



Bethlehem Baptist Church

2017 Annual Report

Annual Report 2017

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Jason Meyer

PREACHING & VISION

Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.—1 Corinthians 1:31

I celebrated my five-year anniversary on staff this year. This year feels to me like an opportunity to see the labors of the previous four years come to fruition. All that the Lord is doing could not possibly fit into an annual report, so let me mention five areas in particular and then close with a fuller personal picture.

Staff Camaraderie

The biggest challenge in the first three years was addressing some of the staff relational difficulties head-on. The gains in this area have been nothing short of miraculous. Two years ago, a group called the Best Christian Workplace Institute awarded us a very high score as a flourishing Christian Workplace. This year we received one of the highest scores they have given to a church. We are in the process of debriefing through the report from the Best Christian Workplace Institute and we see some places for further improvement. Continue to pray that more fruit would abound in this area.

Vision-Casting and Communications

This second area relates to the first. Three years ago, the pastoral staff and their wives met in my home. We used a whiteboard to collect our thoughts in answer to two questions: (1) what things are going well, and (2) what things need improvement? The most common answer to the first question was a growing sense of teamwork as campus teams. The most common answer to the second question was uncertainty about the common goals we were pursuing across all three campuses. The teams felt like they lacked an all-church vision for what they were all doing together. Our conversation that night was something of a precursor to our “Fill These Cities: 25 x ’25” vision. Over the course of the next two years, the Lord brought together the four pieces of our 25 x ’25 vision: (1) engaging 25 unengaged people groups, (2) planting 25 churches, (3) building the South Campus building, and (4) strengthening the core of Bethlehem.

Incidentally, the biggest area of improvement on the Best Christian Workplace Institute survey was in the area of communications and vision. The Lord has been kind to give us a clear sense of direction and unified goals. Please pray that we will continue to see fruit grow in this area.

Financial Generosity

I believe that growth in communication and vision brought a corresponding grace in terms of financial generosity. Giving was above our budget almost every week this fiscal year. That is nothing short of a miracle. We give God thanks for the 2 Corinthians 8:1–2 paradigm of generosity we witnessed: grace came down, joy came up, and generosity flowed forth.

South Campus Building

One of the great joys this year was to see the progress on the South Campus building from the ground up. The Lord gave us an unusually dry and warm October and November so that the building project moved ahead at a great pace. At this point, it looks like we may be able to begin using the building in September 2018. What an outpouring of grace we have witnessed to have the building project where it is now!

Unengaged Peoples and Church Planting

In terms of global outreach toward unengaged people groups, during Global Focus 2017 we saw 60 people come forward with a fresh stirring for the nations. Of the group gathering at Missions in the Manse, 32 people raised their hands to testify that they were actively praying about wanting to go to an unengaged people group. It is a wonder that we have more than 100 people in the Nurture Program and more than 110 units who are currently on the field pursuing our mission. These numbers are world-changing.

In terms of church planting, we have seen our first four churches planted (Word of Grace, Northfield Community Church, Redemption City Church, and Table Rock Church). We are praying that we would have three church planting residents moving forward in 2018 (one for each campus). We see many exciting prospects in the area of church planting, and God continues to give new mercies to encourage us in this endeavor every step of the way.

In conclusion, these five areas all testify to a corporate grace we have witnessed at Bethlehem. No one can take credit for them. This is the Lord’s doing and it is marvelous in our eyes!

On a more personal note, 2017 was perhaps my happiest year as a pastor. Preaching through Mark 1-6 was one of the greatest blessings of my preaching ministry and preaching through John 1:1-14 for Advent was especially rich and rewarding. The Lord gave the gift of time and energy to make progress on three writing projects in 2017. I finished my book on Martyn Lloyd-Jones, made progress on my commentary on 2 Corinthians, and wrote a couple of essays on justification and pastoral theology that will appear in two separate books in 2018.

We have received so much grace from the Lord in 2017. Let us come boldly before the throne of grace and ask for even more in 2018.

Boasting in the Lord with you,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Jason Meyer". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned below the text "Boasting in the Lord with you,".

Jason Meyer
Pastor for Preaching & Vision

Ken Currie

STRATEGIC IMPLEMENTATION AND DOWNTOWN LEAD PASTOR

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

I write this report with just over a year of working in dual roles: the all-church role of *Strategic Implementation*, and the campus-specific role of *Lead Pastor for Downtown*. I want to give God glory for his sustaining grace. This is not just a cliché, but the crucial reality that has kept me engaged and hopeful this year. The gospel of Jesus Christ is my compass to keep me oriented in the midst of challenging situations and my source of identity, comfort, and strength. What could be more powerful and sweet than the knowledge that Christ, the Son of God, loves me and is working for my good?

Personal

I am happy and humbled to report that, by God's grace, Theresa and I continue to love each other in our 28th year of marriage. Our weekly date has been a consistent time to enjoy our calling to be "one," along with our many other connections throughout an average day, week, and month. We continue to find joy in our calling as parents and ask God for wisdom to love our five children well in their various life stages.

Strategic Implementation

Partnership with Jason Meyer, *Pastor for Preaching & Vision*, remains vital and personally encouraging as we meet for accountability and fellowship, but primarily to consider the needs and opportunities of the flock.

The vision of "Fill these Cities: 25 x '25" has moved forward with significant progress in 2017. What a great encouragement to see the unifying effect this shared vision has had on our congregation, as well as the sense of mission it has cultivated.

This year I invested significant time and energy into revising our Constitution and Bylaws. This revision is meant to update our membership sections, to bring greater clarity to our vision for meaningful membership, and to align our governance with our doctrinal convictions regarding officers (elders and deacons) and the church. It was a highlight for me that these revisions passed with overwhelming support at our Annual Meeting on December 15. I praise God for what I believe will serve our congregation in our vision and mission. I thank God for partnership with Elder Brian Tabb in this effort.

In addition to the Constitution and Bylaw revisions, I have sought to serve our church by calling men and women to serve as deacons. After years of an "on again, off again" focus in this area, God has blessed us with deacons at each campus who are serving to assist the elders in the ministry of the word and prayer by meeting the practical needs of our church.

Lead Pastor for Downtown Campus

Life as a pastor at Bethlehem is full, with much striving for the faith of the gospel (Philippians 1:27). There are many joys and struggles as we corporately work out our salvation with fear and trembling. Here are just a few highlights from 2017:

- Joyfully laboring alongside the Downtown Campus pastoral staff and elders. The love and unity we share is a gift from God and I guard against taking it for granted. I aim to maintain connection with the Downtown Campus pastors to support them in their ministry through coaching and prayer.
- Appointing five congregational deacons (Nathan & Renee Warriner, Bob Sarna, Perry Ryan, and Jeff Noyed), along with a greater focus on this ministry.
- Establishing training for potential elders that we have called "Faithful Men Training."
- Engaging in some of the harder abuse cases and seeing God at work.
- Progressing in the transition of bringing on a *Minister for Women* at the Downtown Campus.
- Hiring Bryan Pickering as *Pastor for Care & Counseling* and partnering with him in ministry.
- Investing in our Small Group ministry overall and serving as a Small Group Coach.

Bethlehem, it is a great privilege to serve you as we worship and follow our great King Jesus and seek to spread the good news of salvation in him to our neighbors near and far.



Ken Currie
Lead Pastor for Downtown & Strategic Implementation

Jon Grano

OPERATIONS

What shall I render to the LORD for all his benefits to me? I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the LORD.—Psalm 116:12–13

In a year marked with benefits too numerous to count, Bethlehem's Operations Department continued to provide much of the behind-the-scenes trellis infrastructure that supports the vine of ministry initiatives.

In addition to specific department highlights listed below, three events are worth special mention. In April, we watched God work through Bethlehem's "[Fill These Cities: 25 x '25](#)" initiative as the congregation voted to build and fund a new South Campus facility. In early November, Bethlehem received [accreditation](#) from the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability ([ECFA](#)) as a valued partner to help us steward resources in a wise and responsible manner. Then in late November, after a lengthy staff engagement survey process with 100+ participants, we were notified that Bethlehem was once again [certified](#) as a "[Best Christian Workplace](#)"—humbling and encouraging confirmation from an external source that testified to God's grace at work among us in a flourishing staff culture.

Team Highlights

Bethlehem's Operations Department is organized into six teams, each led by a dedicated and gifted director who oversees a particular ministry area. I'm thankful to God for each one—they make my work a joy!

Building & Property (Scott Brueske)

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

- Repaired and repainted both Downtown and North Campus parking lots.
- Resurfaced North Campus sanctuary floor and remodeled office configurations.
- Implemented two energy-efficient Downtown Campus building upgrades: replaced original boiler burner to extend life of current boiler and replaced over 2,000 LED light bulbs.
- Coordinated significant repairs to the Downtown Campus [sanctuary blinds](#) and provided lighting for the [cross](#) in the main sanctuary window facing East.
- Provided smooth and uneventful logistical support for thousands of daily events and groups across three campus locations.

Communications (Amanda Knoke)

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

- Launched new "[bethlehem.church](#)" website in August, with special attention given to serving newcomers at each campus.
- Introduced Monthly cards to highlight all-church and campus-specific events, with the reverse of the card highlighting a focus on one church planter, outreach partner, and ministry opportunity of the month (global partners are featured each week in the *Weekly* e-newsletter).
- Worked to coordinate an [Advent devotional guide](#) with the North Campus to distribute in various formats for all campuses.
- Bid farewell to Graphic Designer Daniel Botkin, welcomed Graphic Designers Maddie Osgood (shared with Women's Ministry) and Christina Weisensel (shared with Bethlehem College & Seminary), and teamed with branding strategy consultant Annalisa Overgaard to review communications elements within ministry areas.
- Continued ongoing creation, coordination, and production of website content, *Weekly* email newsletter, worship folders and inserts, posters, brochures, seasonal guides, and social media.

Finances & Accounting (Thayne Rossiter)

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

- Created excellent budget and payroll spreadsheet models that undergird Bethlehem ministry financial decisions, including foundational templates for our annual staff budgeting event and ongoing financial reporting.
- Welcomed Daewon Kim as Bethlehem's part-time Bookkeeper, replacing Aaron Geise who transitioned to provide administrative support for growing church planting efforts.
- Continued deployment of "[Tallie](#)," a digital expense management software system, to better streamline reimbursement processes.
- Began partnering with Tradition Bank to help finance our South Campus construction project.
- 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.

- **Celebrated 100 years** of God's goodness to us through the ministry of four of our pastors (Chuck Steddom and Sam Crabtree: 20 years each; David Livingston and Brad Nelson: 30 years each).
- Said goodbye to gifted and encouraging HR ministry assistant Allison Maurer as she welcomed her son into the world. We welcomed Jake Wood whom the Lord gifted and raised up for this time.
- Provided administrative HR support for many staff transitions. Though the core of our staff is solid and stable with many serving for decades (witness the 100-year celebration), HR helped the staff through 136 staffing transitions in 2017, ranging from welcoming a new pastor (Steven Lee) after a long and healthy search, to saying goodbye to several part-time staff members.
- Provided ongoing staff support and care, including coordination of Bethlehem's annual benefits open enrollment period and bi-weekly payroll.
- Continued overseeing the process of moving all our employee records from paper to electronic.

Information Technology (Andrew Lang)

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

- Supported roll-out of new "bethlehem.church" [website](#), using a new content management system and integrated with our [MinistryPlatform](#) church management database for event information.
- Transitioned to using MinistryPlatform as Bethlehem's facilities scheduling and management system, cutting the number of facilities management event sources from three to one.
- Switched to a new giving system at [bethlehem.onlinegiving.org](#) to provide features such as text giving, saved giving profiles, text message autoresponders, and improved integration with MinistryPlatform.
- Transitioned our internal and external computer systems to use the new bethlehem.church domain that we secured when the new [.church](#) top-level domains became available and moved our MinistryPlatform server from the Downtown Campus to an offsite data center with redundant power, internet backbone connections, and physical security.

- Updated our wifi radio and management infrastructure at all three campuses, gaining significant performance and capacity improvements and streamlining administration of users.

Media (Timothy Frederick)

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

- Began a new phase of multi-year updates to major systems in both North and Downtown Campus sanctuaries.
- Collaborated with excellent Audio/Visual/Lighting systems integrator to design all of the AVL systems for the new South Campus sanctuary.
- Forged new partnerships and cultivated existing ones with equipment suppliers and manufacturers to implement new technologies and retire aging ones in sanctuaries and classrooms.
- Updated many classrooms at the Downtown Campus with new presentation technologies, especially for Bethlehem College & Seminary use.
- Supported a myriad of worship services and special events across all three campuses.
- Continued to invest in the lives of a growing number of volunteers—we could not do what we do in Media Ministry without them!

Other Ministry Focuses

In addition to overseeing the six main Operations areas, my role as *Lead Pastor for Operations* in 2017 involved ongoing participation with the following teams:

- The **pastoral staff lead team** met bi-weekly to coordinate ministry across all campuses and help pre-process topics for the pastoral staff and elders.
- The **organizational elders** and **North Campus congregational elders** (subsets of our Council of Elders) met monthly to focus on issues affecting the entire church and North Campus, respectively.
- The **Financial and Property Administrators** (FPAs) met monthly to provide wise counsel on a wide range of financial and property issues. I'm especially thankful for Charlie May's outstanding service as recording secretary in 2017 to help capture meeting content.
- The **staffing resource team** met biweekly to prioritize and coordinate various staffing issues.
- The **health insurance resource team** helped evaluate and select appropriate health insurance

coverage for Bethlehem full-time staff—our insurance premiums dropped 5% for 2017! We praise God for the health he's given our staff and a second consecutive year of reduced premiums.

- The **South Campus building team** meets regularly to coordinate construction of our new campus. In 2017, I began attending meetings to help ensure coordination with Operations.

Numerical Highlights

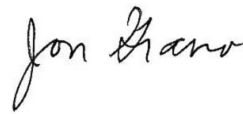
God's many benefits to Bethlehem in 2017 may also be viewed through contribution and attendance statistics:

- Contributions of \$10.95M exceeded Bethlehem's One Fund operating budget. In addition, nearly \$800K in special designated gifts were given toward the South Campus. Given our staff's underspending of the budget, we were able to replenish needed reserves and designate portions of the surplus to the South Campus building project. See our 2017 Financial Secretary and Treasurer reports for details.
- Average attendance (3,442) at Bethlehem's six weekend worship services decreased 3.4% compared to 2016 (3,563), with Easter weekend the highest attendance (5,400) in 2017.
- Average attendance at weekend worship services, by campus:
 - Downtown: 1,594 (2016: 1,659) in three worship services.
 - North: 1,385 (2016: 1,380) in two worship services.
 - South: 463 (2016: 524) in one worship service.
 - The North Campus Sunday 9am worship service continued to have the highest average attendance (837), followed by Downtown Sunday 9am (726).

Personal Notes

This past year was noteworthy for several reasons. In July, we had the first "Grano extended family reunion" in decades as we gathered together at Lake Vermilion in northern Minnesota. In September, our second grandchild, Natalie Joy, was born to Charlie & Rebecca May. Both Pam and I thank God often for the privilege of being grandparents—"twice the fun and half the work" as parenting! Pam continues her involvement with children's worship-leading and music education, and I regularly marvel at God's grace that allows me to serve among such a gifted staff these past 12 years.

May we all continue to grow in grace together in 2018.



Jon Grano
Lead Pastor for Operations

Kenny Stokes

CHURCH PLANTING

"I will build my church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it." —Matthew 16:18

It is with a profound sense of dependence on Christ Jesus that we as a local church are involved in planting new churches, near and far. Planting churches is implicit in Christ's Great Commission and explicit in the apostolic pattern given to us in the New Testament. Let's be very clear: Planting churches is God's work. Christ commissions us (Matthew 28:18–20). God calls planters (Luke 10:2, Acts 13:2). By the word of Christ people are granted the gift of saving faith (Romans 10:17). Believers are gathered, and the Spirit sets apart elders and establishes new churches (Acts 20:28). Clearly, in our "Fill These Cities: 25 x '25" goal to plant 25 new churches by the year 2025, we are utterly dependent upon the Lord to triumph over the power of hell and build his Church.

25 x '25 Update

Since the inception of the 25 x '25 vision in 2016, the elders have approved one church revitalization (or "JumpStart") and three new churches ...

1. Word of Grace Baptist, Minneapolis, MN—2016 (Paul Przybylowski)
2. Northfield Community Church, Northfield, MN—2016 (Jonathon Woodyard)
3. Redemption City, Rochester, MN—2017 (Adam Pohlman & Jake Tonak)
4. Table Rock, Boise, ID—2017 (Ryan Eagy)

Future Planters/Jumpstart Pastors

Currently, 12 students are enrolled in the seminary Church Planting & Revitalization concentration. In addition to the courses required for the M.Div. pastoral degree, these students complete four elective courses:

a) The Gospel and Personal Evangelism, b) Church Planting and Revitalization, c) Cross-Cultural Planting, and d) Church Growth and Renewal.

