and is eager to serve in the community. The story that I want to tell you about happened when we were searching for an apartment. At the time he had been evicted from his previous apartment. We spent weeks searching and waiting, only to be denied at five locations. He had been living in a hotel room, and the cost was getting prohibitive. We had been in communication with one option that sounded promising, but then suddenly lost contact with them for a week. Needless to say we were getting discouraged and worried. Marcus and

I finally gave up one night and I said, "Whatever you have in mind, Lord, we know it's better than what we want, but we could really use a hint." The next day some paperwork we had been waiting on arrived. The possible apartment option called back and said they had an opening! Marcus and I got there just as the full-time staff were leaving. They took the application from him and he got approval right then! Not only did he get approval for the one-bed apartment, but a two-bed apartment (that was \$150 cheaper) had opened up that day—and he could move in right away! Marcus and I learned, yet again, how God's timing is perfect and to trust His plan not ours. Cornerstone Church is now his home church, as well as mine, and we've had a blast building a family of brothers and sisters at church and Celebrate Recovery together.



GROUPS

in the past year

There were 183 Connection Group leaders

59 Connection Groups were regularly meeting

166 people participated in the Fall women's and co-ed groups

80 women met regularly through the Spring Women's Group

120 men met regularly through the Spring Men's Group

400 people met regularly through the Encore Group

AUTHENTIC COMMUNITY

Written by Jenna Van Winkle

Our connection group over this past year has been one of authenticity, vulnerability and support. God, in His wisdom, continues to bring new people into our group who seemingly fit like a puzzle piece into the story of another group member, allowing us to connect deeply with one another. We have been fortunate to experience these unique pairings as we opened our group to five new couples over the past year and a half. As they come in, we continue to be in awe of how God has crossed paths of people in His perfect timing and loving ways.

In one situation, one couple has been primarily struggling with the boundaries of their parents. As it turns out, another couple

MINISTRY

in our group has been walking through an eerily similar situation for more than a decade. Another new couple was brought to us as they returned to the area after an unexpected job loss. They were immediately so transparent and vulnerable in sharing their story. Not too many months after they joined, another couple in our group was told they were going to be impacted by a lay-off. A third situation was from one of our newer couples. They are working through a tough situation with their child marrying a spouse who doesn't seem to be walking in God's ways. They were having a hard time knowing how to best love their child in this tricky situation. Sure enough, another couple shared about the time when their eldest son started walking down a similar path. He was pursuing a serious relationship against his parents' wishes, and ended up moving out and defying them for several grueling months, only later to return after the romantic relationship fell apart. Fast forward to today; their son is now married to a

fantastic godly woman, whom they are happy to embrace as their new daughter-in-law.

These stories are testimonies to the importance of a connection group. These tough situations can seem more manageable and less isolating when walking through them in close community with one another. The empathy that has been displayed, the prayers that have been prayed and the hope that has been given as they share their stories of triumphs and defeats is overwhelming. We desire for our connection group to be a place where people show up, are authentic, and are in community together. Loving each other through good stuff and hard stuff, always being able to point each other to Christ as we walk alongside one another, challenging one another, encouraging one another and holding each other up in support.



LIVING WITH INTENTION

Written by Erica Nesbitt

If I had to choose one word to describe our connection group, I would choose the word “intentional.”

Over the past year or so, we have seen God continue to foster a deep desire in the hearts of our CG members to pursue intentionality. Whether the intentionality is with each other, within the school district, community, serving, or lamenting and rejoicing, we have seen intentionality become a more natural pursuit. Through the messages from Sunday, life-on-life relationships, a book we’ve read together, or reflection of God’s Word, the Lord has graciously begun to show us our human selfishness as He reveals the true meaning of biblical community.

As we seek to minister to those around us, we often find ourselves experiencing God’s blessing in our own lives. The accountability shared and the deep friendships created build a bond of unity as we seek to walk in a manner worthy of the Lord. We are humbly thankful as we reflect on the work God has done — and is doing — in our hearts as we prayerfully desire to impact the lives around us for His Kingdom.



EQUIPPING

CRASH COURSES

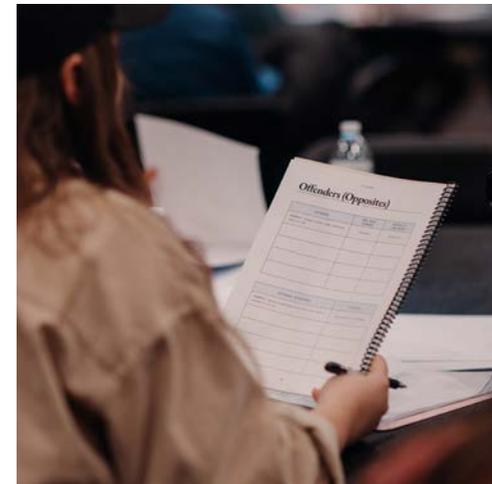
Written by Connie Pitcher

Taking the crash course “Image of God” was a tremendous blessing. It was a great witness of the way followers of Jesus need to be able to come alongside one another and be willing to hear and learn from communities that have suffered and been marginalized within our own beautiful borders. To be part of a body of believers that is willing to talk about an uncomfortable and painful subject from a scriptural, not political, viewpoint was refreshing and properly unsettling.

What a blessing for me to be unsettled and to be invited to understand how much mistreatment an entire population of God’s image bearers have been subjected

to. What a blessing for me to be exhorted to shed past biases, especially biases that I didn’t believe existed (but did exist through my own willful ignorance).

The materials and verses shared, and the books that were promoted have been great tools for me. A major highlight of that event for me was witnessing a group of predominantly Caucasian believers who desired to honor and appreciate Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and who chose to applaud and treasure him on the eve of the day that recognizes him. This action affirmed my belief that we could, and should, celebrate his legacy and intentionally carry it forward.



EQUIP WEEKEND

Written by Mikki Johannes

The mental health Equip Weekend in November was so encouraging and informative. It was great to see so many people from our community interested in learning more about mental health for their own personal growth, and to be a support to friends and family that may be struggling with their own mental health. I found it encouraging to see Cornerstone continue to make progress in reducing the many stigmas that come with the words “mental illness.” There were three topics discussed: community, vocation, and technology. Each one explained how these topics affect our mental health from a biblical point of view. The most helpful for me was to learn how technology negatively affects my mental health and my relationship with God. The practical suggestions offered about how to set healthy boundaries with my phone have improved my overall mental health, and I feel truly grateful for these tools.

