



# **Bethlehem** Baptist Church

2016 Annual Report

# Annual Report 2016

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## Jason Meyer

### PREACHING & VISION

*They feast on the abundance of your bouse, and you give them drink from the river of your delights.  
For with you is the fountain of life; in your light do we see light.—Psalm 36:8–9*

Dear Bethlehem,

I have now been the *Pastor for Preaching & Vision* at Bethlehem for four years. I am happy to report that I am happier than ever in that role. I entered into this position with the hungry hope that God would give me more of himself. God has answered that prayer and then some. He has led me to drink deeply from his river of delights.

We completed our trek through book one of the Psalms this year as we walked through Psalms 17–41 in 2016. I was looking forward to preaching well known Psalms like Psalm 23, 27, 34, and 37. But nearly every week, something happened. After preparing to preach on a new Psalm, I would say something like this: “I had no idea that Psalm \_\_\_\_ was so amazing. It might be my new favorite.” I am not even going to try to single a few Psalms out. The whole series was a highlight for me and every Psalm became a favorite!

The 9-week [preaching series](#) on “Fill These Cities: 25 x ’25” was undoubtedly the most profound season of 2016 for me. In some ways, I had looked ahead to a capital campaign with a mix of excitement and nervousness (and in my weakest moments, maybe even a touch of dread). What happened instead was a measure of personal revival. The three sermons on the greatness of God will mark me for the rest of my life. The five-week focus on “pray and obey” was also a high-water mark. My heart is stirred more than ever to pray in the Spirit and spread a passion for the supremacy of Christ here in these Twin Cities and all the way out to the unengaged peoples of the world. This gospel ambition is not a pipe dream; it is divine promise. “For the earth will be filled with the knowledge of the glory of the LORD as the waters cover the sea” (Habakkuk 2:14).

I continue to be amazed by the camaraderie that has developed among the pastors and elders at Bethlehem. I really do feel like I work with my favorite people on the planet. The lines have fallen for me in pleasant places. Thank you for praying for us. We are reaping the benefits of all the blood, sweat, and tears we put into staff unity. The Best Christian Workplace Institute report from last year testifies to what God has done among us. This year I continued to taste the grace of it all. I love the joyful camaraderie and Christ-exalting harmony that the Lord has given us.

The Lord met me in 2016 through a book project on Martyn Lloyd-Jones. Crossway has an amazing series of books called “Theologians on the Christian Life.” I had the privilege of reading through many volumes of Lloyd-Jones’ sermons in order to dig deep into his theology of the Christian life. He taught that the Christian life is doctrine on fire. Doctrinal precision and experiential power go together like gas and fire, not oil and water. The result is a powerful, wonderful, worshipful explosion called the Christian life.

We talked a lot this Fall about the next 25 months. December was the first month of 25 by ’25 and it stands as the greatest month of giving in Bethlehem’s history. The year 2016 was the greatest year of financial giving in Bethlehem’s history. These things are encouraging, but we do not hope in contribution totals and set our sights on statistics. As I look ahead to all that 2017 may hold, the eyes of my heart are fixed on the God who holds the oceans in the hollow of his hand. Consider again Isaiah 40:12:

*Who has measured the waters in the hollow of his hand  
and marked off the heavens with a span,  
enclosed the dust of the earth in a measure  
and weighed the mountains in scales  
and the hills in a balance?*

Our mission is to spread a passion for the supremacy of God. If we are to reclaim this mission statement to magnify God and to make him supreme, we must repent of the way that we have made small things into big things. And then, shockingly, we have taken the Almighty God who cannot be measured and we have regarded him as small in our hearts. Repentance happens when our hearts are pierced for making much of small things and not making much of Christ. Revival happens when God gloriously and explosively breaks out of the box we put him in, and we refuse to put limitations on him. Let us pray for more and more boxes to break in 2017.



Jason Meyer  
*Pastor for Preaching & Vision*

## Ken Currie

### STRATEGIC IMPLEMENTATION AND DOWNTOWN LEAD PASTOR

*He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.*—1 Thessalonians 5:24

I am thankful to God for the privilege to participate in the shepherding of the flock and the call to spread the gospel of the glory of God at Bethlehem Baptist Church. The year 2016 has been one of intense ministry in a number of ways. I continue to view my contribution primarily in terms of serving the leadership by providing accountability, collaborating on responsibilities, and supporting the ministry efforts of those who directly report to me.

I remain encouraged as I partner with Pastor Jason Meyer's ministry and his call to Bethlehem as *Pastor for Preaching & Vision*. Pastor Jason and I continue to meet regularly (most weeks) for personal accountability and growth in holiness, to discuss ministry direction and ethos, and to address needs that affect significant segments of our body. Pastor Jason and I worked together to set the agenda for the lead pastors team (comprised of ourselves and Pastors Kenny Stokes, Dan Holst, Chuck Steddom, Jon Grano, and Tom Steller), collaborate with the chairman of the elder council (Kurt Elting-Ballard) on agenda items, and lead the rest of the pastors and staff at Bethlehem. Each of these areas has its own set of blessings and challenges. I praise God for the evidence of his grace as we addressed many issues this year.

The rollout of "Fill These Cities: 25 x '25" as a strategy for accelerating the next decade of spreading at Bethlehem has been a particularly challenging but rewarding initiative. God has given our leadership vision to trust God for Bethlehem to send workers to 25 people groups who currently have no gospel witness, plant 25 churches, build a facility for our South Campus, and strengthen our core ministries (see the *Bethlehem DNA* booklet for details).

This year I saw the Lord's provision as I was able to hand over leadership of the Downtown Campus youth ministry to Richie Stark, our new *Pastoral Resident for Youth & Family Discipleship, Downtown*. After careful consideration by the leadership, in October I was recommended to the congregation to assume responsibility as *Lead Pastor for Downtown*. I have assumed these responsibilities with a commitment to

contextualize our vision at the Downtown Campus in partnership with the pastors, elders, and other leadership among the congregation. I'm seeking to balance between gathering information (being "quick to listen") and moving ahead with the pursuit of immediate changes in our ministry strategies. One area that is challenging is our congregational care. The needs at the Downtown Campus are great in variety and depth. I am encouraged that the elders have opened the way to pursue a *Pastor for Congregational Care, Downtown*, in the coming months.

I remain humbled and thankful to God as I participate in his work to magnify his name in our church and to our neighbors near and far.

Respectfully submitted by his grace,



Ken Currie  
*Pastor for Strategic Implementation*

# Jon Grano

## OPERATIONS

*As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen.—1 Peter 4:10–11*

Bethlehem's Operations Department completed another year stewarding God's grace by serving the congregation and staff in many behind-the-scenes areas that draw little attention (intentionally) when things go well. To that end, we strive to provide gracious, dependable, efficient, effective, and problem-free infrastructure support for Bethlehem's *many* ministries—dependent on God's grace and mercy alone at every turn to sustain us and avoid problems that would reflect poorly on the God we love or the people and mission he's called us to serve.

### Team Highlights

Bethlehem's Operations team is organized into six main areas, each led by a gifted, dedicated, and servant-hearted director who oversees a particular ministry. I'm very thankful for God's provision of each one, and for the countless ways they and their teams serve to facilitate and support Bethlehem ministry. A summary of each area and their highlights from 2016 ministry follows.

### Building & Property (Scott Brueske)

*Oversees effective, efficient, safe operation and use of facilities, vehicles, and equipment.*

- Navigated the effects of two major state highway bridge projects (which now provide better campus access and visibility):
  - New I-35W County Road H [roundabout bridge](#) at the doorstep of our North Campus entrance. As part of the construction process, Bethlehem hosted a temporary "Park and Ride" parking lot for 150 cars each weekday for seven months.
  - New I-94 [bridge exit](#) to 7th Street, just feet from our Downtown sanctuary.
- Ongoing building and properties "bread and butter" ministry: room coordination, setup support and custodian services for many thousands of events and meetings each year.
- Special projects:
  - Repainted multiple Downtown Campus third floor classrooms and remodeled a

second floor classroom to better serve as a parent prayer room for Family Discipleship.

- Repainted and refreshed North Campus Commons area.
- Actively coordinated parking during Sunday Vikings games, resulting in thousands of dollars in savings.
- Thanked God for Dan Lehn's most recent tenure of faithful ministry on staff, and for the well-timed provision of Scott Brueske to replace Dan as Bethlehem's Director for Properties in September.

### Communications (Amanda Knoke)

*Oversees production of main communication materials and helps the staff maximize their communication efforts.*

- Commenced new website project, with plans to launch site in early 2017.
- Developed and oversaw Communications Survey to members and regular attenders.
- Special projects:
  - Weekly "[Memorizing Philippians](#)" *Pastors Blog* series by Pastor Jason Meyer (Extended Fighter Verses, Set 1).
  - Created/contributed to many "Fill These Cities: 25 x '25" communications pieces (worship folder inserts, [website](#), [blog posts](#), large brochure, "green dots," and posters).
  - [Bethlehem DNA](#) and *Baptism Class* booklets.
- Ongoing creation, coordination, and production of website content, *Weekly* email newsletter, monthly *Star* newsletter, worship folders and inserts, posters, brochures, seasonal guides, and social media (Facebook and Twitter).

### Finances & Accounting (Thayne Rossiter)

*Oversees design, implementation, and maintenance of financial operations and systems.*

- Deployed "[Tallie](#)," an expense management software system, to replace paper processes for check requests with a digital process to better streamline the reimbursement process.
- Implemented direct deposit of employee reimbursements to save both staff and Accounting Department time.

- Continued initiatives to make dissemination of financial information and reports more efficient, including automated payroll report generation and distribution.
- Oversaw successful annual audits for both Bethlehem and Bethlehem's 401(k) Employee Retirement Savings Trust.

### Human Resources/Office (Joby Morgan)

*Oversees human resources and office staff.*

- Continued to work on creating streamlined systems for hiring new staff, managing their benefits, giving work feedback, and other employee cycles.
- Worked with a team to successfully move Open Enrollment to an online process.
- Created an updated Employment Handbook.
- Ongoing HR coordination of all Bethlehem hiring and continued oversight and support for more than 150 full-time and part-time employees, including coordination of Bethlehem's biweekly payroll.

### Information Technology (Andrew Lang)

*Oversees design, implementation, and maintenance of computer systems, network infrastructure, phone system, office technology, and information systems.*

- Began transition from [hopeinGod.org](http://hopeinGod.org) domain name to bethlehem.church.
- Continued development of new website to be launched early in 2017.
- Updated and expanded Downtown Campus IT infrastructure:
  - Better support for new media networking platform.
  - New host servers.
  - Migrated virtualization platform from VMWare to Microsoft Hyper-V.
- Supported "Fill These Cities: 25 x '25" initiative with database support and analysis, and assisted development of Fill These Cities [website](#) and [commitment mechanisms](#).

### Media (Timothy Frederick)

*Oversees effective and efficient operation and use of media equipment in both weekend worship and weekday settings.*

- Across all campuses, 2016 was a year of equipment repair and reassignment as functional but aging equipment was moved into new roles to better manage our resources. In addition ...

- Downtown: Began multi-year project to standardize media technology for technology-equipped classrooms on all campuses.
- North: Completed move to all 9' x 16' sanctuary projection screens.
- South (Lakeville South High School): Installed live audio & video feed for new Restless Child Room location and updated auditorium video projector to brighter, HD-native model.
- Hosted a regional Church Technical Leaders "[LeadLab](#)" conference in October at the North Campus.
- Transitioned North and Downtown Campus sanctuaries to new post-spectrum auction wireless microphone systems.
- Helped staff and family balance life with ministry: Two members of staff families completed successful cancer treatments, and Tim & Julie welcomed twin daughters into the world in September.

### Other Ministry Focuses

In addition to overseeing these six main Operations areas, my role as *Lead Pastor for Operations* in 2016 involved regular participation with the following teams:

- The **"Fill These Cities: 25 x '25" team** met frequently throughout the year and provided direction and leadership to this key Bethlehem initiative. A special thanks to Tim Johnson, who chaired the team, and to Rick Segal, who provided invaluable creative direction in communicating the vision.
- The **organizational elders** and North Campus **congregational elders** (subsets of our full Council of Elders) met monthly to focus on issues having an impact on the entire church and North Campus, respectively.
- The **pastoral staff lead team** met biweekly to coordinate ministry across all campuses and help pre-process topics for the pastoral staff and elders.
- The **staffing resource team** met biweekly to prioritize and coordinate various staffing issues.
- The **Financial and Property Administrators** (FPAs) met monthly to provide counsel on a wide range of financial and property issues. In December, the congregation elected Steve Walmsley and Adam Sexton to continue serving

as Bethlehem's 2017 *Financial Secretary* and *Treasurer*, respectively.

- The **health insurance resource** team helped evaluate and select appropriate health insurance coverage for Bethlehem full-time staff—our insurance premiums dropped 4% for 2017! The team included representatives from Bethlehem, Bethlehem Urban Initiatives, Bethlehem College & Seminary, and Campus Outreach.

## Numerical Highlights

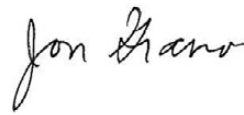
One way to view God's sustaining grace at work among us is through contribution and attendance statistics:

- Bethlehem's strongest month of contributions in December which commenced our 25-month "Fill These Cities: 25 x '25" One Fund initiative, resulted in our 2016 operating fund finishing with an overage of more than \$1.6M. Contributions of \$11.5M given toward expenses of \$9.85M allow us to set funds aside toward a future South Campus facility and to replenish a portion of our elder-recommended operating reserves. See our 2016 *Financial Secretary* and *Treasurer* reports for more details on finances.
- Average attendance (3,543) at Bethlehem's six weekend worship services decreased 5.1% compared to 2015 (3,734), with Easter weekend the highest attendance (5,558) in 2016.
- Average attendance at weekend worship services, by campus:
  - Downtown: 1,653 (2015: 1,763) in three worship services
  - North: 1,380 (2015: 1,433) in two worship services
  - South: 510 (2015: 538) in one worship service
  - The North Campus Sunday 9am worship service continued to have the highest average attendance (835), followed by Downtown Sunday 9am service (730)

## Personal Notes

As in most years, 2016 was filled with both joys and sorrows. Pam and I celebrated our 35-year wedding anniversary with a vacation on Minnesota's North Shore (a favorite spot for two who grew up in Duluth), my Mom's 80th birthday in June, and my 10-year anniversary on staff at our Annual Meeting. We also grieved along with my son-in-law and daughter, Charlie & Rebecca May, and their extended family as Charlie's father, Chris, passed away unexpectedly in early December, and with my mother-in-law, Laurie Johnson, who lost her husband, Floyd, in November after a long illness.

May God teach each of us to number our days in 2017, that we may gain a heart of wisdom.



Jon Grano  
*Lead Pastor for Operations*



## Tom Steller

### LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

### BETHLEHEM COLLEGE & SEMINARY

As *Pastor for Leadership Development*, my main focus over the years has been to develop leaders for the cause of Christ and to stimulate others to do the same. In 1997, I was immersed in creating a project that would focus my attention for the next two decades—and counting. The Bethlehem Institute was being created at that time, the first academic catalogue was well underway, and I was beginning to meet one by one the students who would be part of the first cohort.

Without knowing what an academic dean really was, I was given that role, which has lasted until 2016. One reason I could fill that role is that our president, Tim Tomlinson, understood the academic world from his 25 years at Northwestern College, many of which he served in academic leadership. He was and continues to be a tremendous coach. The other reason I could survive as the academic dean is Brian Tabb. Brian came to study with us at The Bethlehem Institute in 2005, graduating in 2007 and assisting me ever since in academic leadership and in the development of The Bethlehem Institute and its growth into [Bethlehem College & Seminary](#). In May, Brian officially became the academic dean. I continue to be Bethlehem's *Pastor of Leadership Development*, and my revised title with Bethlehem College & Seminary is now *Senior Adviser to the President, Dean of Global and Alumni Outreach, Associate Professor of New Testament*. This is a welcome change for me, first of all because it acknowledges the reality that Bethlehem College & Seminary has become a more developed institution with greater complexity of academic programs and an amazing faculty of nine with their PhD and four in PhD programs. Brian Tabb has the academic experience (MA at Wheaton, ThM at Luther, PhD at London School of Theology) and a special gifting for academic administration (along with his gifts for teaching, writing, and discipleship). So I am delighted to have officially passed the baton to Brian.

Over the years, we have remained connected with many of our alumni, but we lost track of some. In 2016, we spent a lot of effort getting a better picture of where our alumni are serving. From both the college and the seminary, we have confirmed that 75 are serving as pastors, 16 are serving in global outreach, 58 are serving in other spheres of Christian ministry, and 52 are either serving in the academy or are furthering

their own education. More specifically, our graduates are serving as pastors, professors, missionaries, campus ministry workers, editors, businessmen and women, teachers, counselors, homemakers, and in various other marketplace and ministry positions.