Additionally, we are working seriously with five other planters at various stages in the approval process. Each of them has benefitted from Bethlehem College & Seminary in their preparation.

Bethlehem's church planting residency is one of our primary tools for the final phase of planter preparation. In 2018, we are budgeting for three new church planting residents. Tyler Mykkanen has been approved by the South Campus Elders as the 2018 *Church Planting Resident, South*, beginning after he graduates this Spring from Bethlehem College & Seminary (MDiv). Please pray for two more church planting residents to be selected and approved.

Connecting

In addition to developing Bethlehem's church planting efforts, I had the joy of preaching in seven church plants, including the 10th Anniversary of Grace Church, Memphis (January 2017).

I attended the "Just Gospel" Conference in Atlanta with my wife, Kathy. We brought with us the admissions exhibit for Bethlehem College & Seminary in order to increase minority applicants to our school.

Along with Pastor Todd Rasmuson and our Global Outreach Team, I attended the "Missio-Nexus" missions conference to begin to think and work together on church planting in a global context. In October, we gathered with more than 80 pastors and wives at the annual "Treasuring Christ Together Network Retreat." And lastly, I attended the "Church Planting Leaders Fellowship" gathering that included sessions led by Ed Stetzer and Tim Keller.

European Church Planting Trip

In November 2017, Kathy and I set out to explore different locations in Europe at which we could bring potential church planters in order to give them exposure to the challenge of planting churches in post-Christian cultures. Please pray, as we hope to return to the Czech Republic, Sweden, and perhaps Ireland with a team of future church planters in 2018. Our prayer is that by networking with our global partners who are church planting in Europe, we might catalyze thinking about effective church planting in other post-Christian or anti-Christian contexts—such as our own.

I could not keep up with the students, residents, and planters without the help of Cleon Engel, *Coordinator for Church Planting*. Cleon has been a gift of grace to me and to the planters, their families, and the churches. As a mature godly man who grew up as a “pastor’s kid,” he has proven himself to be a wise coach, advisor, mentor, and counselor many times over. Cleon and I have sought to maintain relationships with the students, residents, and planters throughout the year. In addition to Cleon, working with me at Bethlehem is Aaron Geise, who serves as our part-time *Administrative Assistant for Church Planting*. Many thanks to both of these men for their always happy, collaborative help, thinking, and work.

And, I do not take it for granted that my wife, Kathy, has not only supported me in the ministry but has leaned in wholeheartedly at many points to serve and love the church planters and their wives in the challenges of planting, pastoral ministry, and family life.

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

Kenny Stokes
Pastor for Church Planting

Tom Steller

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

BETHLEHEM COLLEGE & SEMINARY

Great are the works of the LORD, studied by all who delight in them.—Psalm 111:2

As 2017 folds into 2018, Bethlehem College & Seminary is cherishing where God has brought us since our founding. The Bethlehem Institute was conceived in 1997 and became Bethlehem College & Seminary in 2009. Twenty years of offering graduate-level theological education in the context of the local church is increasingly bearing fruit both near and far. This summer, I was able to make three trips (Middle East, South Asia, and East Africa) to visit our graduates and see some of the fruit of their labors. Other professors are also visiting graduates or bringing current students to gospel-famished peoples in difficult-to-reach places.

At its core, what it means to be a church-based seminary is that the academy and the church are mutually interdependent as we seek to spread a passion for the supremacy of God in all things for the joy of all peoples through Jesus Christ. Momentum is building in this symbiotic relationship in our mission to plant 25 churches by the year 2025. One of our seminary students and his wife have committed themselves to serve an unreached, unengaged people group and have already been appointed as candidates by Pioneers. They plan to reach out to one or more of the people groups who are currently unreached and untargeted. This year several of our graduates are teaming together to plant Treasuring Christ Together churches in Boise, Idaho; Rochester, Minnesota; and Northfield, Minnesota. Others are involved in church planting, pastoring existing churches, serving as elders, and holding other leadership positions. Graduates from our college are dispersing into the marketplace and church ministry roles in various parts of the country.

In his end-of-the-year Academic Dean report, Brian Tabb summarized highlights of what God has helped us accomplish in this past year. We have...

1. Developed and approved a new degree program: MA in Exegesis and Theology.
2. Hired three well-qualified faculty members (Chris Bruno, Brian Hanson, and Rick Shenk).
3. Accepted international students from El Salvador and Myanmar into the MDiv program, awarding them the Alex Steddom International Scholarship.

4. Launched MDiv graduates as TCT church planters in Northfield, Rochester, and Boise.
5. Promoted continued scholarship among the faculty: Chris Bruno, Andy Naselli, Jason DeRouchie, James McGlothlin, John Piper, and Brian Tabb have all published one or more books, and Ryan Griffith completed his PhD. Please pray for Johnathon Bowers and Joe Rigney as they each seek to finish a PhD in 2018.

Julie and I celebrated our 40th anniversary this year. Also in 2017, Julie stepped down from her 30+ years of leadership in ministry to the wives of our seminary students. She has left a wonderful team to carry on this vital ministry, still showing up from time to time to share insights she has gained from her “long obedience in the same direction.” She is now enjoying her roles as grandma to our four grandchildren and as founder and CEO of Steller Handcrafted Goods.

The year of 2017 also marked Connie Kopischke’s 30 years of pouring her life out for the mission of Bethlehem Baptist Church and Bethlehem College & Seminary. In the early years of The Bethlehem Institute, Connie played almost every role imaginable: registrar, bursar, librarian, IT person, admissions director, housing coordinator, event planner, and my personal assistant—coordinating my calendar, arranging my travel logistics, and the list could go on. As TBI evolved into Bethlehem College & Seminary and grew into what it is today, she has narrowed her focus to registrar, bursar, and institutional researcher, while still cheerfully assisting me in multiple ways.

I will close this report with the latest statistics Connie has assembled that may be of interest to you and which confirm the significant fruit and potential of the students in whom we are investing.

Spring 2017 Graduates

Certificate in Theological Studies.....	3
Associate of Arts.....	4
Bachelor of Arts.....	15
Bachelor of Theology.....	7
Worship Leader Certificate.....	2
Master of Arts in Biblical & Pastoral Studies.....	2
Master of Divinity.....	15
Master of Theology.....	3
<i>Total.....</i>	<i>51</i>

New Students for Fall 2017

Freshmen (College).....	32
Junior Transfers (College).....	3
Degree Completion/Certificate (College).....	9
Year 1 Seminarists.....	18*

**Includes 2 graduates of the college*

**Includes 2 international students*

<i>Total New Students.....</i>	<i>62</i>
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Fall 2017's Total Enrollment.....206

A total of 283 individuals have earned a degree or degree(s) from Bethlehem College & Seminary.

Our students are from 36 states and four countries (Canada, Myanmar, El Salvador, United States).



Gratefully,

Tom Steller

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

Todd Rasmuson

GLOBAL OUTREACH

*For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works,
which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.—Ephesians 2:10*

Global Partners

As we begin 2018, our global partners number 207 adults with 233 children for a total of 440 individuals (as compared to 206 adults and 223 children, totaling 429 at this time last year). In terms of families, there are 95 couples and 17 singles living in 38 countries of the world—a total of 112 “GP units.”

Eleven global partners completed their service in 2017:

Philemon & Linda Y., Jim & MerryCarole B., Jean K., Rick & Tracy C., Roger & Lisa C., David & Darlene S.

Nine global partners were commissioned:

Joe & Holly N., John & Caroline N., Joel & Beth D., Bruce & Marnee B., Katie H.

Additionally, five more adults have been approved as global partners in 2017, and they are support-raising and finishing their final preparations, including Kevin K., Micah & Jessica B., and Dave & Laurie R. in this transitional period. A member attending the North Campus, Abigail H., married current global partner Vijaya M. in 2017.

GO Team

We thank God for the 23 outstanding volunteers who 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 Baumeister, Tracy Brandon, and Scott & Cindy Purser.
- South Campus—Terry & Eileen Kurschner, Mark & Tedde Lundstedt, and Matt & Jessica Gens (joined the team in 2017).

GO Staff

Staff members continuing into 2018 include Micah B. as a *Ministry Assistant for Global Outreach*; Lida Sheard as *Administrative Assistant for Global Outreach*; Tamara Rasmuson as a volunteer *Coordinator for Global Partner Care*; David Livingston as a *Pastor for Global Outreach*,

Member Care; Brad Nelson as a *Pastor for Strategic Short-Term Ministry*; and JoNell Baker as *Administrative Assistant for Short-Term Ministry*.

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 2017, more than 500 members of Bethlehem served on Barnabas teams.

Global Focus

The 2017 theme for Global Focus was “Engaging Islam.” The 11 days of Global Focus (October 11–22) were launched by a special Wednesday night event featuring both local engagement from those serving in Muslim ministry in the Twin Cities and international Muslim engagement from one of our global partners. Additionally, Pastor Jason Meyer shared a biographical message based on the life of Raymond Lull. Pastor Chuck Steddom led a choir in international songs declaring God’s glory among the nations. Georges Houssney was our guest preacher for the weekend of October 14/15. Pastor Jason preached to conclude Global Focus on October 21/22. At the end of the message, Pastor Jason asked, “Who senses a fresh stirring by God to go to the nations?” Across our three campuses, 60 new people came forward indicating a “fresh” call to go to the nations. The Meyer hosted 65 at their home for the “Missions in the Manse” event, where I asked, “Who senses God might be leading them to an unengaged people group?” Thirty-two people raised their hands.

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 99 are enrolled in the program, as compared to 116 last year.

BAM (Business as Missions)

The BAM committee in 2017 included Don Hoffert, Scott Rebney, Brad Nelson, Keith Anderson, Richard Swanson, Steve Walmsley, Paul Lindberg, and Jonathan Kurapati. 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 2017 included Steve Prater, Joel Assaraf, Kathryn Hedlund, Richard Swanson, and Jeff & Deb Bender. Pastor Brad Nelson, Micah B., and I provided pastoral and administrative support. This year the Global Diaconate voted to provide financial support to 13 projects in 11 different countries in the name of Jesus Christ.

Worshiping Jesus with you who has prepared good works for us to bless the nations,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Todd Rasmuson'.

Todd Rasmuson
Pastor for Global Outreach

Matthew Westerholm

DOWNTOWN WORSHIP & MUSIC

Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised, and his greatness is unsearchable.—Psalm 145:3

The Downtown Campus Worship Department was blessed in 2017 to labor for God's kingdom. January began, as every January does, celebrating Bethlehem's priorities. Our department hosted the *All-Church Concert of Word & Prayer*. Later, our weekend services celebrated the sanctity of human life and the importance of ethnic harmony. At the end of the month, volunteers from all three campuses led worship for the Bethlehem College & Seminary *Conference for Pastors + Church Leaders*. During the conference, my wife Lisa and I hosted over thirty worship leaders from around the country in our home for a wonderful evening of fellowship and encouragement.

In February, our services highlighted Bethlehem's "25 x '25" initiative through a series of sermons on church planting (Kenny Stokes), global outreach (global partner Ryan C.), and strengthening the core (Ken Currie). We were also thrilled to welcome several new covenant members into our church body.

March was our first month in the Gospel of Mark sermon series, and we spent the majority of 2017 slowly working our way through the first six chapters of the book. I attended a symposium at Duke Divinity School, focused on "how worship leaders and pastors can discern the right kind of worship music to use in any given context." It was a great chance to connect with many ministry friends from around the country.

In April, we celebrated our Savior, the Light of the World, risen from the dead. On Palm Sunday, our youth choir helped lead worship. On Maundy Thursday, we remembered Christ's work on the cross through Scripture readings and hymns, and the darkness of our sinful world, represented by gradually-dimming candles. 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 celebrated baptisms in every service as symbols of new life in Christ. A special *thank you* to Annalisa Overgaard for her beautiful Easter visuals. The last weekend in April featured the ministry of Bethlehem College & Seminary. Our campus was led in worship by Luke Salik, a fourth-year seminary

student in the *Master of Divinity* program (*Worship Pastor Concentration*). He is a blessing to me, our ministry, and our congregation.

May celebrated the commencement ceremony for Bethlehem College & Seminary's graduating class. We thank the Lord for these graduates, who are being sent out in his name. May was also the first time that we heard a message from Richie Stark, *Pastoral Resident for Youth & Family Discipleship*, who reminded us that "There Is Power In Remembering."

June was a relatively quiet month. 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. Pray for Luke and his wife, Andrea, as they, Lord willing, pursue church planting ministry following Luke's graduation in 2018.

In July, I preached from Isaiah 44 on "Worship: The Alarm Clock for Idolatry." What a joy to spend extensive time in God's word and share his truths with our church family. While several ministries disengage for a summer break, our Downtown worship volunteers kept serving and providing services throughout the remainder of July and August. We taught a haunting new song, "He Is Given," which traces Christ's life as given, stricken, and risen for our sake. I attended a writers' summit for DesiringGod to help my ministry of writing. Our Downtown Campus heard from guest preachers Brian Tabb ("Revere the Risen King") and Kempton Turner ("Be With Jesus").

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 continued our sermon series in the book of Mark, and we witnessed the incoming seminary students of Bethlehem College & Seminary 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, the pastoral staff attended the *Convergence Conference* in Oklahoma City, which encouraged its attendees to “embrace both the functional authority of God’s word and the full range of miraculous gifts of the Spirit, all to the glory of God in Christ.” We all departed grateful for the time. It was a deep blessing to my own soul. I continue to dream of how to implement those conference themes at Bethlehem. Later that month, we heard from George Houssney, founder of Horizons International, on “Wisdom and Foolishness in World Missions”—part of our *Global Focus* series. Our choir sang the Lord’s prayer in Arabic, “Abana alathi fi ssama,” as a prayer for all the peoples.

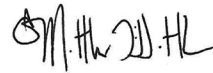
At the beginning of November, we taught a new communion song, “Dear Jesus, As I Take This Bread,” written by two of Bethlehem’s members. I attended the *Evangelical Theological Society Conference* with several Bethlehem College & Seminary professors. It was wonderful to spend time with these brothers and to present a summary of my own dissertation on *Inaugurated Eschatology*. During this month, our ministry invested in a major restoration for our sanctuary’s Steinway piano. It was a much needed, and much appreciated, improvement!

We began the Advent season at the beginning of December. At each weekend service, a child brought a lit candle into the dimmed sanctuary, symbolizing the Light of the World coming to save us from our sinful darkness.

Both our choirs sang this month. The youth choir lead us in “Come Behold the Wondrous Mystery,” and the adult choir sang a beautiful rendition of “Who Would Have Dreamed.” For Advent, Pastor Jason Meyer turned to John 1 to remind us of the practical and powerful implications of Christ’s incarnation. Many thanks to Annalisa Overgaard and Ann Mekala for decorating the sanctuary, as we celebrated the coming of our King.

As a worship ministry, we end 2017 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,



Matthew Westerholm
Pastor for Worship & Music, Downtown

Jared Wass

DOWNTOWN SMALL GROUPS & ADULT DISCIPLESHIP

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

It ought to be normative and prominent in the local church for people to know and disciple one another. Each of the 59 New Testament texts calling Christians to the “one anothers” (instruct one another, serve one another, etc.) bears witness to this. As a church we are working, praying, and trusting Christ to create a culture and structures to nurture, sustain, and grow this kind of life together in the hopes that we would be disciples of Jesus who make disciples of Jesus (Matthew 28:18–20).

Strategy

As we consider a discipleship strategy, it’s worth noting two things: it is foolish to live by a strategy, yet it is also foolish to try to live without one. Israel was warned against trusting in alliances with other nations and the weapons of warfare more than in God for their security (Isaiah 31:1, Psalm 20:7). A strategy does not win the day. Yet we are also given a window into the hardships that come when ministry is attempted without a proper strategy. In Exodus 18 Moses’ father-in-law, Jethro, saw that all Israel looked to Moses to inquire of God and receive counsel. Moses became a bottleneck, and people in need entered a logjam. Jethro advised Moses to recruit others to share the load of discipleship (Exodus 18:17–23).

Moses’ unique role in discipleship was not canceled out. He was still to teach Israel God’s statutes and laws and help them walk in it. God’s role as the primary shepherd was not canceled out; God’s presence and direction was still their primary hope. But Jethro advocated a strategy to delegate discipling responsibility to others to bear the burden, not in place of him, but with him.

Bethlehem’s Strategy

In September, we introduced our discipleship strategy at the Downtown Campus in three parts: home, hospital, and gym. Home is small group life, which is the priority structure for personal discipleship at our church. The hospital is needed when people are in crisis or need acute care, which represents our counseling ministry. The gym, our classroom ministry, is where people go for training to build up their strength. The counseling ministry is led by Pastor Bryan Pickering, but small groups and classroom ministry are under adult discipleship.

Small Groups

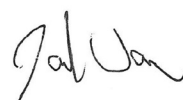
At the Downtown Campus, we currently have 66 small groups with 746 people involved. These 66 groups are led by 180 leaders, co-leaders, or apprentices preparing to lead in the future. We are always seeking to recruit, train, and deploy leaders for groups and we have created a new training called the Lead Table. “Lead” is an acronym for “leadership and discipleship” and “table” communicates that a good deal of the training is a roundtable discussion. Twenty people took this new course in the Fall.