I was also given the opportunity to speak during the closing session about my personal journey with mental health challenges and the ways God has worked in my life. Cornerstone also did a podcast

recording of my story and showed a short, deeply emotional video during the session. This was terrifying, yet so empowering for me because, for a large part of my life, my voice was not heard; so being able to be vulnerable and share God’s rescue story of triumph, and freedom from trauma, addiction, and suffering was so uplifting. I’ve heard from dozens of people that the story God has written in my life has been so helpful and encouraging.

I’m truly grateful for Cornerstone giving me an opportunity for my voice to be heard. This whole experience made me feel loved and has continued to remind me how much more I am dearly loved by our Savior, and just how special each one of us are to our Eternal Father.

in the past year

- 210 people attended 101 classes
- On average, 70 people attend the monthly crash courses
- 160 people participated in Equip Weekend: Mental Health
- 260 people participated in Equip Weekend: Blueprint Foundations

A photograph of three young men standing in a hallway, smiling and looking towards the camera. The man on the left is wearing a dark hoodie. The man in the middle is wearing a dark jacket over a red shirt and a grey beanie with a logo. The man on the right is wearing a dark jacket. The background is a blurred hallway with wooden paneling and a sign with the letter 'M'.

for the
CAMPUS

**in the
past year**

There were 319 Salt Company Student Leaders for the 21-22 school year

900 freshmen attended The Salt Company Freshman Kickoff

Over 500 gospel conversations happened with ISU freshmen

1,650 students attended The Salt Company Fall Kickoff

234 students attended The Salt Company Freshman Retreat

815 students attended The Salt Company Fall Retreat

3,700 students (over 1,000 from ISU) attended The Salt Company Conference

46 students were baptized

THE SALT COMPANY '21-22

Written by Kaleb Dunsbergen

This has been the year in which I have been constantly reminded and seen God's Faithfulness to the undeserving; of whom I may be the most undeserving. This year has been what I have affectionately called the "Year of Mephibosheth" in my own life. Mephibosheth, after being essentially adopted into the family of King David in 2 Samuel 9, asks "What is your servant, that you should notice a dead dog like me?" Over and over again this year I found myself asking the same question of King Jesus.

God has done incredible things by taking a group of random dudes in all different stages of life and putting them together so they can spur one another on towards loving Christ Jesus. My co-leader and I had spent a total of two hours together before our first connection group. We have full-time college students and part-time students working 40 hour weeks. We have freshmen in college all the way through juniors in college; business students and engineers. Those who have spent their whole life going to church, and those who are

professing atheists who still come to hear more about the love of Jesus. I have no reason to be a C Group leader who gets the opportunity to pour into 15 dudes every week, but God put them in our group for a reason.

The Salt Company has created so many opportunities to see college students grow and take steps of faith. One member in particular comes to mind. A sophomore who had never been to Salt just happened to show up an hour early to our connection group because he thought it started at 7pm instead of 8. Yet God perfectly orchestrated it that our C Group would be eating Jethro's wings in the lobby of our dorm just to bond with one another. We invited him to join our group and he keeps coming back to Salt and to C Group every week. He took the step of faith to

come to the Fall Retreat and got to hear Dan Nemmers open up about his prior alcohol and drug use. He then opened up to the group about his own struggles with alcohol and drugs and ended up

ripping up his fake ID in front of us. The next weekend he claimed was his "first sober weekend" during his whole time in college. Yet again, Jesus looked upon two "dead dog" C Group leaders and decided to use them to further God's Kingdom.

This story, and the stories of many other guys stepping up and confessing sin, triggered an absolute tidal wave of love and community with the guys in our group: guys opening up their homes to host C-Group; guys offering to have others over for dinner; guys going out for coffee with one another. A group of 15 dudes who are willing to pray and pursue Jesus with one another is such a rare thing and it has been an absolute privilege to be able to call them "My Boys."

The Salt Company has blessed me in so many ways! Not a day goes by I am not reminded of the Lord's faithfulness through Cornerstone and Salt. God continues to move in incomprehensible ways. Thank you to Cornerstone and all who have sacrificed so much and worked so hard to advance God's Kingdom. The campus of Iowa State University and the City of Ames are our mission fields.

THE

SALT

COMPANY





IFC FAMILY

Written by Rick Beam

So I'm sitting on a couch, savoring the tasty chicken biryani I just consumed, discussing how and why God could forgive the unforgivable, with a group of college guys from India, Indonesia, and Malaysia. And I'm thinking, how does an over 30-year old, (ahem) 50-year old, Midwestern, introverted, small town guy find himself sharing the gospel with a group of very intelligent international fellas on a cold night in central Iowa?

Let's go back about two years ago. Transplanted back to Iowa from Pennsylvania, we found a house 15 minutes from Cornerstone. We chose Cornerstone because of experiencing the awesome college ministry vicariously through our son. We have always had a heart for college students and thought there might be an opportunity to get involved with The Salt Company. In pursuing that, God nudged us in a little different direction, ministering to college students from the rest of the world. We heard about the International Friendship Connection (IFC) ministry in a morning service and both immediately felt the urge to get involved. Information was gathered, plans were made... and then 2020 happened.

Things were delayed for a year, and we were able to join our first IFC family group last fall. I knew how the family groups worked: meet once a week in a host family's house, prepare a meal, sing a couple worship songs, open the Bible and share our beliefs with international students. Maybe a board game and some dessert afterwards. What I wasn't prepared for was the openness of the conversation and the deep connections that quickly formed. I have struggled with sharing my faith at times, often because I sense others don't really want to honestly listen.

With our international friends we have a meaningful discussion every week. They are curious as to what I believe. They also ask sincere questions and we see moments where they are seeking the answers. Many are not believers and they have sometimes openly disagreed with what I believe. That can be difficult. But they always respect what we share. And then we talk about our jobs, or hobbies, or family. We laugh. We identify with each other. We connect. And they keep coming back every week.