Each year, our current seminary students devote, on average, 350 hours a week to ministry at Bethlehem, our church plants, and other related ministries (children's teachers, small group leaders, TBI instructors, worship leaders, Jr & Sr High ministry leaders, short-term ministry trip leaders and participants, communion servers, ushers, nursery workers, outreach ministry facilitators, and more). A significant number are working on staff at Bethlehem as custodians, receptionists, administrative assistants, and ministry assistants. Many of our college students are also deeply involved in the ministry life of this church. Our faculty is serving Bethlehem as elders, small group leaders, and Sunday School teachers. So our prayer that the church and the academy would be a means of mutual blessing to each other continues to be answered in substantial ways.

In January, I had the privilege of teaming up with my daughter, Emma, to serve a number of missions teams coming from difficult places in Europe, Asia, and the Middle East at a spiritual life retreat in Thailand, under the leadership of Walt A. (class of 2003). This trip occurred right after I returned from Cameroon, having co-taught a course with Dieudonne Tamfu (class of 2010). While in Thailand, I learned that Shane (class of 2009) was with his team just a few miles down the road. We spent an afternoon together dreaming about doing theological education in a closed South Asian country. The dream is coming true. This June, Lord willing, I will team up with Shane and one of our current seminarians to teach a hermeneutics course to emerging church planters that Shane has been working with. Later this summer I plan to visit Ryan (class of 2014) and his family in a country in Africa. I will travel there with another of our current seminarians who is part of their Barnabas Team. I am thankful for my new role of being *Dean of Global & Alumni Outreach*.

My wife, Julie, continues to pour her life into our seminary wives with her partners Sharon Rusten, Ruth Bloomstrom, and Kristin Tabb. Julie and I will be



celebrating our 40th wedding anniversary this coming June—36 of those years have been spent partnering together to serve the people and mission of Bethlehem. I have so enjoyed working with the team of leaders focusing on the college and seminary and also working with the team of lead pastors, serving the overall ministry of the church. The “Fill These Cities 25 x ’25” initiative has captured my heart as I watch it capture the hearts of both the church and the academy.

Gratefully,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tom Steller". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Tom" and last name "Steller" clearly legible.

Tom Steller

*Pastor for Leadership Development; Senior Adviser to the President, Dean of Global and Alumni Outreach, Associate Professor of New Testament, Bethlehem College & Seminary*

# Kenny Stokes

## DOWNTOWN LEAD PASTOR

*I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that was given you in Christ Jesus.—1 Corinthians 1:4*

In 2016, once again God showed his grace to us in Christ by his faithfulness to us as a church in general, and specifically at the Downtown Campus and in our church planting efforts.

### Downtown Campus

In January 2016, the elders announced that as an expression of the “Fill These Cities: 25 x ’25” vision, my trajectory would transition from the Downtown Campus Lead Pastor role to working full-time in church planting. As a result, on October 30, I formally became *Pastor for Church Planting*. Although I love the Downtown Campus and will continue to office there, I sense God’s release to focus on church planting and have every confidence in Ken Currie, who is taking my place as *Lead Pastor, Downtown*. I do have to say, I love the Downtown pastoral staff and elders. I do not think I have ever been a part of a healthier, more collaborative and supportive team in my 28 years of pastoral ministry. That is an evidence of God’s faithfulness to us.

Also, in the beginning of year, we hired Bryan Pickering to assist us with our counseling ministry. Bryan founded Redemption: Twin Cities, a biblical counseling organization through our own Bethlehem Urban Initiatives (BUI). Our counseling contract with Bryan has proved helpful in both biblical counseling and training, and we expect to look for Bryan’s continued help in the coming year.

In regard to other Downtown staffing transitions, 2016 saw the departure of Luis Mendez, who helpfully led us in ministry to Hispanics at the church and served as a volunteer chaplain for the Minnesota Twins. We added Richie Stark, *Pastoral Resident for Youth & Family Discipleship, Downtown*. And Lori Jaeger, *Minister for Women, Downtown*, joined our team and began attending the pastoral staff meetings in order to foster more collaboration in our ministry to adults.

Among the many things that marked the year Downtown, I would highlight three. First, the ongoing ministry of care and counseling continues to grow. I believe this is a good thing, because it evidences a growing church culture in which it is “ok not to be ok”

at Bethlehem. In other words, it is good to request help from pastors and other brothers and sisters in Christ when we need it. Second, the year was marked by a continued engagement in the heavier side of church discipline, which in some cases sadly led to removing some from church membership. Third, in July, Jared Wass, Mike Tong, and I, along with a team of leaders from our Downtown small group ministry, joined Jason Meyer and Todd & Tamara Rasmuson in Sheffield, England, to visit The Crowded House. This church has been a leader in advancing a vision for strengthening the church through small groups that engage in both living in community together and being on mission together.

### Jumpstart Program

Our Jumpstart program is our effort to revitalize churches that are in decline. In October, the elders approved Paul Przybylowski and his Jumpstart vision for Word of Grace Baptist Church, Minneapolis. Soon after, the plan was approved at Word of Grace Baptist Church, and Paul was voted in as pastor. Paul and his wife, Lauryn, are joined by Tyler Mykkanen and his wife, Nicole. Together, they are partnering to lead the church into the new vision, while celebrating the past grace of God to the church. Cleon Engel, our *Coordinator for Church Planting*, has been extremely helpful in working with this project for the last two years. Please pray for wisdom as we are continually evaluating requests for new Jumpstart projects.

### Church Planting

City of Joy Fellowship in East St. Louis, Missouri, began public worship services. The church is led by Kempton Turner, formerly one of our pastoral staff members and a church planting resident. I continue to serve on the board with Kempton until the church is able to install qualified elders.

The church planting concentration at Bethlehem Seminary is proving to be very fruitful, and we expect most of our future planters to come to us from there. Two church planting courses were taught in 2016, each with about 15 students enrolled.

Jonathon Woodyard, a 2016 Bethlehem Seminary graduate, began his church planting residency in June. He received approval from the elders in October to plant Northfield Community Church in Northfield, Minnesota. The vision for this plant was born in the hearts of people from Northfield who were members of our South Campus in Lakeville, many of whom have joined together to form the core group for the new church.

Two new residents were approved to begin January 1, 2017, both of whom are scheduled to graduate from the seminary in May 2017. Adam Pohlman will be our Downtown Campus resident for church planting, aiming to plant Redemption City Church in Rochester, Minnesota. Ryan Eagy will be our North Campus resident for church planting, aiming to plant a church in Boise, Idaho.

Other seminary graduates are engaged in planting through their own existing partnerships. Joel Aubrey (class of 2015) is planting in Granville, New York. Michel Galeano (class of 2016) is planting near Miami.

### **Treasuring Christ Together Network (TCTN)**

The TCTN continues to grow. It conducted its first official pastoral assessment in April, and for the first time it added three churches that were not planted by Bethlehem—churches who affirm the TCTN mission, doctrine, and values. In October, the third annual national pastors and wives retreat took place in San Diego with over 75 attendees—a new attendance record. As part of the Bethlehem Conference for Pastors, Steve Timmis not only spoke at the pre-conference sessions but also met with the pastors and church planters of our Treasuring Christ Together Network. As an expression of care for our planters, we partnered with the TCTN in November to send me and my wife, Kathy, to bring pastoral support for Tim & Abbey Cain in Uganda as they returned to the U.S. without the child they had gone to adopt.

Thanks to all of you who have prayed and labored together to spread a passion for the supremacy of God in all things for the joy of all peoples through Jesus Christ. Thank you to Pastor Jason and the pastoral staff for their happy teamwork. Thank you to Cleon Engel, my partner

in supporting our church planters and new churches. Thank you to my assistants, Stephanie Denzer and Aaron Geise, for their happy help. Thank you to my wife, Kathy, for her support, partnership, and encouragement in our 37 years of marriage and 28 years of pastoral ministry.

And thanks be to God because of his continued grace to us in Christ Jesus.



Kenny Stokes

*Lead Pastor, Downtown (until October 30, 2016)*

*Pastor for Church Planting (October 30, 2016 to present)*

### *Note from Pastor Ken Currie:*

Since assuming the role of *Lead Pastor for Downtown* on October 30, by God's grace I have been hard at work learning the dynamics of the pastors, elders, staff, and congregation and have been "leaning in" toward various growth areas. In many ways, the Downtown Campus is the most diverse of our three campuses, and it presents particular needs and opportunities. It is a joy to partner with the Downtown pastoral team, elders, and staff to pursue the joy of our congregation through Christ and to equip the body to make disciples near and far.



Ken Currie

*Lead Pastor for Downtown & Strategic Implementation*

## Matthew Westerholm

### DOWNTOWN WORSHIP & MUSIC

*The horse is made ready for the day of battle, but the victory belongs to the LORD.—Proverbs 21:31*

The Downtown Campus Worship Department was blessed in 2016 to labor for God's kingdom. January began with celebrating Bethlehem's priorities. We remembered our commitment to the word and to prayer during the All-Church Concert of Word & Prayer, where we prayed passages of Scripture and heard passages recited from memory. We also celebrated the sanctity of human life and the importance of ethnic harmony. Later that month, members from all three campuses provided worship for the Bethlehem College & Seminary Conference for Pastors and Church Leaders. What a joy to hear 2000 pastors sing. During the conference, I hosted over 30 worship leaders from around the country in my home for a wonderful evening of fellowship and encouragement.

February saw us working our way through the first book of the Psalms as a church, in addition to hearing our soon-to-be campus pastor Ken Currie preach on "The Bread of Life." It was a busy month! We took the ordinance of communion, celebrated baptisms, and welcomed new covenant members into our church body within a span of three weeks; we are grateful for these happy and fruitful times, against the contrast of Minnesota's cold winter.

March was spent celebrating our Savior, the Light of the World, risen from the dead. On Palm Sunday, our youth choir helped lead worship. On Maundy Thursday, our Downtown Sanctuary was packed; we remembered Christ's work on the cross through Scripture readings, the profound hymn, "Ah, Holy Jesus," and the darkness of our sinful world, represented by gradually-dimming candles. Then on Easter, we added a fourth weekend service and were delighted to be led in worship by our adult choir, directed by Kristin Borski. We also celebrated several baptisms as symbols of our new life in Christ. A special thank you to Emilie Szabo for her beautiful decorations at each of these services. On a personal note, March also saw the successful defense of my dissertation.

In April, our weekend worship featured the ministry of Bethlehem College & Seminary. Our campus was led in worship by Luke Salik, a third-year seminary student in Bethlehem Seminary's Master of Divinity program

(Worship Pastor Concentration). He is a blessing to me, our ministry, and our congregation. Luke was, in turn, blessed to become engaged to be married to a lovely woman at the end of the year. In April, we also had the great privilege to host Dr. Billy G. Russell from Greater Friendship Missionary Baptist Church. Dr. Russell spoke powerfully about the amazing truth, "God Is for You." We pray that his message would work its way deeper into the realities of lives.

May celebrated the commencement ceremony for Bethlehem College & Seminary's graduating class. I also celebrated my own graduation from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. These ceremonies serve as occasions for great thanks to God and to the people whom he has provided as means of grace who spurred me onward in my educational endeavors. I would be remiss if I did not use this opportunity to thank my wife Lisa, my administrative assistant Krista Shadduck, and the many other members of Bethlehem who cheered me on toward finishing my degree. Thank you, Lord, for Bethlehem!

June began with a message from Psalm 27:4 on the beauty of the Lord. Hearing this theme and recognizing the role that the arts play in our Twin Cities, several Downtown members were stirred toward a more purposeful interaction with the local arts community. The Worship Department successfully launched The Arts Collective, which meets monthly to observe and discuss various forms of art displayed in venues throughout the Twin Cities. During this time, Pastor Mike Tong reminded us of "The Greatness of God in All the Peoples," as we commissioned Luis Mendez to preach that greatness to the people of the Dominican Republic.

July and August were the proverbial calm before the storm. As we planned ahead for Fall Kick-Off in September, we also had the joy of celebrating new life in Christ through baptisms and hearing from guest preachers Paul Poteat ("Having the Smile of God") and Kenny Stokes ("Hear What the Spirit Says"). I spent a portion of the summer traveling with my family, which provided Luke Salik additional opportunities to lead our congregation in worship. We were again blessed

by his gifts. I also had an opportunity to speak on the topic of “Can Art Save Us?” at Canvas: A Conference on Theology & Creativity.

September saw the launch of our Fall season and a wonderful week of baptisms. I never tire of hearing the miraculous stories of how the Lord is calling people to himself. What a privilege! We also began our “Fill These Cities” preaching series, and it has been encouraging to see people respond to God’s call for further giving and sacrifice. As we do each September, we asked the incoming seminary students of Bethlehem College & Seminary to affirm the covenant of their institution. It is always exciting to consider how the Lord may use these men and their families in the years to come.

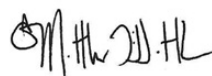
In the month of October, we were glad to once again see Pastor John Piper in the pulpit, as he exhorted us to “Teach All Nations to Observe Everything I Commanded You!” for Global Focus. We also hosted the Doxology vocal ensemble from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. I was able to attend the Mosaix Multiethnic Church Conference with Pastors Chuck Steddom, Ken Currie, and Jason Meyer. It was wonderful to spend time with these dear friends, talking about a topic so dear to the Lord.

At the beginning of November, I flew to Louisville, Kentucky, to speak at the 2016 Doxology & Theology’s Conference for worship leaders. It was invigorating to share the lessons that the Lord has been teaching us here in Minneapolis. We began the Advent season at the end of the month. At each weekend service, one of our 4th graders brought a lit candle into the dimmed sanctuary, symbolizing the Light of the World coming to save us from our sinful darkness.

Advent continued into December, when we were again joined by the youth choir, singing “Hark! The Herald Angels Sing,” and the adult choir, singing an exuberant rendition of “Joy to the World.” Pastor Jason Meyer finished the first book of the Psalms, and for Christmas weekend, he turned to Isaiah 9:6–7 to remind us of the practical and powerful implications of Christ’s incarnation. Many thanks to Daniel & Laura Botkin for their talents in decorating the Sanctuary, as we anticipated celebrating the coming of our King.

As a worship ministry, we end 2016 by looking to the Lord. We pray that he would help us see clearly what he has done and is doing in Jesus. We pray that he would help us experience a foretaste of the embrace that awaits us and to fully sense what we already know of his great love toward us.

Loving God and loving you all,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. Westerholm".

Matthew Westerholm  
*Pastor for Worship & Music, Downtown*

## Jared Wass

### DOWNTOWN SMALL GROUPS & ADULT DISCIPLESHIP

*Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ.  
For this I toil, struggling with all his energy that he powerfully works within me.—Colossians 1:28–29*

The text above is important in our small group and adult discipleship ministry. It says that the way we will present the people of Bethlehem mature in Christ is by proclaiming Christ. The warning and teaching we are to do in our personal discipling of one another is only effective if it centers on the person and work of Jesus. The gospel is the power of God to both enter the Christian life (Romans 1:16) and to carry on and grow in the Christian life (Romans 16:25). As we seek to be disciples who make other disciples, we know the joy of the Lord and the joy of our salvation is our strength.

#### Small Groups

Growth in grace happens in a variety of forms, but small groups are the priority structure at Bethlehem for personal discipleship (1 Thessalonians 2:8) and spiritual multiplication (2 Timothy 2:2). This is a ministry we desire to continue to grow in our church, and we actively seek ways to recruit, train, deploy, and oversee leaders and connect people to groups.

At the Downtown Campus we currently have 71 small groups with 757 people involved in those groups. Over a year ago we retooled our online small group finder, and in 2016, 110 people used that tool Downtown to find a group. Our 71 groups are led by 186 people who are either leaders, co-leaders, or apprentices preparing to lead in the future. In the last year 28 people attended a one-day leadership intensive, and on average 100 leaders attend our quarterly all-leader trainings.

Good leadership is the backbone of good small group ministry, and the Lord is raising up leadership at Bethlehem.

#### Classroom Discipleship

We have offered College Connection, King's Friends, Mosaic, All Nations Fellowship, and *Escuela Dominical* as Sunday School classes the past several years. In 2016, we added to a series of classes aimed at equipping leadership, called the Lead (which stands for Leadership Equipping And Disciple-Making). In addition to How People Change, we also offered Personal Bible Reading

and Personal Disciple-Making. We also ran two other new Sunday School classes: God-Centered Living and a class focused on integrating our faith with our work.

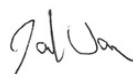
#### Baptism and Membership

God also blessed Bethlehem with another fruitful year of adding people into covenant membership. One hundred forty-nine people attended the Membership Class, and 124 joined at a Covenant Affirmation service. Sixty-two took the Baptism Class, and 30 moved forward with baptism.

#### Closing

Numbers tell us something of what the Lord is doing in our midst, but not everything. Our greatest desire is that the people of Bethlehem would be mature in Christ and that more people in our Twin Cities would become Christians and join us to grow as well. I am grateful for the work that the Lord has been pleased to do in small groups and adult discipleship in the year past and ask you would pray that we as a church would continue to abide in Christ and bear much fruit, so proving to be Christ's disciples (John 15:4–8).

Serving in joy,



Jared Wass  
*Pastor for Small Groups, Downtown*

## Mike Tong

### DOWNTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD OUTREACH

*"A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another.*

*By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."*—John 13:34–35

Our vision for Neighborhood Outreach at the Downtown Campus of Bethlehem Baptist Church is to live out Christ's commandment to love the Lord our God with all of our heart, mind, soul, and strength and to love our neighbors as ourselves. There are no commandments greater than these.

