



Bethlehem
Baptist Church

20

**ANNUAL
REPORT**

21

2021 Annual Report

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Pastors & Leaders Serving All Campuses

- 3.....Kurt Elting-Ballard, Council of Elders
- 4.....Ken Currie, Strategic Implementation
- 6.....Jon Grano, Operations
- 9.....Brad Nelson, Global Outreach
- 12.....Kenny Stokes, Church Planting

Pastors & Leaders Serving the Downtown Campus

- 14.....Kenny Stokes, Preaching & Vision
- 15.....Chuck Steddom, Worship & Ministry Development
- 16.....Jared Wass, Small Groups & Adult Discipleship
- 17.....Meg Anderson and Cynthia McGill, Women's Ministry
- 18.....Bud Burk, Children & Family Discipleship
- 20.....Andrew Ballard, Youth & Family Discipleship

Pastors & Leaders Serving the North Campus

- 22.....Steven Lee, Pastor for Preaching & Vision
- 24.....Dan Holst, Worship & Music
- 25.....Sam Crabtree, Small Groups & Adult Discipleship
- 27.....Brian Liechty, Counseling
- 29.....Vince Johnson, Neighborhood Outreach
- 30.....Pam Larson, Women's Ministry
- 32.....Aaron Rothermel, Children & Families
- 34.....Jon Nowlin, Youth & Families
- 35.....Ben Katterson, Middle School & Families

Pastors & Leaders Serving the South Campus

- 37.....Dave Zuleger, Pastor for Preaching & Vision
- 40.....Nick Roen, Worship & Education
- 41.....Daniel Viezbicke, Membership & Mobilization
- 42.....Holly Nelson, Women's Ministry
- 44.....Stacy Thorpe, Care & Counseling
- 45.....Joshua Oakley, Children & Disability Ministries
- 46.....Nathan Metcalf, Youth & Family Discipleship

All-Church Ministries, Finances, and Business

- 47.....Keith Anderson, Senior Adults
- 49.....Brian Tabb, Bethlehem College & Seminary
- 50.....Reid Jilek, Campus Outreach Minneapolis
- 51.....Financial Secretary/Contributions: Steve Walmsley
- 52.....Church Treasurer/Budget, Income & Expenses: Tim Brinkmann
- 55.....Church Clerk/Church Business Record: Bobby Ratliff

Kurt Elting-Ballard

CHAIRMAN, COUNCIL OF ELDERS

But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.—Lamentations 3:21–23

Sesquicentennial. We entered 2021 with hopes for a fading global pandemic and the celebration of Bethlehem's 150th anniversary. We end 2021 still in a pandemic, with areas of unrest both in and out of the church on a wide array of issues. Nobody envisioned 12 months ago that in the year to come we would experience the resignation of three beloved pastors, difficult church business meetings and family meetings, and a rending of one of our campuses that has been very painful. As we prepare our annual report for the church, how can we not ask, "What is the Lord doing in our midst?"

This is the right question. The Lord is doing a work. While the unfolding of these events may have been unexpected for us, they were not unexpected for the Lord. Nothing is unexpected for him. In 2016, we launched "[Fill These Cities: 25 x '25](#)"—a decade of accelerated spreading. Last year, I wrote the following in the *2020 Annual Report*:

When we launched "Fill These Cities: 25 x '25," we prayed and asked that we would not just get a vision *from* God, but a vision *of* God. We did not want him to just give us a vision, but *to be* our vision.

We prayed,

Cause our eyes to be riveted upon you so that we don't merely fix our eyes on you but feast our eyes on you. Satisfy our hearts with fresh glimpses of your glory and greatness ... break our hearts so that we are moved with compassion for the lostness we see in our families and neighborhoods and nations. Yes, give us compassion for the lost, passion for your glory, and perseverance in obedience. Cause us to fix our eyes and feast our eyes on you. ([Annual Report 2020](#), page 3)

In 2021, did he do this for us? Is he answering our prayer in the outworking of the life of this church in its sesquicentennial year? He *wants* our eyes riveted upon himself. Jesus *wants* to satisfy our hearts, individually and collectively, with fresh glimpses of his glory and greatness. When our need is great, his sufficiency is shown all the greater. Has our compassion for unbelievers grown deeper? Has our passion for his glory grown stronger? Have we persevered in obedience and been given strength by his Spirit to continue to persevere?

We gathered on November 21 as one church—Downtown, North, and South congregations—to mark Bethlehem's 150th anniversary. During the welcome, Pastor Tom Steller recounted for us how God has continued to keep us. He has continued to keep us through the 1918 pandemic, the Roaring '20s, a Great Depression, and two World Wars. He recounted the "comings and goings" of many people and pastors, the sending of missionaries, and the planting of churches. Through all of this, he reminded us, "God has brought us through and kept us as a local church *to glorify God together*." In the following pages of our *2021 Annual Report*, we will see answers to the questions above. We will see again and again that Jesus draws our attention so that our eyes are riveted on him because of *his* faithfulness and *his* ongoing work. We will see again and again his sufficiency and his glory displayed. Even in the midst of an ongoing pandemic and in the midst of challenging circumstances and relationships, *he has given us fresh glimpses of his glory and greatness*. That is who he is, and that is what he does. He does this in the midst of our frailty to demonstrate his strength and his goodness.

Looking back over the past year, *variant* is one of the top words for 2021. Variants of a virus labeled by Greek letters: Alpha, Delta, Omicron. The variants have almost taken on identities and persona as they loom large among us. However, we know the One who speaks in Revelation 21:6: "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end." He is not a variant. He is the One who will wipe away every tear from our eyes, who will make death no more, and who will put an end to mourning and crying and pain. What does he say? "Behold, I am making all things new" (Revelation 21:5). Note, he does not say he is going to make new things. He takes all that is broken and marred and makes it *new*. How does he do that? As you read these pages in light of all that has been in 2021, may we call to mind our Savior and his sufficiency and his power. He is our hope and our treasure and great joy. He is able. Let us ask again in 2022 for him to give us fresh glimpses of his glory and greatness.



Kurt Elting-Ballard
Chairman, Council of Elders

Ken Currie

STRATEGIC IMPLEMENTATION

But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not destroyed; always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be manifested in our bodies.—2 Corinthians 4:7–10

Overview

In the Fall of 1990, I entered vocational ministry as a new college graduate. It was not long before I encountered controversy and conflict. I realized that I had idealized ministry and the sense of community that I would experience. My idealism took a hit as I witnessed and experienced sin and its effects. I remember facing discouragement and self-doubt. Maybe I wasn't cut out for ministry? Maybe Satan was winning and God's favor was out of reach? Had anyone ever experienced the headwinds of accusation that I was experiencing? Just associating with some teachers or friends brought on harsh judgment from others. I was not quite prepared but, by God's grace, my wife and I pressed on, believing that God had called us to ministry and was continuing to do so.

That first year helped shape and strengthen our convictions as we have lived through seasons of relative peace and seasons of relative conflict at Bethlehem in the last 18.5 years. This last year has been more characterized by conflict. I have been saddened by the departure of three pastors at the Downtown Campus where I worship. I have been challenged to look to Jesus again as I have been included in accusations of spiritual abuse against the elders. I am so thankful for the gospel that frees me to hear criticism and neither to dismiss nor to be undone by it, but rather to carefully consider it. What have I to lose if Jesus has me and I have him? Therefore, unlike the world, I am able to listen, pray, repent, and continue on even in the face of continued unfounded accusation. By God's grace, I can testify that this year of unprecedented trial in ministry has served to strengthen my hope in the gospel, as I have experienced God's love and fulfillment of his promises.

Personal

Theresa and I continue to marvel at God's faithfulness to us, as we celebrated 30 years of marriage this year. In the Fall, we gained the status of "empty nesters." This stage of life has confirmed with joy that we love each other and are called to a lifetime of partnership in Christ. We continue to praise God for our five children and the privilege to parent and engage them at their various stages of life. This year we also had the joy of welcoming three grandchildren to our family.

Ministry

As stated above, there have been many challenges this year for our church. However, there are graces— many graces that must not be overlooked and for which God must be praised.

My dual responsibilities as the lead pastor at the Downtown Campus and in strategic implementation transitioned in August 2020, when I relinquished the role of *Lead Pastor, Downtown*, and became solely the *Pastor for Strategic Implementation*. Then in mid-year 2021, the unanticipated resignations of the Downtown *Pastor for Preaching & Vision*, *Pastor for Care & Counseling*, and *Pastor for Neighborhood Outreach* required that I step back into leadership at the Downtown Campus in significant ways. In the summer and Fall, much of my time was dedicated to meeting with various leaders to provide support and to help navigate the challenges and stress resulting from the resignations and attending controversy.

Even in the midst of circumstances that I never would have anticipated, I saw God at work. In some instances he gave painful refining and in others, blessings. In particular, I was blessed to participate with the Downtown congregational elders as we rallied to shepherd the flock through turbulent waters. We committed to prayer, fellowship, and reasoning together at a level that I had not witnessed prior to the recent trials.

I continue to feel privileged to partner in ministry with the leaders in the various areas for which I provide guidance. Jon Grano, *Pastor for Operations*, and Joby Morgan, *Director of Human Resources & Office Management*, are two leaders with whom I work closely. They are both highly competent, experienced, and committed to the glory of God and the good of Bethlehem. They, along with Jake Wood, *Coordinator for Vision & Operations*, and myself comprise our "Staffing Resource Team," which seeks to steward the deployment of our staffing at Bethlehem. I am regularly encouraged and challenged by the members of this team as we work together.

I continue to facilitate our lead pastors team, which is composed of the lead pastors across the church. We meet twice per month. Again, this is a group of mature, godly leaders providing shepherding for the church on a myriad of issues. I also continue to provide shepherding for Brad Nelson, *Pastor for Global Outreach*, and Kenny Stokes, who recently was called by the congregation as the *Pastor for Preaching & Vision, Downtown*. Theresa and I also continue to support a team of small group leaders at the Downtown Campus and generally stay connected and participating in church life.

As 2022 launches, I am seeking to fulfill the assignment of the elders to help Bethlehem transition from one church on three campuses to three independent churches. It is my joy to serve the body of Christ in this way and, controversy notwithstanding, I praise God for his manifest favor on Bethlehem. I continue to believe that his sovereign hand of blessing will lead us forward into the future.

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

Ken Currie
Pastor for Strategic Implementation

Jon Grano

OPERATIONS

But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope: The steadfast love of the LORD never ceases; his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.—Lamentations 3:21–23

Overview

In the midst of another challenging year on many fronts, the prophet Jeremiah’s reminder of God’s great faithfulness in times of adversity was a source of comforting encouragement, with a promise of never-ending mercies new every morning. Bethlehem’s Operations team continued their faithful behind-the-scenes service in dependence on God’s mercy and grace through another year affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, and they were reminded often that his grace is always sufficient and his power is made perfect in our weakness.

Team Highlights

The Operations team is organized into six ministry areas, each led by a dedicated director. I meet regularly with the team corporately and individually to help keep all-church and increasingly contextualized campus-specific ministry vision and priorities aligned. The following sections provide a summary of the Operations team ministry areas and 2021 highlights:

Building & Property (Scott Brueske)

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

- Installed a new 69,000 sq. ft. roof at the North Campus, thanks in large part to a generous designated gift.
- Installed new carpet in the Commons, Sanctuary, Prayer Room, and bookstore; and a new, more visible outdoor building sign at the North Campus.
- Replaced antiquated building HVAC control systems and fire alarm controls at the Downtown Campus and installed new carpet in the Commons.
- Purchased a like-new, low-mileage 2019 Ford Transit van with a gift from the Bethlehem Foundation.
- Saved thousands of dollars in parking fees during Sunday Vikings games by helping Downtown worship service attenders find available free parking spots.

Communications (Amanda Knoke)

Oversees production of main all-church and campus-specific communication materials

- Bethlehem’s 150th anniversary was a highlight for Communications, exhibited through a focus on five key areas: Church Planting, Launched Ministries,

Local Ministries, College Ministries (Bethlehem College & Seminary and Campus Outreach), and Global Outreach. Working with Bethlehem’s logo designer, Bob Goebel, and the video production company Savory Media Group, each area was celebrated through the 150th Anniversary webpage, informationally-rich display boards, videos shown in worship services, blog posts, supporting banners, a bookmark—and “birthday” cupcake holders!

- Another “150th” project—created for Global Focus—was the 40-Day Global Outreach Devotional: Reflections From the Field.
- Worked with the North Campus Children’s Ministry team to create an immersive Global Focus event to help children and families visualize what it could be like to become a global partner. A storyline played out through stations with tactile elements for engagement and a “passport” for checking off stations. Other elements included posters, flyers, lanyards, and “baseball cards” of historical missionaries.
- Developed a new approach for volunteer recruitment alongside the North Children’s team that included branded banners, info cards, posters, and web FAQs & information.
- Continued “paperless” focus on online output to help support the needs and resulting rhythms of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic (i.e., “Sanctuary slides” as a primary means of a touchless experience and increased focus on the Weekly all-church e-newsletter and weekly campus Update emails).
- Carefully proofed all-church and campus-specific letters and Q&A-type documents to inform and help the congregation following the resignation of three Downtown Campus pastors, including the Pastor for Preaching & Vision, Jason Meyer.
- Gave focused attention to promotion of Maundy Thursday/Good Friday, Easter, Advent, and Christmas Eve services, along with continued ongoing creation, coordination, and production of website content, online worship orders, seasonal booklets/guides, and the Annual Report.

Finances & Accounting (Thayne Rossiter)

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

- Refinanced mortgages associated with North and South campuses to lock in a 3.2% fixed rate for seven years.
- Oversaw successful 2019 and 2020 audits for Bethlehem with CliftonLarsonAllen (the 2019 audit was delayed due to COVID-19 challenges and a family emergency).
- Created customized trend reports for each ministry area showing annual 2012–2021 *budgeted* and 2012–2020 *actual* expenditures to assist with 2022 budget planning.
- Continued to provide accounting services to CityJoy and served as main point of contact for Bethlehem's financial partners (Tradition Capital Bank, Bremer Bank, Converge Cornerstone Fund, etc.).
- Updated and maintained key systems for tracking, analyzing, and reporting monthly budgeted payroll and ministry expenses, including recurring payment summaries, and provided regular management reports to Bethlehem leadership to assist with “quantifying our vision.”

Human Resources/Office (Joby Morgan)

Oversees human resources and office staff

- In this highly unusual year, our team adjusted many planned goals in order to concentrate on excelling in our response to ever-changing staff needs, in the midst of new and unexpected challenges.
- Worked hard to keep our staff working, seeking to provide them with care and stability as countless obstacles made day-to-day ministry a challenge.
- Responded to 10,000 (or so) questions about COVID-19 and its impact on day-to-day work.
- Continued to work with many staff to determine how to rework job duties, how to learn to do old things in new ways, how to embrace doing new things in hard ways, and how to flex and learn it all over again a short time later.
- Oversaw Bethlehem's annual staff Open Enrollment process in conjunction with Jake Wood, *Coordinator for Vision & Operations*, with an increased focus on automation and online registration, and provided ongoing HR coordination for all Bethlehem hiring and support for over 150 full-time and part-time employees.

Information Technology (Andrew Lang)

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

- Completed next generation rollout of our church management system (MinistryPlatform) to staff and updated small group roster and attendance tools for group leaders on Bethlehem website—both with a more mobile-friendly interface.
- Added login, household, groups, newsletter subscriptions, service opportunities, and other MinistryPlatform widgets to Bethlehem website (allowing for more personalized and streamlined experience when registering and paying for events, listening to sermons, giving, or seeking service opportunities) and introduced text-to-pay and other on-site payment options for Bethlehem events.
- Developed an automated prayer request newsletter for our Global Outreach department that allows global partners to share requests that get automatically collated and sent to subscribers.
- Rolled out a cloud-based printing solution for staff at all three campuses.
- Deployed targeted Announcement Panels in the [Bethlehem app](#) for user-specific campus and ministry updates.
- Began update of North Campus IT server and network infrastructure and transitioned ISP fiber providers at two campuses for greater overall cost savings and better performance (with the South Campus to be finished soon).

Media (Timothy Frederick)

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

- Welcomed Dane Styczynski to our team in January as the new *Coordinator for Media Ministries, Downtown*—an amazing gift to Media Ministry and an answer to many prayers—and sent one of our own team members away for full-time overseas missions in December.
- Continued to support our regular Sunday worship services, Wednesday Connection gatherings, funerals, weddings, and a growing number of Bethlehem and non-Bethlehem conferences, seminars, and special events.

- With an eye to operational simplicity and future compatibility, strategically updated classroom technologies on each campus to meet ever-growing presentation needs for those spaces, as the budget allowed.
- Revived a pre-COVID summertime tradition of holding an all-church Media Ministries “Tech-B-Q” for our volunteers and their families.
- Continually adjusted to the changing technology needs (and the associated increased skill sets) required for **live streaming** worship services and providing virtual/online meetings and seminars, including multisite All-Church Business Meetings.
- Supported Bethlehem’s **150th Anniversary Celebration** at Grace Church Eden Prairie, working in conjunction with their production team, which blended in well with our crew of Bethlehem Media Ministries volunteers!

