



IMPACT

“But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

ACTS 1:8

IMPACT





YOU WERE BORN TO
MAKE AN **IMPACT**





We want to thank you for grabbing a copy of this **IMPACT** booklet and for being a vital part of Lakeside Christian Church. You can think of this booklet as a pathway to helping you become a person of impact for Christ. Ephesians 2:10 says, “For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.” We hope you will discover God’s purpose for your life more deeply throughout the coming months.

This booklet is also a guide for how our Elder Team hopes to deepen Lakeside’s and Christ’s impact within the Greater Springfield area and outward to the ends of the earth. Proverbs 19:21 says, “Many are the plans in the mind of a man, but it is the purpose of the Lord that will stand.” God has great things in store for our Church!

Let me prepare you now. Impact requires commitment and sacrifice. It isn’t enough for us to merely hope for impact, or to possess good intentions. God is looking for faith and obedience. He honors our plans, but only when his Kingdom and purpose is the center of those plans. Psalm 37:4 says, “Delight yourself in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart.”

We urge you to make worship a priority and be a key part of God’s work at Lakeside. We encourage you to become more deeply rooted in group life, where you can lend strength to others. We are praying you will be sensitive to the Holy Spirit’s leadership in your life, as you pray and seek counsel through God’s word.

In Christ, Jon & Lara Morrissette



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ABOUT IMPACT



We are coming before God as a group of believers, putting everything on the table, trusting God to use us for His purposes. God uses our willingness, obedience, and commitment to Him to impact the world.

We're calling this new series IMPACT. Impact is about how God uses His Church, His committed body of believers, to change the world. God generously gives us all we have, even our lives. When we give it all back to Him, He uses our obedience to Impact this world. This isn't for us. Our desire is to enrich the Kingdom in every way and we get to be a part of that.

Through this series we are going to learn how to Impact Deep and Impact Wide through our obedience, gifts, time, and money. Everything we do is important and has Kingdom purpose. So, let's learn together how to make the biggest Impact for God's Kingdom in our church, in our families, in our communities, and in our world.

IMPACT GOALS

Our primary goal is that 100% of our people would go before God in this series and be transformed into agents of Impact for Him. We want people who are all in, who give their time, their gifts, and their money to make an Impact for the Kingdom.

Primary

100%

PARTICIPATION

Our secondary goal is raising \$250k in generous giving to fund what we believe God is calling us to do to “Impact Deep” and “Impact Wide” over this next season. This will cover around 20% of the cost of the remodeld sanctuary.

Secondary

250K



Kids

Restrooms

**INVEST IN WHAT YOU
BELIEVE IN**



IMPACT DEEP

Lakeside wants to deepen the Impact of our ministry.

We do this by organizing our budget into administration, next generation, adult ministry, and mission partners. We call this our “Core Fund” because it is the core, the life blood, of what Lakeside is about. We want to call our congregation into deeper generosity, deeper investment, and the kind of deeper relationships that create a deeper Impact.

By providing funding to these main areas, the goal for “Impact Deep” is to equip every person in the Lakeside family to live sent.



ADMINISTRATION: items related to the operation of our campus such as utilities, decimating debt, technology, janitorial, and administrative salaries



NEXT GENERATION: Discipleship and programming for our Lakeside Kids, Students, and Young Adults ministries (including staff salaries)



ADULT MINISTRIES: Programming and items related to community groups, weekend services, and discipleship initiatives (including staff salaries)



MISSIONS: Items related to outreach that supports the city, state, national, and world-wide mission of the church



*better
together*
Women's Brunch
2017

LAKE SIDE DEMOGRAPHICS



FAMILIES | The largest demographic of people we see come through our doors are young families looking for a place to call home. Our welcoming atmosphere, attention to family values, and holistic family ministries make young families feel as if they belong.



STUDENTS | Lakeside is a natural home to students of all ages. Our authentic and connective Students programming draws students into a dedicated environment for Junior High, High School, and College students to experience God.



KIDS | Our safe, fun, and interactive Kids Ministry has caused for an attendance boom for our infants-5th grade age range! We attract families because of our dedication to excellence in our Kids programming.



EMPTY NESTERS | Lakeside has a large population of people who are digging deeper into church involvement after their children have grown up and left home.

“The church lies at the very center of the eternal purpose of God. It is not a divine afterthought. It is not an accident of history.”

- John Stott







THE CHURCH IS GOD'S PLAN A



IMPACT WIDE

Lakeside doesn't only want to Impact Deep through our investment in the church. We want to Impact Wide by expanding our capacity to reach out into our community and world.

While our "Core Fund" focuses on the operating aspects of our church, the "Vision Fund" strategically widens Lakeside's impact through funding specific projects that will increase our activity and presence in Springfield.

We have a Vision at Lakeside: We want to be a community of people who are sold out to the mission of Jesus, who make an impact in our world through living out the Gospel in our communities.

We believe that our vision projects are essential to move the Impact of Lakeside forward but, remember: Unfunded vision becomes added debt.

VISION PROJECTS

WORSHIP SPACE
RENOVATION



PROPERTY & FACILITY
IMPROVEMENTS

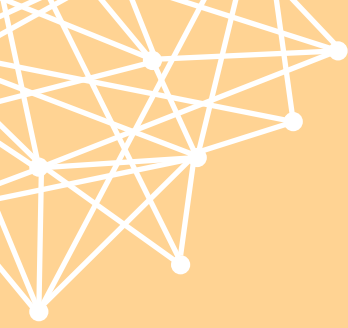


LANDSCAPING



PARKING LOT





VISION



WORSHIP SPACE RENOVATION

As an Elder team, we sense the need for a more intimate worship space. We believe that a dedicated worship space that is intentionally designed and distraction free will enable a significantly high percentage of people to connect with God as they engage in worship.

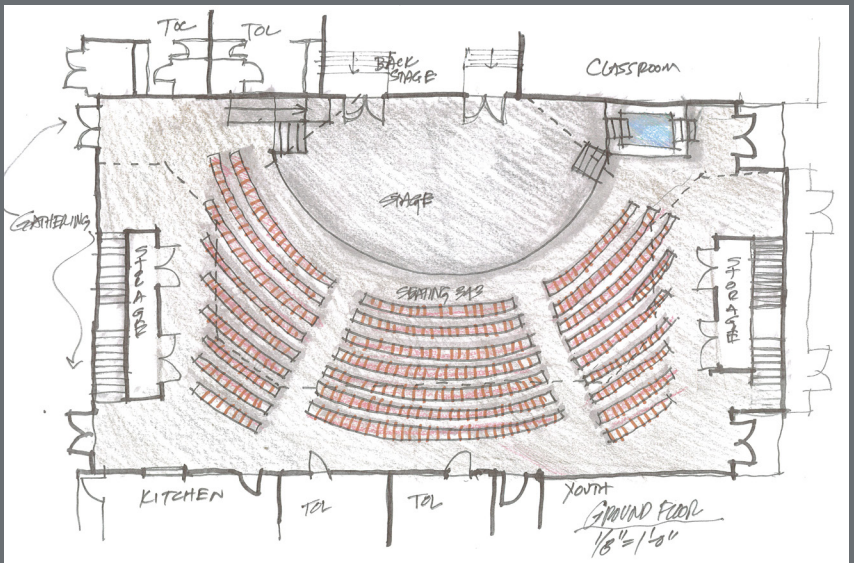
We are currently in conversation with an architect, have viewed two locations where similar work has been done, and have received a basic sketch for a worship space renovation.

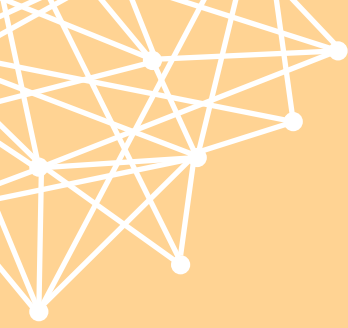
While we are extremely excited about the transition of our worship space there are a couple of milestones that we feel we need to hit as a church before we can begin the renovation.

PROJECTS

We need to average a weekly attendance that exceeds 500 people.

We need to have saved enough to cover at least 20% of project before we proceed. That means roughly \$250,000 given to the Vision Fund.





VISION



PROPERTY & FACILITY IMPROVEMENTS

There are several other projects in addition to the worship space renovation that need to be taken care of as well. For our campus to be safe, beautiful, and maintain appropriate capacity we will need to address the following items.

Front Entrance Landscaping | We already have plans to give our front entrance a face lift with beautiful flowers and flowing water features.

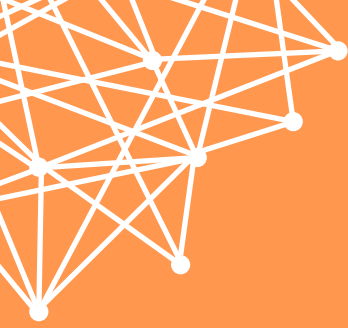
Parking Lot Repair | While it isn't a glamorous project, the need to repair our crumbling parking lot is obvious. We have a two-phase plan to resurface our parking lot.