As we consider who our neighbors are, we also seek to love them by bringing them into our lives and our church. Identifying our neighbors begins with understanding who Jesus identified as our neighbors. In the parable of the Good Samaritan, Jesus names as a neighbor a man who was beaten down on the side of a road. It did not matter where that man lived or what ethnicity or economic status he had. What mattered in the mind of Christ was that that man was, at that moment, in the immediate vicinity of the priest, the Levite, and the Samaritan. For these men to pass by the beaten man without compassion was to do that man—their neighbor—wrong.

Likewise, in our lives, each person we come across every day of our lives is our neighbor. These are the people that we are called to love. To that end, we aim to make our neighbors feel loved and welcomed into our fellowship so that they can hear the gospel and be born again.

#### Building Gospel Community

##### *SnowDay*

SnowDay is an annual event that takes place at Powderhorn Park and is meant to serve our Downtown Campus and the Powderhorn neighborhood alike. Around 700 Bethlehem members came to SnowDay 2016 to enjoy sledding, ice skating, human foosball, and lunch.

##### *Sunday on the River*

Sunday on the River is an annual event that takes place at Boom Island and aims to build our church community through a day of outdoor activity. Our goal here is to create a stronger fabric of fellowship, which in turn can make us a stronger gospel-telling people for the sake of our city.

##### *Sunday Brunch*

Just as the early church was devoted to breaking bread together, Bethlehem values times of eating together. Sunday Brunch is served on the second Sunday of the month in the Fall, winter, and Spring each year. Hundreds of people are served in the Main Hall each month, and hundreds of conversations are given the time they need to deepen our fellowship together.

##### *Turkey Bowl*

Neighborhood Outreach was privileged to partner with the Downtown youth group as well as Elliot Park to host a youth outreach event at the Elliot Park soccer field. Many came out to enjoy flag football and lunch together.

##### *Phillips Club for Children and Youth*

The Phillips Club saw its third year of ministry at Salem House near Stewart Park in Midtown Phillips neighborhood. Serving about 25 kids each Monday night, the Phillips Club aims to share our lives and the gospel with kids from the neighborhood.

##### *Segue to Worship*

Segue to Worship began meeting in Fall 2016 at Segue Cafe on Sunday mornings. Serving free coffee to the community, Segue to Worship is a time of fellowship and teaching from the Bible to all who would attend.

##### *Hispanic Ministry*

In 2016 Pastor Luis Mendez returned to the Dominican Republic, and our Hispanic Ministry continues to thrive, even as it finds its feet with new leadership and vision for the future. Please pray that the Hispanic Ministry will continue to be a blessing to the 50+ members who attend each week.

Looking for future grace from God in 2017,



Mike Tong

*Pastor for Neighborhood Outreach, Downtown*



## Lori Jaeger

### DOWNTOWN WOMEN'S MINISTRY

*The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.—Philippians 4:5-7*

Women's Ministry Downtown seeks the Lord for focus and guidance. Each month, the Ministry Team meets to pray and plan the upcoming events. The goal of our ministry is to be Christ-focused and Bible-centered in order to bring the women of the Downtown Campus ever closer to God.

#### Bible Studies

We offered five Fall Bible studies (including one in Spanish) and 102 women participated. Children's programming was available for all morning Bible studies at no cost.

#### MOMS

The MOMS (Making Our Mothering Significant) group meets twice a month, with 104 women attending; there are about 60 children being cared for each time. At the Downtown Campus, MOMS is led by Krista Coronado and Janette Takata.

#### Downtown Campus Ministry Team

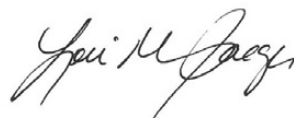
I am thankful to have a team of women who serve to advise and help plan the events and programs for Women's Ministry. The team consists of Evelyn Clifford, Cynthia Francis, Deena Hougard, Connie Oman, Samm Poteat, and Pattie Tattersall. These are godly women who encourage me and add so much wisdom. I thank God for them.

#### Christmas Event, December 3

- *Purpose: To prepare our hearts for the Advent season by focusing on Jesus.*
- *Theme: Let Us Adore Him*

Our Christmas celebration was the first campus-specific event for the Downtown Campus women. More than 120 women attended. Pastor Matthew Westerholm led us in singing Christmas carols and shared from his heart about some of the carols and his childhood. Several of the women read the Nativity story in chronological order between the carols. After this time, a light brunch was served. The feedback for this event has been overwhelmingly positive.

In closing, I am constantly amazed by and grateful for the warm welcome I have received by Bethlehem women. Each one of you are an amazing gift that I cherish and seek to serve.



Lori Jaeger  
*Minister for Women, Downtown*

# Bud Burk

## DOWNTOWN CHILDREN & FAMILY DISCIPLESHP

*But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.—Galatians 6:14*

### Overview

In the conclusion of my 2014 annual report I said, “The glory of Christ and the grace he brings has risen more fully to the surface this year. I believe it is just beginning to blossom and will do so even more by God’s faithful grace in 2015 and following. *I look forward to giving annual reports in the years to come*, giving witness to the unfolding story of God’s grace in Christ to undeserving sinners at Bethlehem among families, which brings both salvation and sanctification for our joy. If I had to summarize this glorious theme in a word it would be a name: Jesus.”

I am moved with gratitude that what appeared to be a newer expression of the Spirit’s work upon me personally and upon the ministry that God had given back in 2014 is still quite fresh. In fact, it has been deepening. Paul, you recall, rejoiced that Christ’s name was being proclaimed even though he was in prison (Philippians 1:18), and as Christ’s name is being proclaimed more fully in my ministry world, I too rejoice. It is a place of gladness of heart and peacefulness of spirit. May this theme forever deepen.

### Office Team

The office team that I serve with reflects this newer work of the Spirit as well. Lisa Burk in her ministry to young families through the nursery, Connie Oman in her ministry to classroom teams and particularly mothers, Michelle Ryan and her ministry to families who have children with special needs, and Amy Johnson in her administrative support—all have grown more deeply in this truth: Jesus loves them and they know it. This truth is influencing their countenance among people, refining their ministry theme with Jesus as the point, while cultivating their love for him. Our unified cry is simply and powerfully this: *Show them Christ!*

### Disability Ministry

This past year, God’s hand in the Disability Ministry has been seen in the provision of volunteers (classroom 1:1 buddies, our teacher and worship leader in the His Strength class, multiple Respite Night volunteers), valuable times of encouragement for moms at Hope Keepers gatherings, personal prayer conversations with parents, and grace-filled Respite Nights offered

to support families. God has helped me align my expectations and more fully rely on his ministry plans and not my own. Lord willing, I hope to develop a stronger prayer program with parents and plan home visits more frequently.

### Nursery

It is our joy to continue to spread the fragrance of Jesus in and through our nurseries and to pray for each child by name when he or she is in our care. The Lord continues to bless Bethlehem families with children, and we added 61 babies to our roster in 2016. In addition to serving our Women’s Ministry by providing childcare for MOMS and women’s Bible studies, this year it was our joy to also provide childcare for the small group ministry’s quarterly dinners for small group leaders.

### Evidences of Grace: God’s Enabling Help in Ministry

#### *Parent Support*

God has helped me create the Parent Room, which is meant to provide a place for parents to pray during two-thirds of the Sundays during the school year. The remaining one-third of the Sundays are devoted to parent-equipping gatherings. The constant theme of the curriculum for the equipping Sundays is Christ and the power of the gospel to transform.

#### *Visitation*

God has granted grace for the strongest year of yet (over the last five) of serving families through home visits. The fruit of joy and love is the primary blessing that I experienced this year.

#### *Sunday School*

God has granted grace to staff two sessions of Sunday School to serve our families at 9am and at 11am, and he has helped our older classrooms honor Jesus—who has come, is coming again, and who is building his church—through the teaching of Luke and Acts, our primary curriculum. Additionally, God has helped us refine our Old Testament preschool curriculum in such a way that each lesson clearly points to the coming Messiah, helping children begin to grow up in the truth that

these Old Testament stories are pointers forward to the supreme Prophet, Priest, and King: Jesus Christ.

#### *Global Outreach*

Through various global partners, the Global Outreach visits in our classrooms have been a steady gift of grace and are timely in light of the missions emphasis of “Fill These Cities: 25 x ’25.”

#### *Evidences of Grace That We Trust Will Come*

In his kindness, God has revealed the opportunity to grow in helping families give witness to Christ in their neighborhoods. We took a step forward this last Spring with the “Gospel on the Grass” event, but many steps are still needed for this ministry emphasis to grow.

Looking back with gratitude for grace given, while looking forward to future grace in Christ,



Bud Burk

*Pastor for Children & Family Discipleship, Downtown*

### **2016 Downtown Campus Attendance Statistics**

<b>CHILDREN'S MINISTRY</b>					
<b>Weekly Services</b>	<b>Age Group</b>	<b>Total Unique Participants</b>	<b>Participant Average</b>	<b>Total Volunteers (includes 1:1 Buddies &amp; Subs)</b>	<b>Volunteer Average</b>
Wednesday Connection (through May 2016)	<i>Preschool–Grade 6</i>	86	71	36	23
Sunday 9:00am	<i>Preschool–Grade 6</i>	90	67	42	21
Sunday 11:00am	<i>Preschool–Grade 6</i>	266	178	107	66
<b>Weekly Service Totals:</b>		<b>442</b>	<b>316</b>	<b>185</b>	<b>110</b>

<b>NURSERY MINISTRY</b>					
<b>Total number of babies born: 61</b>					
<b>Weekly Services</b>	<b>Age Group</b>	<b>Total Unique Participants</b>	<b>Participant Average</b>	<b>Total Caregivers</b>	<b>Caregiver Average</b>
Saturday 5:30pm	<i>All Nurseries</i>	21	13	15	5
Sunday 9:00am	<i>All Nurseries</i>	67	54	45	23
Sunday 11:00am	<i>All Nurseries</i>	73	57	37	29
<b>Weekly Service Totals:</b>		<b>161</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>97</b>	<b>57</b>
<b>Special Events (MOMS &amp; Bible Studies)</b>		<b>72</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>13</b>

<b>HIS STRENGTH DISABILITY MINISTRY</b>
7 children with weekly 1:1 Buddies in Preschool–Grade 6
3 Respite Night Events with North Campus, serving 46 families

<b>SPECIAL EVENTS &amp; OTHER MINISTRIES</b>
Picnic in Main Hall: 25 family units attended
Parenting the Early Years: 31 family units attended (average of 3 separate events throughout the year)
Children Dedicated: 45
Grace for Dead Dogs: 14 men attended (average of 3 separate events throughout the year)
Downtown Campus Volunteer Training: 94 volunteers attended
Praise in the Park: 24 family units attended
Father/Daughter Retreat: 18 father/daughter couples attended
Gospel on the Grass: 14 family units attended
Volunteer Appreciation Dinner: 247 Downtown & North volunteers attended

## Richie Stark

### DOWNTOWN YOUTH & FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP

*Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.*

—Galatians 1:3–4

*An opening word from Pastor Ken Currie ...*

This past year was the second in which I provided leadership for the youth ministry at the Downtown Campus on an interim basis. I can testify to God's faithfulness to our church's ministry to youth in several ways. We continue to see the blessing of godly, energetic volunteers who love God and our church and are called to minister to our youth. These volunteers are the backbone of the ministry. They bring creative ideas in programming, provide leadership in worship, staff events, and much more. However, the core of their ministry is in small group time and life-on-life discipleship. It amazes me that God has blessed our church with so many who give significant time, prayer, and energy for the sake of our youth. The numbers attending this past year for Jr & Sr High have stabilized after a year of significant growth. The most significant happening in the ministry was the addition of Richie Stark as *Pastoral Resident for Youth & Family Discipleship, Downtown*. Hiring Richie in July was the fruit of a number of months of reviewing candidates, interviews, and candidacy. Particular thanks are extended to committee members Heather Lutz, Whitney Winslow, Joby Morgan, and Greg Mott.

Ken Currie

*Lead Pastor for Downtown and Strategy Implementation*

#### Overview

This Fall, we began a series in Galatians, reminding ourselves of the good news that there is nothing we can do for our salvation. Paul writes, "Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ, who gave himself for our sins to deliver us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be the glory forever and ever" (Galatians 1:3–4).

#### Philosophy of Ministry

We want to equip middle and high school students to joyfully love and honor the Lord Jesus. We attempt to accomplish this in three different ways. First, we want

to eliminate biblical illiteracy. Second, we want to form meaningful relationships. Finally, we want to connect with and contribute to the local church.

#### *Eliminate Biblical Illiteracy*

We want to educate our students on how the whole Scriptures (from Old Testament narratives to Psalms to the Gospels to the Epistles) point to Jesus of Nazareth establishing his eternal kingdom. It is impossible to teach everything there is to know about the Bible, but we seek to give students some tools to work with as they, God-willing, continue to learn as adults.

#### *Form Meaningful Relationships*

A great preaching and teaching ministry alone is insufficient to effectively minister to students. We have dedicated the 2nd and 4th Wednesday nights each month as Small Group Nights. We have done this in an effort to live the gospel together through one-on-one relationships.

#### *Connect With and Contribute to Our Local Church*

There exists in many American evangelical youth groups an unfortunate disconnect between youth group and the greater local church. Many youth groups, whether intentionally or not, find themselves as a subculture, separate from the normal goings on of the rest of the local church. We are committed to helping students discover their gifts and passions so they can contribute in their own creative way to the ministry of the church.

#### Staff

This year our staff team included Benjamin Katterson, *Ministry Assistant for Jr High Discipleship, Downtown* (through August 2016); Patrick Claytor, *Ministry Assistant for Jr High Discipleship, Downtown* (beginning August 2016); Jonathan Patterson, *Ministry Assistant for Sr High Discipleship, Downtown*; Daniel Simmons, *Ministry Assistant for Sr High Worship, Downtown*; and Jenna Thomsen, *Administrative Assistant for Youth & Family Discipleship, Downtown*.

The Jr & Sr High ministries are blessed with 37 volunteer staff. These volunteers serve in various ways, such as

helping lead worship, announcements, small groups, coordinating events, and maintaining relationships outside of planned events.

### Programming

During the school year, the youth ministry meets on Wednesday nights for Wednesday Connection. We have made a more concentrated focus on small groups in the Sr High. On the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays each month, we meet in one large group. The 2nd and 4th Wednesdays we have set aside for small groups. During this time, small group leaders are encouraged to use the big group lesson from the week before to engage the lives of the students.

The Sr High group has been studying Galatians on Wednesday nights and on Sunday mornings they have worked their way through various passages in Deuteronomy. The Jr High has been working through John on Wednesday nights and Joshua and Judges on Sunday mornings.

In addition to regularly scheduled Wednesday nights and Sunday mornings, we have been intentional about adding extra events for the Sr High and Jr High students. Since the Fall, we have had a pool party, gone to AirMaxx (a trampoline park), had a nerf war, played in a Turkey Bowl, eaten a progressive dinner, and played laser tag.

### Fruit

I have been encouraged in this short time that I have been here to see students eager to hear and learn about the Lord and to love their neighbors. We are starting to be intentional about ministering to our neighbors by teaming up with Minneapolis Parks and Recreation in Elliot Park. The park board invited students to come out and play football with us at our Turkey Bowl in November, and at least four neighborhood youth came. This connection has given fresh anticipation for how the Lord may use us, both leaders and students, to minister the gospel to our community.

### Closing

I am so excited to have come to minister the gospel to our students and staff here at Bethlehem. I pray that the Lord will draw each of us closer to himself and make himself the greatest joy in our lives, because we know that the Lord will not give his glory to another. We have had just a little time together, but it has been so much fun and a great joy to labor with my fellow brothers to make Jesus' name great.



Richie Stark  
*Pastoral Resident for Youth & Family Discipleship, Downtown*

### 2016 Downtown Campus Attendance Statistics

YOUTH DISCIPLESHIP			
Weekly Services	Average Participants	Total Participants	Total Volunteers
Jr High Sunday School	34	52	13
Sr High Sunday School	40	55	19
<b>Total Sunday School</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>32</b>
Jr High Wednesday Connection	15	30	13
Sr High Wednesday Connection	30	50	19
<b>Total Wednesday Connection:</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>32</b>

## Dan Holst

### NORTH LEAD PASTOR/WORSHIP & MUSIC

*The LORD is righteous in all his ways and kind in all his works.—Psalm 145:17*

Having recently read Psalm 145 responsively with the North Campus congregation, I have found myself seeking evidences of God's kindness as it shines through "all his works." Some of those works include people through whom God's kindness toward me shines as I continue to serve as *Lead Pastor, North*.

#### North Elders

God's evident kindness shines brightly through this servant-hearted group of men. God has called Jason Ruch (2016 congregational elder council chair), Tim Johnson, Jon Grano, Steve Walmsley, Mike Meloch, Kurt Elting-Ballard, Sam Crabtree, Tim Held, Jack Delk, Gil McConnell, Vince Johnson, and Tom Dodds to advance the mission of our church. In 2016, we also welcomed Andy Naselli, Luis Rodriguez, and Jason DeRouchie as elders. Prayerful, watchful, discerning, dependant, all.