Classroom Discipleship

We continue to offer College Connection, King’s Friends, Mosaic, All Nations Fellowship, and *Escuela Dominical* (Hispanic Sunday School) as Sunday School classes. This Fall, we offered How People Change, which teaches basic Christian counseling practices; Mining God’s Word, which helps people read the Bible better; Love the City, which teaches people to love our city better; and Marriage Enrichment & Pre-Marriage Class, which teaches how to love and care for a spouse/fiancé better. We hope to establish a core curriculum of classes we can rotate through to touch on important aspects of Christianity.

Closing

This Fall, I preached a sermon from Ephesians 4:11–16 entitled “Equipped, Connected, and Growing.” This text is foundational for discipleship and small group life. We will be a growing body as we are a connected body, each part equipped by the leaders of the church to walk in the power of the Holy Spirit in such a way that they are helping others grow in Christ. This Christ is the head of our body, giving us direction, and he is also the gospel, which is our power for salvation (Romans 1:16) and sanctification (Romans 16:25). May the Lord help us to speak the truth in love to one another that we would build each other up into our head, who is Christ.



Jared Wass
Pastor for Small Groups, Downtown

Bryan Pickering

DOWNTOWN CARE & COUNSELING

And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all.—1 Thessalonians 5:14

I am deeply thankful for the opportunity to serve our Downtown Campus by working with you for your joy in Jesus as we seek to apply God's glorious gospel to the general and specific troubles and pleasures of everyday life in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Equipping the Saints for the Work of Ministry (Ephesians 4:12)

Christian Counseling & Educational Foundation Classes

In 2017, we offered seven CCEF graduate-level counseling courses at the Downtown Campus.

- **Dynamics of Biblical Change** (2x) - A course on counseling model, diving into answering questions like, how does Christ's past grace, present grace, and future grace speak to our hearts and change how we live our daily lives? This course is about people. It is about how we face the troubles of life. It is about how we deal with our inner struggles. It is about how we change into Jesus' image.
- **Helping Relationships** - A course on counseling method, seeking to answer the question, how do you apply a growing understanding of biblical counseling in your everyday relationships?
- **Biblical Interpretation** (2x) - A course on hermeneutics (interpreting Scripture), especially in a personal ministry and counseling context. This course helps students understand both people and the Bible more thoroughly and is designed to strengthen their ability to rivet scriptural truth to real-life ministry situations.
- **Human Personality** - A course on biblical anthropology, focusing especially on answering the questions: Who am I? Who are we? And most importantly, since we are made in the image of God, we also had the pleasure of asking, Who is God?
- **Counseling & Physiology** - A course focusing on the embodied aspect of our embodied-soul nature as human beings created in the image of God. A biblical view of human beings begins with an understanding that we are both body and spirit. From this reality flows a nuanced pastoral approach to suffering and sin in a person's life that takes seriously both the physical and spiritual aspects of the struggle at hand.

To date, we've trained 81 students (24 men and 57 women) through CCEF classes. Currently 53 of these students are a part of Bethlehem and 34 of them call the Downtown Campus home. These students are currently involved in a wide range of ministry roles, including:

- Bethlehem Baptist Church Admin Staff
- Bethlehem College & Seminary Faculty and Staff
- Bethlehem College & Seminary Student or Spouse
- Campus Outreach Minister
- Counselor
- DART Volunteer
- Global Partner
- Pastor
- Pastor's Wife
- Small Group Leader
- Small Group Coach
- Titus 2 Mentor

I treasure walking with students into deeper, richer, and more robust expressions of wise and compassionate care.

Bethlehem College & Seminary

I have the privilege of co-teaching the counseling classes to our seminarians with my friend and fellow-Bethlehem member, Glen Bloomstrom.

- Sixteen men completed their 2nd semester of counseling
- Seventeen men completed their 1st semester of counseling
- Topics Covered: Counseling Models, Methods, and Local Church Context, Suffering, Grief & Loss, Guilt & Shame, Anger, Fear & Anxiety, Depression, Crisis & Trauma, Suicide, Alcoholism, Addictions, Eating Disorders, Abuse/Oppression & Neglect, Infidelity, Diseases Affecting Mood, Intellect, Behavior, Psychiatric Disorders, Same-Sex Attraction, and Gender Identity/Transgender Issues
- Mentoring three students: Luke Salik (4th year), Matt Denzer (3rd year), and Eric Melling (2nd year)

To watch these men prepare to launch (or relaunch!) into a vast ministry field is humbling and delightful.

David Powlison in April

We were blessed to have CCEF's executive director, David Powlison, with us for three days in April. David

invested significant time with Bethlehem College & Seminary faculty and students, Redemption: Twin Cities counseling staff, CCEF students at Bethlehem, and our wider congregation. His visit was a great encouragement to us to lean into the task of growing in grace and skill for personal ministry with God's help.

Group Counseling Training

In August several from our Downtown Campus and church invested a very full three days into learning how to do group counseling more effectively.

CCEF Conference

In October, several folks from the Downtown Campus traveled down to Frisco, Texas, to attend CCEF's national conference on Family. While enjoying the refreshment through worship and teaching, we were also able to invest time in small groups to learn with and from others in vocational counseling. This time of learning included a professional counselor from The Village Church in Dallas, a counseling pastor from Parkside Church near Cleveland, Ohio, a counseling center director in Chapel Hill, North Carolina, and many who work with CCEF.

Implementing a System of Care (Colossians 1:28)

I and the other Downtown Campus staff continue to labor to develop and implement a robust, holistic system of care to deploy as needed. As a norm, this system includes pastoral oversight, focused care (could be a counselor or other specialist), and community involvement (most often a small group). We made good strides in this area in 2017 and look forward to more growth in grace in 2018. We are also deploying our CCEF students in counseling relationships on an ongoing basis.

Joining God's Heart for the Oppressed at the Downtown Campus (Psalm 103:6)

In our 12 DART cases at the Downtown Campus, we've been blessed to come alongside those who are struggling. Many of these men and women—by the powerful grace of God at work in their hearts—continue to take good steps forward with God's help. We continue to grow together as a staff in our understanding of the dynamics present in oppressive relationships and how to be helpful to those in this situation. The Downtown Campus hosted Abuse/Oppression trainings with Chris Moles (April) and Darby Strickland (November)—both guest speakers have been a sweet gift from the Lord to us!

Thank You (1 Corinthians 1:4)

I want to thank God publicly for all of you who have labored with our care and counseling ministry by holding up the helpers and those being helped to our Heavenly Father in prayer. I also want to thank him for all of your efforts to show tangible and refreshing expressions of God's steadfast love toward his people—from the strongest to the weakest—and everyone in between. We know the Lord has been pleased to sustain this ministry through your seeking his face on our behalf. Please keep praying for fresh grace and new mercies! I also want to say a special thanks to God for a few of his many relational graces I get to experience on a regular basis:

- My fellow Downtown Campus pastors and staff members; it is a joy to serve with you!
- Kirsten Christianson and the DART volunteers for their tireless efforts to press our campus forward in care for the oppressed and those who oppress others.
- Stephanie Denzer, my assistant, for her superb help in getting an effective process of care and counseling off the ground—her ministry to our people is invaluable.
- Cache Barnes and all those at Redemption: Twin Cities. Your consistent, wise, and compassionate counsel of our people is bearing fruit big-time. It's a joy to have you near to us.
- Debby, my wife, for being a most excellent partner and friend in life and ministry these 21 years. She reflects the countenance of Jesus to me more consistently than any other person on the planet.

Bethlehem, it is a high honor to get to serve you through our weeping and through our joy (Psalm 126).



Bryan Pickering
Pastor for Care & Counseling, Downtown

Mike Tong

DOWNTOWN NEIGHBORHOOD OUTREACH

They who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.—Isaiah 40:31

Hope in God and Helpers for Bethlehem

These are the two main themes that come to mind as I think about 2017.

Hope in God

Truth be told, this was by far the most painful and difficult year of ministry for me and my precious wife, Catherine. The year began with, and persisted in, picking up the pieces from a significantly broken relationship in the church—one that was very close to our lives and hearts.

But through the brokenness, God's grace prevailed. While laboring through the consequences of sin all around us, God was building strength and beauty in our home and marriage. While a destructive storm blew outside, God gave our family perhaps the healthiest, strongest year of marriage and parenting we have experienced thus far.

It is never wrong to put your hope in God. He will never fail us. Indeed, because of the finished work of Christ, he cannot fail us.

Helpers for Bethlehem

Bethlehem's Constitution states, "The Deacons shall advise and be ready to assist the Elders in any service that shall support and promote the ministry of the Word, new and existing ministries of the Church, and the care for the members of the congregation."

Before 2017, Bethlehem has always had a few significant deacons serving the church. Men and women such as Adam Sexton and Joby Morgan have served Bethlehem faithfully in essential operational roles. However, under the leadership of Ken Currie, *Pastor for Strategic Implementation*, the Downtown Campus successfully appointed five new deacons this year to assist the Downtown elders.

Renee Warriner, Nathan Warriner, Jeff Noyed, Perry Ryan, and Bob Sarna were appointed as deacons in July 2017. To support their work, we created deacon teams to join them. Deacon teams are composed of Bethlehem members who are dedicated to helping the deacons serve the church.

Renee Warriner oversees a Meals Ministry for those in need of a meal. Nathan Warriner oversees the Host Homes Team, aiming to provide short-term hospitality to Bethlehem members in need. Jeff Noyed continues to serve as the director of Jericho Road Ministries, a mercy ministry and food shelf serving the poor of Minneapolis. Perry Ryan and Bob Sarna oversee a team of people who are aiming to serve widows and single moms with practical help around the house and other advisory help.

Please pray for our deacons and deacon teams, that they will serve the Lord with joy!



Mike Tong
Pastor for Neighborhood Outreach, Downtown

Lori Jaeger

DOWNTOWN WOMEN'S MINISTRY

*For I have learned in whatever situation I am to be content. I know how to be brought low, and I know how to abound.
In any and every circumstance, I have learned the secret of facing plenty and hunger, abundance and need.
I can do all things through him who strengthens me. —Philippians 4:11-13*

Each year, the Women's Ministry leadership team seeks the Lord for direction and focus. This year we felt God leading us to the theme of "Contentment in Christ." We live in a society that thrives on discontentment in almost every area of our lives. Jesus is our source of contentment; he is our rock and wellspring of peace!

Our Vision

Women's Ministry exists to equip women to spread a passion for the supremacy of God in all things for the joy of all peoples through Jesus Christ. We desire to lead women to embrace the great assurance and hope of their identity in Jesus Christ and to claim and enjoy satisfaction in him. We seek to treasure Christ together through prayer, study, and application of the word, fellowship, and serving one another. We encourage the older women to be examples and teachers of the younger women. We are committed to raising up women who exemplify biblical womanhood to the glory of God.

Bible Studies

- Five winter studies were offered; 80 women participated.
- Two summer studies were offered; 137 women participated.
- Three Fall studies were offered; 93 women participated.
- Children's programs were offered at morning studies.

Titus 2 Ministry

- On January 25, 100 young women attended the Titus 2 Mentee Coffee to learn about and sign up for a mentoring group.
- This year's Titus 2 Ministry offerings included 12 focus groups, 30 book groups, and 28 one-on-one mentoring relationships.
- We had 85 mentors ministering to 300 mentees.
- A group of 50 women attended the Titus 2 Appreciation Coffee on June 4. The mentors enjoyed brunch, special music, testimonies, a word of encouragement, and the opportunity to share ministry ideas.
- More than 100 women attended one or more of the three Titus 2 Mentor Training sessions this Fall.

MOMS

- MOMS was led by Krista Coronado and Janette Takata.
- A total of 76 moms were involved with 92 infants and children in children's programming.

Events

Shepherding Our Women Well, August 5

Purpose: To equip our leaders to better shepherd our women.

- Three seminars were offered: Basic Online Bible Study Skills, Online Bible Study Skills In Depth, and Small Group Dynamics.

Women's Fall Kick-Off, September 9

Purpose: To begin our year of ministry by bringing our women together for a time of worship and getting to know some of the areas of the church where they can connect to serve in the church or its associated ministries. To introduce our theme of contentment.

Christmas Luncheon, December 6

Purpose: To prepare our hearts for Christmas by focusing on Jesus. Theme: "Joy to the World"

- More than 300 women attended. The tables were beautifully decorated and hosted by 38 women.
- Worship time included traditional carols, readings from Scripture, and testimonies that focused on Jesus' birth and his life changing gospel.

Ongoing Ministries

White Cross

- MaryAnn Burnes led this group twice a month, which averaged 20-30 women of all ages.
- Projects included quilts for new moms.
- Devotions were led by visitors and women in the group over lunch each month.



Lori Jaeger

Administrative Assistant for Women's Ministry, Downtown

Bud Burk

DOWNTOWN CHILDREN & FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP

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, and 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, of this unfolding story of God’s grace in Christ to undeserving sinners at Bethlehem among families which bring both salvation and sanctification for our joy. If I had to summarize this glorious theme in a word it would be a name: Jesus.”

It has been three years since writing those words, but they are as fresh now as they were then. God’s grace has been relentless for our joy in helping us make much of his Son.

Evidences of Grace

Disability Ministry

God’s hand in the disability/special needs ministry has been seen in the provision of gaining and training volunteers to serve as 1:1 buddies to come alongside students of all ages with special needs. New students are participating in our His Strength adaptive class. And joy has been given in writing interactive Bible lessons for this class, which brings teaching about Jesus Christ into each lesson. God has granted sweet moments of ministry to personally connect with parents in encouragement and prayer either on Sundays, in their homes, at coffee shops, in hospitals, or during our quarterly Hope Keepers gatherings for moms. God continues to supply for our Respite Nights. We’ve held nine Respite Night events over the past three years, which have been a valuable support to our families (Downtown and North Campuses) and have provided partnerships with new volunteers and opportunities for small groups, college students, adults with special needs, and families to serve together. This year has been particularly challenging for me to serve many families in crisis, battling significant health issues—child, parent, or both—and the added and ongoing needs for our growing adult ministry, but in all of this God continues to teach me to be fully dependent on him, leaning on prayer, his good timing, and his grace along the way.

Nursery Ministry

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/she is in our care. Life is a gift from God, and he added 51 new babies to our roster in 2017. Another testimony to our Father’s help and grace in ministering to children is seen in serving our Women’s Ministry by providing childcare for MOMs and Women’s Bible Studies, as well as providing childcare for Small Group Ministry’s quarterly Small Group Leaders’ Dinners.

Parent Support

- God has granted another year of grace for the parent gatherings in the Parent Room. Though we discussed many topics, the heart and soul of our conversation was the gospel of Jesus Christ and our method was in a devotional style where we talked, prayed, and sang. It was a joy to bookend our Sunday School ministry in the Spring and Fall with family gatherings. With God’s help, we are finding ways to serve families in and around our long-standing ministry areas.
- There was another rich measure of grace granted to parents who are grieving the loss of a child, through the development of a Miscarriage Memorial Service held in the Spring and the Fall.
- Jesus left the glory of heaven, expressing love to us by coming to earth. I am continually granted grace to, in small measure, follow his lead by visiting families in their world—in their homes. This remains a very meaningful expression of family support for which I am grateful.

Sunday School

The “steady state” ministry of Sunday School remains marked and blessed by God’s grace. He continues to bring volunteers to serve for the 9am and 11am services. The refinement in the Fall of creating a Middle School model (to include Grade 6) under the leadership of our youth ministry has served us well.

Gospel on the Grass

My hope was that this event would help us take a step forward in bringing the gospel to our neighborhoods. I made mention of this in the 2016 report, but it did not

move forward as I thought it might. God is sovereign over it all, and I am still reflecting on lessons learned.

Evidences of Grace Yet to Come

Sunday School

With God's help, we will move one final class into our study of Luke and Acts. Therefore, all our children in Grades 2-5, which meet Sundays at 9am and 11am, will start afresh in the Gospel of Luke in September. Fall 2018 will begin our second run at this four-year rotation of beholding Christ and watching him build his Church. God has granted so much grace to us, and I look forward to more in the future.

Master Track

I plan on providing a parenting "Master Track" in our Parent Room in the Fall that I trust will become an every-other year rotation to provide parents meaningful conversation and prayer around some very important family life issues. The constant theme will remain the glory of Christ and the transforming power of the gospel for both parents and their children.