PROJECTS

Parking Lot Addition | As we grow, the need for the additional north end parking spaces will become inevitable.

Elementary Renovation | We have identified that our current elementary space will soon be a limiting factor. With a few modifications and the removal of a few walls our elementary area will better serve the needs of our elementary ministry.

Staffing | Our staff are a priority. We want to take care of our growing staff team and continue to ensure that they are appropriately compensated. As a growing church, we will need to hire additional high quality staff to continue to meet the needs of a growing ministry.



LOCAL



LEWIS MEMORIAL CHRISTIAN VILLAGE

LMCV is a continuous care retirement community for those in need of assisted living. Volunteers are always needed to encourage residents, share conversation, sew name tags on clothing, help with crafts and activities, prepare tables before meals, throw parties, and engage in other practical ministry.



LAKE SPRINGFIELD CHRISTIAN ASSEMBLY

Known as LSCA, this camp has provided summer camps and retreats for over 70 years for the sake of developing camper's Christian walk. LSCA's mission is to see people of all ages make life changing decisions to be more like Christ. The camp offers an environment to deepen relationships, laugh, sing,

IMPACT

pray, swim, and canoe. Volunteer opportunities are endless with the large area to maintain, numerous people needed to lead and assist with camps and retreats, cooks, clean-up crews and many more.



THE JAMES PROJECT

The James Project is a mission with the vision of making a difference for over 500 foster children in Sangamon County. This mission offers many opportunities for volunteering through tutoring, providing a meal, transporting needed items, helping with home repair or yard maintenance and more. The James Project works to recruit Christian adults as potential foster parents and are willing to invest time in mentoring those interested. If you have a heart for orphans, there are many ways you can do something to help.



GLOBAL



MYANMAR HOPE

Started by the Cherry's in Springfield, IL, this mission helps meet the needs of the Myanmar people holistically. With the help of native pastors, Myanmar Hope provides an improved education experience for children from poor families through their Hope Boarding School. Myanmar Hope provides emergency medical treatment, Bibles, hymnals and songbooks in their native language, bicycles, radios, training to local pastors. Lakeside currently supports 3 native pastors through Myanmar Hope.



PIONEER BIBLE TRANSLATORS

Lakeside has the privilege to support this crucial ministry with some of our very own church

IMPACT

members out in the field. Pioneer Bible Translators translates the Bible into unreached people groups' languages and oversee literacy programs to teach the people to read. Based in Dallas, Texas they send teams to work with people groups to translate God's word accurately. Pray for peace in the countries, open hearts to hear God's word, and passion to continue God's work.



TAKING CHRIST TO MILLIONS

TCM is an educational, church planting, discipleship ministry of Europe and Central Asia with emphasis on preparing nationals to serve their own people. These students already know the language, cultural practices, and people they serve - plus they are strategically used by God to share Christ in resistant areas.

*“Joy is
the serious
business
of heaven.”*

- C.S. Lewis



The Cost of Following Jesus
 9:35-38 - 12:83-85

"When Jesus saw the crowd about him, he grew sad; he began to say to the side of the lake?" "There a teacher of the law came to him and said, 'Teacher, will you follow me wherever you go?' Jesus replied, 'Foxes have holes and birds have nests, but the Son of Man has no place to lay his head.'"

"Another disciple said to him, 'Lord, first let me go and bury my father.'" "Let the dead bury their own dead," Jesus answered. "Follow me and I will give you life."

Jesus Calms the Storm
 8:23-27 - 12:86-91

9:23-34 - 12:92-101

"Then he got into the boat and his disciples followed him. Without warning a furious storm came up on the lake so that the waves swept over the boat. But Jesus was sleeping. The disciples woke him and said, 'Lord, save us and we will perish.'" "Lord, we are dying!" they cried. "Where is your faith?" Jesus asked. "You of little faith, why are you so afraid?" Then he got up and rebuked the winds and the waves, and it was completely calm.

"What kind of man is this? Even the winds and the waves obey him!"

The Healing of Two Demon-possessed Men
 9:35-38 - 12:102-107

"When he arrived at the other side of the region of the Gadarenes, two men possessed with evil spirits met him, coming out of the tombs. They were so wild and fierce that no one could pass that way. 'What do you want with us, Son of David?' they shouted. 'Have you come here to torture us before the appointed time?'

"Whether distance from them a large crowd of people was following. The two begged Jesus, 'If you drive us out, please send us away to the herd of pigs.'" "Then, 'Go!' So they came out and went into the pigs, and the whole herd rushed down the steep bank into the lake and died in the water.

"Those feeding the pigs ran off, went into the town and reported all this, so that the whole herd of pigs was destroyed. The herd was so large that it was impossible to bury them. Instead, they were thrown onto a steep bank and when they came down they trampled with their hooves the people of that region."

Jesus Heals a Paralytic
 9:35 - 12:112-119

"Jesus stepped into a boat, crossed over and came to his own town. A crowd soon brought to him a paralytic, lying on a mat. When Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, 'Take up your mat and go home.'" "But he said to himself, 'This fellow is blaspheming!'" Jesus said, "To see that you understand and thought as I do, I will ask you a question. What do you think? Whom do you call your Lord?" "We call the Lord God," they answered. "And you say, 'I am the Son of Man.' Whom do you think the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins?" Then he said to the paralytic, "Get up, take your mat and go home." And the crowd got up and went home. "When the crowd saw they were filled with awe and they glorified God, who had given such authority to him."

The Calling of Matthew
 9:10-13 - 12:120-127

"The next day Matthew sat at a tax collector's booth. After sitting at the booth a while, he saw Jesus go by and follow him. Matthew went home with Jesus.

"After Jesus had finished talking to Matthew's friends, he called him and went with him to the Pharisees. When the Pharisees saw this, they asked the disciples, 'Why does your teacher eat with tax collectors and sinners?'"

"The hearing this, Jesus said, 'Is it the healthy who need a doctor, or the sick? The one who is healthy does not need a doctor, but the one who is sick does. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners.'"

Jesus (Re)builds His Church
 16:18-19 - 12:128-137

"When Jesus finished saying these things, he said to his twelve apostles, 'I am sending you out two by two and telling you this: Do not carry gold, silver or copper coins in your pockets, or a traveler's bag, or a double tunic, or sandals, or a staff, or a walking stick. But you are to wear sandals and to carry the staffs. For you will not be without any of these things.' He also said to them, 'Whoever hears these words and puts them into practice will not be rejected by me; whoever does not will be rejected by me and my Father who is in heaven. Anyone who speaks words and does not act on them will be rejected by me and my Father who is in heaven. Anyone who hears these words and does not act on them will be rejected by me and my Father who is in heaven.'"

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LIFE SUFFICIENTLY
GIVE EXTRAVAGANTLY



NEXT STEPS

During this season, we are asking you to go on a spiritual journey with God and your family to take the biggest step of generosity you've ever taken. We want you to strongly consider what it means to give extravagantly to Impact the world for the Kingdom.

Here are four steps that we are specifically asking you to take in this journey:

1. PRAY FERVENTLY | Pray that God would use you, with your specific gifts, talents, time, and resources, to make disciples and glorify Christ. Pray that he would do abundantly more than we could ever ask or imagine for His Kingdom. Pray against any fear or doubt in taking steps of obedience towards God.

2. ATTEND REGULARLY | Help us to reach our goal of 100% participation in this life-changing journey. Stand in solidarity with your church family. Commit to coming faithfully and consistently through this series. Make weekend services a priority and commit to being at weekend services from Aug 27 to Nov 26.

3. COMMIT FULLY | Own the vision of Impact and become invested throughout this series. Engage in the Impact study guides through being in a community group. We want you to commit to be present in this series to gain wisdom and perspective on how to impact your church and community.

4. GIVE GENEROUSLY | Ask God to show you in this series what sacrificial generosity looks like. Take whatever bold steps are required to see it through. Live life with palms open, ready to give and receive when God places opportunities in front



GROUPS

Life was not meant to be lived alone. We impact deep when we invest in relationships within the church.

At Lakeside, we believe that the Spirit works through Groups. This happens when you engage in community through Groups. Groups provide a sense of connection and security as we all tackle life together.

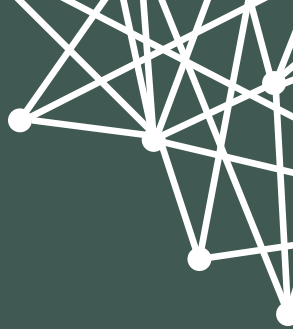
We have a variety of Groups available that are designed and committed to meeting you where you are. We have Men's Groups, Women's Groups, Mixed Groups, Groups for different life stages such as Junior High, High School, Young Adult, and 55 plus. Make Groups a priority by meeting weekly with others.

To get connected simply drop by the Welcome Desk after any service at Lakeside. You can check out all our Groups online at lakesidechristian.com and sign up for a Group hassle free. Also, make sure you attend Lakeside on September 3 to easily meet Group Leaders and sign up for a Group at our GroupLink event!