Both my wife and I feel like we have adopted another dozen adult children.

IFC

INTERNATIONAL
FRIENDSHIP
CONNECTION

We have a second family of kids of a different skin color and very different backgrounds. We get to eat some fantastic foods we didn't know existed. Most importantly, we get to share the truth of the gospel every week to a group of young people seeking the truth. I hope the truth deeply impacts our international friends' lives. It has already impacted ours.



in the past year

An average of 60 internationals attended IFC every week

Over 30 countries were represented

Over 270 internationals heard the gospel through IFC

150 people went on the IFC Getaway retreat (Network-wide) from seven Salt Network campuses, up 33% from the year prior

There were 63 IFC leaders across nine family groups, plus one missional community

THE SALT COMPANY OSU

Written by Joe Printy

My whole life I was a non-Christian going to church. I lived my life trying to find myself by filling it with sin and finding my identity in that sin. It took me farther and farther away from who I wanted to be. Because of that, and along with the pandemic, I entered a state of depression. It led me to the point of asking why am I here, and what is the point of life. Then at the start of my junior year, Salt Company came to Ohio State and my friend, John Mark, really wanted to go meet some people. I did not want anything Christ-related and only went because it looked good to other people. I wanted to look like a Christian for other people but, in reality, wanted nothing to do with it. Through The Salt Company I learned what the gospel is and how it applies to me. It was a slow process of God working at my heart until one night I was overcome with emotion of how lost I was. I accepted Jesus in my heart on the night of October 15th, and got baptized at The Capital Church on March 27th.



in the past year

- 42 students attended The Salt Company Conference in Des Moines
- 4 students plan to go overseas this summer
- 23 students applied for leadership
- 8 people have been baptized
- The Capital Church has 49 members

CHURCH PLANTING

COLUMBUS
ATLANTA
SYRACUSE

“Letting go of everything else allowed me to grab onto Jesus with open hands.”

FINDING CHRIST & COMMUNITY

Written by Natalie Strom

I grew up in church, so I knew about Jesus but didn't really know him. My freshman year I went on a mission trip to Arizona, and I was in a dark place. Taking this trip alongside Christ followers helped me realize Jesus could pull me out of this dark place. The fall of 2021 at Ohio State was when I really felt like I came to know Jesus on a personal level. I felt a lot of comfort in knowing He loves me even though I am nothing compared to Him. This was such a relief after feeling constantly like my life was out of control.

In February 2022 I went to The Salt Company Conference. There, I realized I couldn't just pick and choose what parts of the Bible and Christianity I wanted to apply to myself. I needed to make all of it a priority in my life. Letting go of everything else allowed me to grab onto Jesus with open hands.

Between Salt Company, attending the Capital Church, and having conversations with my campus group, I've started to fully understand what Jesus' death on the cross means and why it matters. I can't imagine where I'd be without these people and the community I've found.





THE SALT COMPANY IN ATLANTA

Written by Josh Wassenaar

God is on the move through The Salt Company in Atlanta!

We met Adam during our mission trip to campus. He started coming to Salt regularly from the very first week this semester. He had a really lonely first semester and since coming to Salt he's shown so much growth as a follower of Jesus. He's going to be a student leader next year and is getting baptized in two weeks.

Abigail started attending Salt in the fall, and in October 2021 she chose to place her faith in Christ! She plans to be baptized in May 2022 and has been growing in such a sweet way.

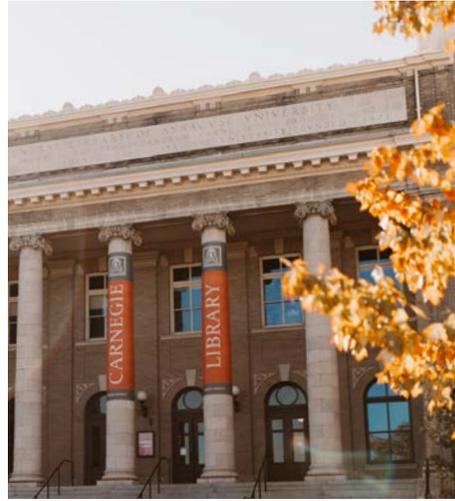
Another student who has been attending Salt told us, "I've been living my life for me. I've now realized that I need to reorient my priorities to live for Christ first."

The Salt Company is influencing more than just college students in Georgia. A couple here in Atlanta donated funds to pay for every student's transportation and housing costs for The Salt Company Conference in Iowa. They made it possible for 19 students to attend. We are so blessed!

What an honor to serve the God of the universe in Atlanta, Georgia.

in the past year

- 19 students attended The Salt Company Conference in Des Moines
- 35 students attended Fall Kickoff
- 45 students attended Spring Kickoff
- 2 students plan to go overseas this summer



RADIANT CHURCH

Written by Keaton and Grace Hewitt

My wife, Grace, and I got married in October of 2021. As soon-to-be college graduates (Spring 2022), we had much to consider with our future and asked the Lord for direction pertaining to our next step in life. For some time, we entertained the romantic idea of exploring a new state, moving somewhere with more to offer than Iowa. But soon, the conviction grew: if we were going to move somewhere, our intentions shouldn't be self-serving, but rather gospel-centered. This isn't to say that it is wrong to travel and experience the sights and warm weather, but we wanted a greater purpose for moving. So we considered joining a church plant.

As students graduating in May of 2022, we wanted to check out the church plant

getting sent out our year with Jason Lankford. First, we got to know Jason and his wife Caroline. Then we went on the vision trip in the fall. In full honesty, on our drive home from the future plant site in Syracuse, New York, we were underwhelmed by the city. Compared to the cities we were considering moving to prior to this trip, Syracuse lacked the trendy and updated allure of most big cities we've been to. So, Grace and I put the thought of moving to Syracuse on hold for a while.

As time passed, we attempted to talk ourselves out of it. We even felt the pull to stay in Iowa as the difficult reality of leaving our family and friends behind set in. Yet, over and over, we kept sensing God was calling us to Syracuse despite our inward opposition. Eventually, we decided that we were going to heed God's prompting, so we went over

to Jason and Caroline's and let them know we would be moving with them.

