

# STORIES OF HOPE

## PASTOR'S MEMO



*“Our whole being by its very nature is one vast need... crying out for Him who can untie things that are now knotted together and tie up things that are still dangling loose.” C.S. Lewis*

I'm drawn to that last image—bound-up things in me that only God's grace can unwind and the unraveled mess that is me at times that only God's grace can pull together. Recently I've been a bit unsettled and haven't been able to put my finger on a particular cause. Have you ever been there? Sadly, in times like this I often unconsciously look to others and to experiences to settle me or satisfy my discontent. It often just worsens. Humbling. No matter how frequently or passionately I teach on these things, I am still a learner too... and have a long way to go. But thankfully, as He has many times over, our gracious Father is breaking in and inviting me to bring my vast need to Him who is able and delighted to restore me through new experiences of His presence and grace. It's always a good time to cease striving and to return to the Father. With Him we can be our real selves—desperate for mending—and receive needed assurance and affection. **LOVING God as Father...** begins again as His love lands in our hearts in a fresh way.

*On the Journey!*

*Stephen*

## GROWING TOGETHER: LISA COREY

Sometimes God works quietly and steadily, yet with powerful results. My summer Sunday School class exemplifies His quiet forces. God whispered to me to share my relaxing, fun activity. The volume of His whispers increased, so I volunteered to teach rubberstamping and card-making to rising 2nd to 5th graders. Planning revealed this to be an opportunity to exercise giving of things, of ourselves, and of God's love. Sending surplus cards to Happy Church to start a card store was perfect! Week One, many cards went home, but as the month progressed, so did God's quiet, steady work. Work became all for Happy Church and focused on others' likes and needs. Possibly the most amazing progression was in one child. In a rare display, a student with significant autism gradually shifted from the fringes of class to enjoyment of class activities through love, patience, and acceptance from classmates. Sometimes God works quietly and steadily, yet with powerful results.



## DISCOVERING GRACE: JOCI HINNERS

This summer, an opportunity came up to go on a mission trip to New York City. I'll be honest, the idea of getting away from Mason was equally as appealing as the work we were going to be doing. We worked with, and taught, ESL to people of many South Asian cultures. I was happy to overuse my favorite question, "What's your life story?" This question holds a lot of power because it is a scary topic for most people. For me, this question is the beginning of the way I choose to disciple others. While I'm still figuring out what this means to me, in light of Christ, I've been able to gather stories from Christians and non-Christians alike that give me glimpses of God. Although this trip didn't solve anything for me or magically make my life turn around, it helped me realize the importance of investing in others. I hope in the future it will help me continue to build my relationship with God.



## MAKING DISCIPLES: SHIVASANKARI

After attending an India Gospel League Children's Gospel Club (CGC) for 9 years, Shivasankari, age 18, became so passionate about the clubs and Jesus that she decided to become a CGC teacher. Shivasankari



wants to give other children the incredible opportunity to learn Bible stories and, most importantly, the opportunity to begin a personal relationship with Jesus, as Shivasankari did at the age of 12. Shivasankari attended a four-day conference in March to prepare for her volunteer position as a CGC teacher of beginner students (ages 3 to 5). During her training she learned songs, dances, and Bible stories to teach the children during their daily lessons, similar to

"I thank Jesus for this Children's Gospel Clubs. I came as a student, and Jesus lifted me as a teacher. Thanks to CGC."

– Shivasankari

a typical Sunday School class or VBS. She is incredibly excited to share Jesus with these young children.

## GROWING TOGETHER: LOIS GRIMENSTEIN

In 1991, my life changed forever, when I was diagnosed with Lupus. The disease not only affected me but also my family. The challenge of Lupus is like a roller coaster, additional complications cause uncertainty and add to the complexity of the disease. My hope and faith are in Jesus. My mother and two grandmothers were women of great hope and faith and my role models. Their hope and faith were lived out in everyday life, not just times of crisis. During times of uncertainty, my hope in Jesus sustained me, knowing Jesus was right there beside me no matter what I was facing. Over the years I have been able to share with doctors and nurses how Jesus has worked and continues to work in my life in spite of illness. It also shows how God can use us anywhere. Often the fact that I'm a retired nurse opens a door to share how I deal with my illness and how Jesus is my hope and helps me deal with it. Recently, I was able to share with a young nurse and a hotel maid in Chicago. The hotel maid had just been diagnosed with Lupus. We had a wonderful conversation and glory was given to the Lord.