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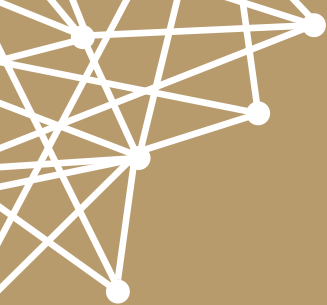
TEAMS

What We Do Together Matters.

One of the most important ways to Impact Wide is to use your gifts and talents to serve the church.

Whether it's behind the scenes or upfront and personal, we have many service opportunities where you can find the perfect fit for you and your family. From serving the Lakeside Kids to serving people coffee on a Sunday morning, from programming lights for our Sunday morning service to welcoming people at the front door, we have opportunities that fit virtually any life stage or interest.

Sign up on the Teams page on the Lakeside Website and experience the meaning, community, and impact found in serving your church.



WHY GIVE?

God is Our Provider - He promises to provide for our needs. The Bible teaches that everything we have comes from God and belongs to Him. Psalm 24:1 says, "The earth is the Lord's and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it." Therefore, we are mere stewards of what God has given to us. Tithing is giving back to God what is already His.

Together, we work as a church to reach the lost. The local church you are attending is the mechanism God is using to impact a world that desperately needs Him. By partnering our monies together, God's work is done more effectively and we are able to partner with Him in the work that He is doing.

Trust God by giving to Him even when it seems impossible and allow Him to show you His provision for your life.



LAKESIDE CHRISTIAN CHURCH



Sundays 9:00am, 10:15am, 11:30am
lakesidechristian.com



WAYS TO GIVE

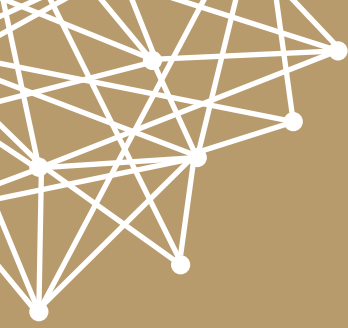


We offer a variety of ways to respond generously to a generous God.

Sunday Morning Service | Every week at Lakeside we pass the offering buckets. Feel free during our offering time to drop some money or a check into the bucket as it is passed in service.

Online | The online giving program is configured to accept direct payments from checking or savings accounts and also accepts credit and debit card payments. Online giving is set to what you feel comfortable with, so you can set up how much you want to give and how often you want to give. To track your giving you can request a giving statement from the church office at any time or by looking at your history of giving online by clicking on our Give page on the Lakeside website.

Text to Give | 77977

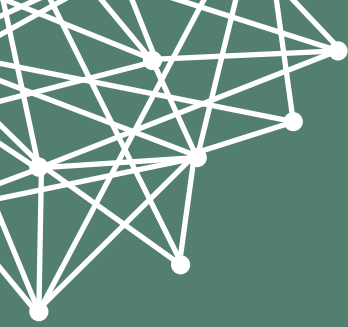


ICOM

At **LAKESIDE** we believe in the importance of **MISSION**, both local and global. The International Conference on Missions in Peoria, IL is a great way to begin to understand how you are connected with the local and global mission of the **CHURCH**.

ICOM exists to encourage, equip and enlist workers for the harvest. The theme for this year's conference is "Together: God's plan to redeem the World" and it will focus on working together to be a part of God's redemption of the world. We are to work together as men and women, youth and elders, professionals and social outcasts, to be citizens of one global village, one body, one spirit, one faith, one hope, and one God and Father of all.

This conference will have over 575 exhibit booths, 125+ workshops, children's programming, and will highlight 5 moving speakers. ICOM is from November 16-19 in Peoria, admission will be free, and we will be attending ICOM together as a church. If you are interested in attending ICOM sign up in the lobby on September 24, October 1, or October 8!



LEE

Lee Elementary School is a local elementary school that is right in Lakeside's backyard. We choose to invest in Lee because we want to Impact the students, teachers, and staff of Lee.

MENTOR

Lee Elementary has a reading program that we staff with volunteers. Volunteers get to spend one lunch period a week with a student who needs help in progressing their reading skills. This volunteer ends up creating a relationship with a child who is, most often, in need of a stable and supportive relationship in their life. On top of that, we get experience growth of the students through the year in their reading, sharing, and confidence.

PROJECTS

ADOPT A CLASS

We encourage our Lakeside Groups to invest in a classroom at Lee Elementary. We call this program Adopt-a-Class and it serves to deepen the relationships that we have with the teachers and staff at Lee. Our Groups choose to partner with a Lee Elementary classroom for a whole year and provide for any needs that might come up. This is one the most impactful ways to impact this school, by choosing to pursue relationships with the people of the school.

EVENTS

This fall we are hosting a Trivia Night in Lee Elementary's honor. We are raising money for the new reading program at Lee this year! We will be selling tables at \$10 per seat and will have SO much for you to do at this event! There will be snacks, refreshments, entertainment, table decorating contests, and stories of impact from the staff and teachers at Lee Elementary. We cannot wait for September 22 at 7:00pm, so buy your tickets now!

SMALL GROUP GUIDE



Jesus called his Church to be a people of impact. But what does this mean? What might this look like?

As it stands, life is tough. Real tough. The average believer is content coping with life's challenges, or just getting through another week of responsibility. The church isn't doing so great either. Nowadays it's not always clear whether the church is having a bigger impact on culture, or the culture is having a greater impact on the church. Where do we find the time or energy to also impact God's world? How would God direct us to live individually, or better function as a church?

There is nothing new under the sun. From the beginning, churches and believers have struggled to make an impact. This will never change. It is the nature of the church's calling and the work that lay before us to utterly depend upon God. But to encourage us along the way, the Holy Spirit inspired the book of Acts and the New Testament letters. These Scriptures paint a vivid picture of how a church of impact functions. More than this, they outline some core principles that, along with God's power and favor, promise to deepen our impact in God's world.

We hope you will make worship a priority over these coming months. We are praying that you will become relationally rooted in groups, that you will seek the presence and power of God's Holy Spirit in your life, that you will discover your mission in the world, and that you will hunger to know and capably share the good news of Jesus Christ.

SMALL GROUP SCHEDULE

9.10.17	GROUP
9.17.17	GROUP
9.24.17	GROUP
10.1.17	OFF WEEK
10.8.17	GROUP
10.15.17	GROUP
10.22.17	GROUP
10.29.17	OFF WEEK
11.5.17	GROUP
11.12.17	GROUP
11.19.17	GROUP
11.26.17	OFF WEEK

SCRIPTURE

PRAY FOR OPEN HEARTS AND MINDS AS GOD LEADS US BY HIS HOLY SPIRIT AND INVITES OUR CHURCH TO MAKE A VITAL IMPACT IN OUR LOCAL COMMUNITY.

READ Matthew 28:16-20, Matthew 22:36-40, and Acts 1:4-8.

REFLECT on Acts 1:8

“On one occasion, while he was eating with them, he gave them this command: “Do not leave Jerusalem, but wait for the gift my Father promised, which you have heard me speak about. 5 For John baptized with water, but in a few days you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit.” Then they gathered around him and asked him, “Lord, are you at this time going to restore the kingdom to Israel?” He said to them: “It is not for you to know the times or dates the Father has set by his own authority. 8 But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth.”

SUMMARY: **MOVED BY MISSION**

A Church of Impact is moved by mission. At the end of his ministry, Jesus cast an expansive, worldwide vision of every person on earth hearing the gospel. Jesus' vision is often called the "Great Commission" and is spelled out in Matthew 28:16-20. Can you imagine a more extraordinary challenge than reaching every person on earth with the gospel? God is deeply concerned about the quantity of people reached by the gospel (Acts 2:41, 2:47, 4:4, 5:14, 6:7, 9:31, 11:21, 11:24, 14:1, 16:5, 17:4, 18:8).

The Great Commission speaks as much about the quality of disciple Jesus desires as the quantity of people he wants us to reach. There is a temptation to pit church growth against church health, but Jesus was concerned with both.

One way to think about church health is teaching people to obey everything Christ commanded starting with faith and baptism (Matthew 28:19-20). We can also look to the "Great Commandment," in Matthew 22:36-40. Jesus tells us that the two greatest commandments (or marks) of being a disciple are to love God and love people. He also says that the totality of the Law and the Prophets hang on these two simple commandments.

What does all of this mean for our church? For Jesus' grand vision to be meaningful, we must discern the practical steps God would have us take as a church today. For example, in Acts 1:8 Jesus urges the disciples to wait for the Holy Spirit before engaging in mission. He also encourages the disciples to begin the mission locally in their city (Jerusalem) before expanding outward (to the ends of the earth). In regard to Jesus' mission, there is a time to "wait" and a time to "act." What is the Spirit saying now to you and our church?