Ultimately, Grace and I decided to move across the country to be a part of the Radiant Church plant in Syracuse not because the city is attractive to us and is a dream destination, but for the mission found there. We are going not to fulfill our own desires but to invest in the Kingdom and work alongside our brothers and sisters reaching the lost. We want to die to our comfort, flesh, and desires and live our lives first and foremost for the Glory of Christ and the fulfillment of His commission to go and make disciples.

in the past year

95 students visited Syracuse between the two vision trips

30 people have committed to the Radiant Church launch team



PSALM 34:5

“Those who look to him are radiant with joy; their faces will never be ashamed.”

in the
past year

45 new members have
joined the Cornerstone
Church family

114 people were baptized

for the

GLORY of CHRIST

SURRENDERING TO CHRIST

Written by Colin Johnston

I had always rejected Jesus in my life, yet found a generalized appreciation for Christianity – all the good hope and meaning it brings into other people’s lives. There were things I disagreed with though and did not want to live by. I enjoyed my rebellion and my individuality, loving the pride that living life on my own gave me.

I’ve been surrounded by Christians and befriended them all my life. But I never gave my life to Christ.

Mark Vance gave a sermon over Psalm 2 on January 23, 2022.

Psalm 2 explains the idea of rebellion and what happens to those who rebel against God. He explained that, even though we have been given authority by God to rule over the whole earth, we still break His laws. And if we do not respect and recognize the Lord, then we will die in our rebellion. But all who take

refuge in Him are happy. Throughout the sermon, I felt myself becoming more and more convinced of something. I’d listened to impactful messages in the past but none like this. It was the first time I truly felt fear of God. I have been nonchalant about the choice to believe all my life, but on that day the choice was clear: God is the only way.

I have been
MADE
NEW

Because of the friendships I’ve made with Christians, my faith in Jesus Christ has only grown stronger. I now have a personal appreciation for Christianity and our God. The Christian friends in my daily life and my Christian friends in FarmHouse Fraternity have helped me grow so much closer to God. I give thanks to all of those who have taken the time to talk about faith with me over the years, positively or negatively, because it has led me to put my faith in Jesus Christ today.

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation: the old has passed away, and see, the new has come!”

2 CORINTHIANS 5:17



FINDING IDENTITY IN CHRIST

Written by Ruby Lopez

I grew up in a Catholic household believing in God and knowing of Jesus, yet never understanding what relationship with God meant or grasping the gravity of Jesus on the cross. I prayed only when things got hard. When I got to college I was quickly disappointed by the temporary fulfillment of worldly things and approval of others. I felt so alone, empty, and unsure of who I was. In the summer of 2019, I attended Summer Salt with a friend. Shortly after, I joined a connection group and consistently attended Salt and Cornerstone Church. Each week I was wrecked with emotions in the best way.

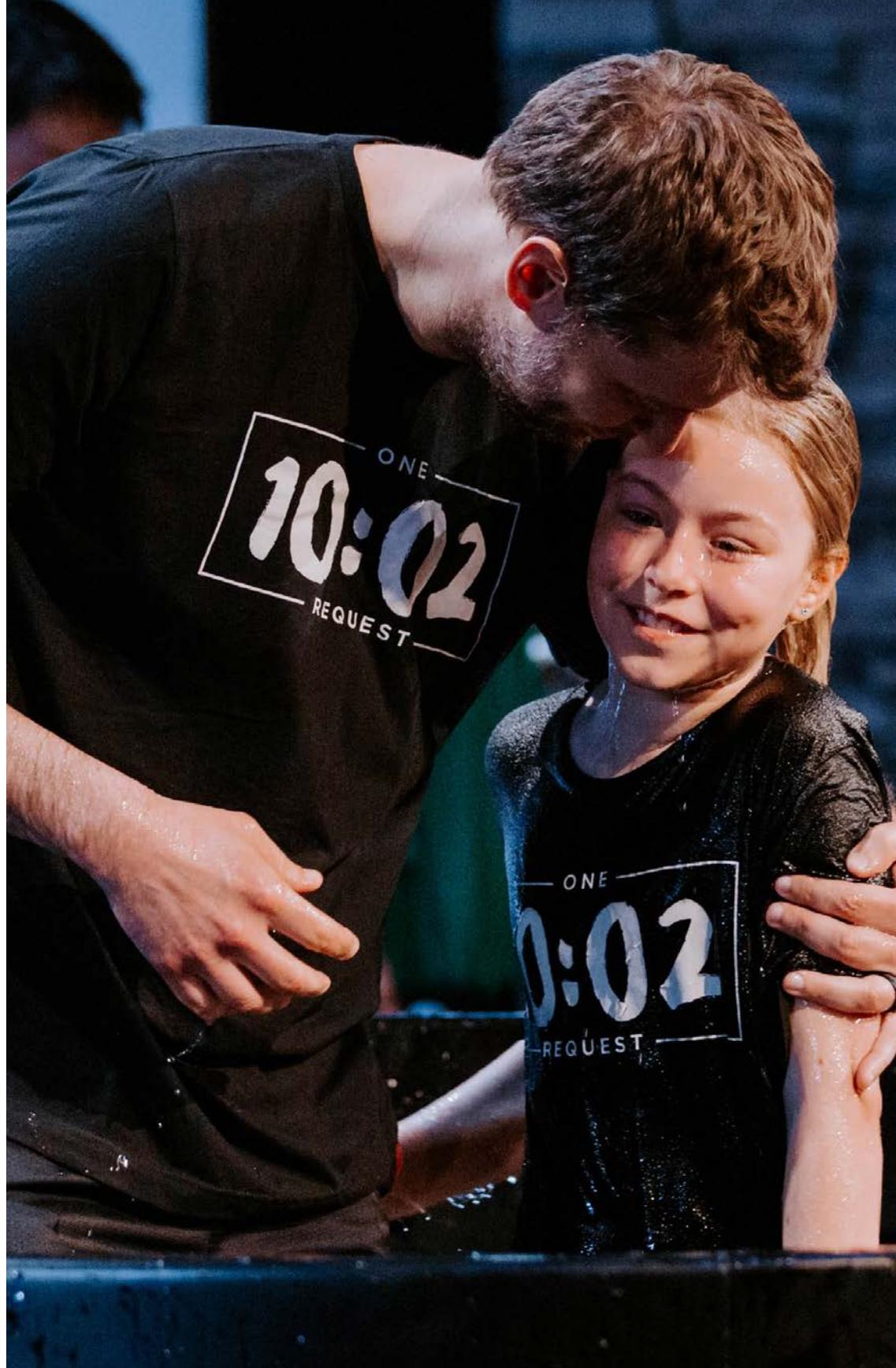
I realized I was placing my identity in things of this world, seeking validation from others; this consumed me with anxiety, and I struggled with my overall happiness. Everything changed when I discovered that my true identity was in Christ. I began to seek God and authentic community. I began to truly understand who Jesus is, what He had done, and what that means for me as I walk through life in faith. For the first time, I felt the weight of my sin and the gravity of what Jesus did on the cross for me. On October 3, 2021, I stepped into obedience to proclaim my identity in Christ and to give God glory for His work in my life! To me, baptism was an outward act of obedience declaring that I was once dead in sin, but because of God, my sins have been washed away, allowing me to live a new life in Jesus.