Other Areas of Ministry Focus

In addition to overseeing the Operations areas listed above, much of my role involved ongoing participation and collaboration with the following teams:

- Pastoral staff Lead Team
- All-Church Organizational Elders and North Campus congregational elders
- Financial & Property Administrators (FPAs)
- Staffing Resource Team
- Health insurance resource team (which negotiated a 2% reduction in 2022 premiums)
- 150th Anniversary Committee (supporting events, videos, display boards, and more), including significant collaboration with Keith Eveland and Mark Seignious (Savory Media) on video production and Bob Goebel on display board design

Worship Service Attendance and Financial Numbers

COVID-19 restrictions continued to have an impact on weekly worship service attendance, especially at the beginning of 2021:

- **Live** in-person services in 2021 averaged 1,874 attendees: 656 Downtown, 927 North, and 292 South.
- **Livestream** services averaged 986 unique viewers watching 30 or more minutes Sunday morning via our website, YouTube channels, and Facebook—with

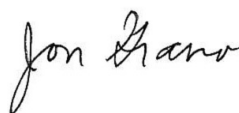
the assumption that each unique “view” represented 1.8 persons (i.e., one “view” often represents multiple viewers/family members who shared one livestream link). By campus: 513 Downtown, 343 North, and 130 South.

- **Combined:** When live and livestream attendance is combined, an average of 2,860 participated in weekly worship services in 2021 compared to 2,931 in 2020—a decrease of 2.4%. By campus: 1,169 Downtown; 1,270 North; and 422 South.
- Both contributions *to* (\$9.24M) and expenses *against* (\$9.46M) Bethlehem’s “Fill These Cities: 25 x ’25” general operating fund were below our congregationally-approved 2021 budget of \$10.2M. I praise God for his December generosity to Bethlehem through you—more than \$1.6M given!
- See reports from our *Financial Secretary* (page 51) and *Treasurer* (page 52) for details on 2021 finances.

Personal Note

This past year Pam and I celebrated both our 40th wedding anniversary and our 40th year being a part of the Bethlehem community—the last 16 years on staff. God is good, he is sovereign, and he is faithful—he will hold us fast in all circumstances! We continue to greatly enjoy time with our grown children, their spouses, and four grandchildren. We also count it a privilege to regularly care for both our moms, who live independently not far from us. As we enter a new year with anticipated challenges and promised new mercies, our song continues to be:

*Great is Thy faithfulness,
Great is Thy faithfulness.
Morning by morning, new mercies I see.
All I have needed Thy hand hath provided.
Great is Thy faithfulness, Lord, unto me.*



Jon Grano
Pastor for Operations

Brad Nelson

GLOBAL OUTREACH

May God be gracious to us and bless us and make his face to shine upon us, that your way may be known on earth, your saving power among all nations. Let the peoples praise you, O God; let all the peoples praise you!—Psalm 67:1–3

The year 2021 was a hard year in the missions world, with losses due to COVID-19 issues, hard transitions, political turmoil, visa issues, medical problems, isolation, unrest, and emotional pain for many of our global partners. Many had to leave their country of ministry and move to a new location. Some were (and some are still) stranded in the United States as they waited to get visas. But in all this turmoil, God is faithful! Our prayer has been the above verse, that God would be gracious and bless us and make his face shine on us so that the nations will know his saving power and more worshipers would praise him. Thank you for praying for our global partners! Below is an update on all things Global Outreach.

Global Partners

As we conclude 2021, our global partners number 206 adults and 214 children—a total of 420 individuals. We have 93 couples and 20 singles living in 43 countries of the world—a total of 113 “GP units.”

Four global partner units completed their service in 2021: Steve & Julie Anderson, Darren & Amy Carlson, Steve & Dorothy Nelson, and DJ & Claudine W. Six global partner units were commissioned in 2021: Chris & Katie Bruno, Allan & Daylinda Badayos, Erik & Charlotte Hyatt, S.N., Trevor Schwarze, and Joshua.

Global Outreach (GO) Team

We thank God for the 36 outstanding volunteers who prepared, sent, and cared for our global partners in 2020. Here are the campus teams as we move into 2021:

- Downtown Campus—Darin & Cristy Brink, Anh Doan, David Jaeger, Daewon Kim, Burt & Trish Koppendrayner, Amy Miller, Chris & Elizabeth Tachick, and myself
- North Campus—Derek & Kristin Dearth, Cherie Igielski, Morris & Wendy Johnson, Jim Jordan, Paul & Karin Lindberg, Jon & Joby Morgan, Joann Pittman, Tom & Julie Varno, and myself
- South Campus—Mike & Judy Anderson, Steve & Julie Anderson, Dane & Erin Carlson, Rachel Dyvig, Greg Jones, Terry & Eileen Kurschner, David & Karin Livingston, and Adam Sands

Global Outreach (GO) Staff

In late October, Global Partner Joe B. completed a year serving our church body as our *Global Partner in Residence*. We are so thankful to have had Joe on our team, and we are praying for him and his family as they move back to the mission field. In January 2022, we will welcome our new *Global Partner in Residence*, Ryan, to our team. We are so thankful for Ryan’s willingness to serve in this role in 2022.

GO staff members continuing in 2021 include:

- David Livingston, *Pastor for Global Outreach Member Care*
- Brad Nelson, *Pastor for Global Outreach*
- JoNell Baker, Chelsey Schmitter, and Krista Smith, *Administrative Assistants for Global Outreach*
- Nick Whitehead, *Ministry Assistant for Global Outreach*
- Global Partners Derek & Kristin Dearth, *Ministerial Coordinators, North*
- Global Partners Chris & Elizabeth Tachick, *Ministerial Coordinators, Downtown*
- Ron Powell, *Ministerial Coordinator for Short-Term Ministry Trips*
- Global Partners Jacob Broten, Joann Pittman, Tim Moline, and Karen S. as members of our GO leadership team

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. At the end of 2021, more than 750 faithful servants were serving on a Barnabas Team to support our global partners.

Reunion ’21

In late July 2021, global partners from around the world gathered in the Twin Cities for a new event that our staff team organized, called Reunion ’21. Even amidst the continuing pandemic, nearly half of our global partners were able to attend. It was a sweet time to gather with so many of these gospel workers and to share updates about Bethlehem, spend time in discussion, and most importantly spend time in prayer together for their ministries. We are currently preparing for Reunion ’22 this coming July, and it is our hope that a reunion will continue on as an annual event.

Global Focus

The 2021 theme for Global Focus was “Bethlehem’s Missions Legacy: 150 Years Among the Nations.” Over the 12 days of Global Focus (October 20–31), we had many opportunities to hear what God has done through Bethlehem’s global partners over our 150-year history. One highlight was gathering together on the first Saturday of Global Focus to hear several speakers lay out big milestones of God’s faithfulness to our church through missions from the very beginning of our church’s history. *Pastor Emeritus* John Piper brought the sermon on the first Sunday of Global Focus. Pastor John also led a Missions in the Main Hall event with 135 people who are interested in God’s love for the nations. On the second Sunday of Global Focus, the *Pastor for Preaching & Vision* at each of the three of our campuses asked all who were sensing God’s call to long-term vocational global missions to come forward and be prayed over by our congregation. Across our three campuses, nearly 50 people came forward.

Nurture Program

We prepare our people for global ministry through our Nurture Program, which combines strategies and resources to equip men and women for international ministry. Currently, we have 56 “units” (individuals, couples, and families) enrolled in the program to discern God’s direction and to be equipped for future global ministry.

BAM (Business As Mission)

The 2021 BAM committee included Don Hoffert, Keith Anderson, Scott Rebney, Steve Walmsley, Paul Lindberg, Jonathan Rees, Richard Swanson, and myself. Several others assisted occasionally and served as consultants, including Scott Riddle, Joe Krekelberg, Jesse Rinkenberger, and JD Harris. We currently have three loans out, helping our global partners start and establish businesses that allow them to be in-country and share the gospel in hard places.

Global Diaconate

Our Global Diaconate task force members include Steve Prater, Mike Anderson, Joe Berg, Derek Dearth, Kathryn Hedlund, Tim Richter-kessing, Ted Sands, Richard Swanson, and myself. Nick Whitehead provides administrative support. This year the Global Diaconate voted to provide 20 financial gifts in 11 different countries in the Name of Jesus Christ, for a total of \$94,400 given. Of these gifts, 68% went to the ministries of global partners, while the remaining 32% went to other trusted partners in ministry. This year, \$26,500 was given

specifically toward pandemic relief projects, most often in the form of basic food and hygiene necessities, and \$19,100 was given to supply relief to war and terrorism victims in three locations. The remaining \$48,800 was used for community development projects of our partners, which included medical and health, education, and clean water projects.

Short-Term Ministry

Pre-COVID-19, our Short Term Ministry Team sent out approximately 35 teams and 130 individuals every year. Unfortunately, COVID-19 caused 2021 to be another slow year for short-term trips. A few trips were planned and then canceled, and a few individuals were able to go out. But overall, COVID-19 made it extremely difficult to get anyone overseas.

JoNell Baker continues as the *Administrative Assistant for Global Outreach Finance & Ministry*. She was able to attend a missions conference in September in Dallas, where she received training on networking and administration of teams, as well as learning from and connecting with others in similar roles. Ron Powell continues to serve as the *Ministerial Coordinator for Short-Term Ministry Trips*, assisting the GO staff with trip planning and implementation.

In 2021, we were able to send out ...

- Reece Thelen to Belize to be an intern at our adopted orphanage, Hopewell.
- Tom Varno and Ludin Reyes, who spent time in Honduras after two hurricanes devastated the area.
- A team to serve at Camp Oak Hills, a camp for Native Americans teens.
- A team to serve in Detroit Lakes at a family retreat with the Joni & Friends ministry.

2022 Trips

Planning for 2022 trips is currently underway. Some of the locations we are planning to send teams to in 2022 are Belize, El Salvador, Hawaii, India, Senegal, Greece, Thailand, and California—just to name a few!

Short-Term Ministry Committee

The Short-Term Ministry Committee is made up of missions-minded, godly individuals. They interview, debrief, and help teams and individuals think through ministry, missions, and future plans that may follow as a result of a short-term ministry experience. The committee members for 2021 were Judy Anderson, Mary Anderson, Satish Amancharla, Doug Hanson, Kathryn Hedlund, Eric Iverson, Jan Korbel, Steve Prater, Ron Powell, Julie Owczarek, Steve Walmsley, Denny Williams, and myself—a nice blend from all three campuses.

Disaster Response Team

Our 2021 Disaster Response Team consisted of Steve Prater, Ron Powell, Steve Walmsley, Ben Peterson, John Holm, Scott Langlie, Gary Anderson, Kurt Swanson, Dave Burnham, Phil Nehl, Dan Obermiller, Ken Rude, and myself. When a disaster hits in any part of the world, this team reacts by connecting with global partners or trusted agencies and sending a team to help bring relief to those affected by the disaster. This year, we sent teams to Louisiana and the Bahamas for hurricane relief and cleanup. It is our desire to be the hands and feet of Jesus, showing his love and praying for opportunities to share the truth and love of Christ.

Travel

In November, Ron Powell and I led a team to Louisiana—down in the Bayou—to do relief work and clean up after the area was hit by Hurricane Ida. The team partnered with a church to assist its congregants with gutting homes, tree removal, and anything else that needed to be done. Praying with the homeowners and sharing God's love with them is always a highlight. Praise the Lord that their hope is not in relief teams but in Christ! The team also brought down relief supplies that were collected from the three campuses.

In November, Pastor David Livingston and I had the opportunity to go to Florida to connect with sending agencies Pioneers, Converge, Cru, and Wycliffe. It was a joy to connect with these agencies to talk about how we can better partner with them to care for our global partners. We also had the opportunity to learn more about The Timothy Initiative and their passion to reach unreached people groups.

Home Front

My wife, Cindy, and I just started our 36th year on staff and 40th year in attendance at Bethlehem. We are also in our 36th year of marriage! Thankfully we love each other way more now than when we were first married. We also love our church and are so thankful for the dear people of Bethlehem and the love they have for Jesus and for the word of God—and how they have been an encouragement to us over the four decades we have been serving here. We also were so thankful to have our second grandchild, Pippa, born last January. In a hard and trying year, God has been good to us.

In spite of a challenging year, God has been working in and through our global partners to do great works for the Kingdom. We have so much to be thankful for. Please continue to faithfully pray for our global partners and the difficult work they are doing in hard areas—all for the glory of God and the advancement of his kingdom! Thank you, Bethlehem, for your partnership in the greatest cause in the universe!



Brad Nelson
Pastor for Global Outreach

Kenny Stokes

CHURCH PLANTING

We give thanks to God always for all of you, constantly mentioning you in our prayers, remembering before our God and Father your work of faith and labor of love and steadfastness of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ. —1 Thessalonians 1:2–3

We plant churches as a faithful expression of obedience to the Great Commission (Matthew 28:18–20). After the ascension of Christ, the apostles set themselves to the work of the Great Commission, making disciples of all nations, baptizing unbelievers into the faith, and discipling believers with the gospel of Christ and the apostolic teachings. In a phrase, they planted new churches and sought to strengthen existing ones.

The effectiveness of churches continues to this day. The words of Tim Keller in 2002 ring true:

The vigorous, continual planting of new congregations is the single most crucial strategy for (1) the numerical growth of the body of Christ in a city and (2) the continual corporate renewal and revival of the existing churches in a city. Nothing else—not crusades, outreach programs, parachurch ministries, growing megachurches, congregational consulting, nor church renewal processes—will have the consistent impact of dynamic, extensive church planting. This is an eyebrow-raising statement, but to those who have done any study at all, it is not even controversial. (Redeemer City website, “[Why Plant Churches?](#)” January 1, 2002)

What follows are highlights of our church planting work in 2021.

‘Fill These Cities: 25 x ’25’ Update

In 2021, our elders approved two new church plants, one from the North Campus and one from the Downtown Campus:

- [Living Hope Church](#) in Maple Grove, Minnesota (Marshall & Becky Posey): Marshall completed the church planting residency on the North Campus in May. The core group and launch team began meeting in early 2021, and small groups started meeting over the summer. They are currently meeting for corporate worship at Maple Grove Middle School.

- [Center City Church](#) in San Diego (James & Betsy Lecheler and G’Joe & Aimee Joseph): In June, James Lecheler completed the church planting residency on the Downtown Campus, where he had served as an elder for several years. Since their summertime launch, Center City Church has been growing and celebrated their first baptism service in December 2021.

Therefore, the following list includes the 14 church plants we have seen begun since the inauguration of the 25 x ’25 vision to pray for 25 new churches/revitalizations to be started by the year 2025:

1. Word of Grace Baptist, Minneapolis: 2016 (this church closed in 2018)
2. Northfield Community, Northfield, Minnesota: 2016 (Jonathon & Gina Woodyard)
3. Redemption City, Rochester, Minnesota: 2017 (Adam & Molly Pohlman)
4. Table Rock, Boise, ID: 2017 (Ryan & Katie Eagy)
5. Little Earth Fellowship, Minneapolis: 2018 (Greg & Kelly Mott)
6. New Creation Community Church, Granville, NY: 2018 (Joel & Holly Aubrey)
7. Grace Upon Grace Church, Weston, FL: 2019 (Michel & Gaby Galeano)
8. Ekklesia, Eau Claire, WI: 2019 (Dan & Angela Shambro)
9. Echo Church, Chino, CA: approved October 2019 (JD & Lauren Hetteema)
10. *Église Baptiste Bethléem*, Yaoundé, Cameroon: 2020 (Dieudonné & Dominique Tamfu)
11. Henniker, NH: 2020 (Andrew & Lida Sheard and Eliot & Olivia DeLorme)
12. Emmaus Church, White Bear Lake, Minnesota: 2020 (Tom & Emily Boyer)
13. Living Hope Church, Maple Grove, Minnesota: 2021 (Marshall & Becky Posey)
14. Center City Church in San Diego: 2021 (James & Betsy Lecheler and G’Joe & Aimee Joseph)

New Church Planting Resident: South Campus

This year, we accepted one new church planting resident. Haddon Anderson began the one-year residency at the South Campus in August. Seeking the Lord for clarity on a location in the Twin Cities, he and his wife, Karlyn, are aiming to plant in the southern suburbs of the Twin Cities. Pray for Haddon & Karlyn and their family. Pray for Haddon's labors as he begins to form a team, refines the new church vision and plan, builds a core group, submits assessments, and prepares for final approval and commission by our South elder council.

In the coming year, please pray for the Lord to call more church planters into our Church Planting Residency on all three campuses. To accomplish our "Fill These Cities: 25 x '25" goal, our prayer is that there would be one church planting resident on each campus each year. Please pray that the Lord might raise up new potential planters for our residency program.

Treasuring Christ Together Network (TCTN)

The TCTN continues to grow in its aims to serve and support pastors, their wives, and congregations as they build new Christ-treasuring churches. In addition to the annual Pastors & Wives Retreat each October, the network provides a formal assessment for TCTN membership, "Treasure Groups" for mutual care, "Training Tracks" for practical training, fellowship and equipping sessions for women, regional conferences, a church planting training seminar, and a podcast. Check out the website, tctnetwork.org, for more information.

In May 2021, sensing a potential division in the leadership team of TCTN, I was asked, along with Pastor Kempton Turner (City of Joy Fellowship; East St. Louis, Illinois), to lead a discussion regarding the current racial tensions and issues in the U.S. and in our churches. We gathered the leadership for about 36 hours in Montgomery, Alabama, in order to visit the [Legacy Museum](#) and the [National Memorial for Peace and Justice](#) and for straight talk together. We believe God granted new measures of harmony and understanding among the leadership who participated in the experience together, and we are planning on doing it again in 2022 with another group of leaders.

Because we think our new churches are better preserved in God-centered, Christ-exalting hope by being in life-giving relationships with other like-minded leaders, we require our approved church plants to be covenant members of TCTN while receiving Bethlehem Baptist financial support. The intent is that within the network the pastors and wives might find mutually supportive grace from one another.

Final Comments

I want to express my thanks to God for our happy church planting team and express my thanks to them. Thank you, Cleon Engel, *Ministerial Coordinator for Church Planting*, for the countless ways you have not only shepherded the planters and residents, but for how you did so much more due to the changes in my role in July.