STUDY GUIDE

- 1. What is the most exciting thing you have been part of (i.e. project, organization, group)?**
- 2. Read Matthew 28:19? Why does “making disciples” matter? How do you understand Jesus’ command to “go?” What kind of relationships are necessary for making disciples?**
- 3. How does Jesus define healthy disciplemaking in Matthew 28:20? What does it mean to teach people to obey... everything... Christ commanded? Break these phrases down.**
- 4. What is the scope of being a healthy disciple in Matthew 22:36-40? Which aspects of discipleship are most difficult or easy to neglect? Do you consider yourself a healthy or unhealthy disciple?**
- 5. Why do we pit church growth and church health, or evangelism and discipleship, against one another?**
- 6. Why did Jesus command his disciples to wait for the Holy Spirit in Acts 1:4-5? Why is the Holy Spirit necessary to obey the Great Commandment and the Great Commission?**
- 7. Lakeside seeks to help people find God, follow Jesus, and flourish for God’s glory. Would you and your group commit to praying for Jesus’ mission to be fulfilled?**
- 8. How might you and your group advance the mission of Jesus? What opportunities do we have on our front door step here in Springfield?**

SCRIPTURE

PRAY FOR GOD TO STRENGTHEN GROUP LIFE AND PARTICIPATION WHILE MULTIPLYING THE TOTAL NUMBER OF GROUPS AVAILABLE.

READ Acts 2:42-46, Hebrews 10:24-25, Matthew 18:20.

REFLECT on Acts 2:42-46.

“They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.”

SUMMARY: **SERVES IN GROUPS**

A Church of Impact serves in groups. E.M. Bounds is famous for saying, “The Church is looking for better methods, God is looking for better men.” Throughout the ages, God called upon individuals to serve in extraordinary ways. Can you think of any examples? What about Moses, Nehemiah, or Ezra? What about Jesus or the Apostles? But what if there is more to success than the solo efforts of a few extraordinary people?

Moses was crushed by the needs of Israelite community until Jethro urged him to appoint leaders of tens, fifties, hundreds, and thousands (Exodus 18:18). Nehemiah’s plans would have gathered dust without the builders being organized into groups and assigned portions of the wall (Nehemiah 3). Ezra’s teaching would have fallen on deaf ears without the heads of households teaching their families (Nehemiah 8). Jesus utilized the Twelve in his ministry tours (Mark 6:10, Luke 10:1). The Apostles utilized teams, and pairs of people, to plant churches (Titus 3:12-15).

God is certainly looking for better people. Heroes are always welcome. But groups are God’s primary method. Study the book of Acts and observe how the gospel advances through the collective efforts of like-minded, Spirit-led communities of men and women. The reason heroes seem so extraordinary is because we give them too much credit. We overlook the anointing of God’s Holy Spirit. We overlook the entourage of like-minded, Spirit-led groups of believers who labor alongside them shouldering the actual work. We are stronger together with God, and with one another. Plus, our impact is exponentially greater!

STUDY GUIDE

- 1. Who is somebody in your personal life you admire for accomplishing extraordinary things? How do you think they accomplished so much and succeeded so well?**
- 2. Describe a time you struggled to do something without God. What changed as you began to rely upon God's presence and power? What is the difference between relying on God instead of your own strength?**
- 3. Describe a time you struggled to do something without God's people. Why is the impact of "two or three" exponentially greater than just "one?"**
- 4. Read Matthew 18:20. God says that when 2 or 3 are gathered in His name, He is there. What does this tell us about how God's Holy Spirit works through groups? How might the Spirit be hindered when we go it alone?**
- 5. The Bible is filled with "one another" commands (i.e. love, encourage, pray for one another). How many can your group find in the Bible? How are small groups uniquely positioned to practice these commands? Why is it hard to experience these in a worship gathering?**
- 6. Read Acts 2:46-47. Why don't we experience the daily growth that the early church did?**
- 7. We need more groups to fulfill the mission Jesus has given us. Would you consider hosting, or being trained to launch a new group? What intimidates you about this idea?**

SCRIPTURE

PRAY THAT OUR CHURCH WILL CONSISTENTLY PURSUE CHRIST IN WORSHIP, WITH GREAT EAGERNESS AND DEVOTION.

READ Acts 2:1-13, Acts 2:37-47, Acts 5:12, Hebrews 10:24-25.

REFLECT on Acts 2:40-41, 2:46-47.

“When the people heard this, they were cut to the heart and said to Peter and the other apostles, “Brothers, what shall we do?” Peter replied, “Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. The promise is for you and your children and for all who are far off—for all whom the Lord our God will call.” With many other words he warned them; and he pleaded with them, “Save yourselves from this corrupt generation.” Those who accepted his message were baptized, and about three thousand were added to their number that day. They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favor of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.”

SUMMARY: **GATHERS REGULARLY**

A Church of Impact gathers regularly. In larger places, hundreds or even thousands could worship as one body. In more intimate settings, dozens of people could meet for worship, teaching, or a shared meal.

It's not hard to imagine how both dynamics enabled the church's witness. From the earliest days, believers gathered in one another's homes for teaching, fellowship, shared meals, and prayer. The more intimate environment allowed them to be responsive to one another's needs, be faithfully present in the nooks and crannies of their communities, and be able to multiply their impact.

A large gathering provides a visible testimony of the strength of God's movement, demonstrates our unity, and reminds us that we are part of something much greater and more powerful than just ourselves (Ephesians 4:1-5). An extraordinary example of a large gathering occurred on the day of Pentecost, in Acts 2. Everyone in the city of Jerusalem, including visitors from every nation on earth, witnessed the power of the Holy Spirit falling upon God's people. Because of the outpouring of God's Spirit, people were "amazed and perplexed" (2:12). As Peter preached, "people were cut to the heart" and asked, "What shall we do?" (2:37). Thousands of people believed in Jesus and were baptized out of obedience to the gospel (2:41). The whole city was shaken by the visibly gathered church, unable to ignore God's power and glory. There will only be one "day of Pentecost." But how might our worship reflect some of these same elements?

STUDY GUIDE

- 1. What is the largest gathering you have ever attended?**
- 2. What do large gatherings communicate? What impact does inconsistent attendance have on Jesus' mission?**
- 3. The Greek word for church is "ekklesia" it had the idea of "being called out of the world." How would you describe the benefits of gathering "regularly" with other Christians?**
- 4. Read Acts 2:1-13. There will only be one "day of Pentecost." But how might our worship reflect some of these same elements? How many different people witnessed the outpouring of God's Spirit?**
- 5. Describe a time when you, perhaps as an unbeliever, were impacted by the worship of believers? Can we be too concerned about seekers in worship?**
- 6. As you consider the greater Springfield area, what groups of people can be impacted by seeing a strong, vibrant fellowship of believers gathered together at Lakeside?**
- 7. Read Revelation 4 and 7:9-12. How would you define worship? How is worship today a rehearsal for heaven and eternity? How well are you rehearsing for the future?**

NOTES

SCRIPTURE

PRAY FOR GOD TO DEEPEN YOUR UNDERSTANDING AND DISCIPLINE OF UNCEASING PRAYER.

READ Acts 1:12-14, 1:24-25, 2:42, 4:23-31, 13:1-3, 16:25-26.

REFLECT on Acts 4:23-31

“On their release, Peter and John went back to their own people and reported all that the chief priests and the elders had said to them. When they heard this, they raised their voices together in prayer to God. “Sovereign Lord,” they said, “you made the heavens and the earth and the sea, and everything in them. You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David: “Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth rise up and the rulers band together against the Lord and against his anointed one. Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed. They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen. Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. Stretch out your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus.” After they prayed, the place where they were meeting was shaken. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.”

SUMMARY: **PRAYS RELENTLESSLY**

A Church of Impact prays relentlessly. Prayer is one of the most visible indicators of faith. It was said that the Puritans prayed with such fervor, God would blush not to answer! The early church gathered for prayer at every critical juncture of her existence.

We discover two types of prayer in Acts. First, the church prayed to have fellowship with God. They saw prayer as a way of communing with God Himself, and not just getting things from God. Second, the church prayed for God's work to advance. Just as they believed God had acted in the past, they fully trusted God to act in the present. For many reasons, they prayed regularly and expectantly.

A quick scan of the book of Acts reveals how the church saw a vital connection between prayer and her impact as the church. From the very beginning of Acts, we find them waiting in prayer to receive power (ch.1). They joined constantly in prayer to consider the person best fit to take the mantle of apostolic leadership (ch. 1). They met together in their homes to pray for one another's lives and needs (Ch. 2). They prayed for God's healing power to be displayed in people's lives (ch. 3). They prayed for deliverance in the face of personal attack and political persecution (ch. 4-5). They distributed ministry responsibility so that the ministry of the Word and prayer would not be neglected (ch. 6). Stephen sought God's presence in prayer as he was being murdered (ch. 7). They prayed for wisdom to resolve controversial matters and protect the church's unity (ch. 15). They prayed for God to open people's hearts to be receptive to the gospel (Acts 16). A church of impact understands the power and priority of prayer.