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

Bud Burk

Bud Burk

Pastor for Children & Family Discipleship, Downtown

2017 Downtown Campus Attendance Statistics

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY					
Weekly Services	Age Group	Total Unique Participants	Participant Average	Total Volunteers (includes 1:1 Buddies & Subs)	Volunteer Average
Sunday 9:00am	<i>Preschool-Grade 6*</i>	109	68	44	30
Sunday 11:00am	<i>Preschool-Grade 6*</i>	253	213	98	59
Weekly Service Totals:		362	281	142	89

**Starting in September 2017, children in Grade 6 moved into Middle School classes (Grades 6-8).*

NURSERY MINISTRY					
Total number of babies born: 51					
Weekly Services	Age Group	Total Unique Participants	Participant Average	Total Caregivers	Caregiver Average
Saturday 5:30pm	<i>All Nurseries</i>	15	8	15	4
Sunday 9:00am	<i>All Nurseries</i>	71	58	44	27
Sunday 11:00am	<i>All Nurseries</i>	68	61	36	22
Weekly Service Totals:		154	127	95	53
Special Events (MOMS & Bible Studies)		82	61	12	7

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

SPECIAL EVENTS & OTHER MINISTRIES
Picnic in Main Hall: 28 family units attended
Parenting the Early Years: 14 family units attended (average of 3 separate events throughout the year)
Children Dedicated: 52
Grace for Dead Dogs: 12 men attended (average of 3 separate events throughout the year)
Downtown Campus Volunteer Training: 97 volunteers attended
Praise in the Park: 18 family units attended
Father/Daughter Retreat: 20 father/daughter units attended
Volunteer Appreciation Dinner: 238 Downtown & North volunteers attended

Richie Stark

DOWNTOWN YOUTH & FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP

But God, being rich in mercy, because of the great love with which he loved us, even when we were dead in our trespasses, made us alive together with Christ—by grace you have been saved—and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.—Ephesians 2:4-6

Overview

This Fall, we began a series in Ephesians and are reminding ourselves of the sovereignty of God and the unity of our salvation. God made us alive, raised us up, and seated us with Christ in the heavenly places; it is by grace we have been saved.

Staff

This year our staff team included Patrick Claytor, *Ministry Assistant for Middle School Discipleship, Downtown* (began August 2016); Jonathan Patterson, *Ministry Assistant for Sr High Discipleship, Downtown* (through May 2017); Emily Howe, *Ministry Assistant for Sr High Discipleship* (began May 2017); Daniel Simmons, *Ministry Assistant for Sr High Worship, Downtown*; and Jenna Thomsen, *Administrative Assistant for Youth & Family Discipleship, Downtown*.

The Middle School & Sr High ministries are blessed with 50 volunteer staff. Their responsibilities include helping lead worship, giving announcements, caring for small groups, coordinating events, and maintaining relationships outside of planned events.

Programming

This was a pivotal year in that at the Downtown Campus transitioned from having a Jr High Ministry to having a Middle School Ministry. We felt that students were growing out of the Children's Ministry by the end of Grade 5 and ready for Middle School Ministry. I am excited for the change, because I was a Grade 6 homeroom teacher for eight years and I felt we could minister to these students in similar ways to our Jr High Ministry.

During the school year, the youth ministry meets on Wednesday nights. We have made a more concentrated focus on small groups in the Sr High Ministry. On the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of the month, we meet as one big group. The 2nd and 4th Wednesday of the month 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 High School and Middle School groups have been studying Ephesians on Wednesday nights. On Sunday mornings they have worked their way through a study called "Story-Formed Life."

We hosted many events for the students in 2017. Some of the all-church events with the North and South Campus students include the Twins game, Jr High Summer Camp, and Jr & Sr High Winter Retreat. As a Downtown Campus group, we have had an event just about every month. These range from pool parties, our own "Academy Awards" Weekend, and a Sr High Fall Kick-Off camping trip.

Fruit

The Lord has been kind to us in showing us his mercy. He has moved among the Downtown Campus youth in mighty ways. We have seen him free students of demon possession and oppression at Jr High Summer Camp.

We are seeing students follow Christ in deeper ways and desiring to be baptized. This has given the Downtown Campus staff extra motivation to see the Lord glorify himself in mighty ways.

Closing

This has been a great year in which the Lord has shown himself to us. He has drawn us closer to himself by displaying his mighty power over the enemy. This is what Paul prayed for the Ephesians—that his readers would know the hope and the riches of his glorious inheritance and the immeasurable greatness of his power. It is our prayer that the Lord would be pleased to show us more of this power in the coming year.



Richie Stark

Pastoral Resident for Youth & Family Discipleship, Downtown

2017 Downtown Campus Attendance Statistics

YOUTH DISCIPLESHP						
Sunday School	Average Participants		Total Participants		Total Volunteers	
	<i>Spring</i>	<i>Fall</i>	<i>Spring</i>	<i>Fall</i>	<i>Spring</i>	<i>Fall</i>
Jr High/Middle School	34	65	52	121	13	30
Sr High	40	50	55	81	19	20
Total Sunday School:	74	115	107	202	32	50
Wednesday Connection	Average Participants		Total Participants		Total Volunteers	
	<i>Spring</i>	<i>Fall</i>	<i>Spring</i>	<i>Fall</i>	<i>Spring</i>	<i>Fall</i>
Jr High/Middle School	15	65	30	121	13	30
Sr High	30	40	50	81	19	20
Total Wednesday Connection:	45	105	80	202	32	50

Steven Lee

NORTH LEAD PASTOR

Let them thank the LORD for his steadfast love, for his wondrous works to the children of man!—Psalm 107:8

It is a joy and privilege to write to you as the Lead Pastor of the North Campus. A year ago, our family did not know that God would bring us back to Minnesota. In that time, God has given us a deep affection and love for you, the people of Bethlehem. This year has been one of significant transition for our family, but we are grateful to be here with you, our family in the Lord. As I look back on the last six months, we cannot help but give thanks to God for his sustaining grace and steadfast love. We have seen evidence of God's strengthening hand at work among you.

North Pastoral Staff

The North Campus is blessed to have a pastoral staff that is godly, wise, mature, and deeply committed to the glory of God. The North Campus pastors, residents, and ministers love working together. I am grateful to inherit and lead this incredible, capable staff. It goes without saying, but I know that each of these pastors and ministers could not do what they do without the support, encouragement, and partnership of their spouses, which often goes unseen. I am grateful.

It has been a joy to colabor with Dan Holst, who now serves as *Pastor for Worship, North*. His winsome leading of the North Campus is evident, and I am thrilled to continue to have him guide us week after week in corporate worship. His humility and eagerness to serve have made our transition smoother than I could have imagined. I praise God for Dan's leadership as he cultivates our joy in God each weekend.

Jack Delk announced his intention to retire in April 2018 to move closer to family in Texas. I am grateful for his labors to shape us into a people that walk with one another in pain and suffering. His counsel and care is evident in so many of our lives. We have begun the search to fill the role of *Pastor for Care & Counseling, North*. Thank you for your prayers, and special thanks to the search committee: Steve Stein (chair), Andrya Dieter, Pam Larson, Joby Morgan, Bryan Pickering, Luis Rodriguez, and Keith Steichen. We hope to bring a candidate to the congregation in the coming months.

Ben Katterson joined the North pastoral team this year as the *Pastoral Resident for Jr High & Family Discipleship, North*. I am eager to see Ben unleash his many gifts to serve our Jr High students and parents in loving Jesus. He partners with Pastors Jon Nowlin and Gil McConnell to disciple our youth and families. Jon and Gil continue to lead as wise and humble pastors who know and love our people. I am continually encouraged to see a heart of deep care for our people at work in these men.

Pam Larson continues to lead our Women's Ministry with excellence and an eagerness to see women trained well in handling God's word. Sam Crabtree serves by leading, training, discipling, connecting, and so forth. He is a wise and gifted pastor who brings his experience and unique sense of humor. Vince Johnson leads our outreach efforts to help us become a people who are prayerful and eager to share the good news of Jesus with our neighbors, coworkers, and friends. Vince models what he teaches, and I'm eager for us all to engage in personal evangelism. I long for us to grow in proclaiming the excellencies of Christ to the lost who are in desperate need of Jesus.

Reid Jilek and the CO Team continue to engage, evangelize, and disciple students from the University of Northwestern and Bethel University. Their investment in the lives of these students will shape the next generation of leaders. Praise God with me that many are coming to faith and others are growing in commitment to Christ.

North Support Staff

The Best Christian Workplace Institute survey revealed unprecedented levels of joyful camaraderie among the staff at the North Campus. I am grateful for the support staff who see their roles not merely as jobs, but as service to the Lord. We are blessed to have administrative and ministry assistants that ensure hundreds of details are attended to: Joel Assaraf, Tom Boyer, Josh Bremerman, Heather Douglas, Cynthia Francis, Lynda Hansen, Ryan Kirchoff, Katie Kramer, Lauren Mattson, Beth Nordquist, Lulu Robinson, Jacque Straka, and Diane Soderholm. Various coordinators and directors oversee significant areas of ministry: Lee Burtman over disability ministry, Carmen Tomaszewski (with Claire Olson,

Maggie Sporleder, and Karleen Witt) over nurseries, Dave Carlson (with John Carlson, Ryan Soderholm, and others) over facilities, Kevin Shull and many others over our choirs, and Molly Johnson (with her kitchen team) over all the food and refreshments that are served each week. It is beautiful to see the church body work together for the building up of God's church.

North Elders & Deacons

God has been kind to give us humble, eager, and willing elders who serve, not for selfish gain, but for the glory of God and for the good of his church. God has called these men to shepherd the flock: Sam Crabtree, Jack Delk, Jason DeRouchie, Tom Dodds, Jon Grano, Tim Held, Dan Holst, Tim Johnson, Vince Johnson, Gil McConnell, Andy Naselli, Luis Rodriguez, Steve Stein, and Steve Walmsley. Jason Ruch (who served with a steady hand as the North elder chair) and Mike Meloch (chair of the search committee that brought me here) both roll off our team of North Campus Elders this year. We are grateful to them both, and to their families, for their selfless and humble labor. Our elders continue to consider how to best care for the flock, and they are leaning into domestic abuse cases. We are grateful for those who serve with us in caring for these families (Kirsten Christianson, Andrya Dieter, Kirsten Marsh, and many others). God has also blessed the North Campus with deacons Barry Onufrock and Steve Prater who labor behind the scenes.

People of North Campus

We all have embraced the "Fill these Cities: 25 x '25" vision through our praying, giving, and mutual strengthening of one another. It is exciting to see the South Campus building process, to renew our commitment to reaching unengaged people groups with the gospel, and to consider the church plants that will be birthed from the North Campus into our surrounding area. I look forward to opening God's word this year to consider the glory of Christ and how the good news of Jesus transforms us and trickles down into all the crevices of our lives and relationships.

A Personal Note

So many of you have welcomed our family, prayed for us, and been kind to us as we transitioned here in July. We are grateful for your prayers during our 100 days without a house, and navigating life in a new state with a newborn just 10 days old. We simply could not have done it without your prayers, care, and practical expressions of concern for our family. We thank God for you! We have experienced the love of God through you, and we are eager to labor here for your joy in Christ.



Steven Lee
Lead Pastor, North

Dan Holst

WORSHIP & MUSIC

“The LORD is my portion,” says my soul, “therefore I will hope in him.” The LORD is good to those who wait for him, to the soul who seeks him. It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD.—Lamentations 3:24–26

Waiting is hard. Waiting requires patience—and hope. We read in Lamentations that waiting is good. Those who wait receive God’s expressed goodness and those who wait in quiet, resting faith will receive salvation from God. My soul has learned to wait, not always quietly I must confess, nor patiently. But waiting on the Lord has produced a good gift for me and for all of us at Bethlehem; namely, a full time *Lead Pastor, North*—Steven Lee. Steven & Stephanie’s arrival July 1, 2017, has provided me with a welcomed transition from the dual role of Worship/Lead Pastor, to the sole role of Worship Pastor. Thank you, O Lord, for the evident fruit of your goodness and for faith to hope and wait for your good provision of a qualified and manifestly gifted Lead Pastor. To God be the glory!

Additional Highlights From 2017

- Growth in the number of participants in our Children and Youth choirs—thank the Lord for Kevin Shull, *Director for Music and Worship, North*, and for Jana Parent, Shirley Nagel, and Becki Warnock.
- Ongoing, regular participation of a growing number of worship leaders engaged in our Worship Choir who seek to serve with excellence and joy under Kevin Shull, assisted by Vicki Crabtree.
- Delightful instrumental leadership regularly rendered by our North Campus Orchestra under the invaluable volunteer leadership of Jeremy Kolwinka.
- Week in and week out worship team leadership, anchored regularly on piano by Mark Henderson—whom we honored at his 15 year anniversary in his current role at Bethlehem this Fall. Thank you, Mark!
- Dozens of volunteer vocalists and instrumentalists who helped to flesh out our worship priorities and values with humility, excellence, and passion. Special thanks to Tim Stokes, Wednesday Connection accompanist and Sunday morning “fill in” *extraordinaire*.

- Lauren Mattson—our *Lead Administrative Assistant, North*, who continues to meet needs selflessly and competently behind-the-scenes in myriad ways, serving worshipers and leaders alike.
- Celebrated 15 years on staff at Bethlehem in August 2017.
- Continued serving as an under-shepherd/elder, marking 20 years in that role.
- Performed weddings, participated in funerals, small group ministry, counseling and care, preaching, and teaching in advancing our mission.
- Attended the February 2017 Worship Together Conference in Franklin, Tennessee; partnered with TCT Church Planter, Ryan Eagy, in April by leading a men’s retreat in Boise, Idaho; traveled to Germany with a Bethlehem team in August to honor the memory of Char Ransom in global partner encouragement; and attended the October Convergence Conference in Oklahoma City.
- Personally, Liz and I celebrated 34 years of marriage (February); welcomed our second grandchild (Hadley Elizabeth Jo Holst, born in October to Erik & Breckan); and enrolled our son, Anders (Grade 9), into a part-time educational partnership with the remarkable faculty of Irondale High School.

The Lord has, indeed, been good to me! And the Lord will be good for all those who wait for and seek him.



Dan Holst
Pastor for Worship, North

Sam Crabtree

NORTH SMALL GROUPS & ADULT DISCIPLESHIP

One of the most important questions to answer is in this verse:
And when he entered Jerusalem, the whole city was stirred up, saying, "Who is this?"—Matthew 21:10

Time Investments at Bethlehem in 2017

- Produced the monthly *LAMBgram* newsletter for North Campus small group leaders and elders.
- Chaired the board of Bethlehem College & Seminary (appointed by the Bethlehem elder council), meeting regularly with President Tim Tomlinson, and praying for each graduate (such as at times when I sign each diploma before handing them out at commencement).
- Led segments of Wednesday Connection prayer, participated regularly in the Sunday morning prayer gatherings at 8:15am in the Prayer Room, and participated in the First Wednesday Fasts.
- Served as coordinator and teacher at the periodic small group leader training meetings, taught orientation sessions for new small group leaders, and conducted interviews of applicants.
- Emceed the all-staff Christmas luncheon, introducing Professor Bjorg Bjorgenson.
- Mentored three Bethlehem College & Seminary apprentices and one graduate.
- Rose to speak in favor of our South Campus building project proposal at the Lakeville City Planning Commission meeting.
- Provided premarital counseling and presided at three weddings: Daniel Sheppard & Renae Prater, John Nelson & Cristina Cornelius, and Isaac Ward & Kate Drahosh.
- In the Spring, taught a series of Wednesday night classes related to apologetics. Taught at four of the North Campus Wednesday Connection picnics at Long Lake Regional Park in a series entitled "What We Discover About Jesus in Twelve of His Appearances."
- Spoke in various settings: Sunday School classes, Membership Class, Baptism Class, MOMs, and the like.
- Collaborated with Jared Wass (*Pastor for Small Groups, Downtown*) and Aaron Davitch (*Pastor for Small Groups, South*) in regular meetings to attend to adult ministries on the three campuses.
- Participated in things like the Getting Acquainted With Bethlehem class, presided at the Communion table, officiated at Covenant Affirmations, presided in the waters of baptism, preached at Joel Englund's

funeral, presided at Dorothy Anderson's funeral, sang at the memorial services of Stephanie Noyed and Gary Derfus, spoke in Bethlehem College & Seminary chapel and in class, assisted with child dedications, spoke to a gathering of global partners, spoke to boys and leaders at the Trail Life USA awards night, 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 various individuals seeking it, including pastors from other churches even outside the United States. I counseled a protestant/catholic couple to not marry.
- Conducted interviews with candidates for baptism and membership.
- Composed blog posts for Bethlehem.
- A gal in our small group, Elli Peterson, married Nate Van Zee (both on Campus Outreach staff), and our entire small group attended their wedding in Moose Lake.

Sabbatical

- Took an elder-approved three month sabbatical during which I drafted a book, sold my mother-in-law's house in Willmar, arranged for her to reside with us for the summer while we looked for assisted living arrangements, engaged with Vicki's cancerous brother at Mayo, and a number of other unexpected tasks during that span.
- Visited fifteen churches.
- Read seven books.
- Journalled 117 pages of biblical reflections.
- Took Vicki to Duluth for a few days (site of our honeymoon) where we were surprised to run into some old friends whose son I held in my arms as he died years ago.
- Had lunch and prayed with Randy Anderson, a jr. high friend I hadn't seen for fifty years.
- Cared for four grandchildren for four days as solo grampa (Vicki was working, and my daughter and her husband were away on business-related trip).