Also, thank you to my wife, Kathy Stokes, also a *Ministerial Coordinator for Church Planting*, for her ongoing partnership with me in pastoral ministry, her heartfelt care and ministry to the church planters' wives, and her administration of the church planter assessments in partnership with TCTN.

And thank you to Chelsey Schmitter, *Administrative Assistant for Church Planting*. Chelsey has a gift for administration and project management. She understands our protocols and takes glad initiative to help us all accomplish the work before us.



Kenny Stokes
Pastor for Preaching & Vision, Downtown
Pastor for Church Planting through October 2021,
on behalf of Bethlehem's Church Planting ministry

Kenny Stokes

DOWNTOWN PREACHING & VISION

Yet I will rejoice in the LORD; I will take joy in the God of my salvation.—Habakkuk 3:18

Looking back over the year 2021, I will remember it as a year of losses. In addition to the losses, isolation, and loneliness caused by COVID-19 quarantines, illness, and death, we as a church experienced the loss of friends, members, and pastoral colleagues leaving Bethlehem abruptly. These losses have left many of us at the Downtown Campus with an ongoing sorrow.

In some ways, the resignation of three of our Downtown pastors was only the midpoint in a season of division between leaders and also between some of our members and the church leadership. The church conflicts seemed to be made worse by the widespread polarization of Americans in general, the prolonged interpersonal isolation of COVID-19, and social media.

Habakkuk served as a prophet to God's people at a time of severe loss and devastation. There were no figs. No grapes. No olives. No food from the fields. No animals for clothing or meat or farm work or currency for trade. All told, nothing earthly to enjoy, nothing to support, nothing to comfort, nothing to sustain a normal life.

In direct contrast to the darkness of this list of pervasive loss, Habakkuk concludes his prophecy with a song celebrating the one gift, the one bright treasure that cannot be lost—namely, our covenant relationship with the God in whom is our salvation: “Yet I will rejoice in the LORD; I will take joy in the God of my salvation” (Habakkuk 3:18).

Thankfulness

I want to thank Pastor Jared Wass, *Pastor for Small Groups, Downtown*, who served as *Interim Lead Pastor, Downtown*, from May 1 until November 14. He shepherded the Downtown pastors and staff by the strength of Christ's grace through the most tumultuous months, including through the resignation of Jason Meyer, our former Downtown *Pastor for Preaching & Vision*, in July. As you have occasion, please express your thanks to both Pastor Jared and his wife, Amy, for their investment in steadying the church congregation through this time. On November 14, the recommendation of the elders was approved by the congregation that I become *Pastor for Preaching & Vision, Downtown*.

And I want to thank all of the members, friends, and staff for your labors, prayers, discernment, and help over the past year. I thank God for you.

I also want to thank the leadership, the pastors, elders, teachers, Bible study leaders, and small group leaders for your unceasing efforts to strengthen the church by the grace of the Word, biblical fellowship, and hopeful prayers.

Conclusion

In the midst of devastating losses, the prophet proclaims in Habakkuk 3:19: “GOD, the Lord, is my strength; he makes my feet like the deer's; he makes me tread on my high places.”

As we move into the new year, we do so with expectation. God is our salvation. He is our hope. Christ is our treasure and will sustain us by his all-sufficient grace. He will save us. He will keep us and save us to the uttermost.

For the glory of God and the joy of all peoples,



Kenny Stokes
Pastor for Preaching & Vision, Downtown

Chuck Steddom

DOWNTOWN WORSHIP & MINISTRY DEVELOPMENT

The year 2021 has been a year of change in regards to my role here at Bethlehem. In April the Downtown Campus voted to receive me as their *Pastor for Worship & Ministry Development*, and in the following month of May, the South Campus congregation voted to release me from all South Campus responsibilities. My new role officially began June 1.

Previously in 2020, I was tasked with Worship Ministry leadership at both the South and Downtown campuses. This became a bit overwhelming. Now my main responsibilities are to oversee René González, *Pastoral Resident for Worship & Hispanic Ministry, Downtown*, who leads our weekly worship services, as well as overseeing seasonal worship events, team development, and music ensembles. I also work with CityJoy, lead the worship track in the seminary, and oversee diaconal care.

René and I have developed a regular rotation of weekend worship leadership. He is a joy to work with and brings Spirit-filled leadership, unique gifting, and vision to the Worship Ministry.

In addition to regular planning for Sunday worship services, the effort of coordinating and leading Bethlehem's 150th anniversary event on November 21 ended up being a year-long project for us. It was a joy to work with worship leaders from all three campuses, including Nick Roen, Caleb Peterson, René González, Dan Holst, and Carol Steddom. A special thanks goes out to choir directors—Cheryl Kelly and Brian Hanson. It was a highlight for all Bethlehem to meet and exult in God's goodness to us.

Despite battling the COVID-19 plague, we were able to start an adult choir at the Downtown Campus, rehearsing on Wednesday evenings. The focus of this choir is to enhance our corporate worship experiences and enjoy a wide breadth of music genres. Garrett Gransee and Jeremiah Ogazzi are my two choir assistants. They truly are a gift to us.

A phrase in my job description reads: "And other duties as assigned." As personnel changes occurred on our staff, I was called upon to give attention to the Care & Counseling Ministry and Neighborhood Outreach at the Downtown Campus. Stepping in here is not as much of a stretch as one may think, since these areas dovetail with my existing work with deacons and CityJoy. Pray that God would continue to raise up lay leaders to help us work through staff transitions and seek to care for our people in need.

Please pray with us as we seek to equip the saints for the work of the ministry.

In his grace,



Chuck Steddom
Pastor for Worship & Ministry Development, Downtown

Jared Wass

DOWNTOWN SMALL GROUPS & ADULT DISCIPLESHIP

Binding Up the Brokenhearted

In this world everyone's heart breaks. Sometimes it happens in momentous public events and at other times in quiet private moments. Intensity and frequency varies, but no one escapes this; it comes to us all. Maybe when you were a child, a parent was emotionally unavailable to you, or maybe you were picked on by the school bully. Perhaps you've lost a job and didn't know where to turn, or maybe you've lost a loved one. Life has its pain. Church life has its pain too, and we've experienced a lot of it at Bethlehem in the past year.

Everyone experiences heartbreak. God knows this, and it's a reason Jesus came. Psalm 147:3 says that God "heals the brokenhearted and binds up their wounds." Isaiah 61:1 says, "The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the LORD has anointed me to bring good news to the poor; he has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to those who are bound ..." (the whole chapter is worth reading). In Luke 4:18-22, Jesus opens the scroll of Isaiah and says this Scripture is fulfilled in him.

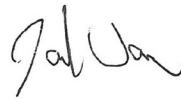
One counselor has said that our pain is the soil from which our idolatries grow. False saviors promise relief from painful experiences in our lives, whether it's in the form of comfort food, career success, body image, social status, or so forth. But only Jesus has the power to bind up our broken hearts and allow us to actually experience comfort and healing. Whatever heartache from 2021 (or earlier) you are bringing into 2022, or whatever heartache is awaiting you in the year ahead, Jesus is the one who was sent to bind up your wounds, now and forevermore. My prayer is that every small group, every Sunday school class, and every discipleship relationship will point away from the activity itself and to Jesus whose life, death, and resurrection was for the healing of the nations (Revelation 22:2).

Discipleship Activity

There are currently 45 small groups led by 107 leaders with 506 people involved. Twenty-four people have been trained in small group leadership this year. We are eager for men and women to partner in this ministry as an expression of complementarity, and we are training with this aim in mind. Half of those in training were men and half were women. There were also 68 people that participated in Group Connect this Fall, seeking help to get involved in a group.

Fifty-two people took the membership class, and 12 attended the baptism class. King's Friends, All Nations Fellowship, and Hispanic Ministries continue to meet Sunday mornings, and a class was held focusing on equipping one another to read the Bible. The hope is to host more classes in the future.

God continues to work, and we are glad for the ways the people of Bethlehem are building each other up in love (Ephesians 4:16).



Jared Wass
Pastor for Small Groups, Downtown

Meg Anderson

DOWNTOWN WOMEN'S MINISTRY

Know therefore that the LORD your God is God, the faithful God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, to a thousand generations.—Deuteronomy 7:9

In 2021, Cynthia McGill came on as *Administrative Assistant for Women's Ministry, Downtown*. In January, Meg Anderson graciously agreed to continue her role in Women's Ministry Bible Study Leadership. We are eager to move toward filling the position of *Minister for Women's Ministry, Downtown*.

The year 2021 was memorable with evidence of the faithfulness, covenant keeping, and steadfast love of God, who is always working for our good. He provided staff, leadership, multiple communication methods, media expertise, gifted writers, and teachers. The Lord called many women who treasure the word of God and the gift of fellowship to participate in the following gatherings.

Women's Bible Study

The year began with a study of Psalms. Psalms teaches us how to approach God in prayer with all of ourselves—our thoughts and emotions in every life circumstance. We walked through seven psalms of encouragement on weekly Zoom meetings, hosted by Tammy Peters and Meg Anderson. The study included a devotional, discussion, and prayer; about 80 women participated. In addition, Meg Anderson developed a six-week guided Psalms devotional, brimming with Scripture, art, music, and questions, for anyone who was unable to participate on Zoom.

With all the challenges facing us individually, corporately, and societally, we need to be reminded how to be steadfast in seeking God's wisdom and mercy. Last summer we studied the book of James using a seven-week video series from The Gospel Coalition. The video was followed by a discussion group and prayer. Seventy-five women signed up for one of three study locations: in-person at church, Zoom meeting, and an outdoor gathering at Wabun Park. Many women reported being strengthened and encouraged by the study and fellowship during this difficult time.

We started studying the book of Exodus in the Fall. Focusing on Exodus 1–15, this class sought answers to questions, such as did God fulfill his promise to redeem Israel, why did he redeem them, how does this fit in the story of the Bible, and how is it relevant to us today? Using a Crossway study guide, we learned and practiced study skills for interpreting Old Testament narratives together. Meg Anderson and Beth Dougherty co-led this class of 10 women.

Also in the Fall, a group of women committed to a rigorous study of the last kings of Judah in 2 Kings, 2 Chronicles, and the prophecy of Zephaniah. These texts reminded us that the promised Redeemer keeps us today amid difficult and complicated times. Professor Jonathon Woodyard, a Zephaniah expert and *Dean of Admissions* at Bethlehem College & Seminary, was welcomed as a guest speaker. This study inspired rich fellowship and fervent prayer. Cheryl Lonski and Cynthia McGill co-led this class of 32 women.

For several years, Magali González has faithfully led a group of Hispanic women in a Bible study. This year they are studying the names of God; *Por amor de Su nombre: Un estudio de los nombres hebreos de Dios*. About 10 women attend the study from all over the metro area. The class started out on Zoom but has moved to in-person meetings. We are grateful for Magali's work of service to these women.

MOMS

With the theme of Deuteronomy 7:9, Downtown mothers welcomed the in-person kickoff of MOMS in September as an answer to prayer. MOMS meets on first and third Tuesdays of the month during the school year. Emily Daniels, Ana Bures, and Chris Gisler stepped in as the new co-leaders. They developed a program of poignant topics and dynamic speakers that focused on our covenant God and matters relevant to moms and their families today. About 25 women attend MOMS meetings. They all enjoy the luxury of time, extended conversations, and deeper fellowship.

White Cross

MaryAnn Burnes continues to lead this group of 10–15 women. They meet twice a month to work on quilts and other sewing projects and to share fellowship together. Using their hands and hearts, they reach out to our church and the world. This year they delivered eight new “first baby quilts” to young Downtown families.

Meg Anderson

Meg Anderson
Women's Ministry Bible Study Leadership, Downtown

Cynthia McGill

Cynthia McGill
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.”

I look forward, with anticipation, to repeating the above paragraph each year in my report, for God is faithful to lift up, above all things, his Name and the Name of his Son. He has done so again in 2021.

Ministry to Parents Through Newer Methods

Our aim was to come alongside parents through technology for 1) parent equipping and encouragement anchored in the hope of the gospel of Jesus Christ, that we would not shift away from it, and 2) prayer. God helped us accomplish the following:

- One online parenting conference: 32 households attended
- One online gathering for husbands, fathers, and men: 36 men attended

In addition, we held three online parent support/training gatherings, monthly prayer gatherings, and weekly devotions with a corresponding video of prayer and encouragement.

Ministry to Parents Through Older Methods

Our aim this year was to make personal contact with households through the “old school” methods of phone calls, home visits, and handwritten letters. Our emphasis was to be hope-filled ambassadors for Jesus Christ by speaking his Name with love and joy, by renewing our shared gratitude for God’s tender mercy for us in his Son, and by prayer. God helped us make 116 phone calls, 64 home visits, and write 340 handwritten letters.

Nursery

We were able to offer limited Nursery Ministry beginning in January during the 9am service and then added additional Nursery Ministry for the 11am service in June.

One word that has defined Nursery Ministry this year has been *flexible*. The Lord was gracious to provide a small nursery team of caregivers, who were gracious and flexible to serve our youngest at Bethlehem. We are also very thankful to welcome 28 new babies born in 2021.

Sunday School

By God’s kind and good providence, we were able to start Sunday School this year. The overarching emphasis for classroom ministry is Christ and his Good News message. Connie Oman, *Ministry Assistant for Training & Classroom Support, Downtown*, has faithfully supported our volunteer team as they served the children in Jesus’ Name.

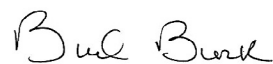
Disability Ministry

Sara Scholtens concluded her ministry to children with special needs this year. She faithfully served families, bringing them a merciful presence, and concluded her time with us by providing a helpful training session for our volunteer team. We look forward to God’s provision for this good work in the future.

People

The office team who serves volunteers and households are dear saints and partners in ministry. I am grateful for my wife, Lisa Burk, *Lead Coordinator for Nurseries, Downtown*; Kari Raia, Halle Wassink, and Andrea Tjarks, who serve as *Assistant Coordinators for Nurseries, Downtown*; Connie Oman, *Ministry Assistant for Training & Classroom Support, Downtown*; Sara Scholtens, our previous *Coordinator for Disability Ministry, Downtown*; Nina Mariani, who served most of the year as *Administrative Assistant for Children & Family Discipleship, Downtown*; and Debbie Mairet, who has now taken up this good work. I am grateful for what God is doing for his glory by using this team to point parents and volunteers to his beloved Son, Jesus Christ. Their names have special meaning.

To the praise of God’s glorious grace upon us in Christ,



Bud Burk
Pastor for Children & Family Discipleship, Downtown

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY (January–May)					
Weekly Services	Age Group	Total Unique Participants	Participant Average	Total Volunteers (includes 1:1 Buddies & Subs)	Volunteer Average
Sunday 9am	<i>Preschool–Grade 5</i>	22	17	11	6

CHILDREN'S MINISTRY (September–December)					
Weekly Services	Age Group	Total Unique Participants	Participant Average	Total Volunteers (includes 1:1 Buddies & Subs)	Volunteer Average
Sunday 9am	<i>Preschool</i>	14	9	7	4
Sunday 11am	<i>Preschool–Grade 5</i>	108	61	37	24

NURSERY MINISTRY (January – December)					
Total number of babies born: 24					
Weekly Services	Age Group	Total Unique Participants	Participant Average	Total Caregivers	Caregiver Average
Sunday 9am	<i>All Nurseries</i>	33	21	11	7
Sunday 11am	<i>All Nurseries</i>	14	10	8	6
MOMS Nurseries		20	12	10	7

HIS STRENGTH DISABILITY MINISTRY
Children with weekly 1:1 Buddies in Preschool–Grade 5: 1

ONLINE 'PARENT DEVOTIONS' & PRAYER GATHERINGS
Parenting with Words of Grace (devotions): 14 attendees (7 households)
Gentle Jesus and the Parent (devotions): 16 attendees (8 households)
Pathway of Hope: 11 attendees (6 households)
Renewal of Nobility (gathering for men): 40 attendees
Parents in Prayer (7 meetings): 50 attendees
Parenting: It's Not What You Think It Is (Paul Tripp online conference): 32 households

SPECIAL EVENTS/MINISTRY
Jesus Lives family event: 35 attendees (10 households)
Father/Daughter Retreat: 10 households
Father/Son Retreat: 14 households
Father/Grandfather events: 47 attendees
Miscarriage Memorial Service: 13 attendees (5 households)
Passion/Resurrection Videos by Connie Oman: 6 videos
Handwritten Letters: 100% of households written
Home Visits: 25% of households visited
Phone Calls: 60% of households called

Andrew Ballard

DOWNTOWN YOUTH

My flesh and my heart may fail, but God is the strength of my heart and my portion forever.—Psalm 73:26

Needing Christ in the Background

It is strange to write an annual report for a year when you were only present for half of it. Strange, but fitting with our theme: man's incompetence met by God's sufficiency (see verse above). Repeatedly in this season, Jesus' words have rebounded in my soul: "Apart from me, you can do nothing" (John 15:5).

My wife, Brooke, and I began the month of August on an interesting note. After moving to a new city and joining a new school (and a new church!), on August 1 we found ourselves experiencing an emergency C-section to deliver our firstborn, Oliver Lewis. When Oliver was born, he was not breathing and had lost 60% of his blood volume. In the background of this crisis was a needlestick injury from my groundskeeping job, which led to six weeks of waiting on bloodwork to discover if I had contracted HIV.

Apart from me, you can do nothing. And yet, "all things are possible with God" (Mark 10:27). God be praised, as I write to you, I am free of disease and Oliver is thriving at five months old.