STUDY GUIDE

- 1. What is the most difficult circumstance you have ever prayed about? How did God respond?**
- 2. What Bible verse has most influenced your prayers? Please share it with your group.**
- 3. Read Matthew 6:5-15. What are some of the key points Jesus makes about prayer?**
- 4. Read Luke 18:11-13. What do you think is the most important issue in prayer?**
- 5. Read Matthew 7:7-12. How confident do you feel that God hears and answers your prayers? If God hears, why doesn't he always seem to respond? Why is it important to trust God's goodness while praying?**
- 6. Read Philippians 4:6-7. What kinds of things are appropriate to pray about? What shouldn't we pray about?**
- 7. Read Colossians 1:1-13. How would you characterize Paul's prayer life? What kinds of things does Paul pray about?**
- 8. Read 1 Thessalonians 5:16-19. What keeps you from praying? How can your group strengthen its practice of prayer?**

SCRIPTURE

PRAY THAT GOD WILL HELP YOU EXCEL IN THE GRACE OF GIVING AND ENABLE YOUR CAPACITY FOR DEEPER GENEROSITY.

READ Acts 4:32-37, 11:27-30, 2 Corinthians 8-9

REFLECT on Acts 4:32-37.

“All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had. With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And God’s grace was so powerfully at work in them all that there were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales and put it at the apostles’ feet, and it was distributed to anyone who had need. Joseph, a Levite from Cyprus, whom the apostles called Barnabas (which means “son of encouragement”), sold a field he owned and brought the money and put it at the apostles’ feet.”

SUMMARY: **GIVES GENEROUSLY**

A Church of Impact gives generously. In Acts 4:33 we find the Apostles proclaiming the resurrection. Jesus didn't consider equality with God something to be used for his own advantage, but made himself nothing. He took on the very nature of a servant, and as a servant, humbled himself by becoming obedient unto to death—even death on a cross. Therefore, God exalted Jesus to the highest place and gave him a name above every name.

As the early church contemplated Christ's sacrificial manner of life, they couldn't help but translate his example into everyday acts of generosity. For them, generosity was worship. Acts 4:33-34 records how God's grace powerfully compelled the believers to share their possessions, give generously to people in need, and even make larger sacrifices of land and houses. The urgency of Christ's mission radically reoriented the church away from materialism toward generosity, and away from individualism toward unity.

To people outside the Church, generosity is mind boggling and is often ridiculed as being foolish. Take 2 Corinthians 8-9 as example. Even people facing severe trials and extreme poverty felt compelled to give. They were so overwhelmed by the generosity of God, their poverty welled up in rich generosity. They gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability to give. They excelled in the grace of giving, seeing the act of giving more as a privilege than a duty. The reason? They knew the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for our sake, he became poor so that we through his poverty might become rich.

STUDY GUIDE

- 1. Describe a time you were deeply impacted by someone's generosity.**
- 2. Why do people feel generosity is so hard? What case could be made "against" generosity?**
- 3. Read Acts 4:32-33. What are some creative ways the church practiced generosity?**
- 4. Read Romans 12:6-11. What are some non-financial ways we can also demonstrate generosity?**
- 5. Read 2 Corinthians 8:1-7, 9:6-15. How would you describe the Macedonians? What reasons are given for their generosity? What impact did their generosity have on other believers? What does Paul promise God will do whenever we give? Should we wait until we're rich to give? In what ways are already "rich" enough?**
- 6. Read Matthew 6:1-4 and Acts 5:1-11. Why does integrity matter so much in regard to generosity?**
- 7. Why does generosity matter in the church? What case could be made for "financial" generosity? How have you been blessed by being generous toward others? What is your testimony about generosity?**
- 8. How is God's grace compelling you toward generosity? What steps do you feel led to take?**

NOTES

SCRIPTURE

PRAY FOR WISDOM IN HOW TO COMPASSIONATELY CARE FOR PEOPLE WHILE ALSO HELPING THEM BELIEVE IN JESUS.

READ Acts 3:1-16, Matthew 25:31-46,
Mark 2:1-12

REFLECT on Acts 3:1-16

“One day Peter and John were going up to the temple at the time of prayer—at three in the afternoon. Now a man who was lame from birth was being carried to the temple gate called Beautiful, where he was put every day to beg from those going into the temple courts. When he saw Peter and John about to enter, he asked them for money. Peter looked straight at him, as did John. Then Peter said, “Look at us!” So the man gave them his attention, expecting to get something from them. Then Peter said, “Silver or gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, walk.” Taking him by the right hand, he helped him up, and instantly the man’s feet and ankles became strong. He jumped to his feet and began to walk. Then he went with them into the temple courts, walking and jumping, and praising God. When all the people saw him walking and praising God, they recognized him as the same man who used to sit begging at the temple gate called Beautiful, and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.”

SUMMARY: **SHOWS COMPASSION**

A Church of Impact shows compassion. Every day we're exposed to people facing personal crisis, severe trials or extreme poverty. One day, as Peter and John were going up to the Temple for prayer, they encountered a man who had been lame from birth. His family and friends assumed they had no recourse but to bring him to the Temple where he could beg for money. They imagined that if only people would shower him with enough silver and gold his life might improve. When Peter and John engage him, he hopes to receive some serious coin.

Many people feel their deepest needs are material or financial. The assumption is that if we throw cash at a situation, the problem will be solved. Peter and John realized this man's deepest need was for a faith relationship with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. He needed a Lord, because his whole life had been governed by material ambition and energies centered on his personal needs. He needed a Savior, because only the One who rose from death to life had the power to heal his body and save his soul (see also Mark 2:9-11).

How should we respond to a person in need? Sometimes we assume that if we can't resolve a person's perceived needs we don't have anything of value to offer. Peter and John acknowledge that they don't have any silver or gold to offer the man. What they do possess, however, is the good news of Jesus Christ. When the man believes on Jesus the man experiences healing and suddenly becomes strong enough to now care for himself. He enters the temple jumping and praising God and people were amazed.

STUDY GUIDE

- 1. Are people's deepest needs fundamentally material and financial? Why is it easier to throw money at a person or situation? What are some other alternatives?**
- 2. Read John 9:2-3. Does every need have a spiritual cause? Are needs only the result of a person's lack of faith?**
- 3. Read Mark 2:1-12. There is a great call in the church to engage in social justice. What is the larger perspective of ministry that Jesus speaks to in this story? What happens when we try to help people without also inviting them to trust Jesus for salvation?**
- 4. Read Acts 3:1-16. How do Peter and John keep the focus on Jesus as news of the man begins to spread? How can we sometimes get in the way of what God wants to do through our ministry?**
- 5. The Apostles were given authority to heal the sick and raise people from the dead. What authority have you been given, as a believer, to help others? What material or non-material things has God placed under your authority that could be used to truly help a person in crisis?**
- 6. Read Matthew 26:6-13. What does it mean for a church to be a "faithful presence" for Christ in a community? Did Christ command us to resolve all the needs we encounter?**
- 7. Groups break once a month. How can your group use this as an opportunity to serve our community or perhaps someone in need?**

SCRIPTURE

PRAY FOR GOD TO STRENGTHEN THE UNITY OF OUR CHURCH IN REGARD TO FAITH AND OBEDIENCE.

READ Acts 4:24, 32; Acts 15, Acts 18:18-28, 19:1-7, Philippians 2:1-4.

REFLECT on John 17:20-23

“My prayer is not for them alone. I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me. I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one— I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.”

SUMMARY: **PRACTICES ONENESS**

A Church of Impact practices oneness. Pollster George Barna conducted a study which revealed that 92 percent of Americans claim to be independent. We want to be independent financially. We want to be independent relationally, preferring isolation over engagement. We want to be moral free agents, unpressured by other's expectations. We want to be independent spiritually and theologically. Independence isn't just a virtue, it's often a point of pride and personal identity.

In Matthew 12:25 Jesus warns, "Every kingdom divided against itself will be ruined, and every city or household divided against itself will not stand." There are many dangers facing the church in the world, but the church can pose a danger to herself. At times, the early church was deeply divided about things like leadership succession, how to distribute money, circumcision, eating meat, days of worship, a wide range of moral issues, even baptism. What would have happened if the believers flaunted their independence instead of seeking common unity in Christ?

Henry Ford said, "Coming together is a beginning. Keeping it together is progress. Working together is success." The Early Church resolved to come together and work through difficult issues with the goal of achieving complete unity. Their unity was both preserved and proclaimed through ordinances like baptism and the Lord's Supper. They continually looked to Christ's example, God's written word, and God's Holy Spirit as their guide for faith and practice. They embraced Christ-ordained authority positively while avoiding the dangerous ditch of authoritarianism. In matters of faith they pursued unity, in matters of opinion they granted freedom, but in all things practiced love.