LIVING IN THE LIGHT

Written by Madison Van Meeteren

I grew up in the church knowing and claiming the name of Christ, but I had never truly lived it out. As I grew up my identity was placed in others' perception of me, the friend group I was in, or how I performed academically or athletically. During the pandemic of 2020, God started to work in my heart in big ways, and helped me to realize I am who He says I am, and that my true identity is in Christ. Coming to college, God provided me with such strong community through Cornerstone Church and Salt Company. Through participating in and leading a connection group, as well as being involved with my discipleship group, I was able to find freedom from past sin and, for the first time, truly lived in the Light. Baptism was my outward declaration of my inward transformation because of Christ.

Baptism was my outward declaration of my inward transformation because of Christ.



I CHOOSE TO FOLLOW JESUS

Written by Colton Whitaker

I have attended Cornerstone my entire life and I know I am a sinner and need God. I am a believer in Jesus and I wanted to honor Him by taking the next step into baptism. I have followed Jesus all my life and baptism was the next big step to worship Him.



My dad baptized me which was extra special because he is one of the main reasons I started to follow Jesus. He is a true believer and one of my biggest role models. Getting to share in front of everyone that I choose to follow Jesus was amazing!





REFRAMING MINISTRY

Written by Michael Sampson

For the longest time, I thought that the only ways to work in ministry were through the roles of either a pastor, a missionary, or a worship leader. Amongst the multitude of things that I've learned in this past year, I've come to see just how wrong that view was.

Since May of 2021, I've been able to serve alongside some wonderful people as a member of the communications team

at Cornerstone Church. This has allowed me to utilize the passions and abilities God has given me for videography and storytelling to help share stories of His faithfulness

to His people, give others a glimpse into the experiences of the various parts of the church, and to communicate a vision of what the Lord is leading us into next! Before I began serving as a part of this church, I never gave much thought to the value of intentional rest in my personal life; I had no understanding of what it meant to keep the Sabbath. Yet, now, I see the present necessity of it, both in terms of honoring God by setting aside the busyness of everyday life, but also

in nourishing my physical, mental, and spiritual health.

More importantly than that, this experience I've had working as a part of the communications team has truly reframed my view of how I can glorify Jesus Christ in the work of my hands. It was initially easy for me to think that the "best" story or highlight video was the one that uses the most rigorous

"My ultimate purpose is to make much of Jesus; I'm called to excellence in my work, but it is His Name that ought to echo through whatever I do."

means of production, complicated editing styles, and highly appealing visuals. I won't deny that quality is important to producing a compelling narrative, but truthfully, it's not about any of that.

My ultimate purpose is to make much of Jesus; I'm called to excellence in my work, but it is His Name that ought to echo through whatever I do.

I'm incredibly grateful for what God has allowed me to be a part of this past year, and I eagerly await whatever He is bringing along next, both for myself, and for Cornerstone Church!



SUMMER TRIP TO KENYA

Written by Garrett Belzer

This summer, I was given the opportunity to travel overseas to Kenya with the mission of meeting college students, learning culture, and ultimately, spreading the gospel of Christ. I knew that this experience would open my eyes, but little did I know that it would change my entire perspective on the Christian life.

I used to subconsciously believe that the Great Commission was either for missionaries or really holy Christians and that sharing the gospel was optional. But this summer, I learned that not only is it for all Christians, it is absolutely necessary.

Living in another country for nearly two months, I was stripped of many things: many idols of money or simple freedoms, my comfort, people's approval, social media, simple pleasures, etc. Many times I thought that having these things taken away would negatively affect me. But I soon came to realize not only was it incredibly beneficial to me, but it was so life-giving and soul-enriching.

To be stripped of everything allowed me to live a life that was solely focused on knowing Christ and making Him known.

But shouldn't we always live like that? I am so thankful that God took me 8,000

miles from home to strip me of my pride and apathy and show me how I'm supposed to live a life to the full (John 10:10). Kenya has some incredibly beautiful sites and lovely people, but NOTHING compares to seeing someone go from death to life — a joy that God does not need us for, but something He deeply desires for us to take part of in our everyday lives.

Now that I am home, my prayer is that my experience overseas is one of many Spirit-led catalysts, among those within Salt Company, to radically love and obey Christ, behold and cherish His Word, and ultimately revolutionize my walks with Christ — killing my “cultural Christianity” once and for all.

It has now been nine months since I have returned from my summer trip. Since then, the trip has affected me in multiple different ways and in many of my decisions moving forward. I decided to join the international side of Salt Company, IFC, to reach international students and share my faith with them. I have met many friends from all over the world and have had the blessing to share my faith with them. The trip also helped me realize my love for ministry among college students and led me to accept a position working for Salt Company next year. I

GLOBAL

will be serving on staff as a Salt resident in training and growing in the faith. But the most important way the trip affected me was in my routine of daily living.

Specifically, this means three things changed for me. The first, to abide well and radically and intentionally spend time in God's Word, studying it, resting in it, memorizing it each day and inviting others into our quiet time. Secondly, it changed how I see community. Connection group now becomes a place of not just confession but active repentance. It becomes a place of equipping in God's word, sharing the gospel and actually going out with our groups and doing that, as well as sharing in wisdom. Lastly, it changed how I live and evangelize. My desire is to intentionally share the Good News of Jesus with people in my classes, at my work, and in my home.