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 ...

- Served on the board of Desiring God. (I've served on this board for two decades. My term concluded at the end of 2017.)
- Gave away a couple hundred books to upperclassmen attending the annual CRU (Campus Crusade Twin Cities) Winter Conference seniors' breakfast which solicits upperclassmen for long term ministry.
- 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.
- Preached at Calvary Community Church in St. Cloud and at the Marie Sandvik Center in south Minneapolis.
- Marched at the Whole Woman's abortuary in downtown Minneapolis.
- Delivered two seminars to CRU's regional leadership team.
- Spoke to University of Northwestern-St. Paul faculty at their Fall in-service meetings.
- Delivered three messages at the marriage retreat sponsored by Northfield Community Church.

Still Learning & Developing

- Attended the Bethlehem Conference for Pastors + Church Leaders.
- Toured a private curation of the Sacra Pagina traveling exhibit.
- Attended the Convergence Conference in Oklahoma City.

I Am Helped

Heather Douglas continues to serve as *Administrative Assistant for Adult Discipleship, North*. My thanks to Heather and Lauren Mattson for executing the Fall Kick-Off and Spring Appreciation Dinner for small group leaders.

Personal Notes

- I joined Bethlehem's staff in 1997, and the church marked my 20th anniversary and the anniversary of other pastors and wives (Livingstons, Nelsons, and Steddoms—"100-Year" Celebration!) with a reception and service at which John Piper delivered remarks.
- God granted a 67th birthday.
- Observed, with pleasure, as my twelve-year-old granddaughter played trumpet as she marched in a couple parades.
- The small group Vicki and I lead in our home is studying Jerry Bridges' *Pursuit of Holiness* for which I prepare discussion questions.
- In grace and mercy, Vicki and I reached our 44th 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 over 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 and was struck (doored) by a car, breaking two ribs and a finger.
- Surpassed my goal of making 100 consecutive free throws, achieving 130 and making 187 out of 188.
- House projects: removed a tree from our front yard (chopped it down and chopped it up by hand), replaced toilet, demo-ed and sheet-rocked stairwell, carpeted two stairways and two rooms, stripped wallpaper and painted, replaced six windows.
- Had a tooth crowned, and had a routine MRI of my heart, aorta, etc. Vicki had three vascular surgeries on her legs.

Living in light of the Bible's (and universe's) answer to the question, "Who is this?"



Sam Crabtree
Pastor for Small Groups, North

Jack Delk

NORTH BIBLICAL COUNSELING

And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, until we all attain to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to mature manhood, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ, so that we may no longer be children, tossed to and fro by the waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by human cunning, by craftiness in deceitful schemes. 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 4:11–16

October 2017 marked the beginning of the sixth year of the North Campus Counseling Center. The original vision for a counseling ministry at the North Campus 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.

I am continually amazed when I witness the joy and excitement that our lay counselors experience through serving in the care of souls. These men and women walk alongside others in the body of Christ, many with overwhelming, often heavy burdens, and it is evident that God has clearly called and equipped these caregivers for this ministry. Ephesians 4:11–16 is beautifully illustrated through the ministry of these lay counselors.

Mary Wilkin (my right-hand lady) and I decided to take the year off from training new lay counselors given the transition time that my retirement in April will necessitate. Instead, we are focusing on deepening the skills of our current lay counselors through continuing education. Each Monday night about twenty of us gather to discuss the material from an online course we are auditing taught by David Powlison. These gatherings are rich as we experience an “iron sharpening iron” through our interaction with one another as we verbally process David’s teaching.

Once again I took a group to Faith Church in LaFayette, Indiana, for a week of training in February. We obviously are maturing as a group of counselors because all of us were in Track 4, the advanced track that changes each year so you can attend without repetition. The week at Faith was intense—sitting in training seminars about eight hours a day. Yet the seminars are very helpful and practical. I always learn things that I can bring home and apply.

My wife, Mary, and I made the trek to Frisco, Texas, in October to attend the Christian Counseling & Education Foundation (CCEF) Annual Conference. This year’s theme was, “Family: Embracing the Blessing, Facing the Brokenness.” The conference was very thought-provoking—challenging us to consider the reality that families can often be a mixed bag, bringing both joy and sorrows. Several Bethlehem lay counselors attended this conference with us.

I want to close by recognizing and thanking the lay counselors at the North Campus: Anita Tomlinson, Mary Wilkin, Kelly Loken, Pastor Vince & Kathy Johnson, John Morrison, Sonja Perschbacher, Keith & Sharon Steichen, Steve & Liz Stein, Sharon Dierberger, Darlene Sorley, Carol McCormick, Cristina Delgado, Luis Rodriguez, Marsha Lehn, and Dennis & Kathleen Dodds. And special thanks to Cynthia Francis, who administrates and organizes so many things for the ministry in her ten hours per week.

I love them all and thank God daily for their commitment and service to the North Campus of Bethlehem Baptist Church.



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

The Lord has blessed the North Campus in 2017 in our Neighborhood Outreach and Welcome Team ministries! Let me mention just a few of these highlights.

Neighborhood Outreach

- Our Wednesday ESL ministry continues to be extremely fruitful. Chrissy Kline, our faithful coordinator, sends me stories of God's great work among the 50 students and 50 tutors. Here is one such story: "I ended up in All Nations Fellowship after church yesterday. I saw one of the tutors who had brought his student to the class. Phyllis & Greg Smith were sharing the gospel with him in Chinese for at least 15 minutes from the time I arrived. Obviously, I don't know exactly what they said, but at the end, she gave him the bridge tract and they all prayed together. This student's wife became a Christian earlier in the year and they are returning to China next month."
- Shield616 is an outreach project we began in 2017 to support our local police department. The Mounds View Police Department now has 19 support groups from North Campus serving, communicating with, and praying for each of their 19 officers.
- David Zhang started a Sermon Discussion in Mandarin each Sunday after church this summer. Because of the exciting turnout, he continued the discussion during second hour in the Fall.
- Our monthly outreach to Union Gospel Mission has been led by Daryl & Karla Roberts for many years. I thank and praise the Lord for their spiritual leadership of this evangelistic and compassionate way of loving these homeless neighbors!
- Advent Outreach Cards were included in the worship folders one Sunday to help us pray for, serve, and share the gospel with a neighbor, family member, or friend. We are in the process of collecting and telling the stories of God's great deeds through this effort. One idea is to continue with this strategy seasonally to include Easter and summer in this outreach model.

Welcome Team

- Bea Anderson started the Coffee Connection Ministry. This effort includes an upgrade in the coffee served in the Commons next to the Info Booth on Sunday mornings.
- Dave Christenson has spent many Sundays out in our parking lot loving the people who were looking for parking spots. He is helping to gather others for a Parking Ministry to help lead people to parking.
- We now have a Deacon for the Usher Ministry, Barry Onufrock. This vital ministry involves eight "captains" overseeing teams for each service.

Personal Update

I'm so thankful for my wife, Kathy, who is my best friend and faithful prayer partner. She is my greatest blessing on this planet, and I enjoyed spending 2017 with her. I have enjoyed working closely with Ryan Kirchoff, *Ministry Assistant for Neighborhood Outreach, North*, and Heather Douglas, *Administrative Assistant for Adult Discipleship, North*. They pray with me, celebrate God's awesomeness with me, and help me plan and execute strategies and events. I love trusting the Lord with them.

This year has also been a stretching year! Kathy's mom survived being hit by a car in a crosswalk and was just diagnosed with lung cancer. My father is battling multiple dementia. I am so glad we are not body alone—praise God he has made us in his image with a soul and a hope in Jesus for eternal life!

Whoever believes in the Son has eternal life; whoever does not obey the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God remains on him.—John 3:36



Vince Johnson
Pastor for Outreach, North

Pam Larson

NORTH WOMEN'S MINISTRY

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect.—Romans 12:2

God's Transforming Grace

Our Women's Ministry theme for the 2016–2017 ministry year came from Isaiah 61:10: "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."

We are clothed with Christ's robe of righteousness. We are justified! "For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God" (2 Corinthians 5:21). The Bible goes on to tell us that because we are justified, and because we have Christ's "garment of grace," we are to "put on" Christ (be clothed in him). "But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to gratify its desires" (Romans 13:14), and "Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect" (Romans 12:2).

"Be transformed" is an imperative, a command. That means an action for us to do. But this is a work the Spirit does within us through his word, so we've got to bring ourselves under the influence of the word. That is why Women's Ministry strives to provide many opportunities for women to be in the word of God.

God's Transforming Grace in and Through Our Priorities

Bible Studies

- Winter: Six Bible studies were offered at the North Campus and 159 women participated.
- Summer: About 170 North w 1 Peter, women studied teaching from The Gospel Coalition Women's Conference of 2016.
- Fall: Nearly 200 women participated in five different Bible studies, including one in Chinese.

Titus 2 Ministry

- In January, 90 young women attended the Titus 2 Mentee Coffee.

- Titus 2 Ministry offerings included 11 focus groups, 39 book groups, and 13 one-on-one mentoring relationships.
- Ninety mentors ministered to 300 mentees.
- About 70 of our current mentors attended an appreciation event for them on November 9. They enjoyed dinner, special music, testimonies, a word of encouragement, and the opportunity to share ministry ideas with other mentors.
- More than 45 women attended one or more of the three Titus 2 Mentor Training sessions this Fall.
- The November session, "Discerning Truth From Error," was opened up to all women and 230 attended. Our guest speaker, [Janet Aucoin](#), helped us understand what discernment is; how it differs from a critical, self-righteous spirit; and why it is important. As women and as followers of Jesus, we must be discerning in many areas as we evaluate the truth claims we hear, determine how to give guidance, and decide how to prioritize and help others to prioritize.

MOMS

- North MOMS was led by Heather Haas and Kelly Vranes.
- On the North Campus, 59 moms were involved with 104 children in children's programming.

God's Transforming Grace in North Women's Ministry

As we settled into more campus-specific ministry this year, God continued to lead and bless.

North Women's Fall Kick-Off, September 7

- Purpose: To begin our ministry year by bringing women together for worship, encouragement and fellowship.
- Women gathered for dessert and fellowship with Becki Warnock leading worship. We heard precious stories and godly wisdom during a panel discussion of our theme for the 2017–18 year, "Contentment in Christ," based on 1 Timothy 6:6. Panel members were asked to share favorite promises or passages

of Scripture that they turn to when discontentment creeps in and also to name favorite books or authors who have helped them find contentment in Christ.

North Women's Christmas in the Commons

A gathering of 110 women braved the wintry weather for our second annual North Women's "Christmas in the Commons," an intimate evening of worship, contemplation, and fellowship as we focused our hearts on the miracle of Jesus' incarnation. Christmas cookies were served, but the true feast was the joy of Christmas with our sisters in Christ through carol-singing and Advent readings.

God's Transforming Grace in Our All-Church Events

Women's Spring Conference, May 5-6

- Purpose: To offer women the opportunity to be challenged by good Bible teaching, to fellowship with each other, and to spend quiet time with the Lord.
- Theme: "Transforming Grace"
- Held at the North Campus; 723 women attended.
- Nancy Guthrie was our guest speaker and Debra Stokes led worship. A team of about 150 volunteers from all three campuses worked together for this event.

Holiday Craft Boutique, November 17-18

- 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 and Sara Neibergall.

God's Transforming 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.

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.

Joyfully submitted,



Pam Larson
Minister for Women, North

Gil McConnell

NORTH CHILDREN & FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP

Father, I desire that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory that you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world. —John 17:24

Nursery and Children's Ministry

Showing Them Jesus

In 2017, we continued our efforts in nursery and children's ministry to "show them Jesus" in every setting where we were engaging children. We were staggered with the knowledge that not only did Jesus condescend to be with us, but he wants his people to be with him forever to see his glory (John 17:24)! That has been our aim and will be our aim: To help children truly see Jesus' glory now so that they will see it forever in his most happy presence.

Staffing Transition

In April, Jacque Straka went on maternity leave and came back in part-time status. She finished up her official time on staff at the beginning of January 2018. Jacque is a gifted and godly administrator, organizer, planner, and visionary. She will be missed! Lulu Robinson joined us as our new *Administrative Assistant for Children & Family Discipleship*. God gave her to us just before Jacque went on leave. God has been abundantly kind in bringing us Lulu, and she has quickly become an integral part of the team.

Developments and Refinements

Tom Boyer, *Ministry Assistant for Family Discipleship*, has been spearheading projects and helping us develop and refine many areas of our ministry. He has diligently brought fresh insight to work on policies, seminars, and training and resource materials. What a gift! He also updated our classroom collections of children's books to more biblical selections in Preschool through Grade 1.

Parenting and Family Ministry

Wall Mural and Hallway B Updates

We continued and finished the work on the "wall of worship" in Hallway B with the help of artist and dear brother, David Lundquist. The second phase of painting represented the first phase of redemptive history, from Creation through the Noahic Covenant. Countless families have paused to reflect and stand in awe of God's wondrous works depicted in these vivid murals. We also worked with a small army of folks to update the rest of our walls and directional signage in Hallway B.

We added visionary phrases from Psalm 78 to remind children, parents, and all of us of our biblical aims and as an explanation of the mural. High commendation goes to Scott Brueske and Dave Carlson (facilities staff), Ruth Gulbranson, Amanda Knoke, and Maddie Osgood (communications staff), Annalisa Overgaard (branding consultant), and Carmen Tomaszewski (Lead Coordinator for Nurseries, North). I praise God for his hand in this wonderful team effort. May Hallway B praise his name!

Parenting Classes, Seminars, and Conferences

We had another strong year in our *Parenting Through the Years* Sunday School community, with the leadership of Jake & Amy Mulvihill and Matt & Christa Smyth. We sought to equip parents with a *Children in Corporate Worship* seminar based on the book *Parenting in the Pew*, by Robbie Castleman, and we gave away copies of this book. God is moving mightily in many of our families!

Boy Scouts, Trail Life USA, and American Heritage Girls

We held three Boy Scouts Court of Honor ceremonies in which we celebrated twelve boys (ten from the North Campus and two from the Downtown Campus) who achieved the rank of Eagle Scout. These were wonderful gatherings which allowed us to conclude our Boy Scout charter on a high point with at the close of 2017. With a degree of sadness, we ended our affiliation with the Boy Scouts of America (BSA) due to top-down decisions made by BSA officials that we could no longer support. God gave us great unity among leadership in this decision. Overall, we have enjoyed our BSA charter. Our boys have experienced many outdoor adventures and have had many opportunities to grow in Christ-like character and leadership since our humble beginnings in 2001 at the Downtown Campus. We will continue a similar pursuit for the boys through our affiliation with Trail Life USA. In addition, we will continue many of the same aims for girls through our American Heritage Girls (AHG) troop.

Disability and Special Needs Ministry

Lee Burtman continued as our Coordinator for Disability and Special Needs Ministry, North. She wrote God-Centered curriculum and provided oversight for

the His Works class for adults with special needs. She also helped move us forward in discussion about how those with disabilities might pursue baptism and church membership. Her son Kyle, with Down Syndrome, will be baptized January 2018.

Other Ministry Opportunities

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

- Taught in parenting classes and seminars, children's classrooms, Wednesday Connection, Getting Acquainted With Bethlehem class, and Theological Foundations class
- Spoke at Trail Life USA and American Heritage Girls events
- Officiated funeral/memorial services for Beverly Martin, Huaiji Zhang, and Gary Derfus
- Promoted church-wide "Fill These Cities, 25 x '25" visionary efforts within children's ministry
- Marched/Prayed in the "March for Life" and "Peaceful Presence" events to protect the unborn
- Wrote references letters for adopting families
- Provided pastoral counseling, marriage counseling, and mediation
- Stayed accountable to another brother on the elder council
- Participated in an elder retreat to discuss divorce and remarriage
- Attended Convergence Conference (Oklahoma City) with pastors/elders and church members

- Spoke at a family retreat for Village Church (based in Dallas)
- Began mentoring relationship with Micah McLellan from Meadow Creek Church
- Crafted several blog posts for the Children Desiring God Fighter Verse blog
- Provided consultation for children and family ministers from other churches

Personal Life

I love my sweet JoAnna, bride of 15+ years, now more than ever before. This year we watched our children grow and change. Zachary (17 months) began to walk. Benaiah (3) continues to talk ... and talk, and talk! Joshua (almost 8), Micah (10), and Sophia (12) progressed well in their homeschooling through Classical Conversations. All three enjoyed their piano studies. I was especially blessed to walk with Sophia through the waters of baptism and into church membership in May. God has been remarkably kind to us!