#### North Pastoral and Ministry Team

In 2016, **Jack Delk** celebrated 15 years on this amazing pastoral team. In addition to engaging in counseling, care, and leadership at the North Campus, Jack continued his steadfast work of discipling the lay counselors through training; facilitating a preparation for marriage class; and leading the Sunday School class for young marrieds, alongside his wife, Mary.

**Jon Nowlin** was resoundingly honored this past summer for his 10 years of ministry to Jr & Sr High students and their families. Rare is the youth pastor who endures for more than four years in a position as demanding and under-appreciated (in my view!) at any given church. To have Jon & Mandy marking 10 years here at the North Campus is breathtakingly beautiful, and God's kindness shines through the fruit of students' lives changed for eternity through regular Sunday and Wednesday teaching of the Word, Awaken, Jr High Camp, JAM's, Sup n' Stuffs, Winter Retreats, and fellowship rotation events.

**Gil McConnell** has continued to develop a remarkable retinue of volunteer leaders, who serve selflessly in classrooms. Gil has also been on the forefront of vision development for parenting resources and education. We

rejoiced with Gil & Joanna as they welcomed their 5th child, Zachary, in August. God's kindness shines brightly through gifts of children and gifts, like Gil, who live out day after day their calling on this campus.

**Vince Johnson** celebrated six years on staff in October and continues to develop a team approach to Welcoming and Outreach ministries at the North Campus, including ESL, Tuesday evangelism teams, Advent and Holy Week outreaches, Christmas Gatherings, UGM, ongoing evangelism training, and more. Beautiful expressions of God's kindness are shared in our near North neighborhoods. Welcome teams tasked with engaging worshipers weekly at our campus have brought a morning-brightening moment for many as they walk through our doors.

**Sam Crabtree** exudes genuine joy in Jesus that is a kind of apologetic contagion at our campus, sincere and welcomed by many. In addition to overseeing myriad details related to North small group ministry, Sam engages in a breadth of pastoral leadership that is invaluable, from worship service Welcomes to teaching (Summer Wednesday Connection series, Sunday School classes, etc.), to Communion meditations, to preaching, to officiating at weddings and funerals, to hospital and hospice visitation. "Joyful generalist-pastor" is a tag affixed to Pastor Sam and to be celebrated by all ... especially by this harried lead pastor!

**Pam Larson** is the newest staff member, now serving as *Minister for Women, North*. Though her job description is considered part time (!), Pam is "all in" as she seeks to steward the grace of leadership that Mary Delk provided (across the campuses of Bethlehem for more than 10 years) by now providing a North Campus focus. I regularly thank God for the kindness he is showing us in Pam's presence and participation on this team.

#### North Campus Support Team

Layer upon layer of happy-hearted, team-spirited support staff serve the 1,500 or so who call the North Campus "home." We give thanks for Carmen Tomaszewski and her great team of family-serving coordinators (Jessica Pluim, Maggie Sporleder, Karleen Witt, and others), Dave Carlson and his crew of



custodial caretakers (John Carlson, Wes Nelson, Ryan Soderholm, among others), Ben Carlson (IT support), Molly Johnson and her kitchen crew (representing the “heart of hospitality” here at Bethlehem’s North Campus), not to mention the amazing men and women who serve as admin and ministry assistants: Katie Kramer, Jacque Straka, Emily Boyer, Ben Katterson, Joel Assaraf, Jared Clausen, Jocelyn Rognlin, Jordan Hecox, Tom Boyer, Beth Nordquist, Heather Douglas, Tracy Cornish, Brad Aust, among others. Special note must be made of the role Lauren Mattson plays as *Lead Administrative Assistant, North*. Her experienced partnership in managing the many details of campus life, including calendar work, communication, and detail-juggling, is highly valued by this pastor especially when it is combined with a joy-in-serving demeanor that she brings into the office every day. One more evidence of God’s kindness in all his works!

### **Worship**

The flourishing of North Campus worship is owing in large measure to teams of leaders who serve in visible and invisible ways. Children’s choirs—with conductors Shirley Nagel, Jana Parent, and Becki Warnock—and our worship choir alike flourish under Kevin Shull’s encouragement and leadership. Orchestral and brass musicians thrive here when the baton is in the hands of Mike Hebert and Jeremy Kolwinska. Laura Hebert, Connie Aiken, and others keep our string players— young and old alike—engaged and on mission. Worship team leadership thrives when many instruments and voices combine in the beauty of harmony and diversity led so often from the piano by Mark Henderson. High school musicians grow when leaders like Tim Stokes shepherd them to grow in their knowledge of God and the gospel, while also encouraging these students to pursue growing musical aptitudes.

### **The People of the North Campus**

God’s kindness is revealed in *all* his works, especially his work of forming a people at Bethlehem’s North Campus. Thank you for your continued prayer, for your ongoing support, for your financial faithfulness (2016—more contributions this year than any previous year in the history of the church!), for your steadfast encouragement, for your willing engagement in body life (disciplining members is a painful part of body life) and service.

As a church, we hope to welcome a new *Lead Pastor, North*, to this team. Pray for that process! We also hope to add a staff person to oversee our robust Jr High ministry in partnership with Jon Nowlin. As we look ahead, our hope and expectation is that God would be glorified in our joy and delight in him, and that we would continue to faithfully look to him for his direction, as together we seek to Fill These Cities with the fame of his Name.



Dan Holst  
*Lead Pastor, North*

## Sam Crabtree

### NORTH SMALL GROUPS & ADULT DISCIPLESHIP

*Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ.—Colossians 1:28*

#### Time Investments at Bethlehem

- Served as coordinator and teacher at the periodic small group leader training meetings, taught orientation sessions for new small group leaders, and conducted interviews with potential new leaders.
- Emceed the all-staff picnic in June and the all-staff Christmas party in December.
- Produced the monthly *LAMBgram* newsletter for North Campus small group leaders and elders.
- Led segments of Wednesday Connection prayer, participated regularly in the Pre-Service Prayer gatherings on Sundays at 8:15am, and participated in the First Wednesday Fasts.
- Preached one Sunday in June at the North Campus from Hebrews 12:1–13 on the fatherhood of God: “God Is Treating Us as Sons, and Disciplining Us for Our Good.”
- Mentored four seminar students of Bethlehem College & Seminary.
- Facilitated a panel discussion on Physician-Assisted Suicide.
- Hosted the interview-launch of Andy Naselli’s book *Conscience: What It Is, How to Train It, and Loving Those Who Differ*.
- Provided premarital counseling and presided at five weddings: Zach Peterson & Becca Worden, Jake Fletcher & Michaela Gibas, Jonathon Engelien & Julie Curran, Noah Evans & Erin Jewett, and Keith Kresge & MacKenzie Abell.
- Served as the principal teacher for the North Campus Wednesday Connection at Long Lake Regional Park in a series entitled “Portraits of Jesus.”
- Spoke in various settings: Sunday School classes, Membership Class, Baptism Class, First Wednesday Fast meetings, MOMs, and the like.
- Collaborated with Jared Wass (*Pastor for Small Groups, Downtown*) and Aaron Davitch (*Pastor for Small Groups, South*) in regular periodic meetings to oversee adult ministries on the three campuses.
- Participated in the Getting Acquainted with Bethlehem class, presided at the Communion table, officiated at Covenant Affirmations, delivered the Christmas Eve meditation, presided in the waters of baptism, led singing at the Bernie Kopischke

funeral, spoke at the Bethlehem College & Seminary family picnic, sang for recording the Fighter Verse songs, and served in other capacities at the North Campus.

- Participated in behind-the-scenes pastoral ministry such as interfacing with the Domestic Abuse Response Team (DART) and providing individual personal counsel for individuals seeking it (including pastors from other churches).
- Conducted interviews with candidates for baptism and membership.
- Chaired the board of Bethlehem College & Seminary (appointed by the Bethlehem elder council), meeting regularly with President Tim Tomlinson, serving on the Facilities Task Force, and praying for each graduate as I signed each diploma before handing them out at commencement. I also spoke at Table Talk, providing pie for the students.
- Composed blog posts for Bethlehem.
- Attended the premiere of the docu-drama film *Until Forever*, the true story of Michael Boyum (I was in his hospital room when he died of cancer at age 23).
- Hosted and spoke at a Saturday morning grandparenting seminar for Keith Anderson’s 3rd Quarter Ministry to seniors.

#### Team Playing

Bethlehem gladly partners with others in the great cause of spreading a passion for the preeminence of Jesus Christ.

In the spirit of collegiality, I engaged in the following ...

- Consulted privately with pastors from several other churches at their request.
- Attended regular pastors’ prayer gatherings at Bethel University and University of Northwestern–St. Paul.
- Concluded a third and final year of my term on the Converge Retirement Board.
- Served on the board of Desiring God. (I’ve served on this board for 18 years. My term is scheduled to conclude at the end of 2017.)

- On behalf of Bethlehem, I was impaneled along with two Bethlehem College & Seminary students at an ordination council in Algona, Iowa.
- Preached twice at Calvary Community Church in St. Cloud and at the Marie Sandvik Center in south Minneapolis.
- Gave away a couple hundred books to upperclassmen attending the seniors' breakfast at the annual CRU Winter Conference Minneapolis, which solicits upperclassmen for long-term ministry.
- Issued "the charge" as Bryan Dewire was installed as elder at Sojourners Church in Albert Lea, Minnesota.
- Hosted the Freedom of Conscience seminar by attorney Renee Carlson.
- Marched at the Whole Woman's abortuary in downtown Minneapolis.

### Still Learning & Developing

- Attended the Bethlehem Conference for Pastors.
- Attended the 'Indulge' Conference sponsored by Bethlehem College & Seminary.

### I Am Helped

My thanks to Heather Douglas and Lauren Mattson for executing the Spring appreciation dinner for small group leaders. Heather continues to serve as *Administrative Assistant for Adult Discipleship, North*.

### Personal Notes

- I joined Bethlehem's staff in 1997, soon to mark the 20th anniversary.
- God granted a 66th birthday.
- Vicki and I celebrated John Piper's 70th birthday at his house.
- Observed with pleasure as my 11-year-old granddaughter took lessons on the trumpet I bought 40 years ago and played at numerous weddings and such.

- Spent a day on Powder Ridge tubing with three of my grandchildren and their Christian school classmates.
- The small group Vicki and I lead in our home is studying David Mathis's *Habits of Grace: Enjoying Jesus Through the Spiritual Disciplines*.
- In grace and mercy, Vicki and I reached our 43rd anniversary. She continues to be a perceptive sounding board and capable contributor to the music ministry of Bethlehem. She leads a women's book group that she has been leading for a decade, and she is a Titus 2 one-on-one mentor. She teaches piano in our home and leads a music studio in Minnetonka.
- Our six grandchildren regularly present discipleship opportunities.
- I rode many miles on my bicycle (it will have to be replaced this year) and still work at my goal of making 100 consecutive free throws (current best: 95).

Confident that Jesus is relentlessly working out his good plan for us,



Sam Crabtree  
*Pastor for Small Groups, North*

## Jack Delk

### NORTH BIBLICAL COUNSELING

*Rather, speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in every way into him who is the head, into Christ, from whom the whole body, joined and held together by every joint with which it is equipped, when each part is working properly, makes the body grow so that it builds itself up in love.—Ephesians 4:15–16*

October 2016 marked the beginning of the fifth year of the North Campus Counseling Center. The original vision for a counseling ministry at Bethlehem was to task a pastor to recruit, train, and oversee a team of lay people to walk alongside those in the congregation who are struggling. This ministry continues to grow, both in numbers of people served and in the number of counselors eager to serve through biblical counseling.

One of the most amazing things for me to witness is the joy and excitement that the counselors experience through serving. These men and women walk alongside others in the body of Christ, often with often have overwhelming burdens, and it is evident that God has clearly called and equipped them for this ministry. Ephesians 4:11–16 is beautifully illustrated through the ministry of these lay counselors.

Mary Wilkin and I took a new group of potential lay counselors through a 26-week counselor training class during the 2015–2016 school year. Each Wednesday evening, we met with 12 eager men and women. In this class, the students are solidly grounded in theological concepts, including justification, sanctification, repentance, and union with Christ. The question we focused on was this: What difference do these truths make in everyday life? We also focused on the dynamics of bringing about real heart change and the methods employed in walking alongside another in the midst of his or her struggle. These men and women were dedicated (though sometimes overwhelmed), participating in two hours of class each week and studying four hours or more outside of class. And yes, they also were tasked with writing papers.

In October, my wife Mary and I made the trek to Chattanooga, Tennessee, to attend the Christian Counseling & Education Foundation (CCEF) Conference. This year's theme was "Emotions: Engaging the Expressions of Our Hearts." The conference was very thought-provoking, challenging us to consider the reality that we as humans, created in the image of God, are designed to respond from the very core of our hearts to God's creation and to all that God does.

Emotions are core to the human experience and central to our worship and our identity. Therefore, they are a target for both sin and suffering. At the conference, we considered the beauty of human emotions while acknowledging the potential dangers if allowed to hijack our worship. Several Bethlehem lay counselors attended this conference with us.

Vicki Harrison continues behind the scenes to quietly lead small groups of people who have experienced the loss of loved ones through the GriefShare curriculum. I have visited these groups on occasion, and while most people don't even know this ministry is happening, it is very powerful and effective. Thanks, Vicki.

I want to close by recognizing and thanking the lay counselors at the North Campus: Mary Wilkin, Kurt & Laury Johnson, Kelly Loken, Darlene Sorley, Marsha Lehn, Cynthia Francis, Dennis & Kathleen Dodds, Vince & Kathy Johnson, Carol McCormick, Anita Tomlinson, Steve & Liz Stein, Luis Rodriguez & Cristina Delgado, Keith & Sharon Steichen, Sonja Perschbacher, and Barb Waldemar. And in the observation phase of their training: Brian & Deanna Pratt, John Morrison, Thayne Boyer, and Sharon Dierberger. I love you all and thank God daily for your service in his Kingdom.



Jack Delk  
*Pastor for Counseling, North*

## Vince Johnson

### NORTH NEIGHBORHOOD OUTREACH

*Oh give thanks to the Lord; call upon his name; make known his deeds among the peoples!—Psalm 105:1*

In 2016, God continued to perform “deeds” in Neighborhood Outreach and Welcome Ministry that need to be made known for his glory. It is my joy to share some of these.

#### Neighborhood Outreach Ministry Highlights

- ESL continues to show us that God is still saving individuals! Two students became Christians during the year. We averaged 50 students and 50 tutors!
- Car Care blessed many of our local neighbors with needed financial help for a car repair. Paul Nystedt, *Ministry Assistant for Neighborhood Outreach, North*, enjoyed sharing about Jesus with these neighbors.
- Pete Christianson and others provided coffee and snacks on three Friday mornings when our parking lot became a temporary Park & Ride during construction on County Road H.
- Tuesday Night Evangelism took the gospel message to the streets! A faithful group of evangelists initiated gospel conversations with hundreds of neighbors in New Brighton.
- In January, we hosted a live feed of the Understanding and Answering Islam Conference, which helped equip about 500 of us to love our Muslim neighbors.

#### ‘Outside of Bethlehem’ Partnership Highlights

- Our Refugee Life Ministries (Arrive Ministries) team is helping settle a Karen family who arrived in the middle of November. They are adjusting well, and a welcome dinner is hopefully happening soon.
- The Community Support Center that helps those on the edge of homelessness has added the North Campus as one of their founding churches. North member Samantha Gruver volunteers by listening to the stories of people and trusting Jesus to respond in love.
- We continue to give money to the city of Mounds View every six months and have the opportunity to work with city officials for how these funds are used. In 2016, proposals included the Community Support Center, Ralph Reeder Food Shelf, and the Quincy TreeHouse.
- Union Gospel Mission hosts many homeless men. We are privileged to make and serve a monthly

meal on Sundays and lead the chapel service every other month. During the meal, our team sits with the men and initiates spiritual conversations.

- The Hospitality Center for Chinese lets us use one of their vans for our ESL ministry and also promotes the program.
- The Quincy TreeHouse is a TreeHouse Ministry site for at-risk teens. They are using our gym on Thursday nights for their guys’ night.
- Christmas Gatherings were again offered. The director of this ministry, Joyce Bademan, led the training for hosts in the Fall, and we saw many neighbors hear the true meaning of Christmas through these events.

#### ‘Inside of Bethlehem’ Partnership Highlights

- ‘Bringing Jesus Into Every Relationship’ is a 30-minute training I did with six small groups. I loved meeting new people and training toward opening our mouths with people who know us well.
- Youth: This summer I enjoyed leading a ‘Bringing Jesus Into Every Relationship’ training for 60 youth at the Voth family’s home in Maplewood.
- There were a number of Backyard Bible Clubs. I loved partnering with Pastor Gil McConnell again to love the children in our geographic neighborhoods.
- Daryl Roberts and I met with Pastor Tom Steller to talk about the vision of having Bethlehem College & Seminary students preach when we do the chapel service at UGM. This turned into presenting at a Table Talk time with many seminary students. The result is that all six of the 2017 chapel slots are filled by these students!