Needing Christ in the Beginning

I was invited to join the staff at Bethlehem while we were still in the hospital. On September 19, after a ministry leaders' retreat, we launched a new semester of ministry at the Downtown Youth Group (DTYG). At that point and for about six weeks after that, Allison Steddom was the only other Downtown youth staff person.

Here I must also recognize Caleb Ziegler, who left to join the pastoral staff at Ekklesia Church in Eau Claire, Wisconsin. Caleb was a steady servant to the youth this year, and he helped me immensely in my orientation. Thank you for your service, Caleb! You are sorely missed by all!

Allison had a busy year herself with a new job and a new house. We are supremely grateful for her. She has used her home to show hospitality to our team of leaders, labored tirelessly on our events and retreats, and has been a source of encouragement and joy as the *Ministerial Coordinator for Youth, Downtown*. Thanks mainly to her efforts, we had a High School Day Away trip and events like "Bike, Hike, & Spike," Turkey Bowl, and a Christmas party. Thank you for your labors, Allison, and for persevering through the many changes in the ministry in 2021.

Six weeks at half-staffing, right when we start back up for the semester—somehow, God carried us. *Apart from me, you can do nothing.* And yet, "humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God so that at the proper time he may exalt you, casting all your anxieties on him, because he cares for you" (1 Peter 5:6-7).

Needing Christ in the Ministry

We were privileged to hire Benjamin Brenner as *Ministry Assistant for Middle School Discipleship, Downtown*. Benjamin is a first-year seminary student at Bethlehem College & Seminary, is married to Robyn, and is one of the most humorous people I know. He coordinates our Sunday morning gatherings and has a focus on Middle School ministry. He taught superbly through various topics this Fall, and he completed a series on Leviticus, where we learned how the Levitical law laid down shadows of the good things that were to come in Christ (Hebrews 10:1). On Wednesdays, we taught through John 13–17, seeing how Jesus loved his disciples to the end in the Upper Room Discourse. It was wonderful to see how the two series complemented and informed one another.

Benjamin, already father of Judah (2), welcomed Adalyn Joy into the family on November 21. A newborn, seminary, and a ministry job, all at once? *Apart from me, you can do nothing.* And yet, "it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for his good pleasure" (Philippians 2:13).

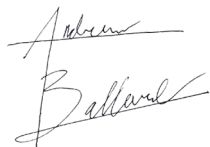
Not long after—and not a moment too soon—Pearl Gaspar joined our team as *Administrative Assistant for Youth, Downtown*, which is the *best* decision we made this year. Pearl comes from Singapore and has extensive experience working in campus ministry there, and she is finishing her undergraduate degree at Bethlehem College & Seminary. She can solve any problem, except for how to get me to preach a message in less than 20 minutes. Thank you for your work, Pearl—we're so glad to have you!

Needing Christ in the Past

It has been a pleasure to serve with this staff and the leaders and parents for the benefit and maturity of our youth. We saw an average of about 30-40 students at our weekly gatherings. We welcomed about seven new leaders to the team of volunteers, and we are grateful for the five leaders who have continued to serve. We are also grateful for the elders who have labored with us in oversight of the ministry: Charles Kim, Darin Brink, and René González.

Needing Christ in the Future

Without Christ, we can do nothing. What a freeing truth to know. As we give thanks for 2021 and as we look toward 2022, it is our heart's desire to see each student walk in the fullness of joy that is freely given in Christ and to see many more youth come to know him. This is impossible in our own strength, but God can do it. *We needed you more than anything in 2021, Lord Jesus, and we will need you more than anything in 2022. Remain in us, and for your glory make us remain in you.*



Andrew Ballard
Interim Coordinator for Youth, Downtown

2021 Downtown Campus Attendance Statistics

YOUTH DISCIPLESHIP						
<i>Note that Spring attendance was similar to Fall, although numbers are not recorded.</i>						
Weekly Services	Average Participants		Total Participants		Total Volunteers	
	<i>Spring</i>	<i>Fall</i>	<i>Spring</i>	<i>Fall</i>	<i>Spring</i>	<i>Fall</i>
Middle School	--	12	--	53	--	8
Sr High	--	8	--	52	--	8
Total Sunday School:	--	20	--	105	--	16

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>
Middle School	--	12	--	53	--	8
Sr High	--	8	--	52	--	13
Total Wednesday Connection:	--	20	--	105	--	21

Steven Lee

NORTH PREACHING & VISION

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.—Psalm 46:1

God's Goodness in a Hard Year

When I think back upon 2021, I mainly feel gratitude for God's faithfulness to his church. He has been our refuge and strength. He has been a very present help through this trying season. He has lavished his sustaining grace upon us. This year has not been without heartache, trials, and challenges, but God has not failed us yet. He has not left us to flounder. Instead, he has shown us more of his glory, more of his power, more of his grace, and more of our dependence upon him.

Praise God for keeping us and upholding us in the midst of a challenging year. I hope you share my deep sense of gratitude to God for how he has watched over us and carried us in this season. "Oh, magnify the LORD with me, and let us exalt his name together!" (Psalm 34:3).

Sustained by God's Word

As I reflect on the sermons of the past year, the book of Acts served as a ballast and an encouragement to my soul. We were reminded that the *acts of Jesus Christ* are unfolding both in Acts and today. We saw the glory of Christ's ascension, the pouring out of his Spirit, and the empowering of his disciples to change the world. The early church devoted themselves to teaching, fellowship, the breaking of bread, and prayer. Wonders and signs were taking place: healing, casting out of demons, and great salvation. They prayed continually for boldness to proclaim the good news of the gospel before a watching world. Even in the midst of persecution, suffering, hostility, and sharp disagreement, God continued to advance his gospel, build his church, and purify his people.

Through the events of this difficult year—resignations, polarization, and strife—we have seen the acts of Jesus in his sustaining grace and his unifying work. After concluding Acts, we reexamined our mission statement: *We exist to spread a passion for the supremacy of God in all things for the joy of all peoples through Jesus Christ.* Then we spent a season reflecting on gratitude and thanksgiving, and celebrated Advent through key passages in Isaiah. "Oh, taste and see that the LORD is good! Blessed is the man who takes refuge in him!" (Psalm 34:8).

150th Anniversary

It was good and right to celebrate God's faithfulness to Bethlehem at our 150th anniversary event. This celebration—in a year like we experienced in 2021—was a reminder that God builds his church, he is faithful, and he's in control. Thank you to all those who poured in many hours to make the event possible. Praise God for Jon Grano, our Media and Communication teams, Chuck Steddom, our worship choirs, volunteers from all campuses, and all of you who joyfully participated. "I will bless the LORD at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth" (Psalm 34:1).

Miscellaneous Highlights

- *Church Planting.* We had the privilege of sending Marshall Posey and a number of members to plant Living Hope Church in Maple Grove and the surrounding suburbs. Praise God for another gospel outpost that aims to reach unbelievers and disciple believers to know and love Christ.
- *Multiplication.* We shared that the elders are prayerfully planning toward formally multiplying our church body into three independent churches. I look forward to sharing more about this vision in the coming year as the Lord leads and guides us. We are eager for your engagement as we look forward to this exciting vision of multiplication.
- *Eldership.* You voted to call Ben Katterson as a North staff elder and Nick Brazis and Ryan Dembeck as North non-staff elders. I look forward to working alongside these men in serving this church family. We bid farewell to Tony Cooper as he concluded serving on the elder council.
- *Partnership.* It is a joy-filled privilege to co-labor with my fellow pastors, elders, deacons, and support staff at the North Campus. A special thanks to Grace Ohlendorf, who gets a thousand things done with joy. I am grateful for Ben Mattson's labors and now for Stephen Clayton's help as my pastoral assistant.

A Personal Word

Thank you for your prayers and notes of encouragement. I have repeatedly said to my wife, Stephanie, “Thank God that our people are praying!” I have felt sustained by God through your faithful and regular prayers. Thank you for your friendship, your grace when I fall short, your expressions of appreciation, and your participation in loving one another here in this body. I count it a privilege to shepherd, along with my fellow elders, this church family that loves God, loves one another, seeks to reach out to unbelievers, serves with joy, gives generously, ministers to the weak, sends and supports our global partners, prays steadfastly, and welcomes those yet without Christ.

On behalf of my wife, Stephanie, and our children, thank you for allowing me to shepherd and lead this church family with joy and not with groaning (Hebrews 13:17). Thank you for allowing us to interweave our lives with yours, and thank you for being our family away from our extended family. Thank you for praying for our children and for being part of the church family that joins us in shepherding them toward Jesus.

Though we are all far from perfect, I have witnessed in you a mature and growing faith that seeks to magnify Christ in all things. May the Lord continue to give us a humble dependence upon him and continue to grow our love for him and for one another. My prayer for us this coming year is summed up in the apostle Paul’s prayer to the Philippian church:

And it is my prayer that your love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that you may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.—Philippians 1:9–11

With affection in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steven Lee". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "S" and "L".

Steven Lee
Pastor for Preaching & Vision, North

Dan Holst

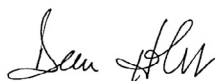
NORTH WORSHIP & MUSIC

*I will give thanks to the LORD with my whole heart; I will recount all of your wonderful deeds.
I will be glad and exult in you; I will sing praise to your name, O Most High.—Psalm 9:1–2*

In reflecting on the wonderful deeds that the Lord worked among us in 2021, it is with wholehearted thanks that I am glad to report:

- Our North Campus worship choir restarted during Holy Week 2021 under the care of Brian (director) & Johanna (accompanist) Hanson. This choir continues to point our hearts God-ward monthly in Sunday worship.
- Our children's choirs reconvened in September with competent leadership overseeing each: Mary Lee (Music Makers), Cheryl Kelley (Joyful Praise), and Jeanne Anderson (Choristers). Combined, these three choirs served during both our 150th Anniversary Celebration in November and our Christmas Eve services North.
- A new high school ensemble, Treble Choir, was founded in the Fall by Missy Steward. The voices of these students led in praise on Sundays and on Christmas Eve.
- Bethlehem's North Campus Orchestra participated regularly in Sunday worship this Fall, coordinated by Caleb Peterson and conducted by Glen Larson.
- Worship teams, composed of volunteer vocalists and instrumentalists, provided weekly Sunday and Wednesday worship leadership with heartfelt engagement.
- Mark Henderson continues to regularly serve (for 19 years now!) as the Sunday accompanist with excellence.
- Caleb Peterson completed his first full year as *Ministry Assistant for Worship, North*, providing Sunday and Wednesday worship planning and musical leadership full-time through the summer months of 2021.
- Grace Ohlendorf serves in remarkable behind-the-scenes ways as *Lead Administrative Assistant for Worship & North*, providing administrative support for all that happens in music and worship North.
- Our North prayer deacons (Laurie Walmsley; David & Jenny Fuller) served to advance passion for prayer through leadership in our Prayer Lab and coordination of prayer ministry teams. Additionally, these deacons were a vital coordinating force behind our monthly "Draw Near" evenings of worship and prayer.
- On-going pastoral ministry included weddings, funerals, teaching, care, and prayer with this much-beloved, multi-generational congregation. What a privilege!
- Personally, I am deeply thankful for an elder-approved summer-long sabbatical, during which I read, reconnected, and was personally refreshed in retooling for the next season of pastoral ministry. Liz and I celebrated 38 years of marriage in February, graduated our youngest, Anders, from Irondale High School in June, and grieved the sudden death of Liz's mother, Jane Winberg, in August. We also made sweet memories with children and grandchildren near and far.

In recounting these wonderful deeds of the Lord wrought in 2021, my heart overflows with gladness and praise to the Most High God.



Dan Holst
Pastor for Worship, North

Sam Crabtree

NORTH SMALL GROUPS & ADULT DISCIPLESHIP

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

At Bethlehem's North Campus

- Currently 61 small groups with over 100 leaders
- Conducted orientation and interviews for new leaders throughout the year
- Conducted baptism interviews and performed baptisms throughout the year
- Taught membership and baptism classes through the year
- Regular appearances at Getting Acquainted
- Launched "Core Conversations" class for new converts/newcomers; paused the class after a couple of months on account of low attendance
- Preaching/Speaking
 - » Seven Sundays in 2021
 - » Seven funerals/interments plus one additional graveside
 - » Three weddings (plus premarital sessions)
 - » Global Outreach reunion
 - » Seminary wives
- Serendipitous interactions with persons asking, "What's going on at Bethlehem?"

Other

- Mosaic class suspended
- Speaker at Cities Church conference
- Preached at Ron Wickard retirement (Richland Church, 42 years)
- Attendee at Simeon Trust workshop
- Speaker to Wyoming (MN) area pastors
- Mentored Pastor Peter Talbot of Algona, IA, during his sabbatical, plus David Fuller and Thomas Barclay at their request
- DAWG (Day Alone With God)

Bethlehem College & Seminary

- Emceed the Tomlinson Appreciation Event
- Four Tabletalks
- Onboarding of new president
- Re-elected as chairman of the Board of Trustees (one-year term)
- Delivered the charge at Commencement
- Spoke at leadership class
- Mentored seminary student
- Spoke at student gathering
- Spoke at "Look at the Sacred Book"

Desiring God

- Served on the board
- Wrote a couple solicited articles for the website

Testimonies of God at Work (Answers to Prayer)

"Thank you so much for your love and kindness, especially over the past 20 months. Your listening ears, encouraging words, and willingness to pray with me on days that are incredibly hard—and rejoice with me when there are days that call for joy—are gifts from God!" (11/20/2021)

"I greatly appreciate your call and thoughtful wish to hear my reflections on my dad. I am overwhelmed and thankful for dear friends like you. Sam, I know you are my pastor, but I consider you a dear friend. You have blessed our family over and over ..." (11/30/2021)

"What a blessing to have you share with the women of MCC. God has gifted you, and we are recipients of his grace through you." (12/5/2021)

"I really like it when you preach. It makes sense when you say it." (age 10, 12/22/2021) Martin Luther said, "When I preach, I regard neither doctors nor magistrates, of whom I have above forty in my congregation; I have all my eyes on the servant maids and on the children. And if the learned men are not well pleased with what they hear, well, the door is open." One of my standard prayers before preaching is to ask for God's help in making the message clear, accessible to children. So, I take notes from 10-year-olds as evidence of answered prayer, something God is doing.

Personal

- First full year living in Blaine
- Emergency room visit, pacemaker implanted
- COVID-19 (11 days of sick leave)
- Wrote daily note to Vicki
- 331 pages of journaling the Bible
- Led a small group, co-hosted by Vicki

Prayer Requests

- For new (additional) small group leaders and groups
- Grace for Vicki
- Grace for fresh widows
- Greater skill and conditioning through pickleball
- That my love may abound more and more, with knowledge and all discernment, so that I may approve what is excellent, and so be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ, to the glory and praise of God.

God is near and in charge,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Sam Crabtree".

Sam Crabtree
Pastor for Small Groups, North

Brian Liechty

NORTH COUNSELING

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

I'm so grateful to serve as a pastor here at Bethlehem Baptist Church. So much has happened during the past year, but the word that seems to capture it best is "grace"—God's unexpected, undeserved, unrelenting blessing and favor. Though I don't have space to recount all the ways God's grace has been evident in Care & Counseling here at the North Campus, I want to highlight three of them.

God's Grace in the Counseling One Another Seminars

In the Fall of 2019, we launched a Counseling One Another initiative here at the North Campus with an emphasis on equipping the church to counsel one another. As part of that initiative, 48 of our small groups worked through a study called *Side by Side* by Ed Welch, in which they learned how to better admit their struggles, have compassion during trouble, and pray for one another. In addition to that study, we scheduled five Counseling One Another seminars between the Fall of 2019 and Spring of 2020 for those who wanted to pursue further equipping. Unfortunately, with COVID-19 and lockdowns in 2020, we were only able to host the first three seminars. But thankfully, in 2021 as the church began to gather again and hold in-person events, we were able to complete the final two seminars: "Addressing Mental Health Challenges" and "Ministering to Sexual Brokenness." Once again, God met us in a profound way as each seminar had approximately 100 people engaged in times of teaching, small group discussion, and personal application. By God's grace, counseling one another is starting to become part of our culture, and lives are being changed as a result. May God continue this work of grace in 2022, as we continue to develop meaningful relationships and speak the truth in love with one another.

God's Grace in the North Lay Counseling Team

Another area where God has been extremely gracious is in the work of our lay counseling team. During the past year we were able to add two new counselors to our team, Dave Wicklund and Lulu Robinson. They have done a tremendous job meeting with various individuals, getting to know their story, and ministering to their sin and suffering. Additionally, we were able to develop several partnerships with other ministries in the church where our team members provided various resources and equipping, including teaching the young adults about "Dealing with Disappointment" in June and leading a "Walking Together" seminar for our women in August. Over the past year, our counseling team has worked with 65 individuals and couples facing various struggles including purity, anxiety, depression, and broken relationships.

Through exit surveys we were able to receive some very encouraging feedback. One woman shared: "I really appreciated being able to share my heart struggles with a godly woman who could understand me and speak the truth to me. She could help me sort out my struggles objectively and point out areas where I can apply Scripture and God's truth in my broken ways of thinking and dealing with various issues. I appreciated having a safe environment to process some of the issues that I deal with." Another individual shared: "One struggle I went to counseling for was shame about past events or sin struggles. God worked through (counselor name) to help me find freedom from those memories and struggles by first confessing them aloud to (counselor name) and then aloud to the Lord in prayer! It was amazing to feel the shame diminish as God shined his healing light on my brokenness." May God continue this work of grace in 2022, as our North counseling team personally ministers the word so that hearts are changed and lives are transformed to be more like Jesus.