Amazed in the presence of Jesus,



Gil McConnell
Pastor for Children & Family Discipleship, North

2017 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	166	118	38	22
Sunday 11:00am	Preschool–Grade 6	244	170	71	42
Wednesday Connection	Preschool–Grade 6	238	176	44	33
Weekly Service Totals:		648	464	153	97
*Includes Substitutes who do not participate on a regular basis					

NURSERY MINISTRIES

Total number of babies born or adopted: 39

Weekly Services	Age Group	Total Unique Participants	Participant Average	Total Volunteers	Volunteer Average
Sunday 9:00am	<i>Nurseries A–D</i>	205	53	161	19
Sunday 11:00am	<i>Nurseries A–D</i>	161	28	97	12
Wednesday Connection	<i>Nurseries A–D</i>	40	23	22	9
Weekly Service Totals:		406	104	280	40
Special Events: MOMS		155	65	39	22
Special Events: Women's Bible Studies		63	41	20	12

DISABILITY MINISTRIES

13 regular 1:1 Buddies (Aides)

His Works Sunday school: 12 North young adults and 5 volunteers

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

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

3 Respite Nights, average of 46 participants, 46 families, 55 volunteers

OTHER EVENTS & MINISTRIES

17 families attending Parenting Through the Years Sunday school class

34 parents attending Parenting: The Early Years seminars

35 children dedicated

Family Discipleship Appreciation Dinner: 189 attendees (North and Downtown, Nursery–Grade 6)

2 Backyard Bible Clubs hosted by North families, involving 10 households
8 attended Backyard Bible Club Luncheon & Training

North Campus Fall Volunteer Training: 89 volunteers trained

North Trail Life – Woodlands (Grades K–5): 20 Participants and 8 Leaders

North Trail Life – Navigators/Adventurers (Grades 6–12): 10 Participants and 8 Leaders

North Boy Scouts: 9 Participants and 5 Leaders

North Boy Scouts who achieved rank of Eagle Scout: 8

American Heritage Girls: 50 Girls, 16 Leaders, 4 Support Leaders

Jon Nowlin

NORTH YOUTH & FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP

If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach.—James 1:5

In our lack, our generous God of steadfast love provided again and again for the students and families of the North Campus in 2017. May these highlights stir you to thanksgiving and rejoicing in the Lord!

All-Church Winter Retreat

Kind sovereignty was the banner flying over students and leaders from all three campuses at Trout Lake Camp the weekend of January 27–29. God’s robust control over hard things was on display before all who attended, both in little things like a broken-down bus and also in large ways through our times in the word. Tim Cain (TCT Church Planter at Kaleo Church in El Cajon, California) returned to serve our group as the retreat speaker for the second year. The season between last year and this year’s retreat held some of Tim and his family’s greatest trials to date. As Tim opened 1 Peter and shared his personal story of suffering, many saw and felt the comfort of God in their own hardships. The Lord gave further healing and tears were shed as we joined our voices after his sharing to sing “Sovereign Over Us.” In the Lord’s great kindness, he brought us face-to-face with our theme, “Living Hope,” in the midst of the many winter activities and relational joys during the weekend away.

San Diego Short-Term Ministry Trip

In the Spring, the Lord allowed me to lead a team of 13 students and adults (three from the Downtown Campus and ten from the North Campus) to travel to California June 17–25. Our aim was to assist Kaleo Church in El Cajon with their “Summer in the City” outreach. Our primary ministry was serving children from Preschool–Sr High at a church-sponsored basketball camp. We joined with Kaleo to teach and refine basketball skills under the hot sun and proclaim the gospel each day during a snack time in the shade. Many who were unfamiliar with Jesus heard of his creation of all things, incarnation, death, resurrection, and return with a compassionate call to repent and believe the good news. My heart was refreshed to engage with the lost about biblical truths that were new to them, and I was made freshly aware of the condition of the lost, seeing their desire to pursue sin’s enslaving lies. Over the trip, God allowed our team to taste biblical fellowship through taking communion

with believers at Kaleo, enjoying regular times of worship, and listening to each of our team members share the story of God’s work in their lives. We experienced great unity among our team and with Kaleo, seeing the Lord draw new people into their church’s fold and grow believers who were already part of their fellowship.

Abundant Blessings in Transition

This year brought an opportunity to send North Campus staff on to other ministries in a manner worthy of the gospel and to welcome new team members to labor with us side by side. In the Spring, Emily Boyer (*Administrative Assistant for Youth & Family Discipleship, North*) completed her season of faithful service to Bethlehem and moved on to serve her young family. God provided Diane Soderholm to take her place. Diane’s wisdom, responsible nature, and prior Family Discipleship volunteer experience have made her a wonderful addition to our team. In May, Jared Clausen (*Ministry Assistant for Sr High Discipleship, North*) completed his Master of Divinity at Bethlehem College & Seminary. This milestone led to his transition, with his wife and family, to full-time pastoral ministry in Wahpeton, North Dakota. As Jared moved on, our people lavished him with love, rejoicing in God’s gift to us in his ministry. In a sweet providential orchestration, his final days overlapped with Josh Bremerman, our new *Ministry Assistant for Sr High Discipleship, North*. Josh hit the ground running, spending a week at Jr High Camp, serving our North Sr High group with excellence for the rest of the year, and pouring himself into incoming Grade 9 students whom he hopes to serve throughout their Sr High years. Ben Katterson, who also graduated from Bethlehem College & Seminary in May, also caused rejoicing with his transition. In June, he moved from a part-time *Ministry Assistant* to a full-time *Pastoral Resident for Jr High & Family Discipleship, North*. The Lord has blessed our church body greatly in the first six months of Ben’s ministry in this position. These team members are clear examples of the Lord’s generosity to us. I can truly say with Paul, I thank my God in all my remembrance of these dear saints who have been, and are currently are, partners in the gospel for the Lord’s sake. I rejoice in God’s gift of them to our North Campus (Philippians 1:3–4).

Awaken Fall Retreat

Our North Campus students in Grades 7–12 spent the weekend of October 27–29 focused on Jesus, who sets his people “free indeed” (John 8:36). This local retreat afforded us time to share meals and worship at the North Campus, as well as spend the evenings in local homes of North Campus families. We welcomed Jonathan & Emily Martin to stir our hearts to worship in song with Scripture-saturated lyrics. On Saturday morning, we added a new Q & A time and invited Paul & Samm Poteat, two of Bethlehem’s Campus Outreach leaders. They shared their life stories and personal journeys with Jesus toward greater freedom. This time was a highlight of the weekend for many. What Paul & Samm shared dovetailed beautifully with our theme of freedom in Jesus Christ. By God’s grace, it was my privilege to spend time preparing and delivering three messages to our students. God seemed to especially focus our attention on his love for believers. Though many of our young people know his greatness and their sinfulness, it seems more grace is needed for them to see his love for them and to desire his personal shepherding

and care in their lives. Looking back at the weekend, God’s gracious kindness was everywhere. Our Good Shepherd fed us on the rich grass of his truth, brought us Jesus-Exuding guests, gave us games and activities that served all types and abilities, blessed us with generous hospitality from our local church body, and allowed our team to thrive in their giftings. It was one of our best Fall retreats to date.

Bethlehem, your generosity made these and many other realities possible. Thank you for your support, prayers, and investment in the lives of our students and families!

Very thankful to be an under-shepherd of our gracious Good Shepherd,



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	60	82	18	26
Sr High Sunday School	113	158	26	34
Total Sunday School	173	240	44	60
Jr High Wednesday Connection	42	54	7	10
Sr High Wednesday Connection	75	108	14	18
Total Wednesday Connection	117	162	21	28

*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 27–29): 252 students, 67 leaders (all-church)
Youth Baptisms (May 10): 11 baptized
Jr High Summer Camp (June 18–23): 115 students, 47 leaders (all-church)
Jr & Sr High Awaken Retreat (October 27–29): 133 students, 28 leaders

Ben Katterson

NORTH JR HIGH & FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP

Now may the God of peace himself sanctify you completely, and may your whole spirit and soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. He who calls you is faithful; he will surely do it.—1 Thessalonians 5:23–24

What is Jesus doing? According to the above text, he is sanctifying, keeping, coming, calling, and doing. Here are a few of the things that he is doing in the North Jr High ministry.

Move North

The year 2017 was a very busy one. God saw fit to lead the Katterson family to purchase a home in Circle Pines. We moved in January. I graduated from Bethlehem College & Seminary in May, and I began full-time ministry as a pastoral resident in June. I love to minister to and with Jr High students and their families. Amy, our boys, and I have found a warm and receptive home at the North Campus.

Shortly after our move to the north suburbs, we hosted the Jr High boys for Strength & Beauty Night (commonly known as purity night) in our large garage. It was a time of looking at Jesus in Mark 14. We saw how Jesus displayed strength and how it differed from the world's displays of strength. Gathered in another location, the Jr High ladies looked at Jesus' definition of beauty against what the world defines as beauty.

Summer Highlights

Summer Camp was a particular highlight. Our theme was "Redeemer," and Pastor Jason Meyer led us through the book of Ruth. The camp was shepherded by an unusually large number of pastors this year. This proved providential as one of our young ladies (Grade 8) experienced the expulsion of demons, and a significant need was felt for a strong pastoral presence. The Holy Spirit began a great work there, of which we are still feeling the effects.

The summer culminated with a new event for Grade 8 students: "Duluth in a Day" trip. We retreated to Duluth and spent time playing, eating, climbing up a river, and dreaming about what God might do with them in the year ahead. It was a fruitful time for me to get to know this older group better and to ask the Lord how they can best be served.

Fall Features

The Fall kicked off on Sundays with the worldview curriculum entitled "Your Word is Truth." Mitch Pearson and I continue to alternate teaching. The team of mentors is strong this year. On Wednesdays, we use the Swedish Bible study method to study the text of the coming sermon. One of my aims in Jr High is that the students begin to read the word for themselves and begin to hear Jesus speak to them through the text. It has been a joy to lead them and guide the discovery.

Coinciding with the Convergence Conference this Fall, I have felt a need to increase prayer in many areas. I have invited the Jr & Sr High parents and leaders to pray for youth once per month on Sunday. We have gathered and prayed. I greatly desire for more prayer and more of the Spirit's leading in this ministry. May Jesus pour himself out on these Jr High students in such a way that they turn to him, see him, and love him with all their hearts.



Ben Katterson
*Pastoral Resident for Jr High
& Family Discipleship, North*

Chuck Steddom

SOUTH LEAD PASTOR/WORSHIP & MUSIC

For this reason I bow my knees before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth is named, that according to the riches of his glory he may grant you to be strengthened with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith—that you, being rooted and grounded in love, may have strength to comprehend with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth, and to know the love of Christ that surpasses knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.—Ephesians 3:14–19

This year has been a season of ministry efforts designed to strengthen and build up the people of the South Campus both spiritually and relationally. Strategically, our ministry efforts coincided with the first year of Bethlehem's 25-month "Fill These Cities: "25 x '25" vision to 1) plant churches, 2) reach the unengaged peoples of the world, 3) strengthen the core values and vision of our church, and 4) build a 24/7 presence building for our South Campus. In the following paragraphs, I want to simply highlight a few of the main efforts we have made toward these goals.

Under the vision to "strengthen the core," we hosted our first campus-specific marriage retreat March 10–11 at a beautiful facility in nearby Chaska. Led and hosted by elder Phil Nelson with his wife, Holly, we heard personal testimonies from three South Campus couples, prayed together, and enjoyed the relaxing atmosphere of the retreat center with the 51 couples who attended. Many reported being encouraged and strengthened in their marital relationships by those who shared their testimonies and by the opportunity to meet and spend time with others from the South Campus. We believe that healthy marriages are key to the building up our church.

Another area of strengthening was a fresh look at our Sunday morning worship schedule and our discipleship curriculum for Sunday School. In September, we launched our Fall classes with a new curriculum correlated for children, youth, and adults: *The Gospel Project*®. This theologically-rich curriculum allows all ages to study the same portions of Scripture with age-appropriate levels of instruction. Families can then debrief together on what they are learning. We have heard positive responses as our people have come to appreciate this alignment.

We also shifted to begin our Sunday morning schedule with Sunday School at 9am and then to gather for the morning in worship at 10:30am. While not meeting everyone's personal preferences, we have found that this arrangement enables teachers to have ample time

to prepare to teach without feeling rushed following the worship service. The time change allows teachers and workers to linger in fellowship with others after the worship service, which we believe is healthy. The later worship start time is also appealing to visitors and families with very young children or children with disabilities.

In July, we took a huge step forward in strengthening our South Campus ministry by appointing six new deacons: Denny & Bonnie Williams, Greg Gee, Jack & Marilyn Olwell, and Mary Hendricks. These men and women were set apart to work in the areas of hospitality/welcome, benevolence, widow/orphan care, and crisis/meal ministry. This step is a valuable help to the elders in strengthening our capabilities for congregational care. Now we are dreaming about new ways to expand our deacon ministry in the areas of disability and immigrant care.

We value the pursuit of ethnic harmony at Bethlehem. On February 26, the South Campus Choir joined with a predominately African American church choir from Greater Friendship Missionary Baptist Church for an evening of spirituals, laments, and Gospel songs. We entitled it the "Better Together" festival. By worshipping together, we believe that we are working to build lasting relationships and break down walls of racial hostility for the sake of the gospel witness across the Twin Cities. It has become an annual highlight for our choir, and we are planning on doing it again in February 2018.

In addition to the ongoing and incredible ministry events we have for our women, we believe that one way to strengthen the spiritual fabric of our church is through specific ministry to our men, both young and old. On April 29, we hosted a Men's Retreat at a farm south of the metro. More than 90 men gathered for a day to worship, study the Word, build relationships, and strengthen the resolve to battle for purity together. This retreat is a significant ministry opportunity to challenge our men toward spiritual leadership and to encourage our youth toward manhood. We hope to make this retreat an annual event.

We at South Campus are thrilled to have a part in Bethlehem's 25 x '25 vision for planting churches. On April 2, the Northfield Community Church was officially launched in Northfield, Minnesota, under the leadership of church planter, Pastor Jonathon Woodward and Elder Dave Filzen. A core group of about 35 began public ministry in the local community room of a bank in Northfield. Current attendance is around 80 people.

The Republic of Ireland is the most "unreached" English-speaking country in the world—an ironic statement, given the strong historic presence of the Catholic Church. This fact, along with our ongoing short-term ministry investments in Catholic communities in Northern Ireland, was the impetus for sending 54 people to travel to both Ireland and Northern Ireland for two weeks in June to sing and testify to the beauty and centrality of Jesus Christ. The Treasuring Christ in Ireland Choir had the opportunity to sing in four Catholic churches, a Gaelic immersion school, a nursing home, two new Evangelical church plants, and numerous "street music" settings. Each performance was received with warmth and significant interest in the gospel. In so many ways, this ministry trip was the trip of a lifetime.

For the sake of this report, I have saved the most strategic (by far) for last. In a special meeting on April 2, the Bethlehem congregation voted to move forward with a new 51,000-sq-ft South Campus building. Hallelujah! On Sunday, September 24, we gathered at 3pm on the 12-acre site along I-35 and put 12 spades in the ground to ceremonially launch the construction phase. We were joined by representatives from Tradition Bank (our lender), the Anderson Companies (our builder), Lampert Architecture Firm, building committee members, and past and current pastors. God is at work, "Aslan is on the move," and we are so thankful to God for his provision for us. We are praying and laboring to be the light of God's truth to Lakeville and its surrounding communities. Presently, our occupancy of the new building is planned for early September 2018.

The church of Jesus Christ is a "dynamic" community; it is always changing. I am so thankful for the dynamic staff team that God has given us at the South Campus. Sadly, we said goodbye to Tracy Anderson, our nursery coordinator. We value Tracy and wish her the best in

her new teaching career. We welcome to staff Justin & Lindsey Smith (welcome to Bethlehem College & Seminary as well)! Lindsey is replacing Tracy as nursery coordinator and Justin has been added to strengthen our ministry to Jr High students. Already this couple has made a huge impact. We also said goodbye to Krissy Porath, who served as coordinator for children and adults under Pastor Aaron Davitch. We pray God's blessing upon her as she transitions to a church plant in Sauk Rapids, Minnesota.

Moving forward, our heart's desire continues to be that Jesus would be the Head of all things at the South Campus, and that the Spirit of Christ would continue to unite us together in faith and truth to care for one another in love that we might be the aroma of Christ to those around us.



Chuck Steddom
Lead Pastor, South

Aaron Davitch

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

I do not cease to give thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers, that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and of revelation in the knowledge of him.—Ephesians 1:16–17

This year I completed my seventh year of ministry on staff at Bethlehem. It has been a great privilege to serve the Lord here at Bethlehem. I love the people and the camaraderie we have among the South Campus staff. In this review for my ministry area, I will share some highlights and some new initiatives.

A Few Highlights From 2017

South Marriage Retreat

One of the goals of the South Campus elders and pastoral team has been to invest in healthy marriages. Toward that end, we held our first South Campus Marriage Retreat in early March at the Oak Ridge Hotel & Conference Center in Chaska. The theme for the retreat was “Stories of Grace and Growth” and featured a variety of testimonies from couples at the South Campus. The goals for the retreat were that marriages would be enriched, community would be developed, and that we would take a step forward in creating a grace-rich culture where it is safe to be vulnerable and admit our struggles while celebrating God’s grace to grow us. The retreat greatly exceeded our expectations in terms of turnout (102 people attended), enthusiasm, and feedback after the event.