I will pray for the nations. I will help fund missions with God's money. I will reach internationals. I will live on mission.



“To be stripped of everything allowed me to live a life that was solely focused on knowing Christ and making Him known.”



in the
past year

18 students went on summer trips in 2021

62 students plan to go on summer trips to seven different countries in 2022

7 people from Cornerstone were sent out overseas long-term

a gospel goodbye

from Pastor Shane

Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will travel to such and such a city and spend a year there and do business and make a profit.” Yet you do not know what tomorrow will bring—what your life will be! For you are like vapor that appears for a little while, then vanishes. Instead, you should say, “If the Lord wills, we will live and do this or that.”

JAMES 4:13-15

It’s been a year of sensing the subtle rebuke of James 4. But when the Lord brings the sting of rebuke to his children, his kindness is also ever present.

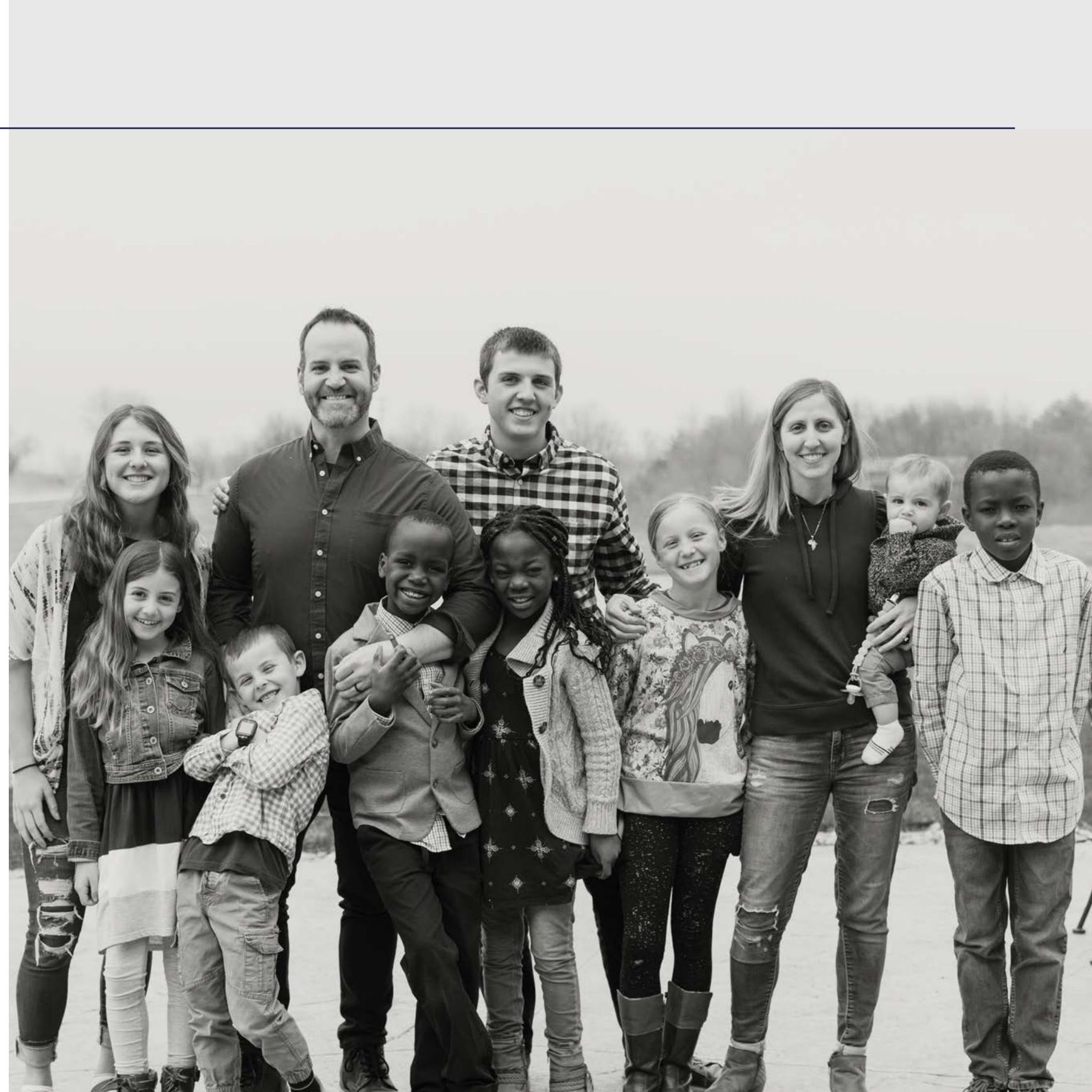
“I have a 15 year plan for our lives.” Those were the words I announced to my wife when I got home from the office one day in mid-December, 2020. Our director team at Cornerstone had just spent a week together participating in a team-building, personal strengths assessment, and life planning workshop. It was a truly life-giving week, and one of the highlights of the tumultuous year that was 2020. I emerged from that time as confident as ever in how God had uniquely created me and what it was he was calling me to do. And the truth was, I was already doing it. I had found my sweet spot, and it was serving as a pastor at Cornerstone Church of Ames, caring for

and encouraging the church family. Our family was flourishing here. We loved this church, this city and our neighborhood. I loved where I was and what I was doing, and I wanted to do it for a long time.

What I didn’t know was that within one month of energetically developing my 15 year life-plan, we would learn that my wife was pregnant (a mere six and a half years after we thought we were finished having biological children), our US visa application for our adopted 11 year old was denied with the state department intending to revoke our adoption approval, and my dad was diagnosed with a terminal lung disease. We found ourselves living in a swirl that was quickly gaining momentum.

With my wife’s pregnancy progressing, the reality of my dad’s illness beginning to set

in, and our desperate attempts to gather the documentation needed to appeal our son’s visa denial, I began to sense a growing tension between the ministry entrusted to me at Cornerstone and the needs of my family. In April 2021, I visited with both Mark and Troy about these tensions, sharing how for the first time in my 16 years of pastoral ministry I was feeling the impact our life decisions, particularly related to the expansion of our family, were having on my capacity as a pastor. I made it clear that I didn’t regret any of those familial decisions for a moment, but the limits of my capacity to care well for both flocks entrusted to me were being stretched. Both Mark and Troy responded with tremendous grace and encouragement, ensuring me I was fulfilling my role at Cornerstone faithfully, and that this was a unique and





challenging season for me. They assured me that I could have whatever space I needed to continue to navigate these familial challenges.