God's Grace in Crisis Care

A final area in which to highlight God's grace is crisis care at the North Campus. This is an aspect of the Care & Counseling ministry that often goes unnoticed, but it is making an impact in the lives of those at the North Campus facing some of the deepest struggles. This year alone we have worked with individuals overwhelmed with traumatic loss and addiction, marriages facing domestic abuse and adultery, and families where children have been suicidal or where sibling sexual abuse has taken place. Even though these situations require extensive time, attention, and wisdom, God has been faithful to help us provide gracious care and wise love. I'm particularly grateful for Kirsten Christianson, *Coordinator for Crisis Care, North*, who has partnered with me in these situations and who willingly enters into some of the most complex situations to offer hope and help. May God continue this work of grace in 2022, as we seek to minister to those in crisis and as we together seek the Lord, our refuge and strength and very present help in trouble.

For the gospel,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Brian Liechty', with a stylized, flowing script.

Brian Liechty
Pastor for Counseling, North

Vince Johnson

NORTH NEIGHBORHOOD OUTREACH

"Go home to your friends and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and how he has had mercy on you."—Mark 5:19

Jesus told the man who had been possessed with demons in Mark 5 that he could not go with him but sent him to preach to those in his hometown. That is similar to our "gospel befriending" efforts over these past three years. At the North Campus, we continue to trust God to help us love our unbelieving family and friends with his steadfast love of "grace and truth" (John 1:14).

Here are some highlights from 2021:

Neighborhood Outreach

We continued to serve with Ralph Reeder Food Shelf by helping deliver food on Wednesdays and Fridays to those who could not drive to pick up their food. This ministry helps put us in contact with some of the most vulnerable in our communities. What a blessing to meet them and try to spread joy to them.

The Lord opened the door for a positive relationship with the manager of the mobile home park just two blocks away. He asked us to help him learn from residents how to develop a better sense of community there. McDonalds has given free tickets for a complimentary sandwich to the first 60 people that participate in the survey. The dream is that this effort will spawn some community-building events that North will help facilitate, leading to a richer community and gospel relationships.

We are now blessed to have Mary Anderson helping lead our efforts in Sanctity of Life at the North Campus. She has jumped right in with organizing our Christmas Tree Ornaments, the Baby Bottle Program, and the March for Life bus.

Our English as a Second Language program continues to grow gospel relationships with mostly U of M scholars desiring to develop in their English language skills. Many of these tutoring relationships are facilitated through online connections because of the pandemic.

Neighborhood Outreach has partnered with Derek Dearth and Global Outreach to form an Arrive Good Neighbor Team that will serve a refugee family of 11 from Afghanistan arriving in January 2022. This North Campus team will help the family over the next year to settle into a home in St. Anthony.

I thank the Lord for my administrative assistant, Jacque Boldt, my ministry assistant, Daniel Bouchoc, and my new apprentice, Joshua Sullivan! They have loved the Lord and our neighbors alongside me.

Welcome Ministries

Getting Acquainted With Bethlehem continues to love those seeking to become covenant members and learn more about our church. The pastoral presenters serve these people well each week. The host team includes me, Kathy Johnson, Kacie Liechty, and Gladys Amancharla.

I thank the Lord for Dan Johnson, who has filled in as the Usher Coordinator for the two-year COVID-19 season. He has served so diligently and humbly.

Jim Schroeder has stepped in as our Security Team Coordinator. Jim schedules, trains, and encourages us to watch over our people during both services on Sundays.

May the Lord continue to love the North Campus and our communities through these ministries,



Vince Johnson
Pastor for Neighborhood Outreach, North

Pam Larson

NORTH WOMEN'S MINISTRY

Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love, that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.—Psalm 90:14

A Song for Every Season

Women at the North Campus have been learning that God invites us to come to him in all seasons, whether joy or sorrow. He inclines his ear to our prayers whether we express devotion or doubt, and he delights in our worship even when fear and anxiety tempt us to be silent. I am grateful to my **North Women's Ministry Team**: Julia Dembeck, Abigail Dodds, Beth Nordquist, Liz Stein, Kelly Vranys, and Barbara Winbush, who gather monthly to pray and give vision for Women's Ministry.

Winter

In the winter season, our **North Women's Bible Study** studied a selection of 14 psalms in a study titled *A Song for Every Season*, designed to draw our hearts out in praise to the Lord, giving us words to pray and songs to sing in every season of life. We encouraged one another to sing songs of praise, songs of God's steadfast love, songs while we wait, songs when we celebrate, songs in suffering, songs even when depressed, songs when we doubt, and songs for the blessed. Charisse Compton and I shared the joy of writing the workbook and teaching each week. Over 160 women participated in this Bible study through in-person groups, Zoom, and independent study.

MOMS continued strong with 68 women and 41 children, led by Kelly Vranys and a host of committed volunteers. I hosted a brunch for our **Titus 2 Mentors** in my home, and we experienced a sweet time of refreshment and encouragement. We praise God for this spiritual mothering ministry.

Spring/Summer

Throughout the summer season, our focus for **Women's Bible Study** was prayer through our study *He Hears Me: Prayers of the Bible*. One hundred sixty women dug into the Lord's prayer and the prayers of Hannah, Mary, Deborah & Barak, David, Paul, and Jesus. Our teaching team consisted of Charisse Compton, Kacie Liechty, Amy Katterson, Lindsay Osborne, Jenni Naselli, and Julia Dembeck. Together, these women also wrote the workbook for the study.

Fall

North Women's Ministry Team prayerfully selected our theme for the coming year, and on September 9 we had a **kickoff event**, including a panel discussion to introduce our theme, *Our Redeemer: Mighty to Save!*

You have led in your steadfast love the people whom you have redeemed; you have guided them by your strength to your holy abode.—Exodus 15:13

We encouraged women to fix their eyes and their hope fully on our Mighty Redeemer! After a brief overview of this year's Women's Ministry opportunities, we moved to the Commons for refreshments, fellowship, and opportunities for women to get connected with various ministries.

MOMS began this Fall with Julia Dembeck and Bailey Olson leading the Monday evening group and Jennifer Gerth and Kelly Vranys leading Tuesday mornings with nearly 80 women and 60 children attending. Their theme for 2021–2022 is "Live Wise."

So teach us to number our days that we may get a heart of wisdom.—Psalm 90:12

Women in Missions has been gathering to hear from and pray for our global partner women on the second Monday of each month, led by a faithful team consisting of Dawn McCowen, Jane Larson, and Barbara Winbush.

Women's Bible Study on Exodus 1–15 began in September, with me teaching each week and Amy Katterson once. Classes met in person at church, and many other women studied along with us independently. Nearly 170 women participated, including our Mandarin-speaking sisters. (Thanks to Jin Zhang for translating our workbook, which I wrote.) Teaching messages were recorded and posted to our podcast and YouTube channel. We ended our semester singing with Moses,

*"Who is like you, O LORD, among the gods?
Who is like you, majestic in holiness, awesome in
glorious deeds, doing wonders?"—Exodus 15:11*

Because he is sovereign, we can be filled with hope. There is no one like our God—no one like Jesus. We should be grateful, thankful, joyful people! We are the redeemed who worship our Redeemer, individually and corporately! Thanksgiving and praise are the natural outflow from those who have experienced God's grace. We get redemption/salvation, and God gets the glory as our Redeemer.

In late November, I hosted an **Appreciation Dinner** for our **Titus 2 Mentors** in my home, and we rejoiced together for the wonderful ways the Lord is working through this mentoring ministry.

We concluded the ministry year on a snowy Saturday morning, December 11, when approximately 260 women had the joy of gathering together to celebrate the incarnation of Jesus at our Christmas Brunch event, *How Low Was Our Redeemer Brought*. Julie Lynch and her team provided a delicious breakfast, I welcomed women with a devotion, Krystal Wee led us in singing, Kirsten Christianson wrote readings (readers: Annie Scott, Marlyis Carpenter, Abby Dieter, and Shu Whei Miao), and Jenni Naselli shared a short message. How sweet it was to hear our women's voices filling the room with their worship.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Pam Larson".

Pam Larson
Minister for Women's Ministry, North

Aaron Rothermel

NORTH CHILDREN & FAMILIES

"I have said these things to you, that in me you may have peace. In the world you will have tribulation. But take heart; I have overcome the world."—John 16:33

This past year our theme for children's ministry was John 16:33, and we put these words on the ministry team mug. On one side it says, *"In this world you will have tribulation,"* and on the other side it says, *"But take heart! I have overcome the world."* Every time I pour coffee into that mug, I've been encouraged by the unshakeable hope we have in Christ. *"I have overcome the world."* Jesus has overcome. In so many areas of life this year there have been hard things, and yet our confidence in Christ is immovable. Jesus has conquered. Jesus has brought perfect peace that transcends our circumstances.

Yes, there have been difficulties this year, but there have been so many areas for which to be thankful. This was my first full year serving as a pastor at Bethlehem North, and the Lord has been good to our family. The Lord has been good to us as a church. We have an incredible staff and countless ministry partners who serve week in and week out to make our children's ministry happen.

God's Provision

This past year, relaunching full Fall ministries was a significant undertaking. Our call to our recruiting team was to remember Luke 10:2, that our primary recruitment call is *to pray*. The Lord answered our prayer. I'm thankful for the incredible work that Communications did in helping us develop recruitment materials for casting vision, and I'm thankful for the many returning and brand new volunteers that we welcomed to our team this past year! We have a legacy of children's ministry workers who have served for over a decade, and we are so blessed to also have new ministry partners who served for the first time this year. Join me in thanking God for his provision, and pray for his continued sustaining work as we continue to labor for the joy of the next generation!

Equipping Parents

A significant part of our philosophy of children's ministry is equipping parents. It's been a tremendous privilege to connect with numerous parents this year through our child dedication process, which includes a child dedication class and a home visit. I've greatly enjoyed getting to know many of the wonderful young families in our church. In addition to this, we led two father/child retreats this year (one for fathers/sons and one for fathers/daughters) to help facilitate intentional time together

and in the word. Both new believers and more seasoned believing parents participated in these events. I'm thankful for the significant ways that I saw God working in the hearts of parents and children from a variety of backgrounds.

Staff Team

God has blessed our church with an incredible staff team. I am thankful to have added Lexi Hennen as *Coordinator for Special Needs Ministry, North*, to the team this year. She has been a huge asset and has taken on some important responsibilities, coordinating buddies in the children's classrooms, leading our His Works class, and significantly helping to develop our membership and baptism curriculum for those with disability. Carmen Tomaszewski, *Lead Coordinator for Nurseries, North*, and Claire Olson, *Coordinator for Preschool & Assistant Coordinator for Nurseries, North*, are vital members of the team. I'm so thankful for their partnership. In addition to their leadership, they are amazing team members that bring a lot of experience and wisdom. Lulu Robinson, *Administrative Assistant for Children & Families, North*, serves in a critical role. I am so thankful for her tireless and steady work making sure that children's ministry keeps running. She is invaluable in the ways she serves our church and our ministry to the next generation, and she is such a huge help to me. Lastly, I'm thankful for the incredible church staff I get to serve with. There is a spirit of partnership and collaboration in both the pastoral and administrative staff which has made this year a *wonderful* first year of ministry here at Bethlehem.

Final Thoughts

So much more could be said about this year. There have been many highlights to reflect on, from our Global Focus Kickoff to the quieter, more hidden ministry moments over which the angels in heaven rejoice. Thank you for your partnership for the joy of the next generation.

For our joy in Jesus,



Aaron Rothermel
Pastor for Children & Families, North

North Campus Attendance

*NOTE: Classroom numbers are from September 2020—May 2021. Sunday Nursery numbers are January—December 2021.

NORTH CAMPUS CHILDREN'S ATTENDANCE STATISTICS					
Weekly Services	Age Group	Total Unique Participants	Participant Average	*Total Volunteers	*Volunteer Average
Sunday 9am	Preschool	38	11	9	2
Sunday 11am	Preschool	33	9	7	2
Wednesday Connection	Preschool—Grade 5	174	105	34	23
Weekly Service Totals:		245	125	50	27

*Includes Substitutes who do not participate on a regular basis

NURSERIES (JANUARY—DECEMBER 2021)					
Weekly Services	Age Group	Total Unique Participants	Participant Average	Total Volunteers	Volunteer Average
Sunday 9am	Nurseries A–D	123	28	115	14
Sunday 11am	Nurseries A–D	99	17	82	9
Weekly Service Totals:		222	45	197	23

NURSERY: WEDNESDAY CONNECTION & SPECIAL EVENTS (SEPTEMBER 2020—MAY 2021)					
Wednesday Connection	Nurseries A–D	22	7	23	5
Special Events: MOMS		50	23	6	5
Special Events: Women's Bible Studies		7	4	6	3

Total Babies Born or Adopted: 32

DISABILITY MINISTRIES (SEPTEMBER 2020—MAY 2021)
Regular 1:1 Buddies (Aides): 2
His Works Wednesday Nights class: 15 Students; 4 Volunteers
40 Children & youth with significant disabilities on our radar at the North Campus

OTHER EVENTS AND MINISTRIES
17 Families attending Parenting: The Early Years seminars
34 Children dedicated
Family Discipleship Appreciation Event: 120 attendees (Nursery—Grade 5, Trail Life)
North Trail Life: Woodlands (Grades K-5): 64 Participants; 10 Leaders
North Trail Life: Navigators/Adventurers (Grades 6—12): 18 Participants; 12 Leaders

Jon Nowlin

NORTH YOUTH & FAMILIES

Give thanks to the LORD, for he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever.—Psalm 136:1

This year God displayed the magnificence of his orchestration of all things. The challenges he designed and his empowering grace combined to promote our Godward dependence and to ignite rejoicing in him.

Winter Retreat

God gave us great grace to host a North Youth Winter Retreat (Grades 6–12), January 29–31. It was unlike any retreat we have had in the past. We spent the weekend at a new location, Camp Lebanon, for our first campus-specific Winter Retreat in more than a decade. This allowed us to make modifications for COVID-19, spending the weekend in “pods” with separate Middle School and High School chapels, meals, and activities. The most encouraging new element was the volunteer team that God assembled for the weekend. Everywhere I turned, I saw members of my local fellowship serving with extraordinary grace in varied roles: doctor, program team members, worship team, and counselors.

God gave our speaker, Josh Bremerman (*Ministry Assistant for High School Discipleship, North*), the ability to skillfully present God’s message from the Scriptures to both groups of students. Our theme was “Take Refuge!,” rooted in Psalm 46:1–11. Amid all the fear swirling through those January days, God’s Spirit sought to root our students rightly in the fear of the Lord. God gave us great energy and joy to give our students a retreat in an unusual season. The investment was well worth the effort.

Worldview Teaching

God’s good shepherding was especially evident in our High School worldview teaching in the winter and Spring of 2021. Building upon the gospel foundation of the Fall, we considered several present-day worldviews competing for our students’ attention. These included Critical Theory, progressive Christianity, Islam, science, and pornography. God taught us truth from the Scriptures and helped us work together as small groups to engage in wisdom with outsiders in each area.

Ministry Assistants

May 2021 marked a significant transition for High School ministry. For four years God poured out grace upon grace through the exceptional gift of Josh Bremerman. His graduation from Bethlehem Seminary in May allowed us to honor him, express gratitude to the Lord, and send him off well. Just prior to that transition, God provided Scott Byers, a student just completing his first year in seminary, to fill this significant role.

Middle School Summer Camp

God orchestrated a wonderful week of ministry for Scott Byers, me, and several of our High School Student Service Team (SST) members at Camp Lebanon, June 20–25. Five of our high school student leaders served young people as assistant counselors. Scott served as a counselor for a cabin of upcoming Grade 9 boys. It was a joy for me to serve the wider group, proclaiming passages from the Gospel of Luke throughout the week and to enjoy meals with the upcoming Grade 9 young women. These investments built memories and bore fruit when this class joined the High School group for the first time the following week.

Student Service Team Up-Front Leadership

This summer our SST transitioned from primarily behind-the-scenes serving to greater up-front leadership. God helped us deploy these students more effectively, inviting them to serve as emcees, discussion leaders, game planners, and welcomers. This step was a great win for our wider group and for those who shouldered significant responsibilities.

Awaken

Following a year of adapted programming for our Fall Retreat in 2020, God allowed us to return to a retreat hosted in local homes in October 2021. God gave us a beautiful weekend to enjoy with our small groups and many willing volunteers, and he helped orchestrate our ability to join the North Campus 11am service for our final session. In the midst of a season of health challenges, God bore fruit in his people through the opening of the Scriptures on the theme of “Rejoice!” Reports of God’s work following retreats are normally sparse, but this year God brought many to our attention. Two specific reports included Scriptural help for one student to rejoice in the Lord when his soccer team lost their chance at playing in the state tournament. Another young person found ballast in God’s truth and his newly revived youth group community when Monday brought relational loss. God was at work for our students’ good throughout the weekend.

It is a joy to look back at all that God did this year, with gratitude for your support, service, and prayers,



Jon Nowlin
Pastor for Youth & Family Discipleship, North

Ben Katterson

NORTH MIDDLE SCHOOL & FAMILIES

"Let light shine out of darkness." —2 Corinthians 4:6

In the darkness of the curse, the light of Christ shines brightly. The Gospel of Matthew paints a portrait of Jesus as a very different kind of King. His ways, his laws, his love, his people, and his realm are all of another world. This year in the North Middle School ministry, we have seen this upside-down King shine in our hearts and into a dark world. May he always receive the glory that he is due.

Regular Programming

In the ebb and flow of North Middle School weekly programming are the fingerprints of Diane Soderholm, who continues to provide excellent support to this ministry with her careful and energetic attention.

