

STORIES OF HOPE

PASTOR'S MEMO



One of the most overused words in the English language has to be—**AWESOME**. You get off of the roller coaster Banchee and people say, “That was awesome!” Or you overhear someone at a restaurant refer to the key lime pie as “Awesome”. And then you get a text from a friend who can babysit while you get your hair done and you say, “Awesome”. If we were from a foreign land I am quite sure we would be confused. Does it mean, “good”, “fun”, “helpful”, “tasty”? Actually “awe” referred to terror or dread in old English. It morphed into a more neutral meaning over time denoting *extreme* emotion. So, if it is “awful” it’s extremely disappointing, but if it is “aw-some” it’s extremely pleasing. So what about when we use “awe” in reference to our posture before God? Well, there probably should be a little bit of both. My sin is *awful*, not just unfortunate. It ought to grieve me as it grieves the One who made me. But likewise God’s

grace is *awesome*, not just accommodating. It ought to thrill me as it thrills God to give it. This summer in our series, **WONDERSTRUCK**, let’s explore together just how *extreme* the God of the Universe really is. Wonder-ful, worthy, shocking, mysterious... truly **awesome**. Indifference is impossible.

On the Journey!

Stephen

MAKING DISCIPLES: KATIE JACKSON

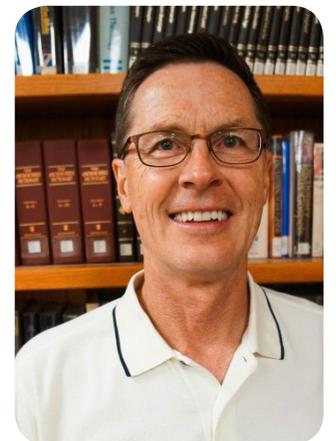
This summer I was asked to teach an art class on Sunday mornings for Kids’ Ministry. I didn’t think twice before answering, because it seemed simple. Of course I’d love to teach art to kids, why not? It was a good question as it turns



out. Jim Tinsley told me that it was because I was available, and not like “I don’t have much of a life” available, but available in the sense that, for the last four years God has been working and moving in my heart. God asked me to do it, so I did. In any case, I’m very excited for this class because I want to show the kids that they can worship God in many ways, including art, and that He finds each of their works good and valuable.

GROWING TOGETHER: MARK NARLOCH

Throughout my recently completed four-year term as an elder, the Lord has been changing me. Through recent personal trials, the Holy Spirit has been teaching me to be more eternity-focused and to rest more on God’s promises. He is faithful to us in all things. What a blessing and privilege it has been to serve as an elder. One of the most meaningful privileges was to be invited to anoint and pray over many of you for special needs and requests. My wife Peg and I along with the other elders are excited about the direction that Hope is headed as together we focus on becoming multiplying disciples. May God help us to love people more as we relate to an ever-changing culture that needs to see and hear the Gospel.



GROWING TOGETHER: RIVER OF LIFE

River of Life Church (ROL) is located in the Cincinnati neighborhood of Over the Rhine. Hope Church, with Pastor Alvin Sanders, planted ROL in 2001. Pastor Chris Woodard is currently shepherding the over 100 person church. Over the past 14 years kids, students, and adults are finding Jesus and new lives in Him because of the outreach of ROL. God is moving in and through the congregation.



Until recently, ROL was financially supported by Hope. At the end of 2013, Hope and ROL elders convened to write a one year plan that would leave ROL owning their current building and give them funds to assist with renovations. Hope committed matching funds to ROL up to \$225,000. ROL matched our \$225,000 donation. God's miracle was ROL raising over \$239,000. The best is yet to come!

MAKING DISCIPLES: ZAC & BLAKE

When you think of teenagers, what comes to mind: a rebellious, pizza-gobbling, impulsive child trying to be an adult? That stereotype doesn't describe the teenagers at Hope who every week invest in our church by serving in Kids' Ministry. Blake Weaver is a teenager who has shepherded the same group of boys the past three years. When asked why he does it, his answer is simple, "I like working with kids." Blake has built relationships with these boys. His love for them is obvious and their love for him is just as apparent. One special relationship is with Zac LeMaster. This year Zac accepted Jesus as his Lord and wanted to take the next step and be baptized. Zac chose Blake to baptize him. Why? "Because I know him the best." Being known. Being loved. Investing in the church. That is the avenue God uses to change lives!



MAKING DISCIPLES: TRIADS

Dear Pastors Stephen and Bill,

I am really enjoying the triad experience and look forward to it each week. This "journey" is a valuable one and I recommend (or brag about) it to anyone who I get the chance to tell. I'm so glad our church is promoting it. When I saw that the first chapter was on Grace I feared it would be an uninteresting repetition of a topic I have heard about for over 35 years. To my surprise and delight, it reinforced God's love to me in a way I had not previously experienced. My prayers are more seasoned with praise, thanksgiving, and gratitude for what He has done. I guess we all know this discipleship life continues to be a refining process. My triad is helping with that. Thank you for this program. I believe God is glorified in it. I hope to see it grow and... MULTIPLY.



Blessings,
Chuck Lovell

GROWING TOGETHER: THE MOFFETTS

Have you ever been in a situation that totally overwhelmed you and caused you to question God? Unfortunately a couple months ago our family was dealing with this scenario. Due to unforeseen circumstances our income dropped dramatically and we were struggling to pay bills and keep food in the house for our family of four. We continued to pray and wanted to believe that God would provide, but to be honest there were times we questioned. In spite of our doubt, God did provide. He showed us His unconditional love in so many ways! God provided not only delicious meals prepared by others, but also money that enabled us to get caught up on our bills. I am so thankful to God for His abundant provision and the love He showed us through the family of God. This experience has definitely strengthened our faith in our loving Father.