In August, little Tyson LeRoy was born, and incredibly, our visa appeal was granted, ultimately leading us to bring our son, Jordan, home from Africa in October. Both were extremely exciting events for our family. Unfortunately, during Tyson's delivery, my wife, Michelle, suffered a tailbone injury, making her recovery long and difficult. In addition, my dad's illness began visibly progressing, leading me to greater consideration of how to best care for my parents during this season. Mark and the elders generously blessed me with a two month family medical leave, allowing me the necessary time to care for my family. It was during this time away from my

pastoral responsibilities at Cornerstone that I began to sense something that I never saw coming and that certainly wasn't part of my 15 year plan:

The Lord was releasing me from vocational pastoral ministry. Even now, typing that sentence fills my eyes with tears.

Shortly after returning from the medical leave, I informed Mark and Troy that I felt the Lord was calling me to move back to NE Iowa to be close to my parents, and that I would be taking an indefinite break from pastoral ministry. As had been their pattern all year, both responded with overwhelming compassion and kindness. They were true friends to me throughout this season, and the tears shed by each of us were many and genuine.

This decision was the most agonizing of my life, largely

because apart from being a husband and a father, pastoring at Cornerstone Church has been the greatest honor and blessing of my life. I've been here for nearly 12 years, and I still am shocked that I have been granted such a privilege. It is not lost on me that very few pastors will get to experience the joy of pastoring in a place like Cornerstone. Why God would show me such kindness is beyond my comprehension.

Equally perplexing to me was the Lord's design to have me born into the family of His choosing. My parents are a gift beyond measure. Upon hearing of our decision to move, many have expressed how honorable of a thing it is that we are doing. Honestly, that seems a bit odd to me. Nearly every good thing in my life is somehow connected back to how faithfully my parents have lived their lives;

and to be frank, they have more than earned the right for their children to meet them in their greatest hour of need.

The tears I shed in 2021 were in greater measure than the rest of my adult years combined. And yet these tears of grief are the fruit of a deep love for the pastoral stewardship the Lord has so kindly granted to me. I believe God made me to be a pastor. Although this next season may not include vocational ministry, I pray He allows me to be a pastoral presence wherever I am for the remainder of my life.

I may not know what the next 15 years hold, but I know this: the kindness of the Savior is relentless. He is near, and He is good. And it has been pure joy to proclaim the glory of Christ along with the saints at Cornerstone Church. You are deeply loved, friends.

with love, the Rothlisbergers

FOUNDATIONS LEARNING CENTER

Written by Betsy Schmidt

Foundations Learning Center (FLC) opened its doors August 23, 2021 after months of prayer, planning and preparation. Over the last year, so many things have shown the faithfulness of God and His blessing over our faithful presence in the community of Ames. From the very beginning, when FLC was just an idea, people have been praying for this opportunity to love families in Ames well. God has been so faithful in answering those prayers through our staff team, the families we serve, state initiatives, and through Cornerstone members' generosity.

Since opening day we have had a qualified core staff team called to nurture & teach the children walk through the doors. These staff reflect our mission of being "Together for Story County" by faithfully attending a variety of local churches and college ministries. Their gifts and talents have been a reflection of

how God has uniquely crafted each of us. In the first three months, we went from two children attending to opening a new classroom with full enrollment. We have been so blessed to have a variety of families attend that are excited about our mission, and grateful to have consistent care for their children. We are thankful that these families continue to entrust their children to us and speak highly of us throughout Ames. They are the heartbeat of our center.

We are thankful for the funding the State of Iowa allocates toward alleviating the cost of childcare, even when the hoops to attain it are lofty. These funds have been a breath of fresh air in some of our more difficult months. By our nature, we are dependent upon state funding and initiatives that encourage childcare. God has clearly laid childcare on the hearts of our legislators and government as they to continue discussing ways to provide support working families.

We've been so grateful for the partnership between Cornerstone and Foundations Learning Center. Cornerstone's effort to share their gifts has been life-giving to our mission and dreams. They have generously given their space and Overflow Budget funds, as well as shared—through a variety of their ministries—what our needs are in order to help in our growth and flourishing. God's

consistent faithfulness to Cornerstone Church has equated to His faithfulness to the Foundations Learning Center.

God has been faithful to answer prayers to see and love our neighbors. He has been faithful in revealing our gifts and talents and how to use them for the Kingdom. He has been incredibly kind to us. Our prayer is that He would continue to be the foundation of this work.

OVERFLOW

2 COR. 9:10-12

Now the one who provides seed for the sower and bread for food will provide and multiply your seed and increase

BUDGET

the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way for all generosity, which produces thanksgiving to God through us. For the ministry of this service is not only supplying the needs of the saints, but is also overflowing in many acts of thanksgiving to God.



WHAT IS THE OVERFLOW BUDGET?

We are convinced that God has blessed us to be a blessing. One example of that commitment to generosity is our "Overflow Budget." Each year, we intentionally set our spending targets below anticipated giving so we can give away the "overflow" to see Gospel work expand locally, nationally, and internationally. Over the past year, we set aside over \$1.1 million toward Overflow. These are stories of what God has done through your generosity at Cornerstone.



CALLED OVERSEAS

Written by Hudson Kopp

It all started in the summer of 1998. I was not even a thought in my parents' mind yet, but this was the year when Cornerstone Church sent my parents to Central Asia for what was supposed to be just a two year trip. Two years turned into a couple more and that turned into decades; fast forward 24 years and they are still in the exact same city, doing the Work. Growing up as an missionary kid (MK) has its advantages and disadvantages, but I am so incredibly thankful to have had the opportunity to see up close what God was, and is, still doing in Central Asia. To have examples of what it looks like

to surrender your own plans and follow God's calling for your life has been so impactful!