At the beginning of 2021, we were in the middle of a three-year journey through the Bible. In January we were in the book of Judges on Sundays, bounding through the Old Testament in order to begin the Gospel of Matthew in the Fall. On Wednesdays we previewed the upcoming sermon text. Our Sunday programming had transitioned to Sunday evening for the 2020-2021 school year. This afforded more time with each other, in the text, and in small groups.

Summer

In extreme heat, the annual Grade 6 Open House kicked off the summer. Many of the adaptations that were made in the previous summer, due to COVID-19, continued through this summer because of their success. Bike rides were an adaptation from the previous year that proved fruitful. We toured the Rice Creek trails and stopped periodically to rehearse the story of Daniel. We enjoyed a Middle School JAM in late July at the Hoffman home. Other highlights included the Day Away events for students in Grade 7 and in Grade 8, when these particular age groups got away together to bond, explore, and look into God's word.

The summer of 2021 also brought our first North-only summer camp. While it was a tearful goodbye to a well-loved Camp Shetek, it was a joy-filled and profitable time at Camp Lebanon. Jon Nowlin taught from the Gospel of Luke. He helped our students grow in their certainty in knowing Christ, in order that their hearts may burn with affection for him. Katie Kramer gave summer camp excellent administrative support.

Fall Programming

Our annual Fall Kickoff was well attended, and Sunday and Wednesday programming began much like it did before the pandemic. The Awaken retreat held the adaptation that we spent our Saturday afternoon at the North Campus, reducing the cost and providing many opportunities and options for recreation.

This Fall the Lord brought together a Middle School teaching team consisting of Nick Brazis (a new North elder) and me on Sundays, and Tim Johnson (elder), Michelle Richter, and me on Wednesdays. I am delighted with the strength of this team and the ways that they bless and build up the students in the word.

In our third of three years through the Bible, we began the Fall in the Gospel of Matthew, hoping to complete both this Gospel and a short section in Revelation by the end of the school year. By the end of this year, if the Lord wills, students will have a scope of the entire Bible and see how it fits together, with themes, culminating in the person and work of Christ and his imminent return.

Personal Updates

The Lord has seen fit to shower much grace on me personally. Through slow and steady training, discipline, and help from brothers, Bethlehem has confirmed my aspirations to become an elder this year. Because of that call, I was also able to baptize two young people. I feel very humbled to receive this charge from the Lord.

The darkness, difficulty, and hardships of these recent days have been far outstripped by the light in our hearts from the Savior, Christ the Lord. Our King continues to lead us. Please pray for humility and grace to follow him and delight in the light of life, who is Jesus.



Ben Katterson
Pastor for Middle School & Families, North

2021 North Campus Attendance Statistics

YOUTH MINISTRY				
Weekly Services (2020–21 School Year)	Average Participants	Total Participants	Average Volunteers	Total Volunteers
Middle School Sunday Night	43	75	7	9
High Sunday Night	50	91	10	18
Total Sunday Night	93	166	17	27
Middle School Wednesday Connection	57	85	10	15
Sr High Wednesday Connection	52	84	10	13
Total Wednesday Connection	109	169	20	28

Other Events & Ministries Attendance Statistics
Middle & High School Winter Retreat (Jan 29–Feb 31): 124 students, 39 leaders
7th Grade Day Away (Aug 2): 24 students, 5 leaders
8th Grade Day Away (Aug 9): 14 students, 4 leaders
Senior Retreat (Aug 27–29): 14 students, 5 leaders
Middle & High School Awaken Retreat (Oct 15–17): 151 students, 40 leaders

Dave Zuleger

SOUTH PREACHING & VISION

But as it is, they desire a better country, that is, a heavenly one. Therefore God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city.—Hebrews 11:16

Longing for Home and Loving Our God

This year I can identify with Hebrews 11:16 more than I have during any other year. It seems that the current culture and moment we're living in continue to remind us that we are not yet home. I find my heart longing for that heavenly city being prepared for those who love God. A world with no pandemics, no protests, and no political unrest. A world with no tears, suffering, sin, or death. A "better country" than the one we currently live in. Certainly these past couple of years have taught us that if we trust in any earthly citizenship we will be deeply disappointed. But praise the Lord, we do not have to trust in such fragile things:

But our citizenship is in heaven, and from it we await a Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ, who will transform our lowly body to be like his glorious body, by the power that enables him even to subject all things to himself.—Philippians 3:20–21

It is good to be sober-minded and to set our hope fully on the grace that is to come at the revelation of Christ Jesus (1 Peter 1:13). It is good to have the hopes and stability of this world shaken a bit to help us remember that we have a kingdom that cannot be shaken (Hebrews 12:28).

And yet, even in this longing, Jesus has kept his promise to me as a pastor and to us as a people—in the midst of the good, the bad, and the ugly—that he came to give us life and life abundantly. We have abundant life in Jesus. And that is highlighted all the more when the things of this world grow strangely dim.

In all of this, the Lord has been revealing that all else is loss compared to the surpassing worth of knowing him, being found in him, and straining ahead by all means possible for the resurrection from the dead (Philippians 3).

Loving Our Home and Loving Our Neighbors

Even though we are not yet home, we do have a home—the blood-bought family of God. And we are called to love each other deeply and also love those around us wherever the Lord has placed us in his providential arranging.

So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith.—Galatians 6:10

And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, that they should seek God, and perhaps feel their way toward him and find him.—Acts 17:26–27

As we put these verses together, we see a call to do good to one another in the "household of faith" and to those around us. God has determined that we would be in this place, for this season, in this time, for his purposes of bringing the gospel to bear and do good to those around us for the sake of his Name.

Two things have encouraged me this year—one in my own heart and one among our people.

First, in my own heart, I have found the Lord extremely kind to me in continuing to grow—not diminish—my love for the people of the South congregation, even in some really tumultuous times. I know this year has brought change, struggle, and transition in many pastoral situations—some right here at Bethlehem, some more distant. All of this is under God's providence, but many of these situations have been very sad to me.

I don't count it as anything inherently pastoral or good in me that has caused this love to grow, but rather God's mercy in giving me this calling and ministry for this particular moment. I love the South family with all of its incredible highs and joys, and all of its painful lows and sorrows. I love preaching the Word on Sundays. I love eating meals with you on Wednesdays and praying together with you. I love teaching classes. I love the privilege of being in your homes and hospital rooms. I love being at your weddings and your funerals. I love praying with you after the worship services. I love being in worship with you. You have my heart, and I pray the Lord will continue to lead us all until the day we are with him face to face.

Second, among our people, I have found the Lord working particularly through the book of Acts to create a people that is growing in its love for each other and our neighbors.

I have heard story after story of love among small groups, meals brought, cards written, prayers prayed, and countless other examples of those in our congregation weeping with those who weep and rejoicing with those who rejoice. It seems that we are beginning to believe we are a blood-bought family. I couldn't be happier.

Also, I've begun to get emails from many people who are looking at their lives and circumstances and beginning to be intentional in loving their coworkers, neighbors, and family members in word and deed. I want our Sanctuary seats to be filled with our neighbors. Oh, that God would do this all the more in the coming years! We are ambassadors for Christ, and they will not know of him if we do not love them and tell them.

Loving Our Team and Making Disciples

One of the joys of my role is that I get to lead a team of staff and elders that seeks to remember that we “have this ministry by mercy” (2 Corinthians 4:1) and “equip the saints for the work of ministry” (Ephesians 4:12). I get a front-row seat to a team that is imperfect yet genuinely cares and labors out of a heart of love for God and for the South congregation.

There have been changes to the staff in the last year, but staff unity and purpose has never been higher. I truly believe we have a team that is committed to this South congregation and loves what they are doing. I pray the Lord brings a sweet stability that develops into deep camaraderie among the team members and deep trust between the team and the rest of the congregation.

It has been a hard year to do ministry. It has been a hard year to do ministry at Bethlehem. And yet, this team has been a great joy to me in its unity and faithfulness. I'd encourage you to send emails of thankfulness as you see fit and to pray for continued unity and faithfulness among us.

These are the teams that God has provided to think through how to equip the South congregation to make disciples of their neighbors and the nations. Would you pray for me that I would lead well and love well as I serve these teams in this role?

South Staff

- Ashley Brown, *Assistant Coordinator for Nurseries*
- Ethan Bruneau, *Coordinator for Media Ministries & Systems*
- Ethan Buck, *Facilities Staff*
- Dominic Deming, *Facilities Staff*
- Randall Deming, *Facilities Staff*
- Rachel Dyvig, *Lead Administrative Assistant*
- Erica Halmar, *Assistant Coordinator for Nurseries*
- Matt Moore, *Ministry Intern*
- Talitha Moore, *Ministry Assistant for Youth*
- Nathan Metcalf, *Pastoral Resident for Youth*
- Holly Nelson, *Minister for Women's Ministry*
- Joshua Oakley, *Director for Children & Disability Ministries*
- Brandon Pehrson, *Facilities Staff*
- Steve Rinde, *Coordinator for Facilities*
- Nick Roen, *Pastor for Worship & Education*
- Lorie Schindler, *Facilities Staff*
- Kim Schiller, *Coordinator for Kitchen Ministries*
- Stacy Thorpe, *Ministerial Coordinator for Care & Counseling*
- Daniel Viezbicke, *Pastor for Membership & Mobilization*
- Sarah Vogel, *Lead Coordinator for Nurseries*
- Dave Zuleger, *Pastor for Preaching & Vision*
- Emily Zwicky, *Administrative Assistant for Women & Children*

Deacons: Greg Gee, Mary Hendricks, Mary Horning, Matt Klugherz, Jack Olwell, Marilyn Olwell, Bonnie Williams, Denny Williams

Elders: Terry Kurschner, David Livingston, Phil Nelson, Bruce Power, Nick Roen, Peter Thorpe, Daniel Viezbicke, Alan West, Dave Zuleger, Bill Zwicky

Looking Forward and Prayer Requests

This coming year will be another year of transition as we begin to set our sights on what it will mean for the South congregation to become its own autonomous church. I believe this is a move toward biblical faithfulness in what we see of the church in the New Testament. Over the course of the next year, we look forward to teaching and casting vision about this with the South congregation. What this means is that more than ever, church cannot be a spectator sport. We need all hands on deck—with every person using the gifts and generosity God has entrusted to them to love him with all their heart, to love our church, and to love their neighbors as themselves.

Let me end with a few prayer requests:

- Pray for the Lord to grant me wisdom, endurance, and pastoral insight as I prepare to lead us through the word of God week after week in preaching.
- Pray for the Lord to continue to increase my love for our congregation and the South suburbs.
- Pray for the Lord to give me wisdom and endurance as I lead and navigate through transitions.
- Pray for the Lord to help me love and lead our staff and elders well.
- Pray for the Lord to increase our love for God, each other, neighbors, and the nations all the more this coming year as a congregation.
- Pray for an increased wave of hospitality and evangelism to increase at the South congregation.
- Pray for an increased passion in pursuing God in worship and prayer together this year.

O, that God would be pleased to help us love one another and those around us with such self-giving love that the world would know we are his disciples.

Longing, loving, and laboring with all of you,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Dave Zuleger". The signature is written in dark ink and has a long, horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Dave Zuleger
Pastor for Preaching & Vision, South

Nick Roen

SOUTH WORSHIP & EDUCATION

You have said, "Seek my face." My heart says to you, "Your face, LORD, do I seek."—Psalm 27:8

One of the reasons that I love my job so much is that it is all about pursuing God! When we gather together to worship corporately, we are going hard after the joy and presence of the Lord. When we sit under the word, either in our sermons or in adult Sunday school and education classes like Truth On Fire, we are trusting the Lord to sanctify us in his truth (John 17:17) so that we will love God and our neighbors with more and more of our hearts. And when we gather to pray together in prayer meetings and at events such as our Abide: Evening of Worship & Prayer, we are admitting how desperately we need Jesus and the help we receive when we approach his throne (Hebrews 4:16). What an amazing grace that God has ordained these means and that we can pursue them together as his people!

As I look back on the last year of ministry, I am so thankful for the ways that God has made his presence known among us at the South Campus.

I officially became the *Pastor for Worship & Education, South*, in June 2021. Since then we have gone hard after God together in our corporate worship gatherings. The choir has had several opportunities to lead us in song, and our worship teams continue to use their gifts well. One highlight has been the introduction of our new quarterly event, Abide: Evenings of Worship & Prayer. These extended times of lingering in worship, praying for healing and needs among us, and going hard after all the Spirit has for us as a church. Our first gathering took place in October and it was such a sweet gift. My goal for our corporate worship in 2022 is to continue seeking the Spirit's leading, sanctifying power, and comforting presence in our gatherings together. We say to God, "Your face, LORD, do I seek" (Psalm 27:8).

Our adult Sunday School classes were able to meet in person starting last Fall, and the Lord met us. Whether learning how to study the Bible in Mining God's Word or reflecting on the process of sanctification in How People Change, these classes have helped us to love God, his word, and our neighbors together as a blood-bought family. One of the highlights this year has been the kickoff of our lay-person training institute, Truth On Fire. The goal of this program is to study subjects such as biblical interpretation, biblical theology, and systematic theology with an eye toward loving God and our neighbors. The workload is more than a typical Sunday school class, with weekly readings and assignments and final projects after each unit. And the efforts of the students have not been in vain; it has been such an encouragement to see them worship God and exult in his word during our meetings and to hear stories about how the class is affecting their relationships outside of church.

Reflecting on the past helps us to rest concerning the future. And trusting in the future grace of God is indeed a sweet place to rest. He has done so much in our worship and adult education this past year, and he is not done with us yet. In 2022, may we continue to be people that say, "Lord, we seek your face together." There is more help, healing, and holiness to be had in his abiding presence. Come, Lord Jesus!

Seeking the face of the Lord with you,



Nick Roen
Pastor for Worship & Education, South

Daniel Viezbicke

SOUTH MEMBERSHIP & MOBILIZATION

And they devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers.—Acts 2:42

This past Fall, the South Campus finished preaching through the book of Acts; as part of remembering and meditating on the book, I was struck again by Luke's description of the earliest post-Pentecost disciples. They were *devoted* to the apostles' teaching, to the fellowship of believers, to the breaking of bread, and to "the" prayers. These last words, in particular, are striking, as it directly implies that they were praying specific prayers for specific things—perhaps out of the Old Testament or utilizing the Lord's Prayer. As we close 2021 and look to 2022, we similarly are seeking to pray the specific prayers that God has outlined for his people in his word.

As the three congregations consider moving towards three distinct churches, the words of Luke are all the more important ... committing ourselves to the faith delivered once for all for the saints, to the fellowship—the body—of believers, the community that surrounds the Lord's Table, and to praying God's will for his people. We long for his will to be done for all of his people and specifically at Bethlehem South in the coming year.

After seven years of serving youth—first as *Coordinator* and then *Director for Family & Youth Discipleship, South*, and then starting in 2017 as *Pastor for Family & Youth, South*—I began my new role in June 2021 as *Pastor for Membership & Mobilization, South*.

Now in my new role I largely oversee three things:

1. Small groups
2. Outreach
3. Membership

Small Groups

Beginning in the Fall, I began to visit various small groups and meet with small group leaders. This work will continue into 2022, as we seek to provide resourcing and training for leaders. As we seek to launch into our own distinct church, I plan to provide more small group oversight that overlaps with our elders' care for members. Presently there are 23 small groups (co-ed, men's, women's, and other demographics) at South. I hope that several more will be started in the new year as the South Campus continues to seek to live in fellowship with each other, doing the "one anothers" of Scripture.

Outreach

This last year we participated in Lakeville's Pan-O-Prog parade and associated events in July, and it's our hope to do so again this upcoming summer. Additionally, we began a quarterly gathering for sharing stories of evangelism and praying for each other in our grace-soaked efforts to share Christ with our neighbors. Rather than focusing on particular *events* for the sake of evangelistic efforts, my hope is to continue to inculcate an *ethos* of evangelism, where we're hearing about and expecting more witness in our natural spheres of life. As part of this, there will be regular times for training on the skill of hospitality in 2022, as we seek to invite people into our lives and homes for the sake of the gospel.

Membership

This year, God willing, I will begin a rewrite of South's membership material for review by the elders. Especially as we move toward becoming a distinct church, I want to continue to contextualize the membership material for our setting. We recognize all the grace that's taken place in the past and expect more grace as God continues to bring members into our blood-bought family. In addition to the rewrite, I'm spending time refining our membership meetings and discussing with other elders how our practice of shepherding care can be refined and improved as we head into this next season as a church.

God-willing, this summer I will take my first sabbatical at Bethlehem, taking time to rejuvenate with my family as we seek God's face for the next season of ministry at Bethlehem. One thing in particular I'm excited about for the summer is the creation—God willing—of a catechism derived from the *Elder Affirmation of Faith*, that my son and I will work on together.

We covet your prayers here at South. Would you pray the Scriptures on our behalf, specific prayers for God's will to be done here on earth—and at Bethlehem—as it is done in heaven?



Daniel Viezbicke
Pastor for Membership & Mobilization, South

Holly Nelson

SOUTH WOMEN'S MINISTRY

I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth.—1 Corinthians 3:6–7

This was a year of transition of leadership. Ruth Chavis stepped down from her role as *Director for Women's Ministry, South*, in December 2020. I officially began this new role in May 2021, after my previous role as teaching leader of the Eagan women's Bible Study Fellowship class was complete. I spent a few hours a week in the role from February to May. God's call for me to step down from BSF and step into ministry at Bethlehem was very clear.

The transition of leadership in both roles has reminded me once again how God alone chooses his servants for his ministry, and he alone "gives the growth" in the work that he does through us. So it is in Christ alone that I boast for all he has done this year. And there is much to boast about. God has been so faithful to me and the whole ministry for women at Bethlehem South.