South Men’s Retreat

Another big highlight for me this past year was the South Campus Men’s Retreat in April: “Man Up!” It was a one-day retreat at Pickleberry Farm in Webster, Minnesota. We had a full, rich day of food, fellowship, and activities. Bethlehem College & Seminary professor Joe Rigney came and challenged us from Colossians 3:1–11 to “man up” in the area of purity. We had small group discussions and heard a testimony from a brother about God’s grace and growth in the area of purity. I was glad that many fathers and sons could attend together. We had about 100 men ranging in age from 13 to 70-something. It seemed the Lord’s face shone upon that day and that he once again exceeded my expectations.

Vacation Bible School

This year we held our second South Campus Vacation Bible School. We used the *Galactic Starveyors* curriculum and focused on how the God who created everything wants to have a relationship with us. The five lessons

of the week told the story of the gospel. We aimed for “high fun and deep truth.” It was a joy to see the many gifts and skills of the people at the South Campus come together to make this a great week. About 50 people helped serve in various ways; set design, decorations, teaching, small group leading, running games, leading worship, doing skits, serving snacks, and serving on the security and medical team. We had 116 kids come through the South 501 Building that week. God was glorified, kids had fun, and the gospel was taught. It was a great week.

Some New Initiatives

Children’s Sunday School Curriculum Change

This Fall, we tried a new children’s curriculum for Sunday School called *The Gospel Project*®. This curriculum is a three-year chronological Christ-Centered study of the whole Bible for children, youth, and adults. There are several reasons why we wanted to use this curriculum—here are the top three. First, it is Christ-centered and gospel-centered! Second, it teaches the “Big-Picture Story” of the Bible. Lastly, it is a unified curriculum, meaning that it teaches the same Bible lesson on different learning levels each week to each group (children, youth, adults). The unified nature of the curriculum enables the whole family to study the same thing, and equips parents to do discipleship in the home. I’ve been encouraged to see that about sixty people attend our adult class each week.

Parent Equipping Efforts

In addition to switching to a unified curriculum, we have implemented a few other new efforts to encourage and equip parents. Daniel Viezbicke, *Pastor for Youth & Family Discipleship*, and I are offering parent workshops on a range of topics. This Fall, we hosted a seminar on Intentional Discipleship in the Home. We taught on a vision for discipleship in the home and invited three couples to share what they do to intentionally disciple their children.

We hosted a wonderful Family Night event. In October, we had a Reformation 500 Party to celebrate God’s grace in the Protestant Reformation. We had a great night of worship, teaching, games, and snacks.

We also started setting up a Parent Resource Corner by the Sunday School rooms each week at Lakeville South High School where we can highlight and give away resources to parents.

Connect Lunches

In an effort to help connect newcomers and those who have been attending Bethlehem for a while but are still looking to get connected, we are hosting monthly “Connect Lunches.” These are hosted by our new deacons for hospitality, Jack & Marilyn Olwell, on the first Sunday of every month. Elders and staff attend as well.

Small Group Connect

To further help those looking to get connected into the small group community at the South Campus, we are now providing another on-ramp event, called “Small Group Connect.” These events are advertised and held after the Sunday service where small group leaders of open groups meet to talk with those looking for a group. We had our first “Group Connect” in October, with 10 small group leaders representing a variety of open groups.



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

Ruth Chavis

SOUTH WOMEN'S MINISTRY

*Behold, I am doing a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?
I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.—Isaiah 43:19*

As I have reflected on this past year, what has stood out to me was how many “firsts” we have seen in Women’s Ministry at the South Campus. It truly has been a year of the Lord “doing a new thing” in a variety of ways in our classes and events, but more importantly in the hearts and lives of his daughters.

God Doing a New Thing in Women’s Ministry Priorities

Bible Studies

- Offering a study by Jen Wilkin (Exodus) for the first time, as well as an evening study on Biblical Womanhood
- Two new Bible Study leaders

MOMS

- Implementing a new start time of 9:45am to serve moms who drop off children at school
- New co-leader
- Theme of “Contentment in Christ” for messages on various areas of life

Titus 2

- Revised mentor training by the Titus 2 Committee
- New South Campus mentors providing more groups for women to experience mentoring relationships

The Tuesday Morning Women’s small group is not a new thing, but continues to provide an opportunity to welcome and shepherd women.

Approximately 110 women participate in classes and groups at the South Campus.

I am so grateful to God for the many precious women who faithfully lead these ministries, and for those who serve to provide childcare for Bible Studies and MOMS.

God Doing a New Thing in Events

Fall Retreat, October 21

On a rainy Saturday morning, 74 women gathered at the Minnesota Landscape Arboretum for the first South Campus Women’s Retreat. Testimonies were shared on our theme of being “*Rooted, Renewed, and Refreshed: Rooted and Built Up In Him*” (Colossians 2:7). The vulnerable sharing of the speakers led to vulnerable sharing and many tears during table discussions. The Lord did a deep spiritual work in many hearts that day. After lunch, we walked the trails and enjoyed the grounds of the beautiful Arboretum. Many new, Christ-centered friendships began that day and many others grew to a deeper level. The women received a booklet with worship lyrics and resources for their daily devotional time.

Christmas Celebration, December 1

The first South Campus Women’s Christmas Celebration on December 1 was an evening to “Celebrate Tidings of Great Joy.” We packed the South 501 Building with 102 women. Many brought family members and friends, some of whom were not believers, who sung and heard the great truths of the gospel. The women enjoyed a dessert buffet, worship, Advent devotions, and fellowship.

God Doing a New Thing in Leadership

Women’s Theology Sunday School Class

New in February 2017, was a women’s Sunday School Class, “Theology for Women,” led by a South Campus Elder Bruce Power. The purpose of the class was to provide training for current and future Women’s Ministry leaders (18 women attended).

Convergence Conference

In October, I was able to attend the Convergence Conference with our pastors and elders. Attending a conference like this was a new thing for me. I came away with a hunger to know my Heavenly Father’s personal

love for me in a deeper way and to minister out of that love. One of the greatest blessings was the team building that happened during our travel and meal times.

Campus-Specific Ministry Team

This past year has been one of transition for Women's Ministry with the goal of maximizing the best of "all-church" ministry and the best of "campus-specific" ministry. One of the outcomes has been to establish campus-specific leadership ministry teams to replace the former all-church leadership team. Eileen Kurschner, Karen Power, and Bonnie Williams serve on this team. Stacy Thorpe, who until September was *Administrative Assistant for Women's Ministry, South*, was also a part of this team. These women are precious gifts, and I am so grateful to God for their partnership in ministry.

To God be the glory for the new things I have seen him do, but also for the countless, unseen things he has done in drawing women's hearts to himself, sustaining women through trials, and transforming women into the image of his Son, by his Spirit, through his word, in the classes, groups, and events offered.

Although we have experienced God's favor in "establishing the work of our hands" (Psalm 90:17) by

doing many new things this past year, one thing remains constant—and that is God. He is the eternal, unchanging One whose word is our guide in all of life and ministry.

Looking ahead to 2018, I am "pondering anew what the Almighty can do" to build his kingdom as we transition to a 24/7 building and what that looks like for Women's Ministry. Would you pray with me for God to "make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert"?

I thank God for the gift of his Son, for belonging to him, for giving me the priceless privilege and joy to serve him at the South Campus, and for his steadfast love, faithfulness, and sustaining grace in the journey. To him be glory forever.

Ruth Chavis

Ruth Chavis

Director for Women's Ministry, South

Daniel Viezbicke

SOUTH YOUTH & FAMILY DISCIPLESHIP

Therefore be imitators of God, as beloved children. And walk in love, as Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God.—Ephesians 5:1–2

We are rightly amazed by the doctrine of justification that the Protestant Reformation recovered 500 years ago; we delight in the God who justifies sinners apart from any of our works! And I personally am still amazed at how the justification of sinners by God leads us on to sanctification and glorification. This summer, at our two-day retreat for incoming and outgoing Sr High seniors, we focused on walking in love, in light, and in wisdom from Ephesians 5. God works in his people—of all ages—to delight them with a whole salvation.

We pray that the youth among us would seek to imitate Jesus because they discover that they are beloved. This motivation is justification and sanctification working together. The banner over the child of God is love. Christ's death and resurrection justifies us and provides all the grace we need for sanctification and final glorification—all the promises, all the warnings, and all the examples, including the greatest example, Christ.

So, with all this grace poured out for believers, where did we see this grace in youth ministry at the South Campus in 2017?

Grace to the Viezbicke's

This year we continued to settle into our new home in Burnsville. By my count, we had youth over at our house over two dozen times, plus innumerable times with families and students just “dropping in.” We love using our home for hospitality, and my wife's gifts of food-making and home-making flourish with tons of people in our home (and my latent grilling hobby gets used quite often as well).

Our third child, Eden Lisa Mae, joined Caedmon and Helen this July. She is an abounding grace to us; the late nights, the early mornings, and other things that come with having a new child are all so very worth it.

We've also grown in deeper friendships at Bethlehem—our small group of about a dozen adults (and about the same number of kids!) feels increasingly like family. My fellow

pastors at the South Campus are dear brothers whom I've locked arms with for the sake of the gospel. God is indeed good to grant us such grace through Bethlehem!

Grace to Bethlehem's South Campus Youth

God's grace has been evident throughout the year at Bethlehem. Here are three tangible snippets of what God has been doing among the youth at the South Campus.

First, Jr High participation has grown. A large factor in this growth is the continued involvement of Sr High students discipling Jr High students. Over a dozen Sr High students volunteered at Jr High Summer Camp this year, supplying over half the total student volunteers for the camp. Typically, around a dozen participate in our “Sr High takeover days” when Sr High students volunteer in the Jr High classroom.

Second, in the late summer we hired Justin Smith to help oversee Jr High ministry. Justin and his family have been a joy to have around the South Campus. I'm anticipating growth in his role as he takes on more responsibilities and continues to go deeper in relationships among our youth and their families.

Third, we saw God bring students to faith and grow students in their faith. Several students were converted this year; some students professed Christ for the first time and other's long-held beliefs met a passionate heart cry of worship for the first time. We praise God for his work among us. Also, seven students were baptized this year. We continue to ask God to draw students into closer fellowship with each other and the church, especially through membership.

I could continue to write extensively about other more “intangible” signs of growth: young men and women growing in grace, friendships formed on long van rides, and movements of the Spirit to convict of sin and bring power for the Christian walk. We praise God for all of these things.

Grace for the New Year

This year is the second time South Campus youth will participate in a total of five retreats—two with the other campuses and three that are specific to South Campus. In the next two years, we'll seek to add a sixth retreat for those transitioning from Jr High to Sr High.

We are anticipating the completion of the new South Campus building, with a combined total of almost 3,000 sq. ft. for youth. My wife and I have explored some possibilities for what to do with the space; we will be asking parents and youth for more feedback and help as we get closer to the opening of the building (God-willing) in the Fall of 2018.

We are also pondering some changes for the Fall of 2018. Most significant is moving to a Middle School model (similar to the shift the Downtown Campus made this year). We will have a meeting in January to discuss these changes with parents and get plenty of feedback.

We are thankful to be in ministry here. We trust that God will continue to weave our hearts together with the flock of God that is among us.



Daniel Viezbicke

Director for Youth & Family Discipleship, South

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 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 18 teams and approximately 189 people to assist our global partners.

Americas

Ohio

Vaughn Blackburn led a team of 8 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

A team of 5 went to serve with Global Partner April Campbell. The focus of the trip was to pray for April's ministries and those with whom she interacts.

Bethlehem Hosted a Team from the Dominican Republic

A team of 25 from the Dominican Republic traveled to Minneapolis to partner with us in ministry. This Dominican team was from the church that we partner with when we send teams to the DR. While here the team ministered in a variety of ways from assisting with home repairs, helping lead a VBS on the Little Earth Reservation, serving at Feed My Starving Children, assisting with and distributing food at Jericho Road, and working at Hope Academy.

The Dominican Republic/Haiti

Nathan Metcalf, Ken Schlorf, and Michelle Ryan led a team of 15 to help a long-term partnering church in the Dominican Republic with evangelism, light construction, and VBS on five sites. The team also traveled to Haiti to do VBS in a village.

San Diego

Pastor Jon Nowlin and Mary Butler led a team of 14 who 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 other service projects around the city.

Houston

A team of 24 traveled to Houston to assist in hurricane clean up. The team partnered with a church that provided a place to sleep and meals. The team went into the community to assist homeowners with clean up and to pray with and witness to the homeowners.

Africa

Senegal

Keith Anderson led a team of 8 to Dakar, Senegal, where they trained university students in speaking English while weaving Jesus into the lesson plans.

Uganda

A team of 9 led by Bob Horning traveled to Uganda to minister alongside Global Partner Sue Murr. The team assisted Sue in her outreach to children/families with disabilities by distributing wheelchairs and caring for other needs.

East Africa

Jonathan Davis, along with three others, went to East Africa to encourage Bethlehem global partners who serve in a very sensitive location.

Zimbabwe

Steve Prater and Ron Powell traveled to Zimbabwe where they worked at a hospital doing construction and handyman projects on the hospital grounds.

East Africa

Todd & Tamara Rasmuson traveled to East Africa with 10 other team members to visit Bethlehem global partners and Tanzanian churches and communities to minister through Orphan's Joy.

Burkina Faso

A team of 5 went to one of the poorest countries on earth to minister in Ouagadougou, the capital of Burkina Faso to students at Fada N'Gourma Bible School. The team assisted in teaching students how to assemble and use a micro-drip irrigation system. The goal is for students to use the irrigation system for their families to grow food as a means of financial support. The team also met and encouraged many leaders at the school.

Europe

Bosnia

Pastor Brad Nelson led a team of 8 to Bosnia to serve alongside Global Partners 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.

Germany

A team of 8 went to Willingen, Germany, to host a Global Partner Retreat. They had over 70 people attend the conference which included teaching, worship, prayer, fellowship, and kids programs. They partnered with Club 4th in the programming for the kids.

Sweden

Global Partner 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.

Treasuring Christ in Ireland, South Choir, Ireland

The choir from the South Campus partnered with Samuel & Sarah Chestnut to proclaim the name of Jesus in Ireland. Their desire was to encourage local pockets of believers and to bring the gospel of Christ to both Catholic and Protestant communities.

Asia

India

1. A team of 7, led by Erin Carlson went to work with our global partner. The team hosted and led women's conferences, and provided a VBS program.
2. Brad & Cindy Nelson went to perform the marriage ceremony of one of our global partners to a young woman from Bethlehem..
3. A team of 3 went to a number of different locations in India to explore and make connections for a Business for Transformation vision trip for Joy Carts.

Thailand

1. Kate Woletz led a team of 3 to the ELIC conference in Chiang Mai. Their ministry focus was prayer.
2. Keith Anderson led a team of 3 to visit, pray, and encourage Global Partners Tom & Joy Tebow.

China

Brent & Brittney Cramer and Greg Stewart went to China to encourage, support, and bless global partners.

Club 4th

Club 4th's mission is to minister to missionary kids at conferences put on by mission agencies. This year they sent teams to Turkey and Germany.

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 58 individuals, couples, and families to bless the nations in a wide variety of functions and tasks. A few of the countries this group ministered in include: Chad, Middle East, India, Senegal, China, Mexico, Greece, Cameroon and Dubai.

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, Club 4th, medical teams, sports ministry, disaster response, anti-human trafficking or BASE, and prayer.

Short-Term Ministry Mobilization Committee

The Short-Term Ministry Mobilization Committee help make ministry opportunities happen by interviewing, debriefing, and helping teams and individuals think through ministry, missions, and future plans that may follow 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 and Pastor Brad Nelson

Home Front

I had a busy year in that I took five trips, including Bosnia, Costa Rica/Mexico/Belize, India/Nepal, Germany/Italy, and Israel/Jordan/Turkey. I spent one week as the program director at Jr High Summer Camp in June, and performed seven weddings. And in all this, God is good!



Brad Nelson

Pastor for Global Outreach Strategic Short-Term Ministry

Keith Anderson

SENIOR ADULTS

"Only take care, and keep your soul diligently, lest you forget the things that your eyes have seen, and lest they depart from your heart all the days of your life. Make them known to your children and your children's children..."—Deuteronomy 4:9

In January, in addition to my regular part-time duties as *Coordinator for Senior Adult Ministries*, visiting seniors and coordinating seniors events and classes, I was also preparing to lead a group of eight seniors/baby boomers on a ministry trip to Senegal with the Engage English Camp. This was the fourth year that Bethlehem has sent a team to assist in the language camp for Dakar University students. Another trip is being planned for January 2019! Our team included: Tom Youngquist and Dave Naglak (their second trip), Jennifer Naglak, Pastor David & Karin Livingston, and Bob & Evie Wykstra. We joined the long-term global partners who meet with these students year round to assist with an intense week of English classes and sharing our faith in Jesus Christ.

On January 7, our dear Verna Erickson passed away. Her memorial service was a celebration of her life. Verna left a legacy of a stalwart prayer warrior to the end. We also lost Anita Stokes, mother of Pastor Kenny Stokes. Both these dear ladies will be missed. Pastor Ken Currie spoke to our Senior Sojourners in January.