#### Welcome Ministry at Bethlehem

- Brian Verrett was my door greeter coordinator for five years. He and his wife just moved to help plant a church in New York.
- Some new furniture has made the Commons a more pleasurable area for many to use for fellowship.
- Bea Anderson initiated additions to the coffee area next to the Info Booth. People are enjoying the flavors and decor.

- The year 2016 marked the first full year of our Welcome Host ministry led by Ron & Kathy Circle. It is awesome to have four to six greeters stationed just inside our main entrances to love all those coming to worship and to especially welcome any new visitors.
- This summer, I had the opportunity to preach a sermon from Romans 15:1-7 called, "A Culture of Christ-Like Welcome for God's Glory."

May our Savior and Leader enlist us in fruitful efforts for his glory!

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Vince Johnson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Vince" and last name "Johnson" clearly distinguishable.

Vince Johnson  
*Pastor for Outreach, North*

## Pam Larson

### ALL-CHURCH & NORTH WOMEN'S MINISTRY

*He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?—Romans 8:32*

#### 'O for Grace to Trust Him More'

*Jesus, Jesus, how I trust Him!  
How I've proved Him o'er and o'er  
Jesus, Jesus, precious Jesus!  
O for grace to trust Him more!*

Each year, the Women's Ministry Leadership Team seeks the Lord for direction and focus, meeting regularly to pray and plan. We've been focusing on grace, God's amazing grace. The year 2016 was a year we pleaded for more grace. Grace to trust God *more* in a huge transition.

#### God's Grace in Transition

In January 2016, Mary Delk retired after more than ten years of faithful, loving service to the women of Bethlehem on all three campuses. We praise God for his grace in Mary's leadership and vision! I stepped in as *Interim Director of Women's Ministry* and served in that role until August 1 when I transitioned into my current role as *Minister for Women, North*. Lori Jaeger came on as *Minister for Women, Downtown*, and Ruth Chavis as *Director for Women, South*. We have been transitioning from one all-campus ministry toward three more campus-specific ministries. God's grace has sustained us through this transition.

Change has been a challenge, but God is sovereign and has been faithful to us. We have been committed to diligently uphold our vision during the transition and in the implementation of changes. I am very grateful to be ministering alongside so many precious women on the Women's Leadership Team who, together with the Lead Team, helped us set a trajectory consistent with our pastors' and elders' desire to maximize the best of "all-church" and the best of campus-specific ministry.

#### God's Grace in Our Priorities (January through August)

##### *Bible Studies*

- In the winter, 12 Bible studies were offered and 310 women participated.

- This summer, 300 women on all three campuses studied Nancy Guthrie's *The Promised One: Seeing Jesus in Genesis*.

##### *Titus 2 Ministry*

- In January, 90 young women attended the Titus 2 Mentee Coffee.
- Titus 2 Ministry offerings included 11 homemaking groups, 40 book groups, and 18 one-on-one mentoring relationships.
- Ninety-seven mentors ministered to 300 mentees.
- Forty-five of our mentors attended the Titus 2 Appreciation Coffee on June 25. They enjoyed brunch, special music, testimonies, a word of encouragement, and the opportunity to share ministry ideas with other mentors.
- Over 90 women attended one or more of the three Titus 2 mentor training sessions this Fall.

##### *MOMS*

- MOMS was led by Heather Haas and Kelly Vranes (North Campus), Janette Takata and Krista Coronado (Downtown Campus), and Bonnie Williams and Angie Mellema (South Campus).
- On the three campuses, 185 moms were involved with 240 children in children's programming.

#### God's Grace in Our All-Church Events

##### *Women's Spring Conference, April 22–23*

- Purpose: To offer women the opportunity to spend quiet time with the Lord, to be challenged by good Bible teaching, and to fellowship with each other.
- Theme: "O For Grace to Trust Him More."
- Held at the North Campus; 654 women attended.
- John Piper, Samantha Poteat, and Linda Linder spoke. Lisa Howse led worship.

##### *'Shepherding Our Women Well' Leadership Training, August 13*

- Purpose: To equip our leaders in shepherding women.
- Attended by 81 women, including Bible study leaders, Titus 2 mentors, MOMS leadership, DART teams, and North Campus lay counselors.



- Andy Naselli taught from his book *Conscience*, Kirsten Christianson brought an update on DART, and Pastor Jason Meyer encouraged us with a message from Mark 5.

#### *Women's Fall Kick-Off, September 16*

- Purpose: To begin our ministry year by bringing women together for worship, testimony, and prayer.
- Ruth Chavis, Lori Jaeger, and I shared testimonies of God's grace, and Becki Warnock led worship.
- Theme for 2016-17: "Clothed in Garments of Grace" with theme verse, "I will greatly rejoice in the LORD; my soul shall exult in my God, for he has clothed me with the garments of salvation; he has covered me with the robe of righteousness" (Isaiah 61:10). Justified! We are clothed with Christ's robe of righteousness (2 Corinthians 5:21; Romans 4:5). Transformed! Therefore ... "Put on Christ" (be clothed in him—Romans 6:11; 13:14; Ephesians 4:23-24; Colossians 3:10-14).

#### *Holiday Craft Boutique, November 18-19*

- Purpose: To provide fellowship and encouragement for Bethlehem women who make crafts to support missions, ministries, and their own households.
- Hundreds of women and their families viewed 100 tables representing Bethlehem families and their crafts.
- Lonnie Peterson organized this event with the help of Valerie Block.

### **God's Grace in Our Ongoing All-Church Ministries**

#### *White Cross*

- MaryAnn Burnes led this group twice a month, with an average of 20 women of all ages.
- Projects included rolling bandages (for various mission trips), mending choir robes, and making new nursery crib sheets.
- They made many baby quilts for new moms.
- A beautiful group of six-eight women (all over the age of 60) from an Adult Day Care Center joined the Bethlehem women each month. Though they are challenged in some way, they were able to tie one or two quilts each time with the help of their supervisor. They joined the ladies for lunch, prayer, singing, and devotions.

#### *Women in Missions*

- Dawn McCowen led this group of 30 or more women who met monthly to hear testimonies from our global partners and to pray.
- These faithful women committed to pray daily for each global partner.
- More than 90 gift cards were sent out as a special Christmas gift to our female global partners.

### **God's Grace in North Campus Women's Ministry**

As we began to settle into more campus-specific ministry this Fall, God continued to lead and bless. One of God's greatest graces to me and Women's Ministry is the gift of Beth Nordquist, *Administrative Assistant for Women's Ministry, North*, who faithfully serves the women of Bethlehem with such excellence and gladness.

We welcomed nearly 200 women to the seven Bible Studies offered (including one in Chinese), had 67 moms and 107 children participating in our North MOMS program, and 150 women gathered for an intimate evening of carols and readings at "O Come Let Us Adore Him," our first North Campus Christmas in the Commons.

Joyfully submitted,



Pam Larson  
*Minister for Women, North*

# Gil McConnell

## NORTH CHILDREN & FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP

*He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness.*

*By his wounds you have been healed.—1 Peter 2:24*

The Scripture text above served as our 2016–2017 banner over Children & Family Discipleship. While with the children, we have sought to “show them Jesus.” This theme has been an increased emphasis for us and provided a platform for many high points throughout the year.

### God’s Faithfulness in Nursery and Children’s Ministry

Classroom ministry for children has had some lows and highs. After an on-time start up in 2015, we struggled to get going in the summer and Fall of 2016 with the need of additional volunteers. We delayed start-up of children’s Sunday School and Wednesday Connection one week. Even with this felt deficit, we have seen God’s hand of provision in the faithful service and joy-filled hearts of our Jesus-loving volunteers. And I am so thankful for the remarkable gifts of Jacque Straka, *Administrative Assistant for Children’s Discipleship, North*. Almost everything in this ministry has her fingerprints on it.

We had a beautiful wall mural painted in Hallway B, near the nurseries. The Lord gave us the gift of artist David Lundquist to fulfill this dream. Carmen Tomaszewski, *Lead Coordinator for Nurseries, North*, David, and I shared a vision of developing a “wall of worship” where significant events in redemptive history could be displayed. The main portion of the wall was completed this year, with a plan to finish it in 2017. The artwork has provoked families to worship our great God as they walk by.

June 15 marked Carmen Tomaszewski’s 15-year anniversary on staff. As a gift to her, we commissioned David Lundquist to create an original depiction of happy children of varied ethnicities under the banner, “Let the little children come” (Luke 18:16). Carmen reminds us of Jesus as she exemplifies the theme of this picture week after week. She welcomes children into high-quality nurseries. Ratios and health policies exceed state standards. More than that, every child is prayed for and nurtured toward a big vision of our glorious God. God has given us a remarkable gift in Carmen!

### God’s Faithfulness in Parenting Ministry

Brad Aust, *Ministry Assistant for Family Discipleship, North*, nearly finished our “Parenting Toolbox” resource for parents before his graduation from Bethlehem College & Seminary and subsequent departure. This Fall Brad accepted the call as *Associate Pastor of Family Discipleship* at Grace Evangelical Free Church in Iowa. He is dearly missed! However, this summer the Lord provided Tom Boyer to fill the position. Tom is becoming an integral part of our team.

The *Parenting Through the Years* class and the *Parenting: The Early Years* seminar continued this year and were well received by participants. With Brad’s departure, Jake & Amy Mulvihill ably stepped into leadership of the parenting class. Matt & Christa Smyth have joined them and helped cultivate a greater sense of community.

We sought to encourage and equip parents to lead their children in family worship and corporate worship. We gave away family worship resources. Brad Aust and I developed and facilitated a *Leading Your Children in Corporate Worship* seminar in early summer. We continued prayer efforts with a “70 Gospel Prayers for the Next Generation” guide for families. We also facilitated Sunday School for preschool-aged children July 10–31 so that parents could shepherd their older children in corporate worship.

Trail Life and American Heritage Girls ministries remained strong. We continued to phase out Boy Scouts while continuing to support the boys who would like to achieve Eagle Scout rank by the end of 2017.

### God’s Faithfulness in Disability and Special Needs Ministry

Lee Burtman, *Coordinator for Disability Ministry, North*, has served in Respite Nights, family visits, weekly curriculum writing and teaching for the His Works class, and oversight of 1:1 Buddies for Sunday School. Disability Ministry continues to transition and thrive in a more campus-specific approach.

## God's Faithfulness in Other Ministry

The Lord was kind to allow me opportunities to minister in other areas as a pastor/elder:

- Taught two seminars at the Children Desiring God conference in April
- Served on the church planting/Jumpstart committee for a second year
- Provided consultation for children and family ministers from other churches
- Provided premarital counseling and officiated the weddings of Brandon Matheson & Jessica Bretz and Nick Manning & Ariel Hoffman
- Officiated and gave the message at the funeral of Jerry Hinrichs
- Prayed with small group leaders at regular meetings
- Led our neighborhood small group in sermon application
- Led a Covenant Affirmation service
- Made family visits and performed child dedications
- Taught sessions of the Getting Acquainted With Bethlehem class
- Performed baptisms and baptism/membership interviews
- Taught at a Wednesday Connection at Long Lake Park
- Taught a "Leaving a Legacy" church planting class for Bethlehem Seminary students
- Visited members and attendees in the hospital
- Provided pastoral counseling, marriage counseling, and Peacemaker mediation

- Trained potential Backyard Bible Club leaders
- Spoke at Trail Life USA and American Heritage Girls events
- Preached at Bethlehem on July 24
- Stayed accountable to another brother on the elder council

## Personal Life

The biggest news here is the birth of our son, Zachary Corin, on August 4. He joins four adoring siblings: Benaiah (2), Joshua (almost 7), Micah (9), and Sophia (11). My lovely bride of 14 years, JoAnna, is still my best friend and partner in ministry. This year we homeschooled our kids through the Classical Conversations curriculum, which they have enjoyed. It seems Sophia has surrendered to Jesus and looks to be baptized in 2017. We are overjoyed in God's goodness to us.

Thrilled to make much of Jesus with our children and families,



Gil McConnell

*Pastor for Children & Family Discipleship, North*

## 2016 North Campus Attendance Statistics

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY					
Weekly Services	Age Group	Total Unique Participants	Participant Average	Total Volunteers (includes Aides & Subs)	Volunteer Average*
Sunday 9:00am	Preschool–Grade 5	161	109	40	25
Sunday 11:00am	Preschool–Grade 6	291	214	78	49
Wednesday Connection	Preschool–Grade 6	254	184	43	35
<b>Weekly Service Totals:</b>		<b>706</b>	<b>507</b>	<b>161</b>	<b>109</b>
*Includes Substitutes who do not participate on a regular basis					

## NURSERY MINISTRIES

Total number of babies born or adopted: 43

Weekly Services	Age Group	Total Unique Participants	Participant Average	Total Volunteers	Volunteer Average*
Sunday 9:00am	Nurseries A–D	190	57	180	21
Sunday 11:00am	Nurseries A–D	147	29	100	13
Wednesday Connection	Nurseries A–D	52	27	28	10
<b>Weekly Service Totals:</b>		<b>389</b>	<b>113</b>	<b>308</b>	<b>44</b>
<b>Special Events: MOMS</b>		<b>98</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>Special Events: Women's Bible Studies</b>		<b>67</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>11</b>

## DISABILITY MINISTRIES

15 regular 1:1 Buddies (Aides)

His Works Sunday school: 10 North young adults and 3 volunteers

48 children & youth with significant disabilities on our radar at North Campus

9 children with weekly 1:1 aides in Nursery–Sr High

3 Respite Nights, average of 55 participants, 39 families, 47 volunteers

## OTHER EVENTS & MINISTRIES

14 families attending Parenting Through the Years Sunday school class

43 parents attending Parenting: The Early Years seminars

45 children dedicated

Family Discipleship Appreciation Dinner: 247 attendees (North and Downtown, Nursery–Grade 6)

4 Backyard Bible Clubs hosted by North families, involving 14 households, 12 attended Backyard Bible Club Luncheon and Training

North Campus Fall Volunteer Training: 128 volunteers trained

North Trail Life – Woodlands (Grades K–5): 32 Participants and 8 Leaders

North Trail Life – Navigators/Adventurers (Grades 6–12): 18 Participants and 7 Leaders

North Boy Scouts pursuing Eagle Scout while enrolled in Trail Life – Navigators/Adventurers: 9

American Heritage Girls: 49 Girls, 16 Leaders, 8 Support Leaders

# Jon Nowlin

## NORTH YOUTH & FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP

*O Israel, hope in the LORD! For with the LORD there is steadfast love, and with him is plentiful redemption.—Psalm 130:7*

The banner of the Lord's faithfulness and redemption flew high over the students and families of the North Campus in 2016. May these highlights stir you to thanksgiving and hope in the Lord!

### All-Church Winter Retreat

Jr & Sr High students and adult leaders from Bethlehem's three campuses gathered at Trout Lake Camp to enjoy God's winter gifts and to behold King Jesus, January 29–31. The Lord's kindness abounded to us throughout the weekend. We had glorious weather, remarkable safety, and rich times of worship. Yet to our heart's delight, our times in the Scriptures topped them all. We received resounding feedback about the rich blessing of teaching by Tim Cain (TCT church planter at Kaleo Church, El Cajon, CA), who shared three vignettes from the Old Testament Book of Esther. Those messages spoke directly into real life issues, and each powerfully culminated on Christ and his gospel. God was at work through his word as we contrasted the sinful human king who ruled in Esther's day with Jesus. In each passage, Christ shone gloriously, allowing us to experience our retreat theme, "Behold Your King."

Following the retreat, the Lord strengthened our intentional care for North Campus students, prompting us to seek post-retreat shepherding insights from our cabin leaders. This was very profitable and became a fruitful ongoing practice throughout the year.

### All-Church Jr High Summer Camp

Jesus visited and redeemed Jr High students (Grades 7–9) June 19–24, as students from the three campuses spent the week at Camp Shetek. The gospel of Jesus Christ was our focus as we proclaimed, discussed, and used the Swedish Bible Method to study passages from the book of Mark. It was a joy to watch God give vision for and energize students to pray for the 51 weeks following camp. Our morning sessions were used to ground students in the disciplines of grace so that meeting with Jesus in prayer and the Word might spill over into the rest of the year following camp. God was at work through his word. We witnessed many hearts soften toward Christ and saw fruits of the flesh

replaced with fruits of the Spirit. At least three North Campus young men professed faith in Christ in a new and distinct way. Our phenomenal team of Bethlehem leaders (including 25+ Sr High students) ended the week very tired and very aware that they had partnered with the living God for the good of young people.

### Grateful to God for 10 Years of Ministry

My heart rejoiced at the outpouring of love from Bethlehem at the celebration of our ten year ministry anniversary on June 29. So many of the North Campus saints took part in transforming our weekly Wednesday Connection at Long Lake Regional Park into a festive gathering. Those in attendance played games, enjoyed great food, wrote messages of encouragement, celebrated in a time of thanksgiving to God, and capped things off choosing a dessert from over 30 homemade cakes. Every direction I turned, I saw the people I love joyfully living out God's command to outdo one another in showing honor. Our family was humbled and greatly encouraged at this incredibly great gift. It was truly a sweet offering of praise to the Lord who gave us the grace to serve Bethlehem for ten years.