God provided an established women's leadership team to partner with me in leading, serving, and loving the women of the South congregation. On that team are Eileen Kurschner, Beth Davitt, Karen Power, Ang Mellema, Kristi Redler, and Emily Zwicky, who also serves as *Administrative Assistant for Women's Ministry, South*. They provided valuable wisdom and insight especially because I was not only new to my role but new to Women's Ministry.

We jumped right in to planning the Spring women's event, summer Bible study and the Nancy Guthrie Fall workshop.

Spring Women's Event: Beauty, Beginnings, and Blessings (June 3, 2021)

After a season of pandemic isolation, women were eager for a new beginning of gathering together in person. We enjoyed a beautiful evening of food, fellowship, and worship. It was a privilege to welcome them and share about God's many blessings as their new *Minister for Women's Ministry, South*. The room was beautifully decorated with flowers, and Kim Schiller provided dinner for about one hundred women.

Nancy Guthrie Biblical Theology Workshop (September 24–25, 2021)

What a joy and privilege to host Nancy's workshop. Women from all three campuses were invited to attend as well as women throughout the Twin Cities. About 500 women attended Friday night and Saturday morning to hear Nancy teach on how to understand and approach the Bible as one cohesive story about what God is doing in the world through Christ. Hosting the event was labor intensive, but God was faithful to provide, and it was such a good and valuable experience!

Women's Bible Study

The summer study was on Nancy Guthrie's "Even Better Than Eden" study. Praise God for the over 30 women that faithfully attended each week.

The study this Fall was a Precept study on John chapters 1–6. Praise God for 40 or more women who eagerly attended the study on Wednesday mornings and Thursday evenings. The Bible study is led by a team of discussion leaders: Beth Davitt, Eileen Kurschner, Martha Pohl, Kristina Tuttle, and Rachel Ellefson. Lynne Shenk will join the team in January. I lead the team in a weekly training on Tuesday mornings on Zoom. The teaching team that lectures includes Kristina, Beth, Martha, and me. In our Winter/Spring Bible study, we will finish the book of John, using a study guide written by our leadership team.

MOMS

We are blessed with two leaders, Ang Mellema and Kristi Redler, that have faithfully and excellently led the MOMS ministry for years. The group of 20 women meet the first and third Tuesday of every month. We have been blessed by all who come to speak into this year's topic of "Promises of God and Prayer."

Titus 2 Mentoring Ministry

After meeting with all the mentors individually this summer, I was praising God for the godly women he called to mentor the younger women of our church. We had two new mentors join the ministry after a new mentor training in August. Current mentors are Judy Anderson, Erin Carlson, Kerry Clark, Beth Davitt, Celeste Glassel, Karin Livingston, Maria Nelson, Karen Power, Heidi Preisler, Sarah Vogel, and Evie Wykstra. It was a blessing to invite the mentors to my home this Fall for training and a time to connect.

Women in Missions

Praise God for this new ministry here at the South congregation. It is led by Karin Livingston, Erin Carlson, Judy Anderson, and Anne Rebney. They meet quarterly on Saturday mornings with a global partner speaker, worship, fellowship, and breakfast. The first two meetings were well attended.

Other Groups

Treasuring Christ Crafters is a group that began a few years ago and is led by Pam Buckner. This group meets monthly for a variety of crafts and sewing projects to help meet the needs of women coming out of abusive situations.

ESL is a group of Russian women who meet before Bible study each week to grow in their understanding of English and Scripture. Jeanné Shadduck has faithfully led this group for years.

Event Planning Team

After realizing that planning women's events was labor intensive, I developed a new Event Planning Team. The team comes alongside the Women's Leadership Team to help plan and then execute women's events (typically a Spring, Christmas, and Fall event each year). The team consists of a team leader and six coordinators. Kristina Tuttle, who stepped down from the Women's Ministry Leadership Team this year, stepped into the role of team leader.

Their first event as a team was the Christmas Event, and it was a huge success! We had a beautifully decorated church, 16 beautifully decorated tables, and dinner catered by Kim Schiller and served by the men of the church. The evening concluded with a time of worship in the sanctuary, which helped prepare our hearts for Christmas.

Because I am new in my role this year, I feel I had a unique perspective to see and marvel at all God is doing in Women's Ministry and praise him for his faithfulness through it all.

Personally, I am so grateful to God for the staff, elders, and women at the South Campus, who have warmly welcomed me in my new role. Emily Zwicky, who has been in her administrative role for a few years, was an invaluable support as I learned my new role.

First Corinthians 1:31 says, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord." To God be the glory for all of this *he* has done!

God bless you,



Holly Nelson
Minister for Women's Ministry, South

Stacy Thorpe

SOUTH CARE & COUNSELING

*The Lord God has given me the tongue of those who are taught, that I may know how to sustain with a word him who is weary.
Morning by morning he awakens; he awakens my ear to hear as those who are taught.—Isaiah 50:4*

This verse has been a prayer for myself and also for our church, that we would seek God in his word for life and rest and that out of the overflow of that life and rest we would care for others. The Lord sustains us by his word when we are weary, and then we can, in turn, share his word to help sustain others who are weary. In the Care & Counseling ministry, this is what we have the privilege of doing with those who are wearied by suffering and sin. We come alongside others in love and seek the Lord together in the person's unique circumstances.

Equipping

Our ministry focuses on two avenues of equipping people to care for one another. The first is equipping all of us to care well for one another in the various groups and relationships we find ourselves in. The second is equipping those who want to engage in more formal counseling. In the first category, we offered a "How People Change" class, starting in September, taught by Klaas Van Zee and Scott Butler. This class covers foundational material on how we change and become more like Christ through the gospel in everyday life. It has been well attended and has had good engagement throughout.

At the beginning of the year, we were able to offer the Christian Counseling & Educational Foundation (CCEF) class "Helping Relationships" online, and we had six students complete that class. This is a master's level course all about how to come alongside others in wisdom and love, while pointing them to Christ. It was such a joy to see these students continue to be equipped in personal ministry.

Care & Counseling

A new initiative this year was offering a couple of different support groups. The first one, offered early in the year, was for general suffering, and the second one was for anxiety. The groups met for six weeks, with the goal of helping people seek the Lord in their struggles while also building community with others. One of the people who

participated in one of the groups said that it helped so much to be able to share with others and also broke down some of the isolation that can accompany a particular struggle. Change happens best in community as people seek the Lord together, which was evident in these groups.

In February, the South Campus hosted a marriage retreat on the topic of intimacy in marriage. It was the first time offering a livestream option of the retreat, due to COVID-19. There were about 50 couples who participated and heard teaching on biblical sexuality and how God intended intimacy to be in marriage.

In addition to these things, the year brought many one-on-one meetings and phone calls where listening happened, love was shown, words were spoken, and prayers were offered by those in the formal counseling ministry. God has sustained people through suffering and has changed hearts from sin to loving him and others more. All have been miracles of grace through the Holy Spirit's comforting, convicting, and empowering work.

It has been my joy to see how God worked in people's lives and through others this past year. All glory to him, for "the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us" (2 Corinthians 4:7).

Gratefully,



Stacy Thorpe
Ministerial Coordinator for Care & Counseling, South

Joshua Oakley

SOUTH CHILDREN & DISABILITY MINISTRIES

“Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might. And these words that I command you today shall be on your heart. You shall teach them diligently to your children, and shall talk of them when you sit in your house, and when you walk by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise.”—Deuteronomy 6.4–7

As I look back on 2021, I can't help but express thankfulness:

- For the privilege and joy of serving this congregation and teaching children about our great God who sent his Son Jesus that we might spend eternity with him—transfixed by the brightness of his glory and overwhelmed by the depth of his love for us.
- For the many volunteers who have persevered through the myriad of changes that have marked how and when we gather as a body of believers. It is such a joy to see them perform their role not merely as supervisors of children, but as believers desperate for the children to truly know and treasure Christ above all else.
- For the South congregation, who also has persevered with us through the ever-changing guidelines and last-minute event changes, flexing with us as we try to adapt while maintaining our desire to gather together regularly.

Sunday School

We covered much of the Old Testament in the 2020–21 school year with 2 Samuel through Jeremiah. We picked up this past Fall with Habakkuk and worked through Nehemiah. We've seen how God maintains his faithfulness to provide for and care for his people, no matter what conflict or sin they find themselves in. On Sunday we aim to focus on the first commandment Jesus gave, to “love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind” (Matthew 22:37).

Wednesday Connection

During the 2020–21 school year, we moved Sunday School to Wednesday nights. However, this Fall we resumed having two weekly gatherings with children. At Wednesday Connection, we focus on the second-greatest commandment that Jesus gave, saying, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself” (Matthew 22:39).

With that aim in mind, we have begun focusing on our South-specific global partners, seeking to know about their family and where they are serving and to stay connected with updated prayer requests. What a joy to begin while we had some global partner children with us for part of the Fall.

We have also been able to have conversations about what it means to tell others about Christ. One child invited her unchurched neighbor, who continued coming each week, not only on Wednesdays but on Sundays as well.

We take time each Wednesday to pray corporately with the children for the global partners of the week and for each other. It has been sweet to see the children eager to bring the requests of others before the Lord, particularly the requests for people who are not in the room with us.

Vacation Bible School

I was so excited to be able to host VBS for the children in-person this summer. While I'd like to think we did a good job offering a virtual option in 2020, VBS is best held in person. Attendance was slightly down from previous years, but we still had a great turnout as the children came to learn about the foundation we have in Jesus and “that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ” (Philippians 1:6).

Disability Ministry

We began 2021 with the prayer that God would bring at least one more family affected by disability to the South congregation. God answered that request by bringing many families to our body. As the visibility of disabilities increased in our congregation, I wrote a letter last Fall encouraging the congregation to get to know those among us who are affected by disability. We seek to open our hearts and allow the Holy Spirit to use us to minister both to and with them and in return be ministered to by them. I am encouraged to have opportunities to continue growing in this ministry.

Would you join me in praying that the children at the South congregation would be forever changed as they continue to know and love God more and to share that good news with others?

To him who is able to do abundantly more than we ask or think,



Joshua Oakley
Director for Children & Disability Ministries, South

Nathan Metcalf

SOUTH YOUTH

But these are written so that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.—John 20:31

This year brought many changes for the youth at the South Campus. After what felt like an eternity, we started to see some consistent programming return in early 2021 with Wednesday night activities taking off and the opportunity for a Spring retreat and a full summer camp with both South and Downtown campuses. We celebrated baptisms, took part in events, connected with global partners coming and going, welcomed new leadership shifts, and launched the new school year with an exciting new focus.

Spring/Summer

As we established some return to programming and face to face events, we were able to do a one-day Spring retreat in Webster, MN. It was exciting to see the kids laughing, playing, worshipping, and having fun in an outside group setting. We also started hearing about some potential transitions during this season. Daniel Viezbicke transitioned into his new role of *Pastor for Membership & Mobilization, South*, after seven years serving as the *Pastor for Youth & Family Discipleship, South*. I transitioned into the role of *Pastoral Resident for Youth* after serving as a volunteer and youth ministry assistant with Daniel for several years.

In June, we had our first summer camp in two years and our students were thrilled. We spent a week at Camp Victory with 75 students from both South and Downtown campuses. We had a wonderful time in fellowship and being fed in our faith through the word of God as Daniel Viezbicke taught through the book of Ephesians. The times of fellowship and worship around the fire during our final few evenings were a wonderful end to our week.

As the summer went on, we spent time leaning into relational fellowship during events and weekly Bible study times. We had the joy of hosting some global partner times this summer with many global partners being home for a season. It was a blessing to incorporate these families into our youth programming for as long or as short as they were with us. It is helpful to remind the youth that we are a global church family. Toward the end of summer, my wife, Sarah, and I opened our home for a few gatherings where we shared sweet fellowship and our ministry vision. At the end of summer, we also welcomed Talitha Moore into her new role as *Ministry Assistant for Youth, South*; her addition has been a blessing to us all.

Fall/Winter

This Fall, we launched new vision and direction for the school year. At our Fall retreat, with more than 60 people in attendance, we introduced our study of the Gospel of John. We want to lean into what the apostle John has to say about Jesus, which John shared in such a way “that we may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing we may have life in his name” (John 20:31).

We also started our Wednesday evening program where we are unpacking the four W’s. We are looking at what it means to be a youth group that embraces the Word, Worship, Walk, and Witness. Our time together has focused on what it means to be people who love the *word of God*, who love to *worship God* in all things, who embrace the sanctifying *walk* before us, and who embrace the call on our life to be *witnesses* of the gospel.

We launched into some new events this Fall that are paving the way for future relationships within the church: service projects, all-church events, and so forth. Unfortunately, due to increasing COVID-19 exposure, we had to cancel several events in the last two months of the year. But one standout ministry opportunity was the informational meeting for our Mission ’22 short-term ministry trip. After several years when we could not travel abroad, we plan to head back out on a youth mission trip in the coming year. Our launch of this team was an exciting new direction.

As this year has been filled with transitions and old and new events and programs, with concerns about COVID-19 still looming overhead, we have seen the abounding steadfast love and mercy of God ever before us. We have been blessed with volunteers who love our youth, a facility that feels like home, programs that exist for a reason, events that foster relationships, and a God who is faithful beyond all our wildest imaginations. Would you join us this coming year in praying that our youth would grow in their love for God, in gratitude for who he is and what he is doing both in their lives and through them to the lives of those around them?



Nathan Metcalf
Pastoral Resident for Youth, South

Keith Anderson

SENIOR ADULTS

Gray hair is a crown of glory; it is gained in a righteous life.—Proverbs 16:31

Listed below is what you should expect the *Ministerial Coordinator for Senior Adult Ministries* (for all campuses) to have done last year and what actually happened in 2021:

- *Visit the hospitalized, shut-in, and ill seniors of Bethlehem, and others as requested by staff or family.*
Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, visits to hospitals, senior residences, and even most church activities came to a halt much of the year. After many received a vaccine, quite a few seniors returned to an “almost normal” Sunday routine, including attending worship services and Ram King’s Friends class Downtown. Home visits increased from 2020, but with the precautions of masks or outdoor visits. We did not reach pre-virus visit levels.
- *Coordinate monthly Senior Sojourners events.*
Sojourners were cancelled January–March out of “an abundance of caution.” In April, local storyteller from the Parable Fund, Pati Kachel, presented on the life of Corrie ten Boom. This was via Zoom and in front of an audience. Tom Youngquist and Bob Ambler made the Zoom possible and are greatly appreciated! After another break, we resumed August 19, when the Bethlehem Baptist Church youth group from the 1970’s gathered to tell what God has been doing in their lives! This was an especially sweet time. The Nelson boys came in from Texas and many others came looking for those with whom they had grown up.
- *Champion seniors in all aspects of church ministry.*
I stepped off the elder council two years ago, but I have continued to bring seniors before the staff at our weekly staff and pastoral meetings. I will seek to continue this advocacy.
- *Coordinate the annual Christmas cookie delivery.*
Again due to COVID-19 restrictions, Christmas cookies couldn’t get distributed by the congregation. However, in their place, my wife, Mary, assembled krumkake for us to distribute at physically distanced spaces. It is a joy to have Mary come along on these visits.
- *Coordinate the annual Easter memorial flowers.*
Sixty-two members donated flowers in memory of their loved ones, and three teams of volunteers were able to bless the residents of three senior facilities with Easter flowers (one North, one Downtown, and one South). Thank you to all who donated an Easter flower!
- *Plan, coordinate, and assist with funerals as requested.*
Celebrating the end of life is challenging in a pandemic, especially for the families and loved ones of those who pass into glory. Several services were held. More memorial services will follow as COVID-19 restrictions loosen. I savor the sweet blessing of reading Scripture and praying with those who are only days, hours, or minutes from meeting Jesus face to face.
- *Process check requests for senior Sunday school donations.*
One area thankfully not significantly impacted by COVID-19!
- *Serve as one of the contact persons for requests for Bible study leaders in off-site senior facilities.*
Senior facilities currently seldom allow these types of gatherings.
- *Champion missions opportunities to seniors.*
As we like to say, “Jesus first, missions always.” Our seniors’ classes regularly host global partners in their classes in person and online via Zoom. Classes also maintain contact with their supported global partners and encourage regular prayer support. The *Global Partner Prayer Calendar* includes a wealth of information for how to pray for our global partners, memorize a weekly Scripture verse, and ways to contact and encourage our global partners.

Other Important Items to Note

It is by God's grace that I am able to do anything of value for our seniors ... and by the help of my (unofficial) ministry assistant and wife, Mary, and my official, shared-time, administrative assistant, Marianne Derfus. These two ladies are a godsend to this ministry and me!

Senior adult Sunday School classes continue to meet—both in person and online via Zoom!

In 2021, one GriefShare group provided support for people recovering from the loss of a loved one. The 13-week session includes videos and discussions, supported by a very useful workbook. Those who have attended gave positive comments about this biblically-based grief tool. This year the only GriefShare support group was offsite at the 7500 York Cooperative. It was well received by the residents that attended. Glen & Ruth Bloomstrom and Bob & Evie Wykstra, along with my wife, Mary, complete the GriefShare team. Many thanks to them for their hard work and diligence in serving the grieving.

The White Cross women's group continues to sew blankets for new moms and to complete other projects. MaryAnn Burnes leads this ministry at the Downtown Campus twice monthly, September through June.

A year ago the first COVID-19 vaccines were being administered to Minnesota medical staff. Virtually everyone was impacted by the 2020 pandemic. In many ways, 2021 saw more of the same dramatic impact.

The pandemic has continued and spread with multiple variations. Please pray with me that God would end this pandemic soon and that he would receive the glory for its ending!

If you have stayed with me and read this annual report this far, you are unusual! If you are the first person (staff excluded) to tell me that you have read my report, I'll give you a \$5 bill. The offer still stands.