When I graduated high school and left the familiar nest of Central Asia to come to Iowa State, I had a couple dreams in my head, but the biggest was to live a comfortable life in the States surrounded by a loving family. I knew and understood the Great Commission but thought that as a MK I had served my time and I wanted to just blend in and be normal! Thankfully, God gave me an opportunity through Cornerstone to go on a Salt Company overseas summer trip to Southeast

Asia and my dreams quickly changed. Being able to spend the summer with the sole purpose of sharing Christ, and Him crucified, with many people who had never even heard of the Name of Jesus before, rocked my world! I saw many people's lives become transformed by the gospel and was constantly in awe of how He was pursuing people from every tongue and nation. How could I not want to be a part of what God is doing

among the nations? How could I not surrender my own plans in order to join with the mission He has called the global Church into, to go and make disciples of all nations? Seeing the lostness of Southeast Asia and getting a taste of God's plan to fulfill the Great Commission, motivated me to pursue long-term work overseas.

Getting back after that summer I wanted to drop out of school and just go but, I still had two years left in college.

“My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is perfected in weakness.”

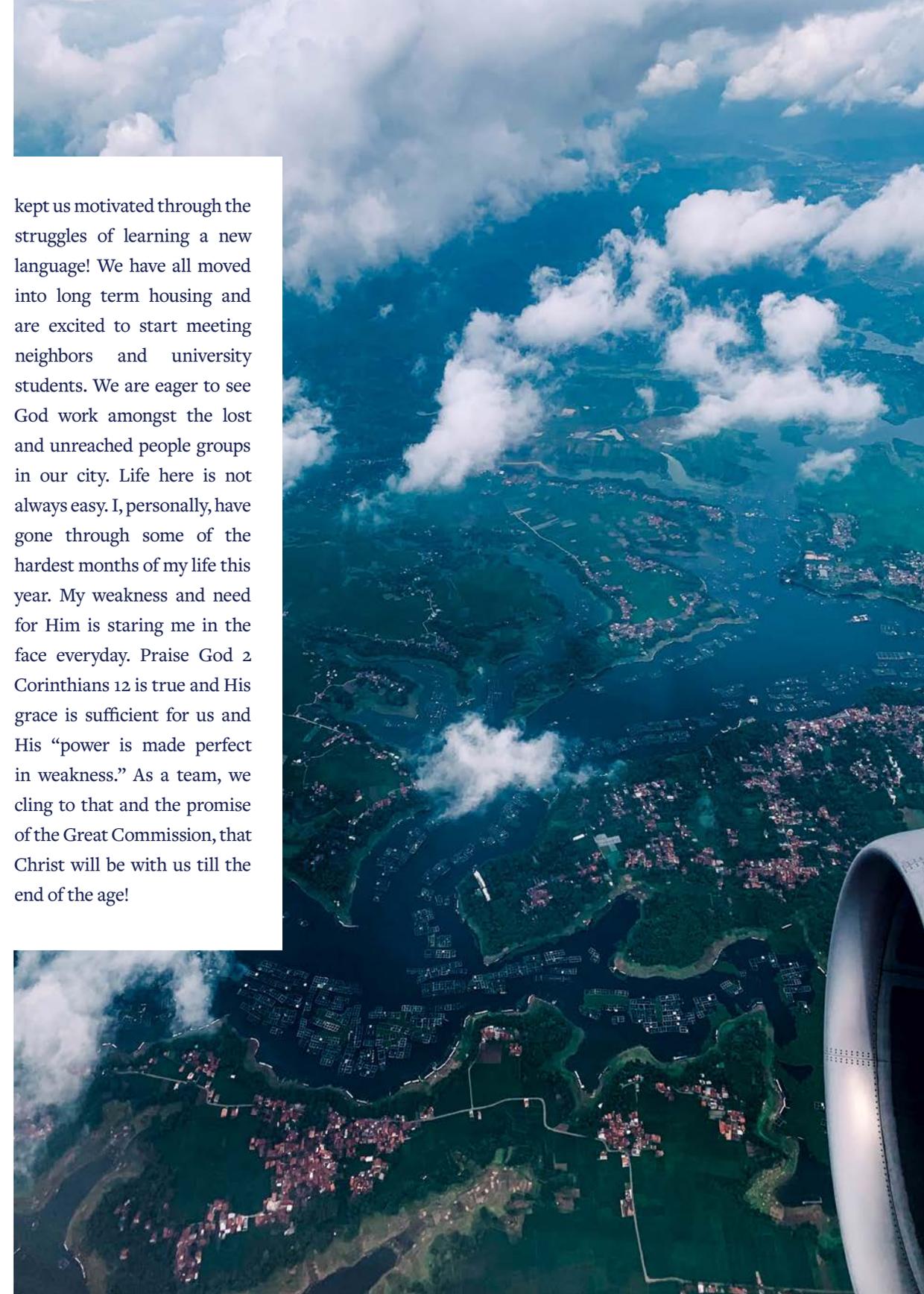
2 COR. 12:9



Thankfully, God gave me patience, two years to learn how to live for Christ in the States, and led me to a team going to a different country in SE Asia. This team had a passion for college students and seeing a revival start in the country through Christ capturing the hearts of the local university students. This, along with the opportunity to share the Good News of Jesus in a large Muslim Nation, similar to the one I had grown up in, seemed like a perfect fit. After praying a lot about it and going through the fundraising process, I officially joined that team in August of 2021. On Thanksgiving day, we landed in the country eager to see and be a part of what God will do!

Since arriving in this beautiful SE Asian country five months ago, we have hit language and culture education hard. The desire to plant a sustainable team that has the ability to share the Good News to locals in their own language, along with goodness of God has

kept us motivated through the struggles of learning a new language! We have all moved into long term housing and are excited to start meeting neighbors and university students. We are eager to see God work amongst the lost and unreached people groups in our city. Life here is not always easy. I, personally, have gone through some of the hardest months of my life this year. My weakness and need for Him is staring me in the face everyday. Praise God 2 Corinthians 12 is true and His grace is sufficient for us and His “power is made perfect in weakness.” As a team, we cling to that and the promise of the Great Commission, that Christ will be with us till the end of the age!



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While we could not print every story that was submitted, we would like to make them all available to members. To read the stories not included here, please visit:

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