In February, our preparations for the Fall trip to Israel moved into high gear and friend Dave Laurion passed into glory unexpectedly. In Senior Sojourners, Dr. John & Wendy Mielke shared pictures and experiences of their Fall trip to Ireland with Samuel Chestnutt.

In March, several attended a piano concert at Wooddale Church by MaryAnn Burnes' son-in-law, Dr. Mark Solfelt. I sustained a mild concussion about mid-March and took a week off to recover. Senior Sojourners in March saw Joanne Pittman, with Noel Piper, speak about her recent book *The Bells Are Not Silent: Stories of Church Bells in China*. Very interesting!

April began with the annual organizing of Easter flower donations. Our youngest (of nine) grandchildren took her first steps on April 17! At our April Senior Sojourners, we hosted Downtown Campus pastors and each one took a few minutes to speak about their families and work. We all enjoyed getting to know them better. In late April, several attended a special ceremony in Cambridge, Minnesota, honoring longtime missionary

Dr. Tom Coleman (Baptist General Conference/Converge). Truly a memorable service.

In May, our Parish Nurse Judy Anderson reported on a recent three-month season of volunteering in a hospital in Cameroon. In 2018, Mike & Judy plan to serve another several months at the same hospital.

In June, a group of 40 toured the newly renovated Minnesota State Capitol. Mary ended the month of June spending a week with her 92-year-old mother and four sisters in Nashville.

In July, Mary and I were blessed to camp several weekends with friends and grandchildren. Our favorite spots are in and around the Boundary Waters in northern Minnesota. On July 10 our dear friend and long-time Bethlehem member, Dorothy Anderson, passed into glory. In spite of never having her own children, many that felt "mothered" and loved by her. On July 13, many of Char Ransom's admirers gathered to remember her generous support to missions. The pictures and stories we shared reminded us of how God was glorified and we were blessed by her life.

The July Senior Sojourners was a unique event. Bethlehem youth, led by Pastor Richie Stark, joined us at Arneson Acres Park for games and sharing. We all enjoyed the special afternoon! In late July, we mourned (yet not without hope) another dear saint, good friend, and Sojourner pianist, Don Fadell. Don's legacy is one of optimism, readiness to share his testimony of salvation, and generous musical talent for God's glory.

On August 21, God treated us to yet another example of his majesty—a solar eclipse! Although in Minnesota it was cloudy and only a partial eclipse, the occurrence was the focus of the areas where it reached "totality." "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork" (Psalms 19:1). Yet another long time Bethlehem saint, Ann Benson, saw Jesus face-to-face before this month ended. Ann's sudden passing shocked all of us, but we rejoice now with her.

In September, Lois Nelson turned 97, and her son, Steve, was in town to help celebrate her birthday and attend the third Reunion of the Bethlehem Baptist Church Youth Group. About 75 seniors—who were teenagers in the 1960's—gathered to reminisce, enjoy Carbone's Pizza, and thank God for their beginning faith here. The Senior Sojourners "field trip" had over 100 travel to Taylors Falls to tour the river on a warm, and glorious Fall day. Before September ended, Vern Cowley was also with Jesus! A bright, gentle, and quiet gentleman who spent his last nine years with the Bethlehem seniors. We didn't get to know Vern as much as we had wanted due to his hearing issues, but he was a beloved saint.

In October, yet another "giant" of a man and great friend to so many, passed away in early October: Ray Hutton. Jim Harrison finally succumbed to lung disease and passed into Jesus arms. His struggle lasted many months and we are relieved with him. This was an especially busy month as Mary and I prepared to co-host a group of 54 (mostly senior) travelers to Israel and Jordan. Although tiring, it is a special experience to introduce people to places where Jesus and Moses lived. Senior Sojourners was hosted by Pastor David Livingston. The program mixed global partners with our seniors at each table to hear of work happening around the world.

In November, Senior Sojourners observed of the 500-Year Anniversary of the Protestant Reformation as we watched a video of Pastor Jason Meyer's message to Bethlehem College & Seminary on the impact of the life of Martin Luther.

In December, Senior Sojourners held its annual Christmas Celebration with a special meal and Pioneer Photographer, Doug Ohman, showing photo collection "Churches and Christmas in Minnesota." Many nursing home visits were made with the help of Intern Daniel Evertson, a young college student from Nebraska who loves our seniors. Special thanks to Daniel for his help!

Still thanking God for the privilege of serving you!



Keith Andersion
*Ministerial Coordinator for Senior Adult Ministries
(and Baby Boomers)*

Paul Poteat

CAMPUS OUTREACH MINNEAPOLIS

*For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God
for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.*

*For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith for faith,
as it is written, "The righteous shall live by faith."—Romans 1:16-17*

This year was a full year for the Poteat family. It began with sadness as we were deeply engaged with the outworkings of the unfaithfulness of one of Bethlehem's elders. We experienced further sadness when our Campus Outreach team serving in Sheffield, United Kingdom, had some significant disagreements with the partnering church, which led to a breaking of ties that culminated in the team (three families: Knights, Devanes, Dischers) returning to the U.S.

Sadness, however, gave way to joy as I was granted a three-month personal leave from April—June. In this time, I worked on some support raising material for our ministry, finished 2.5 seminary courses, and was able to step away from the daily pressures of relational ministry. The pinnacle was a two-week family trip. We drove from Minneapolis to San Francisco and then back, being sure to hit five National Parks along the way! It was an amazing experience and my youngest daughter, Sophie, said upon returning, "Dad, this was the best summer ever." Success, eh?

In all this, my marriage to Samantha has been a strength and a joy. Parenting together, counseling people together, ministering together, resting together, and vacationing across the U.S. together have all been a sweet grace from the Lord. He who finds a wife finds a good thing.

As is the case each year, Campus Outreach produced an annual review as a service to our many financial donors, which includes testimonies from our Campus Directors, our Project Directors, and a former student. Please read this extensive [2017 Annual Report](#) for more information on Campus Outreach Minneapolis. I love being a part of Bethlehem, and our staff feel 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

Pastoral Director; Campus Outreach Regional Director

Steve Walmsley

FINANCIAL SECRETARY/CONTRIBUTIONS

"Give thanks to the LORD, call upon his name, make known his deeds among the peoples, proclaim that his name is exalted. Sing praises to the LORD, for he has done gloriously; let this be made known in all the earth."—Isaiah 12:4-5

It was an honor to serve the Lord and this congregation in 2017 as the *Financial Secretary*. There is also a team of dedicated volunteers who collect, sort, count, and tally the offering each week. They are a blessing as they work behind the scenes to make sure that donor's gifts are processed as intended.

In 2017, the twenty-five month "Fill These Cities: 25 x '25" initiative continued with months 2-13, contributing toward more than 1,300 faith commitments totaling more than \$17,400,000 (to be fulfilled through December 31, 2018). During the campaign, all contributions to Church & Missions and Fill These Cities are combined as our congregationally approved "One Fund" (through December 31, 2018). Our Lord has blessed marvelously through the fulfilling of commitments to date, along with other donations by individuals and families who call Bethlehem their church home. The benefits of these contributions can be seen throughout the preceding ministry reports that highlight the four priorities of the Fill These Cities initiative.

The contributions toward the budget (Church & Missions and Fill These Cities accounts) in 2017 totaled \$10,946,676. This was an 5% decrease from the 2016 budget contributions that totaled \$11,534,086, which included the special December 2016 one-time over and above gifts to jumpstart the 25 months of Fill These Cities. In addition to budget giving in 2017, special designated gifts of \$776,741 were applied directly toward our South Campus building project and designated gifts of \$139,542 were applied toward the "Funding the Filling" existing mortgage reduction fund. We applied these gifts to our existing mortgage balance, along with our budgeted mortgage payments.

This year we implemented our new Online Giving platform, which has provided significant increases in online giving capability, including "text to give" options and improved communications regarding online donations. The utilization of online giving continues to grow. In 2017, 42% (up from 37%) of the Church & Missions contributions were made through our 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. It is also encouraged that online donors migrate to contributing through a bank account rather than credit card to assist in reducing our electronic transaction fees and potentially incurring personal financing charges on donor's card balances.

In 2017, a total of 6,525 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 2,529 donors from 2,268 families contributing to the One Fund 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 2017 was our first full year of the “Fill These Cities: 25 x ’25” initiative and another strong year of giving at Bethlehem, with giving toward our One Fund operating budget totalling \$10,947K. The budget was set at \$10,700K, but actual spending was \$10,337K as the staff diligently managed expenses to remain below budget.

2017 Highlights

- Contributions to the One Fund operating budget were down \$578K (-5%) from 2016, but this comparison includes the strong December 2016 giving at the start of the “25x ’25” initiative—and it does not include \$776K of designated gifts (over and above the budget) toward the South Campus project in 2017.
- Net spending was up \$486K (5%), reflecting increases for the four main priorities in the “25 x ’25” vision.
- Outstanding external debt at year-end was \$2,896, which was down \$458K (14%).

- The line of credit was at zero as of December 31, 2017.
- Total cash for all funds was \$3,912K as of December 31, 2017.

In 2017, the regional CPA firm CliftonLarsonAllen audited our 2016 financial statements. An audit report is available upon request. Additional unaudited financial details for 2017 are 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

Bethlehem Baptist Church

2017 Operating Fund (unaudited)

	ACTUAL	BUDGET	VARIANCE
General Contributions	10,946,676	10,700,000	246,676
Worship & Music	413,611	423,385	9,774
Vision & Preaching	596,621	630,906	34,285
Media	339,728	358,214	18,486
Worship	1,349,960	1,412,505	62,545
Family Discipleship	15,371	25,208	9,837
Nursery	104,241	130,594	26,353
Children	428,799	436,126	7,327
Jr High/Middle School	195,636	187,335	(8,301)
Sr High	288,334	289,370	1,036
Disability	48,615	58,309	9,694
Library	20,109	24,977	4,868
Adult Discipleship	88,618	89,122	494
Small Groups	303,934	318,407	14,473
Men's	1,911	6,000	4,089
Women's	173,443	191,940	18,497
Senior's	43,624	48,001	4,377
Counseling	216,233	240,200	23,967
Life Training	1,928,868	2,045,579	116,711
Neighborhood Outreach	308,477	332,822	24,345
Hispanic Outreach	3,179	5,804	2,625
Outreach Support	545,255	547,200	1,945
Ministry Mobilization	204,252	200,433	(3,819)
Global Outreach	2,081,017	2,161,452	80,435
Church Planting	460,028	392,289	(67,739)
Leadership Development	422,369	424,099	1,730
Outreach	4,024,578	4,064,099	39,521
General Administration	154,807	144,177	(10,630)
Office	92,334	99,078	6,744
Human Resources	65,121	100,163	35,043
Accounting	165,063	178,179	13,116
Giving	122,403	114,547	(7,856)
Communications	257,365	277,367	20,002
Information Technology	311,942	336,054	24,112
Building & Property	1,650,313	1,686,404	36,091
Kitchen	36,235	27,848	(8,387)
Four-plex	(6,626)	-	6,626
Undeveloped Property	183,403	114,000	(69,403)
Support	3,032,359	3,077,817	45,458
Net Expenditures	10,335,765	10,600,000	264,235
Net Surplus/(Deficit)	610,911	100,000	510,911

Bethlehem Baptist Church

Net Assets/Cash/Loans (unaudited)

FUND	BEGINNING NET ASSETS	2016 SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	ENDING NET ASSETS
Cash			
Operating Fund	2,449,037	604,111	3,053,148
Helping Hands	101,690	9,997	111,687
Campus Outreach	346,326	80,338	426,664
STMM Projects	147,666	(1,919)	145,747
Designated Projects/Other	(68,655)	243,552	174,897
Total Cash	2,976,064	936,079	3,912,143
Fixed Assets	16,519,965	248,958	16,768,923
Current Assets/(Liabilities)	292,250	(121,109)	171,141
External Debt			
Mortgage	3,145,747	(443,530)	2,702,217
BGC Loan: Mesken Property	208,090	(14,556)	193,534
Line of Credit	-	-	-
Total External Debt	3,353,837	(458,086)	2,895,751
Net Assets	16,434,442	1,522,014	17,956,456

Benjamin Holvey and Jacob Smith

CHURCH BUSINESS RECORD

So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth.—1 Corinthians 3:7

The congregation of Bethlehem Baptist Church held six business meetings in 2017:

- January 29, Quarterly Strategy Meeting
- April 2, Special Strategy Meeting
- April 30, Quarterly Strategy Meeting
- July 30, Quarterly Strategy Meeting
- October 29, Quarterly Strategy meeting
- December 17, Annual Business Meeting

The outcome of these congregational meetings is summarized by topic below.

Officers, Elders, Deacons, and Ministers

- On April 30, Bethlehem called Steven Lee as *Lead Pastor, North Campus*; Bryan Pickering as *Minister for Care & Counseling, Downtown Campus*; and Daniel Viezbicke as *Minister for Youth and Family Discipleship, South Campus*.
- On December 17, Bethlehem reaffirmed Vocational Elders Sam Crabtree, Ken Currie, Jon Grano, Jason Meyer, and Tom Steller to another three-year term; reaffirmed Vocational Minister Brad Nelson to another three-year term; reaffirmed Non-Vocational Elders Tom Dodds, Tim Held, James Lecheler, Bruce Power, and Steve Walmsley to another three-year term; called Properties Director Scott Brueske and Treasurer Adam Sexton to three-year terms as Deacons; elected Steve Walmsley to a one-year term as *Financial Secretary*, Adam Sexton to a one-year term as *Treasurer*, and Benjamin Holvey and Jacob Smith to one-year terms as *Church Clerks*.

Revision of Constitution and Bylaws

Bethlehem Voted to Amend Article IV, Section 1, Subsection G:

- From “Approve the call, job description and initial salary of Vocational Pastors and Ministers.” To “Approve the call and job description of those Elders who receive compensation from the Church for fulfilling their Elder responsibilities.”

Constitutional Change Summary:

- Eliminates the categories of “vocational minister” and “vocational pastor” as constitutionally stipulated.
- Eliminates the standard of the entire congregation approving salaries of Staff-Elders.
- Provides greater biblical clarity that “Elder” and “Pastor” are the same office.
- Provides ground for “Staff Elders” to be defined by their responsibilities as “Elder.” That is, avoiding the situation in which one is deemed a “Staff Elder” simply because they are employed by the Church as opposed to fulfilling Elder responsibilities.

Bethlehem Voted to Amend the Following Bylaws:

Article I: Membership

- Section 1 PROCEDURE; Section 2 INSTRUCTION TO NEW MEMBERS; Section 3 REMOVAL OF MEMBERS

Summary of Changes for Membership

- Removes archaic membership practices.
- Provides greater clarity on the responsibilities for members, congregation, and Elders toward meaningful membership.

Article II: Church Government

- Section 1 OFFICERS OF THE CHURCH
- Section 2 ELDERS: A. Qualifications, B. Responsibilities, C. Composition, D. Call by the Church, E. Organization
- Section 3 DEACONS: A. Qualifications, B. Responsibilities, C. Composition, D. Call by the Church, E. Organization
- Section 4 REMOVAL: A. By Resignation, B. Grievance, C. Lack Reaffirmation
- Section 5 LICENSING AND ORDINATION

Summary of Changes to Church Government

- Clarifies that Elders and Deacons are the biblical officers of the Church while Elders are the legal officers of the church.
- Establishes “Staff” and “Non-Staff” Elders while removing “Vocational Minister,” “Vocational Pastor,” “Vocational Elder,” and “Lay Elder.”
- Clarifies that the designation “Staff Elder” is tied to responsibilities and not employment.

- Simplifies and brings continuity of direction for Elders and Deacons in qualifications, responsibilities, composition, call by the Church, and organization.
- Retains the essence of Elder and Deacon roles.
- Removes the mandatory 2:1 ratio of Non-Staff to Staff Elders.
- Removes the compulsory year off for Non-Staff Elders.
- Clarifies Bethlehem's ordination standard.

South Campus

On April 2, Bethlehem approved a motion to sign contracts, secure financing, increase budget, and accelerate debt service in order to build and fund a South Campus facility in 2017.

Budget

- On January 29, Bethlehem approved a \$10.6M One Fund operating budget for 2017 and committed \$1.5M of 2016 overage toward construction of a South Campus facility.

- On April 2, Bethlehem increased the One Fund operating budget from \$10.6M to \$10.7M to cover up to \$100,000 of expected 2017 construction loan interest and loan closing costs associated with construction of a South Campus facility.

Church Membership

At the end of 2017, the membership roll stood at 2,733. Over the year, church action removed 469 members and 259 new members were welcomed into the church.

Deaths of Members in 2017

- Dorothy Anderson
- Ann Benson
- Gary Derfus
- Verna Erickson
- Don Fadell
- Ray Hutton
- Cathy Klein
- Dave Laurion
- Jeff Schuenke

Benjamin Holvey and Jacob Smith
Church Clerks