### Transition Faithfulness & Fruitfulness

The Lord displayed his faithfulness during the summer months as two of our part-time team members, Jocelyn Rognlin (*Administrative Assistant for Youth & Family Discipleship, North*) and Jordan Hecox (*Ministry Assistant for Jr High Discipleship, North*), transitioned to exciting new opportunities. The Lord displayed his faithfulness as they transitioned by richly filling the gaps they left. He brought Emily Boyer to serve our church administratively with diligence and efficiency. We also rejoiced to welcome Ben Katterson to serve our Jr High students. The Lord has been at work through Ben to produce much fruit in serving Jr High youth and their families at the Downtown Campus and continued through the year to do so here at the North Campus.

### Journeying Through Jesus' Story of Redemption

The Lord took us on a sweeping Scriptural journey in 2016 through our weekly teaching. We began the year

inviting students and families to join us in reading through the Old Testament history of redemption from Joshua through 1 & 2 Kings. Along the way, the Holy Spirit led us to slow down and carefully consider the Lord's plentiful redemption in Samson's life as we taught chapter by chapter through Judges 13–16. Over the summer, students walked through the Gospel of Matthew with assistance from videos, art, and insights from The Bible Project. Then in September we launched the new school year, seeking to give students a front row seat to watch Jesus build his church from the Cross (Luke 22) through the book of Acts. We made chronological stops along the way to read and study one of the letters Paul wrote after his first and second missionary journey (Galatians and 1 Thessalonians, respectively). This historical journey through the Scriptures gave us fresh appreciation for the Lord and especially his personal and heartfelt interaction with his chosen people.

Thank you for supporting and praying for our students and families. Your investment had many great returns, including many that space did not permit mentioning here.

Grateful to know the Giver of these good gifts,



Jon Nowlin  
*Pastor for Youth & Family Discipleship, North*

## 2016 North Campus Attendance Statistics

YOUTH MINISTRY				
Weekly Services	Average Participants	Total Participants	Average Volunteers*	Total Volunteers
Jr High Sunday School	54	81	17	20
Sr High Sunday School	112	163	16	24
<b>Total Sunday School</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>244</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>44</b>
Jr High Wednesday Connection	42	65	7	12
Sr High Wednesday Connection	76	122	8	13
<b>Total Wednesday Connection</b>	<b>118</b>	<b>187</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>25</b>

*\*Not every classroom volunteer was accounted for. Numbers are most likely higher than reported.*

Other Events & Ministries Attendance Statistics
Jr & Sr High Winter Retreat (January 29–31): 257 students, 58 leaders (all-church)
Youth Baptisms (May 11): 9 baptized
Jr High Summer Camp (June 19–24): 119 students, 45 leaders (all-church)
Jr & Sr High Awaken Retreat (October 14–16): 135 students, 25 leaders

## Chuck Steddom

### SOUTH LEAD PASTOR/WORSHIP & MUSIC

*And he came and preached peace to you who were far off and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access in one Spirit to the Father. So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Christ Jesus himself being the cornerstone, in whom the whole structure, being joined together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord. In him you also are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit.—Ephesians 2:17–22*

As I look back on 2016, God has done a significant shifting, refining, and faith-building work in our people at the South Campus. I believe this is all a part of Ephesians 1:22—“in him” we are being built together into a dwelling place for God by the Spirit. This year was a testament to a “building year” for the South Campus and a season of contrasts in ministry.

This was the year God led us as a church to forge a new 10-year vision: “Fill These Cities: 25 by ’25.” This initiative consisted of four major components: strengthen the core of Bethlehem’s ministries across the campuses; plant 25 churches local, national, and international by 2025; reach 25 unengaged people groups; and build a 24/7 building to house us here at the South Campus. Several group and individual coffee gatherings were designed to share this new vision with our church family. Many hours were spent listening to the dreams and burdens of our people. This was a unique opportunity for me and other South pastors and elders to personally connect with several members with whom we had not recently connected.

We also implemented a number of positive new and strategic ministry initiatives:

- We added a “*Director for Women*”—Ruth Chavis.
- We brought on four new congregational elders—Peter Thorpe, Phil Nelson, Alan West, and Pavel Nesvetaylov.
- We introduced a week-long Vacation Bible School, July 11–15, designed to reach out to the neighborhood around our 501 office building in Burnsville.

Each initiative was designed to reach out to the lost and more effectively minister to both men and women at the South Campus. For all this we give God praise and glory.

We love the vision of planting churches. It was our joy and privilege to set apart Jonathan Woodyard as church planter, and Dave Filzen and Spencer Jones as elders,

to lead approximately 30 covenant members to plant a TCT church in Northfield, Minnesota. We will miss them and feel their absence already. Yet, we believe this transition is a part of advancing the gospel kingdom and supporting the Fill These Cities vision. We are proud to be able to send out one of the first Fill These Cities church plants.

At the same time, this year we have faced some of our most difficult pastoral care and domestic abuse issues to date. Our hearts agonize and weep over seemingly intractable marital struggles, disease, and relational hurts within the body. It seemed like this year in particular, the enemy was working overtime to thwart these new gospel advancing initiatives and the joy of his people. As elders and under-shepherds, we were continually in fervent prayer, humbly acknowledging that we shepherd imperfectly and need to continually seek his wisdom and guidance. We praise God that he is on the throne and that he shepherds perfectly. Pray that we will hear rightly from the Lord and lead accordingly.

Here are some more specific details related to other new ministries this past year:

- Quarterly Soup Supper, Worship & Prayer nights on January 6, April 6, September 7, and November 9
- Valentine’s Dinner on February 13, attended by 52 couples
- As a part of our Ethnic Harmony initiative, a joint *Concert of Spirituals and Lament* on February 28 with Dr. Timothy Berry, Praise Groove from Greater Friendship Missionary Baptist Church, and the South Campus choir
- Worship Pastor swap with Dan Holst and North Campus on Sunday, October 9
- First women’s campus-specific event: Thanksgiving Brunch on November 12, with 75 women attending

### *Personal Ministry Highlights*

- Worship training at the Kachin Theological College & Seminary in Myanmar in June
- Ministry trip to Ireland in July to prepare for the South Choir Tour in 2017
- Led worship for the Lakeville National Day of Prayer event on May 5
- Worship training for Fellowship Bible Church in Oskaloosa, Iowa, in September
- Mosaix Conference for Multi-Ethnic Church Planters in Dallas in September

### *South Campus Sunday Worship Statistics*

- Average attendance: 510
- Highest attendance: 689 (January 24), excluding Easter, which was 839
- First quarter average: 559
- Fourth quarter average: 439
- Covenant Members: 406

Our heart's desire is that Jesus would be the head of all things at the South Campus, that we would continue to be knit together in faith and unity—to be the aroma of Christ in Lakeville and the surrounding communities—and to care for one another in love and truth.

Living in His Grace,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Chuck Steddom".

Chuck Steddom  
*Lead Pastor, South*



## Aaron Davitch

### SOUTH SMALL GROUPS, ADULT DISCIPLESHIP, AND CHILDREN & FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP

... *For your progress and joy in the faith.*—Philippians 1:25

The verse above is one of my favorite descriptions of the aim of Christian ministry. The Apostle Paul summarizes the aim of his ministry to the Philippians as continuing with them for their “progress and joy in the faith.” That’s my desire in ministry at Bethlehem, namely to work for the progress and joy of those I am privileged to serve at the South Campus. Below are some of the ways I’ve aimed, with God’s help, to do that in this past year.

But first, I want to say what a joy it is to serve with the South staff and elders. I love the people I get to serve with and the joyful camaraderie God has given us. In fact, that term “joyful camaraderie” comes from my job description, where it says that I “should endeavor to experience and maintain the joyful camaraderie and creative complementation of gifts and ministries of the pastors, elders and staff.” In other words, it’s my job (!) to experience and maintain the “joyful camaraderie” of the staff and elders. I praise God that I’ve experienced it, and I hope I’ve also helped contributed to it.

Second, I want to express what a joy it is to serve the people of the South Campus. I love getting to know and serve with these humble, godly men and women. Their faith encourages mine.

#### Small Groups

Small groups are one of the main organizing structures at Bethlehem for community and discipleship. At the South Campus about 60% of our members were involved in a small group in this past year. I love knowing that as Bethlehem South leaves church on Sunday we continue to be the church scattered throughout the South metro area in small groups. I love hearing the stories of people connecting, being known and cared for, and growing in Christ and in the joy of faith through life-on-life discipleship.

#### Classroom Discipleship

Adult Sunday School classes continue to be an important part of the ministry at the South Campus. About 120 people participated in a class in 2016. This year we offered several classes, including Mosaic, CrossWalk, Career Adults, a college class, Mining God’s Word, Hope When Life Hurts, Parenting Adopted Children, a

Russian Sunday School class, and How People Change. These classes provide a mid-size community setting where people can connect and grow together in the grace and knowledge of the Lord (2 Peter 3:18).

#### Leadership Development

I enjoy leading a men’s leadership development group that meets early on Monday mornings. This year we went through the *Instruments in the Redeemer’s Hands* workbook as well as a study on personal Bible reading. I am encouraged that a couple of these men are prayerfully considering eldership at the South Campus. In the Spring, I was able to take two of the men to a 9Marks Weekender at Capitol Hill Baptist Church. It was a great experience to share that time together and to learn about meaningful membership, eldering, and member care.

#### Men’s Ministry

##### *Monthly Breakfasts*

On the first Saturday of the month, South men gather to feast, fellowship, pray, hear a testimony of grace, and be encouraged in the faith. It is great to see men bring along a son or invite a neighbor.

##### *Men’s Small Groups*

In addition to the monthly breakfasts, there are four men’s small groups that meet regularly.

##### *Men’s Retreat*

We moved the Men’s Retreat from the Fall 2016 to the Spring 2017.

##### *Purity Conference*

In the Spring, we held an all-church Men’s Purity Conference at the Downtown Campus where we heard from Bethlehem College & Seminary professor Andy Naselli and Minneapolis Police Sergeant Grant Snyder. About 35 men from the South Campus attended. Afterward, we met for lunch and had a helpful time debriefing in groups.

#### Valentine’s Dinner

In February we had a South Campus Valentine’s Dinner at Morgan’s in the Best Western Premier Nicollet Inn.

We heard from two couples, one sharing what friendship in their marriage looks like and the other couple sharing the story of God's grace and growth in their marriage. It was a lovely evening, and 52 couples attended the event. Next year, in March 2017, we plan to host a South Campus Marriage Retreat.

## **Summer Ministry**

### *Vacation Bible School*

This year we had a blast hosting our first-ever South Campus Vacation Bible School! We used the *Proof Pirates* curriculum, which focuses on different aspects of God's grace each day. It was awesome to see the many gifts and skills of the South Campus come together to make this a great week. About 60 people helped serve in various ways, including set design, decorations, teaching, leading small groups, leading games, leading worship, doing skits, serving snacks, handing out fliers, and serving in hospitality and registration. It was great to see the volunteers get in character and have God-glorifying fun. About 85 children participated in the program.

### *Summer Connections*

In June and July, the South Campus gathered on Wednesdays at Antlers Park in Lakeville to eat together, worship, and hear a message. We featured testimonies of God's grace, highlighting the various backgrounds out of which he saves people and the various means he uses to draw people to himself. About 130 people from the South Campus attended each week.

### *Meetups*

In August, instead of the weekly Connections at Antlers, we had Meetups. These are geographically-based gatherings in the homes of South members spread throughout the south suburbs. The main goal of these gatherings is for our members and regular attenders to get to know their Bethlehem neighbors.

### *Preaching*

This summer, for one of the campus-specific messages, I had the opportunity to preach on the topic of outreach. I preached on Colossians 4:2-6 with a sermon titled, "Ordinary People, Ordinary Lives With Gospel Intentionality."

## **Membership**

In 2016 the average attendance at the South Campus worship service was 517 people. I am encouraged

that out of this number, about 380 (roughly 75%) are Bethlehem members. In this past year, we thank God for bringing 27 brothers and sisters into covenant membership with us.

## **Pre-Marriage Counseling and Weddings**

This year I had the privilege of leading the pre-marriage counseling and officiating at the weddings of two couples. It was a joy to get to know them better and to participate in this significant event in their lives.

## **Children's Ministry**

### *Nursery*

It's our joy to serve the youngest among us in the nursery, where each child receives care, prayer, and sound instruction in the word of God. Tracy Anderson, *Lead Coordinator for Nurseries, South*, does a wonderful job recruiting, training, and creating a nursery environment where the love of Christ is tangible. This year 89 children participated in the nursery ministry and 88 volunteers served.

### *Children's Sunday School*

I praise God for his faithfulness in 2016 in raising up volunteers who love Jesus and want to love and lead children in Jesus' name through classroom ministry. It's a joy to partner with them in coming alongside parents in the discipleship of their children. I was encouraged to watch the Lord stretch some people out of their comfort zones to serve in roles they weren't sure they could do and to open the hearts of others to see a need in Sunday school and step up to serve with gladness. This year, 130 children participated in Sunday school and 68 volunteers served.

### *Disability and Special Needs Ministry*

God is so good in giving specifically-fitted volunteers with a heart filled with the love of Christ to serve as aides to the children with special needs in the classrooms. These 11 children are a gift to the students and teams in the classrooms. In addition to serving children with special needs, God is good in providing ministry to parents affected by disability through the Hope When Life Hurts class and the Parenting Adopted Children class. In addition, God moved in the heart of a South small group to provide a Respite Day to parents. About 15 children were cared for at the South 501 Building while parents were able to go on a date for a few hours this Fall.

### *Restless Child Room*

Meeting in a rented facility has some challenges, but this past year we were able to designate a room near the sanctuary as a “restless child area.” With the help of the media team, we provide a live feed of the whole service into the room. On average, five to eight children and their parents make use of this room each week.

### **Security and Medical Team**

This year we made efforts to develop a greater security presence and procedures at the South Campus. Each Sunday we have members who are either doctors or nurses check in to be available in the event of a medical need. In addition, two men serve on security each Sunday. This Spring we had an “active shooter” training for our nursery, children, and youth volunteers. I serve as the pastoral liaison to the security and medical team.

In closing, I trust that because of God’s promise in 1 Corinthians 15:58, none of the ministry above was in vain and that through it God was pleased to work for our progress and joy in the faith.



Aaron Davitch  
*Pastor for Small Groups and  
Children & Family Discipleship, South*

## Ruth Chavis

### SOUTH WOMEN'S MINISTRY

*And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times,  
you may abound in every good work.—2 Corinthians 9:8*

I have prayed this verse daily and have it written on the whiteboard in my office to remind myself throughout my day to depend on God, the One who is able, and not on myself to do this “good work” he has called me to do at Bethlehem. And he has been faithful. He has granted sufficient grace for the daily tasks, sanctifying and strengthening grace in the trials, grace that is carrying me through family heartaches, grace that has poured down much joy, and grace that has loved me through the love of the women I have the privilege to serve and lead. I am in awe of his personal care. He truly is the God of all grace!

What follows is a testimony of our Heavenly Father's love and grace working in the hearts and lives of his daughters at the South Campus.

#### God's Work Through Ministries

##### *Bible Studies*

- This past year, we offered Beth Moore and Precept studies on Wednesday mornings and a bioethics class on Tuesday evenings, with 55 women participating. The summer Nancy Guthrie study had 28 participants.
- I thank God for Debbie Adams, Candace Schroeder, Martha Pohl, and Mary Ezzo for leading these studies and also for Jolene Rossiter, who coordinated children's programming during the morning studies.

##### *MOMS*

- Making Our Mothering Significant ministry averaged 30 participants throughout the year.
- I thank God for Angie Mellema and Bonnie Williams, who lead this ministry, and for Sarah Vogel, who coordinates children's programming.

##### *Titus 2*

In 2016, seven women were actively involved in Titus 2, mentoring three South women (as well as young women from the Downtown Campus). Four additional women will be mentoring for the first time in 2017, and several young women have already registered for Titus 2 groups.

The Lord has been good to provide all the volunteers needed to make these ministries happen. I am grateful for each one of them.

God has faithfully worked through these ministries to breathe his word into the hearts of the women, effectively teaching, correcting, and training them in righteousness, so that these women of God may be competent and equipped for every good work (2 Timothy 3:16).

#### God's Work Through Women Ministering to Women

##### *Thanksgiving Brunch, November 12*

God blessed this first campus-specific event, which was attended by 75 women. The morning began with God-exalting, heartfelt worship, followed by testimonies of his faithfulness and care, and then forming new friendships and building old ones around a meal served by several of the South men.

##### *Tuesday Women's Small Group*

This group has been meeting for several years, and I had the opportunity to visit them with the purpose of encouraging them, and I left being more encouraged by them! I am grateful for Laur Weisensel's leadership of this group.

##### *ESL Class*

Every week three of our women lead five non-Bethlehem women of various cultural and spiritual backgrounds in ESL. More importantly, these women share Jesus.

##### *New Initiatives*

God is stirring in hearts of women to offer a new Bible study at the South Campus, to raise up a team of 25 women to plan a future retreat, and to pray about a small group for moms with adopted children.