STUDY GUIDE

- 1. Why do we so deeply value our independence? What is the upside of our independence? What is the downside of our independence?**
- 2. When have you experienced a church or group of people torn apart? Why did people find it difficult to maintain unity?**
- 3. When have you experienced a church or group of people united? What enabled the group to be united? What was the group able to accomplish?**
- 4. Read Romans 14:1. What issues of faith are non-negotiable? What are some examples of non-essential, disputable matters?**
- 5. Read 1 Corinthians 1:10-17. What is at the center of so many quarrels in the church? How can we practically live out 1 Corinthians 1:10 with other believers?**
- 6. Read 1 Corinthians 13:1-13. Why does love matter so much? Were these verses written just for weddings, or for a broader purpose?**
- 7. What role does Christ's example, Scripture, and the Holy Spirit play in maintaining unity?**

SCRIPTURE

PRAY FOR GOD TO GIVE YOU, AND OUR CHURCH, GREATER BOLDNESS TO LIVE FOR JESUS AND PROCLAIM THE NAME OF JESUS.

READ Acts 4:18-22, 7:54-8:3, 12:1-18, 17:1-9, 18:9-11

REFLECT on Acts 5:27-33.

“The apostles were brought in and made to appear before the Sanhedrin to be questioned by the high priest. “We gave you strict orders not to teach in this name,” he said. “Yet you have filled Jerusalem with your teaching and are determined to make us guilty of this man’s blood.” Peter and the other apostles replied: “We must obey God rather than human beings! The God of our ancestors raised Jesus from the dead—whom you killed by hanging him on a cross. God exalted him to his own right hand as Prince and Savior that he might bring Israel to repentance and forgive their sins. We are witnesses of these things, and so is the Holy Spirit, whom God has given to those who obey him.” When they heard this, they were furious and wanted to put them to death.”

SUMMARY: **FACES DANGER**

A Church of Impact faces danger. From the beginning, the early church suffered persecution. One moment they were praising God and enjoying the favor of all people. The Lord was adding to their number daily those who were being saved. Thousands of men and women were being baptized including priests and influencers within the city of Jerusalem. But the next moment, Peter and John were being called before Jewish authorities to explain their words and actions. The authorities were disturbed about their teaching and sought to silence the Apostles. They commanded Peter and John not to speak or teach in the name of Jesus.

The first persecution came from religious institutions and insiders, not secular authorities. Peter and John had a tough decision to make, along with the early church. Do they obey God or obey men? Do they respect the wishes of the authorities or do they continue proclaiming the name of Jesus? In Acts 8 violent persecution breaks out against the church. The tension in Jerusalem had reached a breaking point. A zealous Pharisee named Saul literally went house to house seeking to arrest any believers he found. Everyone, except the Apostles, fled Jerusalem and scattered throughout Judea and Samaria. Whatever the authorities had hoped to achieve totally failed. The first believers shared Jesus everywhere they were scattered and the rest is history!

Later in life (see 1 Peter), Peter reflected at length upon the suffering and persecution he experienced. There are legitimate reasons to suffer for Christ, but there can also be unnecessary suffering. Some Christians consider it a service to God to escalate tension whether in their family, or workplace, or community. Peter encouraged Christians to pursue peace, and exercise wisdom and discretion, while being bold for the gospel of Jesus Christ.

STUDY GUIDE

1. What is the greatest danger you ever faced in life?
2. Read Matthew 10:22. Why does hostility exist toward the Kingdom of God? Why do people feel threatened? What implications of the gospel do people find so difficult to accept?
3. Read 2 Timothy 3:12. How does serving Jesus have political, economic, job-related, or social ramifications for you? If we're not being persecuted, are we getting something wrong?
4. Why isn't the church in America persecuted more? Some has said that personal peace and affluence have become idols in the American Church. Do you agree? What might change as a church deepens and widens her impact?
5. Read Jesus' advice to his disciples in Matthew 10:16. What does it mean to be as "shrewd as snakes" and "innocent as doves" in the face of danger? What are some of the ways Christians unnecessarily escalate conflict with unbelievers?
6. Read 1 Peter 3:8-4:19. What are some key principles Peter teaches about suffering?
7. Where are you most lacking courage in your Christian witness? How can your group pray for you to have greater boldness?

SCRIPTURE

PRAY FOR THE CHURCH TO BUILD ITSELF UP IN LOVE, AS EACH MEMBER USES THEIR GIFTS TO SERVE.

READ Exodus 18, Acts 6:1-7, Ephesians 4:11-13, 1 Peter 2:4-5

REFLECT on Acts 6:1-7

“In those days when the number of disciples was increasing, the Hellenistic Jews among them complained against the Hebraic Jews because their widows were being overlooked in the daily distribution of food. So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together and said, “It would not be right for us to neglect the ministry of the word of God in order to wait on tables. Brothers and sisters, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom. We will turn this responsibility over to them and will give our attention to prayer and the ministry of the word.” This proposal pleased the whole group. They chose Stephen, a man full of faith and of the Holy Spirit; also Philip, Procorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas from Antioch, a convert to Judaism. 6 They presented these men to the apostles, who prayed and laid their hands on them. So the word of God spread. The number of disciples in Jerusalem increased rapidly, and a large number of priests became obedient to the faith.”

SUMMARY: EMPOWERS MINISTRY

A Church of Impact empowers ministry. As a church grows, it faces increasingly complex needs and challenges. In Acts 6 the church was experiencing explosive growth. The needs of widows in the church were being overlooked. You can imagine how powerfully this group might have made their case. In James 1:27 we were told how pure and faultless religion involves looking after orphans and widows in their distress! The church looked to the Apostles to personally “be the solution” to this emerging problem. How could they neglect such a priority?

The Apostles saw this crisis differently. The church was right to be concerned about widows and to seek immediate resolution of the matter. What they didn’t understand was that God was calling the church to “be the solution.” Within the church were many competing priorities. There was concern for widows, but there was also concern for the ministry of the word and prayer. How could the church give energy to one priority without compromising the other? The answer is that every member of the Church must be empowered for ministry. Just as the Apostles were to called to the ministry of the word and prayer, others were called to care for widows.

Rick Warren observed that the church has experienced two great reformations throughout history. The first put the Scriptures back into the hands of the church. Luther translated the Scriptures into the language of ordinary people, and the invention of the Guttenberg Press enabled the Bible to be distributed on a mass scale. The reformation is putting ministry back into the hands of the church. Instead of looking to professionals to “do” the ministry, ordinary believers are realizing their call to “be” a priesthood of all believers (see 1 Peter 2:4-5). The church can only flourish when the whole body answers God’s call to “be the solution.”

STUDY GUIDE

- 1. How many people can the average individual care for at one time? What happens when a person gets stretched too thin with responsibilities?**
- 2. Stephen Covey encourages people to categorize tasks by importance and urgency. Why is it easier for leaders to neglect the ministry of word of prayer than care for widows?**
- 3. Read 1 Peter 2:4-5. What does Peter mean when he describes the church as a “priesthood of all believers.” Should certain types of ministry be off limits to ordinary believers?**
- 4. Read Exodus 18:13-24. How did Moses’ approach to ministry affect his family? How did it affect the Israelites? How did it affect Moses personally? What was Jethro’s advice to Moses?**
- 5. Read Ephesians 4:11-16. What is the primary purpose of church leaders? Who is primarily responsible for building the church up in love? What happen when the work is pushed off on “professional clergy”?**
- 6. Sometimes people complain in the hope that somebody else will answer the call God is putting on our heart. What is your part in building the church up? What are your areas of strength and giftedness?**
- 7. How can the leaders of Lakeside better equip you to be a minister? How can you support their work?**

SCRIPTURE

PRAY FOR GOD TO HELP LAKESIDE MULTIPLY KINGDOM WORKERS AND BECOME MORE FRUITFUL IN CHURCH-PLANTING.

READ Acts 8:1, 11:19-26, 13:1-5, Matthew 25:14-30

REFLECT on Matthew 9:35-38

“Jesus went through all the towns and villages, teaching in their synagogues, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom and healing every disease and sickness. When he saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few.”

SUMMARY:

PLANTS CHURCHES

A Church of Impact plants churches. How do we define success? Is success planting a seed? Is success helping a seed germinate? Is success nourishing a seedling until it takes deeper root? Is success helping a seedling grow into a fruit-bearing tree? Is success a tree casting its seed, enabling a whole new tree to emerge? Is success mere reproduction or multiplication? Within every seed lay the potential of an orchard.

In the church, there is a temptation to settle for a lesser definition of success. When a church begins to bear fruit, it's tempting to sit back and become comfortable. But what if a church were to think bigger than achieving its own individual success? What if a church were to think not just in terms of reproduction but in terms of multiplication? In Acts 11, 13, and 14 we discover a church hungry for multiplication.

How did the Church in Acts multiply? The Church made it a priority to continually send out apostles, missionaries, and workers to expand the geographical footprint of the church. The normative pattern in Acts is for churches to become “sending” churches—churches that raise up workers and churches that plant other churches. These new churches fueled the rapid expansion of the gospel to the ends of the earth. It's also worth noting that most of the people being sent, including the Apostles themselves, were unschooled ordinary people (Acts 4:13).