Please contact me if you need a visit!



Keith Anderson
Ministerial Coordinator for Senior Adult Ministries

Brian Tabb

BETHLEHEM COLLEGE & SEMINARY

I am the vine; you are the branches. Whoever abides in me and I in him, he it is that bears much fruit, for apart from me you can do nothing.—John 15:5

It is a distinct joy and privilege to continue serving as *Academic Dean & Professor of Biblical Studies* at Bethlehem College & Seminary. The year 2021 marks my fifteenth year on staff at the school and my sixth year as an elder of Bethlehem Baptist Church. Both the church and school have faced various challenges in the past two years—including a global pandemic, unrest in Minneapolis, staffing transitions, and public scrutiny—yet I am incredibly grateful to God for his sustaining grace and hopeful as Bethlehem College & Seminary continues the good work of teaching students to treasure Christ above all things, to grow in wisdom and knowledge over a lifetime, and to glorify God in every sphere of life.

In 2021, Dr. Tim Tomlinson retired after 13 years of distinguished service as the founding president of Bethlehem College & Seminary. President Tomlinson guided the school through accreditation with ABHE, assembled a strong team of well-credentialed, God-centered faculty members, and established extension sites of Bethlehem in Cameroon, Hawaii, Memphis, and Rochester. The trustees enthusiastically called Dr. Joe Rigney to serve as the school's second president. President Rigney is a long-time faculty member of Bethlehem College & Seminary, one of the founding pastors of Cities Church in St. Paul, and is a teacher for desiringGod.org. He completed a Ph.D. in theology at the University of Chester and is the author of five books, including *Strangely Bright* (Crossway).

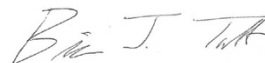
Additionally, the school hired five outstanding new faculty members in 2021: Dr. Joshua Greever as *Associate Professor of New Testament*, Dr. David Haines as *Assistant Professor of Philosophy and Theology*, Elizabeth Howard as *Assistant Professor of Literature*, Jonathon Woodyard as *Dean of Admissions and Assistant Professor of Theology & History*, and Timothée Davi as *Adjunct Instructor of Greek and Latin*. The school's faculty members published five books in 2021: John Piper, *Providence and Good News of Great Joy*; Joe Rigney, *More Than a Battle*; David Haines, *Natural Theology*; and I published *After Emmaus*. As one expression of the vital partnership between the church and school, three professors served as non-staff elders of Bethlehem Baptist Church (Brian Hanson, Andy Naselli, and myself), while Pastor Kenny Stokes and Pastor Chuck Steddom taught seminary courses in church planting, counseling, and worship.

Amid all the uncertainties and challenges of 2021, Bethlehem College & Seminary graduated 53 students in May and welcomed its largest ever incoming class of 95 students in August. During 2021, 321 students took classes for academic credit (including extension sites). This year Bethlehem's Minneapolis campus has welcomed students from 39 states as well as 17 international students from Canada, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Germany, India, Indonesia, Italy, Mexico, Myanmar, Nigeria, Singapore, and Vietnam. These students are actively involved in the life and ministry of Bethlehem Baptist Church's three campuses as well as other like-minded churches in the Twin Cities.

Under President Rigney's leadership, the school was once again certified as a Best Christian Workplace in 2021. The faculty and staff began the Fall semester with a two-day offsite retreat to build relational thickness and our fresh vision to equip and launch a movement of seriously joyful men and women to have a disproportionate Christ-exalting impact on the world. President Rigney identified three strategic initiatives for Bethlehem College & Seminary in the next five years:

1. *Get to scale* with 250 full-time students and \$2.5 million per year in contributions supporting the Serious Joy Scholarship;
2. *Strengthen the church-school partnership* with relationships of mutual trust and shared mission with Bethlehem Baptist Church;
3. *Broaden the base* with a wider circle of like-minded churches partnering with the school.

The call to abide in Christ from John 15 served as the theme for Bethlehem College & Seminary's chapel series this Fall. The staff and students reflected on the fundamental truth that apart from Jesus we can do nothing, and we sought to cultivate regular, prayerful, glad dependence on the Savior who satisfies our souls and supplies our needs. May we continue to abide in Christ, our life-giving vine, and so bear much fruit that abounds to his glory and our delight.



Brian Tabb
Elder; Academic Dean, Bethlehem College & Seminary

Reid Jilek

CAMPUS OUTREACH

“Remember therefore from where you have fallen; repent, and do the works you did at first.”—Revelation 2:5

I don’t know about you, but confusion is typically what I feel when I read the book of Revelation. However, as of late, I have been encouraged by a passage in Revelation 2.

In the passage, John is writing to the church in Ephesus. He says in verse three that they “have not grown weary.” Well, this has felt like an easy season to grow weary in. This season has held the immense weight of a global pandemic, division from the presidential election, and the death of George Floyd in our own backyard. Even just one of those things would be enough to cause weariness. All of these things have many effects on the relational ministry we do with college students. We’ve all been shaped and impacted over the course of the past year with feelings of confusion and grief. It has caused me to wonder, “God, what are you doing?”

In the following verse, Revelation 2:4, John says, “You have abandoned the love you had at first.” There are many different views on what this verse means, and I will not attempt to convince you of a view. However, one thing this year has taught us is to slow down, take a step back, and ask, “What is important? What matters? What are we focusing on?” As the *Regional Director of Campus Outreach Minneapolis*, I have paused to ask, “What is the primary focus of what we do? What is our first love as a ministry?”

Our mission statement (“Glorifying God by building laborers on the college campus for the lost world”) has to be the main focus and the heartbeat of our ministry.

John goes on in Revelation 2:5 to charge people to remember, repent, and change. It has been immensely helpful for us to remember God’s faithfulness. Remember the transforming work God has already done and is continuing to do. Remember that God has done a miracle in bringing our hearts from death to life. Remember that God is still at work; he is not done! In slowing down and remembering, Campus Outreach Minneapolis (and Campus Outreach nationally) has been evaluating ways we need to repent and change.

We want to be humbly dependent on God.

We want to focus on the health of our staff team.

We want to love and partner with our church.

We want to value all the gifts on our team.

We want to see God do “more than we could ask or imagine” on our campuses.

By prioritizing these things together as a staff team, we will continue to move toward our vision of fruit that abides. As we stop and think for next year, there will be many gains and losses, but one thing will remain the same: God’s love is unchanging and sustaining.

Read the full Campus Outreach 2021 report online at cominneapolis.org.



Reid Jilek
Regional Director for Campus Outreach Minneapolis

Steve Walmsley

CONTRIBUTIONS

This God—his way is perfect; the word of the LORD proves true; he is a shield for all those who take refuge in him. For who is God, but the LORD? And who is a rock, except our God?— the God who equipped me with strength and made my way blameless. He made my feet like the feet of a deer and set me secure on the heights.—Psalm 18:30–33

We look back on 2021 and marvel at the faithfulness of our Lord to keep his word and do amazing things to help us minister in the strength and through the resources that he alone provides. Thank you for being a fellow laborer with Bethlehem through the grace our Lord Jesus Christ has given—thank you for your prayers, financial gifts, and other practical offerings from what God has supplied to you, that equip Bethlehem to minister the gospel to many!

Contributions toward Bethlehem's "Fill These Cities: 25 x '25" general operating budget fund in 2021 totaled \$9,234,510. This total is 9.5% below our 2021 congregationally-approved budget of \$10,200,000 and a 1.1% decrease from 2020 budget contributions (that totaled \$9,333,431). In addition to budget fund giving in 2021, special designated gifts of \$140,402 were given toward the "Funding the Filling" existing mortgage reduction fund and were applied against our existing mortgage balance, along with our 7.5% of the budget going to mortgage payments. The ongoing "Fill These Cities: 25 x '25" initiative through 2025 means that our general budget fund giving is synonymous with and continues to include funding for the "25 x '25" initiatives.

The COVID-19 protocols continued into 2021, with limited seating capacity at live services through the end of May. The continued livestream option meant that utilization of online giving continued to be high, and it grew by 1% in 2021, with 66% of all contribution dollars coming in through our online giving portal via Bethlehem's website, Bethlehem's mobile app, and text-giving options. Setting up recurring giving schedules via the online

portal is a helpful way for donors to remove the weekly or monthly check-writing process from their schedule when they anticipate a regular, recurring amount to be given. Online donors are also encouraged to contribute via their bank account (ACH) rather than credit card, to assist in reducing Bethlehem's electronic transaction fees as well as to avoid potentially incurring personal financing charges against their credit card's balance.

In 2021, a total of 3,823 families, individuals, and organizations gave recorded contributions to the general budget, short-term ministry programs, Campus Outreach, and other ministries of the church. This number includes 1,990 donors from 1,837 families contributing to the general budget fund.

Remembering God's personal provision in 2021, join us in praying for him to bless Bethlehem's ministries this coming year, and consider how you can take part financially to serve others near and far, for the glory of his great Name.



Steve Walmsley
Financial Secretary

Tim Brinkmann

CHURCH TREASURER: BUDGET, INCOME & EXPENSES

It is required of stewards that they be found faithful.—1 Corinthians 4:2

The year 2021 was a difficult one for Bethlehem, due to the ongoing pandemic and the loss of membership resulting from various issues in the church. In the year of Bethlehem's 150th anniversary, we also saw much evidence of God's continued faithfulness to his people. Both giving and spending were below last year.

Total giving in 2021 was \$9,235K. The budget was set at \$10,200K, but actual spending was \$9,463K as the staff managed expenses to be below budget.

2021 Highlights

- Contributions were down \$98K (1.1%) from 2021.
- More than \$1.6M was given in December, which was 4% over the December budget.
- December 2021 actual giving was more than 10% higher than December 2020 actual giving.
- All three campuses had higher December 2021 giving than December 2020 actual giving.

- Net spending was down \$489K (4.9%).
- At year-end, outstanding external debt was \$7,474K, a decrease of \$680K from 12/31/20.
- The line of credit was at zero as of December 31, 2021.
- Total cash for all funds was \$2,587K as of December 31, 2021.

In 2021, the regional CPA firm Clifton Larson Allen finalized their audit of our 2020 financial statements. That audit report is available upon request. Unaudited financial detail for 2021 is provided on the following pages. If you have any questions related to the finances, please contact the church office and we will be happy to answer them.

Tim Brinkmann
Church Treasurer

Bethlehem Baptist Church

2021 Operating Fund (unaudited)

	ACTUAL	BUDGET	VARIANCE
General Contributions	9,234,510	10,200,000	(965,490)
Worship	436,716	430,360	(6,356)
Vision & Preaching	667,720	675,723	8,003
Media	355,479	418,499	63,020
Upreach	1,459,914	1,524,582	64,668
Family Discipleship	560	3,000	2,440
Nursery	77,391	125,095	47,704
Children	376,050	393,239	17,189
Middle School	189,539	234,247	44,708
High School	266,576	353,513	86,937
Disability	27,679	56,888	29,209
Library	4,901	8,500	3,599
Adult Discipleship	41,662	0	(41,662)
Small Groups	326,641	324,995	(1,646)
Men	1,185	2,300	1,115
Women	139,279	186,819	47,540
Seniors	45,992	46,667	675
Counseling	209,284	273,288	64,004
Member Care	4,042	0	(4,042)
Inreach	1,710,782	2,008,551	297,769
Leadership Development	390,441	392,034	1,593
Outreach Support	418,877	424,632	5,755
Neighborhood Outreach	256,371	321,478	65,107
Hispanic Outreach	19,834	28,057	8,223
Church Planting	344,199	384,056	39,857
Ministry Mobilization	22,019	39,165	17,146
Global Outreach	1,925,538	1,977,030	51,492
Outreach	3,377,279	3,566,452	189,173
General Administration	147,328	186,089	38,761
Office	112,244	113,526	1,282
Human Resources	20,715	60,492	39,777
Accounting	170,328	185,864	15,536
Giving	133,986	166,145	32,159
Communications	211,908	252,266	40,358
Information Technology	287,840	295,207	7,367
Building & Property	1,788,064	1,781,506	(6,558)
Kitchen	41,303	42,020	717
Four-plex	165	0	(165)
Undeveloped Property	1,174	17,300	16,126
Support	2,915,054	3,100,415	185,361
Net Expenditures	9,463,028	10,200,000	736,972
Net Surplus/(Deficit)	(228,518)	0	(228,518)

Bethlehem Baptist Church

2021 Net Assets, Cash & Loans (unaudited)

FUND	BEGINNING NET ASSETS	2021 SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	ENDING NET ASSETS
Cash			
Operating Fund	1,268,646	(485,301)	783,345
Helping Hand	213,624	(40,464)	173,161
Campus Outreach	673,049	(86,276)	586,773
STMM Projects	262,740	(30,051)	232,690
Designated Projects/Other	784,737	26,775	811,512
Total Cash	3,202,797	(615,316)	2,587,480
Fixed Assets	23,915,493	(575,616)	23,339,877
Current Assets/(Liabilities)	(240,037)	98,035	(142,002)
External Debt			
Mortgages	8,014,052	(657,783)	7,356,269
BGC Loan: Mesken Property	139,640	(22,075)	117,565
Line of Credit	--	--	--
Total External Debt	8,153,693	(679,858)	7,473,834
Net Assets	18,724,560	(413,039)	18,311,521

Bobby Ratliff

CHURCH BUSINESS RECORD

And Joseph stored up grain in great abundance, like the sand of the sea, until he ceased to measure it, for it could not be measured.—Genesis 41:49

The congregation of Bethlehem Baptist Church held all-church and campus-specific meetings in 2021, per the changes to the constitution and bylaws made in 2020.

The all-church meetings were:

- January 31, Quarterly Strategy Meeting
- April 25, Quarterly Strategy Meeting
- July 25, Quarterly Strategy Meeting
- October 17, Quarterly Strategy Meeting
- December 12, Annual Business Meeting

The campus-specific meetings were:

Downtown

- January 31
- April 24
- September 12
- November 14
- December 12

North

- January 31
- April 25
- September 26
- December 12

South

- January 31
- May 16
- July 17
- September 12
- December 12

The outcomes of these meetings are summarized by topic below:

Officers, Elders, Deacons, and Ministers

- On January 31, North deacon Stephen Prater was reaffirmed for a three-year term.
- On January 31, the following South deacons were called or reaffirmed for a three-year term: Greg Gee, Mary Hendricks, Jack Olwell, Marilyn Olwell, Bonnie Williams, Denny Williams, Matt Klugherz.
- On April 24, Chuck Steddom was called as *Pastor for Worship & Ministry Development, Downtown*, contingent on being released from his role as *Pastor for Worship & Ministry Development, South* at the May business meeting.
- On April 24, the following Downtown non-staff elders were called for three-year terms: Charles Kim and Chad Geyen.
- On April 24, Downtown deacon Jeff Noyed was reaffirmed for a three-year term.
- On April 24, René González was presented as *Pastoral Resident for Worship & Hispanic Ministry, Downtown*.
- On May 16, Nick Roen was called as *Pastor for Worship & Education, South*.
- On May 16, the South Campus approved the position change for Chuck Steddom (noted above).
- On May 16, Daniel Viezbicke's position was changed to *Pastor for Membership & Mobilization, South*.
- On September 12, Downtown deacons were called for a three-year term: Keith Anderson, Joey Bures, Julie Fee, Sean Fee, Jonell Kluver, Kelvin Kluver, Cynthia McGill, and Laurie McRostie.
- On September 12, Haddon Anderson was presented as *Church Planting Resident, South*.
- On September 26, Ben Katterson was called as *Pastor for Middle School & Family Discipleship, North*.
- On November 14, Kenny Stokes was called as *Pastor for Preaching & Vision, Downtown*.
- On December 12, Downtown elders were reaffirmed for a three-year term: Bud Burk, Paul Delahunt, and Kenny Stokes.
- On December 12, North deacons were reaffirmed for a three-year term: David Fuller, Jenny Fuller, Tim Richterkessing, and Laurie Walmsley.
- On December 12, North elders were reaffirmed for a three-year term: Dan Holst, Tim Johnson, Vince Johnson, Andy Naselli, and Steve Stein.
- On December 12, the following were called as North elders for a three-year term: Nick Brazis and Ryan Dembeck.
- On December 12, the following South elders were reaffirmed for a three-year term: Phil Nelson, Peter Thorpe, and Alan West.
- On December 12, the following all-church positions were elected for a one-year term:
 - » Steve Walmsley, *Financial Secretary*
 - » Tim Brinkmann, *Treasurer*
 - » Bobby Ratliff, *Church Clerk*

Budget

On January 31, Bethlehem approved the elder-recommended 2021 operating budget of \$10,200,000.

Mortgage Updates

Bethlehem Mortgage for North Campus

- \$1.01M Principal balance as of September 30, 2021
- Reduced by \$369K YTD

Bethlehem Mortgage for South Campus

- \$6.50M principal balance as of September 30, 2021
- Reduced by \$136K YTD

Church Membership

At the end of 2021, the membership roll stood at 2,305.

Other Business

On January 31, the congregation passed a motion that the full, unedited reports from the Ethnic Harmony Task Force be publicly released to the members of Bethlehem and, by the next QSM, the elder board and each campus present specific actions that have been taken as a result of the report's findings to more "practically reflect the ethnic and cultural diversity of our church and community."

Deaths of Members in 2021

- Roger Adams
- Sylvia Colehour
- Dawn Dettling
- Barbara Espland
- Dick Fast
- Harley Forest
- Judy Friesen
- Larry Friesen
- Darlene Hokanson
- Burt Kroon
- Scott Langlie
- Vladimir Lukashev
- René Maleski
- Larry Rice

Bobby Ratliff

Church Clerk