##### *In the Day to Day*

The Lord is at work every Sunday through women ministering to women in spontaneous conversations and through serving together on various ministry teams. Each week new mercies are given as they walk through

challenges together, encourage each other in parenting, and help each other keep their eyes on Jesus.

God has granted much grace as I have had the opportunity to come alongside the elders in caring for women and families who are experiencing difficult trials.

### **God's Work in Leadership Development**

With the transition in Women's Ministry came the formation of a women's ministry team on each campus. I thank God for Eileen Kurschner, Karen Power, Bonnie Williams, and Stacy Thorpe (my Administrative Assistant), who are partnering with me in prayer and in overseeing ministry to women at the South Campus.

I am privileged to work with the South pastors and elder Bruce Power in leadership development, resulting in a new Sunday School class, "Theology for Women," beginning in February. We are looking at other training possibilities in 2017.

It's humbling to be a part of what God is doing at the South Campus. May the God who is able be pleased to grant abounding grace in the year ahead by helping me and the women I serve increasingly see the greatness of Jesus Christ in the gospel, seeking our joy and satisfaction in him alone.

*To our God and Father be glory forever and ever. Amen.*

—Philippians 4:20

Seeking more of Jesus with you,

*Ruth Chavis*

Ruth Chavis  
*Director for Women, South*

# Daniel Viezbicke

## SOUTH YOUTH & FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP

*The aim of our charge is love that issues from a pure heart and a good conscience  
and a sincere faith.—1 Timothy 1:5*

The tangible, on-the-ground goal of Christian ministry is “faith working through love” (Galatians 5:6) that results in glory to God. This year I’ve often meditated on this passage in regard to what is needed for the great commandments to be fulfilled; there are prerequisites—equipment necessary—for this earth-shaking task! God must cleanse our hearts, purify our consciences, and strengthen our faith if we are to love him and our neighbors. It’s our prayer that God would continue to do that in the lives of young people and their families at the South Campus in 2017.

### Grace to the Viezbickes at the South Campus

God was good to meet my family in innumerable ways throughout the year. First, God gave us opportunities to use our townhome in Apple Valley for hospitality and evangelism of our neighbors. Several times during the year our son would be out playing with neighborhood kids and I would be grilling, and suddenly tons of people were on our porch, eating and talking. Numerous gospel opportunities arose, and God was good.

Then, in October we bought a house in Burnsville, not too far from the current South Campus offices and only about ten minutes from the church property for the planned South Campus. We’ve slowly been unpacking and moving in, all while hosting pretty sizeable groups of youth and their families. We love this dynamic and hope to continue to make our home a place of hospitality for the South Campus. We jokingly say that it’s like the first part of our planned South Campus building! Please pray that God would make us faithful in our neighborhood so that Jesus might be made known.

### Grace to Youth at the South Campus

As always, there are tangible expressions of God’s grace to report.

#### *Grace at Retreats*

This year we started a new summer retreat for our incoming seniors and outgoing graduating class, as well as an “away” Fall Retreat for Jr & Sr High students at Camp Victory.

A few highlights ...

- At the Jr High Summer Camp, Jon Nowlin and I preached through the Gospel of Mark. We had 29 South students come to hear the good news proclaimed and to enjoy fellowship. As God gave grace, students made professions of faith, turned from sin, and saw Jesus in the gospel.
- At the Winter Retreat, Tim Cain (TCT church planter at Kaleo Church in San Diego) pointed us to Christ in the Book of Esther.
- At the Fall Retreat, Pastor Bud Burk shared Christ with the students in three vignettes, seeking to show them that being “with Jesus” now (in this life) and then (in eternity) is better than anything else imaginable. This South Retreat had 44 students come to enjoy fellowship with each other and their mentors.

#### *Grace in the Classroom*

In Sr High, we finished the last school year talking about the new heavens and new earth, as well as evangelism and discipleship. For this school year (2016–2017), we piloted a new idea: an integrated walkthrough of the New Testament. Formerly we had three tracks in our scope/sequence: 1) Bible study, 2) theological training, and 3) practical topics. With this integrated idea, we are teaching all three tracks as we walk through the book of Acts and take small “off ramps” into each of Paul’s epistles. Various teachers undertook the task of writing curriculum and presenting it.

In Jr High, God met the students through *Your Word Is Truth* and *Teach Me Your Way* at the end of last school year and the beginning of this year (respectively). Brian Eaton has continued to do the lion’s share of teaching, and I’ve stepped in to teach intermittently as well.

2016 Sunday School Attendance Statistics:

#### *Jr High*

- Total participants: 31
- Average participants: 11
- Average volunteers: 5

### *Sr High*

- Total participants: 78
- Average participants: 41
- Average volunteers: 11

*Note: Wednesday Youth Connections did not track attendance in 2016.*

### *More Grace*

Various mentors and others shared stories of God's grace working in their lives at Sup n' Stuff this summer and Jr High JAMs (Jesus And Me), all hosted by South Campus families. Similarly, various homes hosted Wednesday Connection throughout the year.

Five students followed Jesus through the waters of baptism this year, and several went on short-term ministry trips. We're praying that God would lead others to follow Jesus in obedience in these and other ways.

### **Grace for the New Year**

In 2017, we're hoping to begin two more retreats, bringing the total (South-specific and all-church) to six. I'm particularly excited about one of the new retreats—in March we'll host a Disciplines for Life Retreat where

students will get away to fast, pray, and meditate on God's Word for 24 hours. We're also prayerfully asking God to provide assistants for both Jr & Sr High to bolster ministries in both areas, especially seeking to build more community for Jr High students and implement a more robust mid-week meeting.

It's our prayer that students and their families at the South Campus continue to know God deeply in 2017 as he meets them in the fellowship of believers. Pray for us that God would be pleased to continue to move among us for the sake of his glory.



Daniel Viezbicke

*Director for Youth & Family Discipleship, South*

# Todd Rasmuson

## GLOBAL OUTREACH

*And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven  
given among men by which we must be saved.—Acts 4:12*

### Global Partners

As we begin 2017, our global partners number 206 adults and their 223 children, a total of 429 individuals (as compared to 210 adults and 222 children, totaling 432 at this time last year). In terms of families, there are 94 couples and 18 singles living in 47 countries of the world—a total of 112 “GP units” compared to 116 last year in 48 countries.

(Note on numbers: There were ten Bethlehem members who served six months to two years who completed their service during 2016. In the past, we counted those serving for this timeframe as global partners, but now they are counted as short-term ministers since they do not function fluently in the national language with the intent to serve long-term. If we counted those ten short-term ministers in our global partner unit count, comparing apples to apples from 2015 to 2016, the total GP unit count for 2016 would be 122, showing an increase of six units over the previous year. Going forward, the Global Outreach short-term report will provide the numbers for short-term ministers.)

These global partners completed their service in 2016: Jim & Lisa C., Hannia F., Laura W., Courtney A., Daniel & Melissa T., Alissa A., Cherie I., and Chris & Faith C. In July 2016, appointed global partners Jamison & Kathryne P., along with their three children, departed to be with Jesus Christ. Eleven global partners were commissioned: Ben H., Will & Theresa B., Ryan & Carrie T., John & Pamela K., Daniel & Jen P., and Gary & Corrie A. Additionally, five more adults have been approved as global partners in 2016, and they are support-raising and finishing their final preparations: Emily J., John & Caroline N., and Jonathan & Jenny M.

### GO Team

We thank God for the 23 outstanding volunteers who, in 2016, prepared, sent, and cared for those called to serve as our global partners:

- North Campus—Morris & Wendy Johnson, Jon & Joby Morgan, Tom & Julie Varno, Joann Pittman, and Steve & Liz Stein.
- Downtown Campus—Don & Clara Klatke, Travis & Susan Myers, Darin & Cristy Brink, Erin Becker,

Tracy Brandon, and Scott & Cindy Purser.

- South Campus—Terry & Eileen Kurschner and Mark & Tedde Lundstedt.
- Steve & Ruth Bauman finished their service on the South GO Team, and we are grateful for their years of faithful ministry.

### GO Staff

Gina Woodyard completed five years as *Administrative Assistant for Global Outreach*, and Lida Sheard began in that role in August. GO staff members continuing into 2017 include Micah B. as *Ministry Assistant for Global Outreach*, Tamara Rasmuson as *Volunteer Coordinator for Global Partner Care*, Brad Nelson as *Pastor for Global Outreach Strategic Short-Term Ministry*, and JoNell Baker, *Administrative Assistant for Global Outreach* (focused on our short-term ministry). In January, David Livingston joined the GO staff as *Pastor for Global Outreach Member Care*.

### Barnabas Teams

Each global partner has a team of supporters who pray for them regularly and support them in a variety of ways: relationally, emotionally, spiritually, and practically. In 2016, more than 450 members of Bethlehem served on Barnabas Teams.

### Global Focus

The theme for Global Focus 2016 was “Theological Famine Relief.” The 11 days of Global Focus (October 12–23) were launched by a special Wednesday night event featuring Darren Carlson, who shared the history of Training Leaders International, and there was a dedication of a recent translation of Pastor John Piper’s *50 Reasons Why Jesus Came to Die* for the P. tribe. Additionally, Pastor Jason Meyer shared a biographical message based on the lives of Charles & Lettie Cowman, and we held a congregational prayer time for Japan. Pastor John Piper was our guest preacher for the weekend of October 15/16. Pastor Jason preached part seven of his nine-part sermon series, which concluded Global Focus on October 22/23. In this conclusion to Global Focus, Pastor Jason presented a new goal for



Global Outreach: To engage 25 unengaged people groups by the year 2025. Pastor Jason asked, “Who senses a fresh stirring by God to go to the nations?” Seventy-eight people came to the front of the church, and then he asked, “Who senses God might be leading them to an unengaged people group?” Twenty-two people stepped forward. Eighty-five people attended the Missions in the Manse event at the Meyer home.

### **Nurture Program**

We prepare our people for global outreach ministry with our Nurture Program, a program consisting of a combination of strategies and resources for global ministry. Currently there are 116 enrolled in the program, as compared to 130 last year.

### **BAM (Business as Missions)**

The BAM committee in 2016 included Don Hoffert, Scott Rebney, Brad Nelson, Keith Anderson, Steve Walmsley, and Paul Lindberg. Several others assisted occasionally and served as consultants.

### **Global Diaconate**

The Global Diaconate task force oversees the disbursement of Bethlehem funds to ministries of mercy serving the poorest of the poor and those suffering

around the globe. Global Diaconate task force members in 2016 included: C.J. Hughley, Steve Prater, Joel Assaraf, Kathryn Hedlund, David Patterson, Richard Swanson, and Jeff & Deb Bender. Brad Nelson, Todd Rasmuson, and Micah B. provided pastoral and administrative support. This year the Global Diaconate voted to provide financial support to 15 projects in ten countries in the name of Jesus Christ.

Reaching the nations with you in the Name above all names,



Todd Rasmuson  
*Pastor for Global Outreach*

# Brad Nelson

## SHORT-TERM MINISTRY MOBILIZATION

*But thanks be to God, who in Christ always leads us in triumphal procession, and through us spreads the fragrance of the knowledge of him everywhere. For we are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing.—2 Corinthians 2:14–15*

Our philosophy for short-term ministry trips is to support our 112 global partners who serve around the world. We want to encourage them, love them, and come alongside them in the greatest cause in the universe: The spread of the gospel and seeing the name of Jesus glorified to the ends of the earth. This year we sent out 21 teams and approximately 187 people to assist our global partners.

### Short-Term Ministry Teams Sent in 2016

#### Americas

##### Ohio

Vaughn Blackburn led a team of 11 to partner with the Schwartz family by encouraging those who are and will be serving behind the scenes in missionary aviation. As the adults were in the plenary session for the spiritual life conference, the team worked with the children.

##### Costa Rica

Don & Jacque Straka led their small group of seven to partner with April Campbell. The focus of the trip was to pray for April's ministries and those with whom she interacts.

##### Dominican Republic/Haiti

Tyler Holley led a team of 16 to help a long-term partnering church in the Dominican Republic with evangelism, light construction projects, and VBS on five sites. The team also traveled to Haiti to do VBS in a poor village.

##### San Diego

Chris Johnson and a team of nine partnered with Tim Cain, a TCT church planter in San Diego, for a project called "Serve the City." The team helped lead a basketball camp and invest in other service projects around the city.

#### Africa

##### East Africa

Micah B. led a team of three to work with the T. family and helped teach English to university students.

##### Kenya

Josh & Sarah Williams led a team of three to Kenya to work with the I. family. They went to encourage them and partner with them by leading a basketball camp for young refugees.

##### Burkina Faso

Paul Lindberg led a team of three to one of the poorest countries on earth. Their medical team went to Ouagadougou to minister to the hearing impaired by fitting and distributing hearing aids. They also helped with children's ministry and community development.

##### Congo/Uganda

I led a team of six to Uganda to partner with Sue Murr by visiting children with disabilities and their families. They also visited Aaron & Meg Brown and the school where Aaron teaches. The team then traveled to the Congo where they partnered in prayer ministry with Maryanne Augustin.

##### Zambia

Steve Stein led a team of 11 to work with Derek & Kristin Dearth by bringing a team of medical professionals to teach and train workers in AIDS ministry and hospice care. The team also facilitated a retreat for the workers and church leaders.

#### Europe

##### Bosnia

I led a team of 11 to Bosnia to serve alongside Sean & Heather German. The team assisted with an English and ski/snowboard camp with the purpose of reaching out to Muslim students with the gospel by sharing the hope we have in Christ.

##### England

Devin Smith led a team of seven Campus Outreach students to England to work with international students through friendship evangelism. The team partnered with The Crowded House, an Acts 29 church in Sheffield.

##### Sweden

Paul Lindberg led a team which focused on prayer and helping local churches, church planters, missionaries,

and Cru ministries in Sweden by listening, learning, encouraging, and praying.

#### *Northern Ireland*

Daniel Viezbicke led a team of seven to do prep work for the South Campus choir tour in 2017. This trip also gave Pastor Chuck & Carol Steddom the opportunity to remember Alex, their son, on the one-year anniversary of his death.

### **Asia**

#### *India*

This team of seven, led by Erin Carlson, went to work with our global partner. India has been cracking down on Christian ministry by outsiders so this team was limited in what they could do. But God was faithful and many good things happened.

#### *Thailand*

Three teams traveled to Thailand.

1. Genevieve Marr led a team of three to the ELIC conference in Chiang Mai. Their ministry focus was prayer.
2. I led the BASE (Bethlehem Against Sexual Exploitation) team of four to partner with Todd & Karen Indehar by teaching English and observing some of the ministries that fight against sex trafficking. We then traveled to Cambodia to visit AIM's ministry against child trafficking in Svay Pak.
3. Keith Anderson led a team of three to visit, pray, and encourage Tom & Joy Tebows.

#### *Southeast Asia*

Steve Walmsley led a team of 11 to partner with the B. family to Southeast Asia to do "ethno-tours" of island villages while living with host families and sharing Christ through word and deed.

#### *Japan*

Jesse Albrecht led a team of seven to partner with a church planter, with the hope of sending a team in the future to plant a church in the Tokyo area.

#### *Nepal*

Steve Prater led a team of men to Nepal after the devastating earthquake, partnering with a church to rebuild homes in a remote village in the name of Jesus.

### **Club 4th**

Club 4th's mission is to minister to missionary kids at conferences put on by mission agencies. As the adults attend plenary sessions, Corrie Ayers and her team engage the kids in Christ-exalting God-centered activities, teaching, and ministry. This year we sent teams to South Asia, Bali, Turkey, SE Asia, and Cypress.

### **Individuals**

In an effort to make sure our people go out and serve well, we aim to support, train, and equip individuals, couples, or families who desire to minister globally. This year we sent out 50 individuals, couples, and families to bless the nations in a wide variety of functions and tasks. Here a few of the countries where this group ministered: Greece, Cameroon, Kyrgyzstan, India, Turkey, China, Mexico, and Honduras.

### **Ministry Teams**

In an effort to be effective in ministry internationally, Bethlehem has teams who minister locally and have an expertise in a variety of areas, which help us prepare and implement a specific ministry focus overseas. These groups include: Business As Mission (BAM), Club 4th, medical teams, sports ministry, disaster response, anti-human trafficking (BASE), and prayer.

### **Hosted Team From Dominican Republic**

A team of 32 from the Dominican Republic traveled to Minneapolis to partner with us in ministry. When we send teams to the DR, they partner with the church that sent this team. While here, the team ministered in a variety of ways from assisting with a soccer camp, VBS on the Little Earth reservation, Feed My Starving Children, assisting with and distributing food at Jericho Road, and working at Hope Academy.

### **Short-Term Ministry Mobilization Committee**

There is an incredible group of people who form the Short-Term Ministry Mobilization Committee. They help make ministry opportunities happen. They interview, debrief, and help teams and individuals think through ministry, missions, and future plans that may follow as a result of a short-term ministry experience.

**STMMC Team Members**

Judy Anderson, Mary Anderson, Jan Korbel, Steve Prater, Scott Rebney, Denny Williams, Sandra Dzik, Ron Powell, Julie Thompson, Steve Walmsley, Doug Hanson, Kathryn Hedlund, Katie Jacobson, and myself.