What might this look like today? At one time, throughout the Midwest, Christian Churches and Churches of Christ were established in virtually every community large and small. In Chicagoland, organizations like Ignite are leading efforts to plant “church-planting” churches. All around the world, the gospel is spreading rapidly as churches are being planted.

STUDY GUIDE

- 1. How do you define success? Seed, seedling, tree, or orchard? What level of fruitfulness have you achieved as a believer? What level of fruitfulness has our church achieved?**
- 2. Why should a church consider planting other churches? Why does it matter?**
- 3. What might be involved in planting a new church? What is intimidating about the idea? What hesitations would you have?**
- 4. Read Matthew 9:35-38. How would you describe the harvest field?**
- 5. Read Acts 10:9-20. What new direction for mission did Peter discover in prayer? Who has God caused you to become concerned about?**
- 6. Read Mark 1:35-58. How did Jesus maintain his focus on God's work?**
- 7. Read John 4:34-42. How did God use the Samaritan woman in an unforgettable way?**
- 8. What is involved in planting a church? How can you personally get involved in a church-planting effort?**

SCRIPTURE

PRAY FOR GOD TO HELP YOU MASTER THE GOSPEL STORY SO YOU CAN SHARE IT WITH OTHERS.

READ Acts 2:22-36, 1 Corinthians 15:1-11

REFLECT on Acts 2:22-36.

Acts 2:22-24; 29-33;36

“Fellow Israelites, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know. This man was handed over to you by God’s deliberate plan and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.

“Fellow Israelites, I can tell you confidently that the patriarch David died and was buried, and his tomb is here to this day. But he was a prophet and knew that God had promised him on oath that he would place one of his descendants on his throne. Seeing what was to come, he spoke of the resurrection of the Messiah, that he was not abandoned to the realm of the dead, nor did his body see decay. God has raised this Jesus to life, and we are all witnesses of it. Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear.

“Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Messiah.”

SUMMARY: SHARES JESUS

A Church of Impact shares Jesus. The highest call of the church is to hold out Jesus to the world, as the only hope for salvation. The danger is that we bury the headline of the gospel of Jesus Christ by giving front page attention to someone or something secondary. Sometimes church activities, programs and events become a message in themselves. Sometimes the way a church promotes its own success, or brand, or denomination detracts from the centrality of Jesus. Sometimes church leaders make their personality or spirituality a focal point, stealing glory from Christ. Sometimes churches are so consumed with being “relevant” they opt for populist messages that are more apt to build a big crowd than true disciples. It is the highest priority of the church to focus its attention specifically on the person and work of Jesus Christ. This happens through all our preaching, teaching, and worship.

Sometimes we get the headline right (i.e. it’s all about Jesus) but miss the story of Jesus altogether. We love Jesus but we’re unable to offer a compelling explanation as to why! The early church mastered the story of Jesus so they could proclaim the gospel clearly and powerfully. How would you answer some of these questions: Who is Jesus? Why did his Jesus life matter? What does it mean to call Jesus the “Christ”? How do the ancient Scriptures find their fulfillment in Jesus? How does Jesus fit into the grand narrative of God’s salvation history from the beginning to the end? What did Jesus teach about the Father, his own identity, the Holy Spirit, and the Church? What’s so significant about Jesus’ death, burial, and resurrection? Why should we trust the gospel account of Christ’s life? What do we learn about God’s love, mercy and grace from the life of Jesus? What do we learn about the coming judgment, salvation, or the afterlife?

STUDY GUIDE

- 1. Scan a recent newspaper, news website, or your social media feed. How do the various headlines create a focal point? How well do the stories backup the headlines?**
- 2. If you were to write a headline for our church, what would it be?**
- 3. What is the most compelling story you could share if someone asked you to explain your faith?**
- 4. Why is it easier to talk about “our church” than our Lord and Savior Christ Jesus? Can we unintentionally detract from the message of Jesus by focusing too much on our church? Explain.**
- 5. Read Acts 2, or any of the sermons in Acts. What facts do the Apostles most emphasize about Jesus?**
- 6. Read 1 Corinthians 15. What are the core facts of the gospel message? What if we get the gospel wrong?**
- 7. Read the italicized questions in the last paragraph above. Which questions are you confident answering? Which questions do you need help answering? Talk through the answers as a group.**
- 8. What is your personal testimony about Christ? What were you like before you knew Christ? How did God get your attention? What steps of faith did you take? What has God done in your life since then?**

SCRIPTURE

PRAY FOR GOD TO HELP US REACH PEOPLE FAR FROM GOD WITH THE GOOD NEWS OF JESUS.

READ Acts 2:22-36, Acts 17:16-34.

REFLECT on Acts 17:16-34.

Acts 17:22-28

“Paul then stood up in the meeting of the Areopagus and said: “People of Athens! I see that in every way you are very religious. For as I walked around and looked carefully at your objects of worship, I even found an altar with this inscription: TO AN UNKNOWN GOD. So you are ignorant of the very thing you worship—and this is what I am going to proclaim to you. “The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by human hands. And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything. Rather, he himself gives everyone life and breath and everything else. From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands. God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us. ‘For in him we live and move and have our being.’ As some of your own poets have said, ‘We are his offspring.’”

SUMMARY: **REACHES CULTURE**

A Church of Impact reaches culture. Today people are less than willing to trust the Bible over and against any other kind of truth. The hard sciences have assaulted and delegitimized faith as a way of knowing. Secularists have made the teachings of Scripture, especially in regard to morality, suspect. Our culture's distorted ideas of love and tolerance have pitted God's love against God's righteousness. Helping people find God through faith in Jesus Christ is a monumental task.

Our preference might be to reach for people who are already warm to the faith. An example of this type of ministry is found in Acts 2, as Paul preaches to those who share his common Jewish history and knowledge of the Hebrew Scriptures. But what if our task isn't to merely gather like-minded believers?

Most churches grow through transfer growth. This is when a believer leaves one church for another. Transfer growth creates the illusion of vitality while glossing over the often sad reality of our missional ineffectiveness. In contrast, conversion growth is when a person becomes a believer for the very first time through a church's ministry. True conversion growth comes through the hardest labor and isn't the result of building on someone else's foundation (see Romans 15:20-21). If we're truly aspiring for "conversion" growth we're touching people whose beliefs and values are radically different than our own. An example of this type of ministry is found in Acts 17, as Paul preaches to people entirely unfamiliar with Jewish history or the Hebrew Scriptures.

Timothy Keller said, "Even the most outwardly focused, evangelistic churches continue to reach mainly people with traditional mind-sets because their communication expects hearers to carry that historical imprint of Christendom. Yet fewer and fewer find the messages comprehensible, much less persuasive. How do we communicate the Christian faith now, in this increasingly secular world?"

STUDY GUIDE

- 1. When have you had difficulty explaining something to a foreigner?**
- 2. Read Romans 15:20-21. How do you understand the difference between transfer growth and conversion growth? Why is one easier and the more difficult? What kind of growth most often occurs in our church?**
- 3. Do you have any truly unchurched friends? What do they think, feel, or assume about Christianity?**
- 4. Why do strong appeals to Biblical authority often fall flat with unchurched people?**
- 5. Read Acts 2:22-36. What key themes does Peter include or exclude?**
- 6. Read Acts 17:16-34. What key themes does Paul include or exclude?**
- 7. How would you answer Tim Keller's question: "How do we communicate the Christian faith now, in this increasingly secular world?" What are practical ways we can reach culture?**

SCRIPTURE

PRAY FOR GOD TO GIVE YOU STRENGTH, ENCOURAGEMENT, AND FAITHFULNESS IN ALL THINGS.

READ Acts 20:22-38, 2 Corinthians 6:3-10, 2 Timothy 4:7.

REFLECT on 2 Corinthians 6:3-10

We put no stumbling block in anyone's path, so that our ministry will not be discredited. Rather, as servants of God we commend ourselves in every way: in great endurance; in troubles, hardships and distresses; in beatings, imprisonments and riots; in hard work, sleepless nights and hunger; in purity, understanding, patience and kindness; in the Holy Spirit and in sincere love; in truthful speech and in the power of God; with weapons of righteousness in the right hand and in the left; through glory and dishonor, bad report and good report; genuine, yet regarded as impostors; known, yet regarded as unknown; dying, and yet we live on; beaten, and yet not killed; sorrowful, yet always rejoicing; poor, yet making many rich; having nothing, and yet possessing everything.

SUMMARY: **REMAINS FAITHFUL**

A Church of Impact remains faithful. Jesus' developed his disciples through stages of maturity. When Jesus first met his disciples, he offered the simple invitation, "Come and see" (John 1:39-41). His initial goal was to capture their curiosity. Jesus' promise was that if we "seek" God we will "find" God.