**Home Front**

We are thankful that Cindy is now cancer free. We are also thankful that we sold our house in Wyoming, Minnesota, and moved to Fridley. God is good.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Brad Nelson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Brad Nelson

*Pastor for Global Outreach Strategic Short-Term Ministry*

## Keith Anderson

### SENIOR ADULT MINISTRY

*What does man gain by all the toil at which he toils under the sun? A generation goes, and a generation comes, but the earth remains forever. The sun rises, and the sun goes down, and hastens to the place where it rises. The wind blows to the south and goes around to the north; around and around goes the wind, and on its circuits the wind returns. All streams run to the sea, but the sea is not full; to the place where the streams flow, there they flow again. All things are full of weariness; a man cannot utter it; the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the ear filled with hearing. What has been is what will be, and what has been done is what will be done, and there is nothing new under the sun. Is there a thing of which it is said, "See, this is new"? It has been already in the ages before us. There is no remembrance of former things, nor will there be any remembrance of later things yet to be among those who come after.—Ecclesiastes 1:3–11*

The writer of Ecclesiastes certainly takes a hopeless and depressing view on life. Perhaps the modern proverb could be: "The more things change, the more they stay the same."

The year 2016 presented many changes on many levels. Some for the good: Bethlehem is now in a 25-month initiative, "Fill these Cities: 25 by '25." But some people and things perished, some faded, some got defiled. And who would have thought a year ago that we would now be saying "President-Elect Trump"?

According to Wikidictionary.org, this modern proverb means: "Changes do not affect reality on a deeper level." Those who know Jesus as Savior know God the Father, who is the deeper level. And our Father does not change (Malachi 3:6). The world around us can (and will) change, but our Rock never changes. Our salvation is certain. Hips can break, close friends pass away, IRAs become worthless, politicians grasp for power and lose sight of who elected them, and the worldly future looks bleak. But our Rock never changes. Our hope is in the future—the eternal future—not in the past.

The Bethlehem Baptist Church seniors are still a vibrant, Jesus-loving, Bible-loving, prayer-loving, people-loving, missionary-loving family. They enjoy gathering Sunday mornings to worship King Jesus on all three campuses, with an hour or two of Sunday school, occasionally followed by a shared meal. Once a month, seniors meet on the third Thursday to share a meal and hear a global partner or other interesting speaker. Many seniors meet regularly with a small group to grow deeper in their understanding of God's word. Seniors are commonly found attending Wednesday evening or Saturday seminars. Many volunteer in Sunday schools, nurseries, White Cross sewing ministry (making blankets for newborns), the Info Booth, offering counting, ushering, and a myriad of other areas. Many seniors regularly visit other seniors to bring a word from the Word, share a cup of coffee, and bring encouragement with prayer. And seniors are actively involved on short-

term ministry trips all over the world. Those seniors bring gray hair and wisdom to lift up our global partners, gladly spending their retirement not being retired! Some toured Ireland, engaging with small house churches to hear and learn of the challenges and praises ministering on the Emerald Isle.

Bethlehem's fledgling 3rd Quarter Ministry is a recent initiative to re-motivate the newly retired (or soon to be retired) baby boomers in their walk with Jesus. Through both serious and fun events, we seek to help them connect to the church, reminding them how to minister to their grandchildren, spouses, and neighbors. Sometimes events are well attended—other times not so much—and we continue to search for ways to be sensitive to the Holy Spirit in how best to serve these younger seniors.

Ecclesiastes may have a futile outlook, but the seniors at Bethlehem have a bright, predictable future—in heaven!

*Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time.*  
—1 Peter 1:3–5

Thank you again for allowing me the great privilege to serve our wonderful seniors at Bethlehem.

Sincerely,



Keith Anderson  
Coordinator for Senior Adult Ministries (and Baby Boomers)

## Paul Poteat

### CAMPUS OUTREACH MINNEAPOLIS

*And he who was seated on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." —Revelation 21:5*

My house was built in 1904. Needless to say, the ten years my family has lived there have been a journey. I sometimes daydream about what it would be like to live in a new house. As I look in the news, almost every day there is a new shooting, riots, and painful reminders of the continued brokenness that has forever plagued our world. I wonder what it would be like to live in a new world. Daily, I am brought face to face with some of my own failings: impatience with my children, frustrations with incessant emails, prideful reflexes that I can fix any problem. I long for a new day where my (and everyone's) struggle with sin is no more. In Revelation 21:5, Jesus, seated on the throne, ruling over creation says, "Behold, I am making all things new." There will be new houses; there will be a new world; there will be a new day where sin is no more. No more racism, death, brokenness, abuse—it will be done away with, made new.

The beauty of Jesus' promise is in the tense. He doesn't say he "made" all things new; and we know that because we see the imperfections around us. Thankfully, he doesn't say "will make" all things new; our lives would be marked by perpetual longing. He says "I am making all things new." That is current, present, active—now. The greatest and most joy-producing newness is when lives are changed, when sinners repent (there is a party in heaven, Luke 15:7), and when the grip of sin on a person's life is broken and freedom is realized. This is why we minister, why we raise support, why we walk onto the campus day in and day out and risk (and receive) rejection again and again. We want to participate in Jesus' "making all things new," and the hope of doing so fuels life and work and fills each of us with an expectancy of the supernatural.

This past year we've seen God launch ministry in two new regions, and the staff laboring in those regions have been witnesses to things being made new. There have been dozens of professions of faith among students on these campuses. We've seen students gain a vision for reaching out to their friends, family, and fellow students with the life-renewing message of the gospel. We've seen brokenness and sin continue to enslave people, all the while longing for God to break those chains. Thank you for the many ways you have partnered with us as we co-labor with Christ, observing him in the process of making all things new!

The year 2016 was a rebuilding year for Campus Outreach. After sending Andrew Knight to Sheffield, England, and Matt Reagan to Charleston, South Carolina, our team needed to grow and mature to replace the contribution that Andrew and Matt and their teams had been providing. God is faithful, and once again we have seen conversions, students transition onto our staff team, students join the Nurture Program, and a new generation of leaders emerge on each of our campuses.

As is the case each year, Campus Outreach as a ministry produced our own annual review that includes testimonies from our Campus Directors, our Project Directors, and a former student. Please [read this full 2016 update](#) for more information on Campus Outreach Minneapolis. I love being a part of Bethlehem, and our staff feels extremely supported and blessed to be a part of a church that loves the gospel, loves the world, and wants to see the Kingdom advance. Thank you, Bethlehem!



Paul Poteat  
*Campus Outreach Regional Director*

## Steve Walmsley

### FINANCIAL SECRETARY/CONTRIBUTIONS

*I give you thanks, O LORD, with my whole heart; before the gods I sing your praise; I bow down toward your holy temple and give thanks to your name for your steadfast love and faithfulness, for you have exalted above all things your name and your word.—Psalm 138:1–2*

On January 1, 2016, I was honored to step into the role of *Financial Secretary* after Bethlehem's *Financial Secretary* of 36 years, Paul Johnson, stepped down. Paul left the position in great shape and brought me into it in such a way that I was able to continue without interruption and with the same level of integrity he had provided for many years. I am thankful to the Lord for his provision of Paul and for the way we were able to transition the duties. There is also a team of dedicated volunteers who collect, sort, count, and tally the offering each week. They are a blessing, working behind the scenes to make sure that each donor's gift is processed as intended.

A significant event in 2016 was the launch of the "Fill These Cities: 25 x '25" campaign. This initiative involved both an "Every Dot Counts" **commitment phase** and a **contribution phase**. In the commitment phase, more than 1,300 individuals provided faith commitments to the campaign by the end of the year totaling more than \$17,400,000 (to be fulfilled through December 31, 2018). The contribution phase began on December 1, 2016. As of the official start of receiving campaign donations, all contributions to Church & Missions and Fill These Cities: 25 x '25 are combined as our congregationally approved "One Fund." This will be true throughout the 25 months of the Fill These Cities campaign (through December 31, 2018). Individuals and families who call Bethlehem their church home are encouraged to submit an Every Dot Counts commitment if they have not done so already. This will help immensely with budgeting and planning for ministry, especially the initiatives of the Fill These Cities: 25 x '25 campaign.

The contributions toward the budget (Church & Missions and Fill These Cities accounts) in 2016 totaled \$11,534,086. This was an 18% increase from the 2015 budget contributions that totaled \$9,774,760. In addition, designated contributions to the Funding the Filling mortgage reduction fund, which totaled \$255,968, were applied directly against our existing mortgage balance along with our budgeted mortgage payments to assist in reducing the current mortgage balance.

The utilization of online giving continues to grow. In 2016, 37% of the Church & Missions contributions were made through the church's online giving portal. Setting up recurring giving schedules via the online portal is a great way for a donor to remove the weekly or monthly check writing process from their schedule when a regular recurring amount is anticipated to be given. The church is encouraging more donors to migrate to contributing through eCheck or debit card transactions, to assist in reducing the higher electronic transaction fees and potential personal financing charges on donor's card balances.

This year 5,908 families, individuals, and organizations gave recorded contributions to the church, short-term ministry programs, Campus Outreach, and other ministries of the church. This number includes 2,694 donors from 2,388 families contributing to the Church & Missions and Fill These Cities budget.

My prayer for the coming year is that each person who calls Bethlehem their church home will continue to count the blessings of the Lord to them, and "contribute cheerfully and regularly to the support of the ministry, the expenses of the church, the relief of the poor, and the spread of the gospel through all nations" (Bethlehem's Church Covenant).



Steve Walmsley  
*Financial Secretary*

## Adam Sexton

### CHURCH TREASURER/BUDGET, INCOME & EXPENSES

*Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion,  
for God loves a cheerful giver.—2 Corinthians 9:7*

The year 2016 was the best year for giving in Bethlehem's history, which was spurred on by the "Fill These Cities: 25 x '25" vision shared with the congregation in the Fall. The Lord provided \$11,525K through the generosity of the members and attendees of Bethlehem. The budget was set at \$10,700K, but actual spending was \$9,850K as the staff managed expenses to the level of giving experienced before December when the Fill These Cities: 25 x '25 initiative officially began.

In 2015, CliftonLarsonAllen, a regional CPA firm, audited our 2015 financial statements. An audit report is available upon request. Additional unaudited financial detail for 2016 is provided on the following pages. If you have any questions related to the finances, please contact the church office and we will be happy to answer them.

Adam Sexton  
*Church Treasurer*

#### 2016 Highlights

- Contributions were up \$1,763K (18%) from 2015, due to increased giving toward the Fill These Cities: 25 x '25 vision.
- Net spending was up \$223K (2%).
- Outstanding external debt at year-end was \$3,354, which was down \$598K (15%).
- The line of credit was at zero as of December 31, 2016.
- Total cash for all funds was \$2,976K as of December 31, 2016.



# Bethlehem Baptist Church

2016 Operating Fund (unaudited)

	ACTUAL	BUDGET	VARIANCE
<b>General Contributions</b>	<b>11,524,611</b>	<b>10,700,000</b>	<b>824,611</b>
Worship & Music	382,137	429,397	47,260
Vision & Preaching	670,592	697,970	27,378
Media	293,159	362,923	69,764
<b>Worship</b>	<b>1,345,888</b>	<b>1,490,290</b>	<b>144,402</b>
Family Discipleship	24,206	42,412	18,206
Nursery	105,251	127,492	22,241
Children	397,222	389,961	(7,261)
Junior High	122,536	151,932	29,396
Senior High	271,701	278,533	6,832
Disability	42,055	58,341	16,286
Library	18,801	24,954	6,153
Adult Discipleship	132,708	126,146	(6,562)
Small Groups	290,868	317,437	26,569
Men's	1,262	6,061	4,799
Women's	151,274	177,987	26,713
Senior's	39,926	42,681	2,755
Counseling	195,075	188,819	(6,256)
<b>Life Training</b>	<b>1,792,884</b>	<b>1,932,756</b>	<b>139,872</b>
Leadership Development	420,946	419,419	(1,527)
Outreach Support	568,241	548,405	(19,836)
Neighborhood Outreach	306,800	317,897	11,097
Hispanic OUtreach	57,938	119,246	61,308
Church Planting	206,754	277,705	70,951
Ministry Mobilization	182,023	202,253	20,230
Global Outreach	2,069,197	2,109,794	40,597
<b>Outreach</b>	<b>3,811,899</b>	<b>3,994,719</b>	<b>182,820</b>
General Administration	182,840	152,397	(30,443)
Office	91,994	108,075	16,081
Human Resources	52,970	77,501	24,531
Accounting	158,445	167,683	9,238
Giving	111,324	116,201	4,877
Communications	282,047	285,093	3,046
Information Technology	282,983	343,223	60,240
Building & Property	1,588,068	1,865,876	277,808
Kitchen	51,835	50,210	(1,625)
Four-plex	(5,873)	126	5,999
Undeveloped Property	102,639	15,850	(86,789)
<b>Support</b>	<b>2,899,272</b>	<b>3,182,235</b>	<b>282,963</b>
<b>Net Expenditures</b>	<b>9,849,943</b>	<b>10,600,000</b>	<b>750,057</b>
<b>Net Surplus/(Deficit)</b>	<b>1,674,668</b>	<b>100,000</b>	<b>1,574,668</b>

## Bethlehem Baptist Church

Net Assets/Cash/Loans (unaudited)

FUND	BEGINNING NET ASSETS	2016 SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	ENDING NET ASSETS
<b>Cash</b>			
Operating Fund	774,369	1,674,668	2,449,037
Helping Hands	106,261	(4,571)	101,690
Campus Outreach	324,342	21,984	346,326
STMM Projects	157,451	(9,785)	147,666
Designated Projects/Other	(166,727)	98,072	(68,655)
<b>Total Cash</b>	<b>1,195,696</b>	<b>1,780,368</b>	<b>2,976,064</b>
<b>Fixed Assets</b>	<b>17,322,034</b>	<b>(802,069)</b>	<b>16,519,965</b>
<b>Current Assets/(Liabilities)</b>	<b>8,641</b>	<b>283,609</b>	<b>292,250</b>
<b>External Debt</b>			
Mortgage: North Campus	3,728,423	(582,676)	3,145,747
BGC Loan: Mesken Property	223,049	(14,959)	208,090
Line of Credit	-	-	-
<b>Total External Debt</b>	<b>3,951,472</b>	<b>(597,635)</b>	<b>3,353,837</b>
<b>Net Assets</b>	<b>14,574,899</b>	<b>1,859,543</b>	<b>16,434,442</b>

# Curt Szabo, Ben Holvey, and Jacob Smith

## CHURCH BUSINESS RECORD

*For the eyes of the LORD run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to give strong support to those whose heart is blameless toward him.—2 Chronicles 16:9*

The congregation of Bethlehem Baptist Church held five business meetings in 2016:

- January 31, Quarterly Strategy Meeting
- April 24, Quarterly Strategy Meeting
- July 31, Quarterly Strategy Meeting
- October 30, Quarterly Strategy meeting
- December 18, Annual Business Meeting

The outcome of these meetings is summarized by topic below.

### Officers, Elders, Deacons, and Ministers

- On January 31, Tim Johnson was called as a non-vocational elder.
- On April 24, David Crabb, Andy Naselli, Phil Nelson, Luis Rodriguez, and Peter Thorpe were called as non-vocational elders.
- On July 31, Pam Larson was called as *Minister for Women, North*. Lori Jaeger was called as *Minister for Women, Downtown*. Alan West was called as a non-vocational elder.
- On October 30, a change in job description was approved for Kenny Stokes as *Pastor for Church Planting*. A change in job description was approved for Ken Currie as *Lead Pastor for Downtown & Strategic Implementation*.
- On December 18, Jason DeRouchie and Pavel Nesvetaylov were called as non-vocational elders. Jack Delk and Chuck Steddom were reaffirmed as vocational elders. Aaron Davitch and Mike Tong were reaffirmed as vocational ministers. Kurt Elting-Ballard, Terry Kurschner, Michael Meloch, and Bill Zwicky were reaffirmed as non-vocational elders. Joe Krekelberg, Joby Morgan, and Thayne Rossiter were reaffirmed as deacons. Steve Walmsley was elected as *Financial Secretary*. Adam Sexton was elected as *Treasurer*. Jacob Smith was elected as *Church Clerk*.

### 'Fill These Cities'

On July 31, the Council of Elders presented the following two-part motion to the assembly, and the motion was approved by the assembly.

1. To approve the process and trajectory described by "Fill These Cities: 25 by '25" vision.
2. To commit to praying about each of our roles in supporting and accelerating the "25 by '25" vision.

### South Campus

On October 30, the assembly approved the motion to purchase the property between the South Campus property and the Holiday Inn from the city of Lakeville for a sum not exceeding \$10,000.

### Budget

On January 31, the assembly approved a 2016 Church & Mission budget of \$10.7M.

### Church Membership

At the end of 2016, the church membership roll stood at 2,943. Over the year, church action removed 529 members, six members died, and 228 members were welcomed into the church.

### Deaths of Members in 2016

- Char Ransom, January 22
- Bitu Arman, February 18
- Jamison Pals, July 31
- Kathryn Pals, July 31
- Michelle Frazier, August 24
- Chris May, December 3
- Arnold Lindberg, December 22

Curt Szabo, Ben Holvey, and Jacob Smith  
*Church Clerks*