As the disciples gained a clearer understanding of his identity, Jesus called them to a place of commitment. His invitation was "Come, follow me, and I will make you fishers of men" (Matthew 4:19). As we trust Jesus, and cooperate with his Lordship, God makes us into useful instruments for His own Kingdom and glory. In the Great Commission Jesus emphasized that we're not just teaching to satisfy people's curiosity about God. We are teaching people to live in commitment, "to obey everything" Christ commanded. (Matthew 28:16-20)

With deeper commitment came Jesus' invitation, "Be with me" (3:13-18). Once he had the disciple's cooperation he commissioned them, sending them out in pairs to speak the words and complete the works God had prepared for them since the foundation of the world (Ephesians 2:10). The largest segments of the gospels record Jesus' effort to both model and train his disciples to pray, preach, serve, love, sacrifice, and "do ministry."

As Jesus prepared to die, he invited his disciples, "Remain in me" (John 15:4). He promised that he would be present with them through his Holy Spirit though he would be physically absent. His call was that they would remain faithful in his service even unto death. The majority of the New Testament captures the difficult circumstances the Apostles and early believers were willing to endure for the sake of Christ. Without faithfulness, there would be so little gospel fruit. Christian faith now, in this increasingly secular world?"

STUDY GUIDE

- 1. What is the hardest thing you have ever had to endure? What happened?**
- 2. Read Acts 7:55-58, Acts 23:11, and Mark 16:20. How does God make his presence known to us in times of trouble, danger, or discouragement?**
- 3. What does it look like to grow in faithfulness? How did Peter grow in faithfulness throughout the gospels? Was he always just faithful, or did he learn to be faithful over time?**
- 4. Read John 15:1-8. What does it mean to “remain” in Jesus? Why is it so difficult to remain in Jesus?**
- 5. Read Romans 5:4. How might God’s word encourage our faithfulness?**
- 6. Read Romans 15:30-33. How might we, as the body of Christ, encourage one another’s faithfulness? Why do we find it so hard to ask others for encouragement?**
- 7. What is the relationship between faithfulness and fruitfulness? Can we be faithful but not fruitful? Can we appear fruitful while not truly being faithful? Explain.**
- 8. How have you exercised faith in the past? How has God answered your prayers? How can you use your story to encourage the faith of someone who is facing challenging times?**

SCRIPTURE

PRAY THANK GOD FOR ALL THE WORK HE IS DOING THROUGHOUT OUR CHURCH AND COMMUNITY

READ 13:46-52, Acts 16:25-34, Colossians 1:3-8, Romans 15:13

REFLECT on Colossians 1:3-8.

We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, because we have heard of your faith in Christ Jesus and of the love you have for all God's people—the faith and love that spring from the hope stored up for you in heaven and about which you have already heard in the true message of the gospel that has come to you. In the same way, the gospel is bearing fruit and growing throughout the whole world—just as it has been doing among you since the day you heard it and truly understood God's grace. You learned it from Epaphras, our dear fellow servant, who is a faithful minister of Christ on our behalf, and who also told us of your love in the Spirit.

SUMMARY: **CELEBRATES VICTORY**

As believers, we possess a deep reservoir of joy. Perhaps you remember the joy you felt when you first trusted in Jesus, turned from sin, confessed Jesus as Lord, pledged your allegiance to Jesus in baptism, received forgiveness, or sensed the presence and power of the Holy Spirit in your life. An example of this is the Jailer in Acts 16:34, who was filled with joy because as his whole family responded in faith.

Another source of joy is seeing other people follow Jesus. All around us people are seeking and finding God for the first time. People are growing in God's grace and demonstrating their faith in remarkable ways. People are bearing fruit by making other disciples—multiplying themselves through evangelism and discipleship. Throughout Acts the church breaks into praise, and is filled with joy, because of the work God is doing among them. An example of this is found in Acts 13:52. Despite the persecution, the church rejoices because the word of God is spreading and Gentiles are coming to faith.

Another source of joy is hope in Christ's death, burial, and resurrection. Despite everything the church experienced, they remained "joyful in hope, patient in affliction, and faithful in prayer" (Romans 12:12). This is perhaps best captured in Paul's letter to the Philippians. Paul had profound joy despite his imprisonment, the hardships being caused by "not-so-well intentioned" Christians (1:15-18), his fading health (1:20-22), his physical suffering (2:29-30, 3:10), even his own poverty (4:11-13). What was the secret to his joy? It was hope. Throughout the letter, he expresses total confidence not only is God working, but God is bringing everything to completion for the day of Christ Jesus (1:6, 1:19, 2:8-11, 2:13, 3:10, 2:20-21, 4:7, 4:13, 4:19).

STUDY GUIDE

- 1. As Thanksgiving approaches, what are you most thankful for?**
- 2. How do you define joy? How is joy similar or different than happiness? Can you have one without the other?**
- 3. Read 1 Thessalonians 1:6. How did you respond the first time you heard the gospel? Why?**
- 4. Read Acts 8:4-8. How can joy be contagious and affect an entire city?**
- 5. Read Colossians 1:3-8. What evidence have you seen of God's work in people's lives? Who has found God for the first time? Who is learning to follow Jesus more fully? Who is bearing fruit, or flourishing, as a disciple maker?**
- 6. Read Philippians 1:3-6 (or some of the other verses cited). What is the nature of the Apostle Paul's joy?**
- 7. Read Ephesians 1:15-23. What portrait does Paul paint of our future? How might this portrait of hope encourage us today?**
- 8. Read the paragraphs above. At this stage in your life, which aspect of joy is most relevant to you now?**

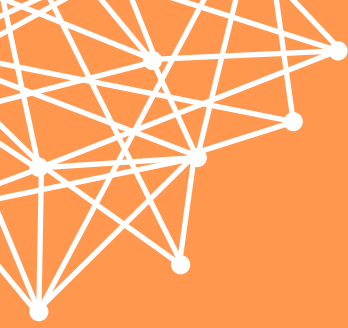


***“God is calling
His church to
fish in deep
blue waters”***

A CHURCH OF IMPACT HELPS PEOPLE FIND GOD

Helping people find God is a monumental challenge. People are drifting farther from God than ever before. They do not understand the message of Christ. They are deeply suspicious of truth claims and cynical about authority. They are less willing to anchor their life to some church or to the Bible's teachings. They would rather drift spiritually than risk commitment. They find themselves without God and without hope, lost at sea.

To use a metaphor, most churches prefer fishing in the shallow “red water” closest to the bank. The water is red because the fiercest competition for fish occurs along the banks, or in the safety of the harbor. Meanwhile, in deep “blue water”, there are billions of fish who have never seen a boat, much less a fisherman. Churches understand that it is a whole lot easier to reach someone who is already warm to Christianity than conducting a search and rescue operation in deeper water for someone who has never known the name of Jesus much less belonged to a church. But God is calling His church to fish in deep “blue waters.”



***“A healthy disciple
at Lakeside is
committed to
believing in Jesus,
becoming like Jesus,
building up Christ’s
body, and being sent
to fulfill Jesus’ mission
in the world.”***

A CHURCH OF IMPACT HELPS PEOPLE FOLLOW JESUS

Discipleship is all about relationships. John 3:16 says, “For God so loved the world, He sent his One and Only Son Jesus Christ into the world that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life.” There is no clearer command in the New Testament than to “believe” in Jesus. But there is more.

Before Jesus ascended into heaven He promised to send his Holy Spirit into the world. God’s desire was that in addition to believing in Jesus we might “become” like Jesus, and participate in God’s divine nature. The Holy Spirit transforms us from the inside-out, enabling us to lead transformed lives.

Following Jesus isn’t just about ourselves. Jesus promised that he would “build” his church and that the gates of hades would never prevail against the church. The foundation of the church is faith. The power of the church is God’s Spirit. But work of the church is expressed in Ephesians 4:16, where the church is called to “grow” and “build” itself up in love “as each part does its work.”

Finally, the church is called to “be sent” on mission into the world. In John 20:21 Jesus tells his disciples, “Peace be with you! As the Father has sent me, I am sending you!” The church doesn’t exist for its own sake, but for the sake of God’s Kingdom and Glory.

A “healthy” disciple at Lakeside is committed to believing in Jesus, becoming like Jesus, building up Christ’s body, and being sent to fulfill Jesus’ mission in the world.



“If you are a healthy disciple are you willing to let our Church develop your exponential potential?”

A CHURCH OF IMPACT HELPS PEOPLE FLOURISH

Imagine the potential that a seed possesses within itself. Within a single seed lays the potential of a sprawling orchard! Now imagine the potential of a disciple. In John 15:8 Jesus declares that it's, "to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples." In fact, Jesus' final instructions to his disciples in Matthew 28:18-20 was that we would "Go and make disciples of all the nations on earth."

As a church we want to release the disciple-making, disciple-multiplying potential of every Christ follower. You can think of disciple-making disciples as concentric rings of impact! If you are a healthy disciple are you willing to let our Church develop your exponential potential?

The L1 Challenge | Are you feeling called to lead one or person to faith?

The L10 Challenge | Are you feeling called to minister to a group of ten or more believers?

The L100 Challenge | Are you feeling called to develop other discipling leaders?

The L1000 Challenge | Are you feeling called to pastor the overall movement of Jesus at Lakeside?



GENEROSITY



LADDER

In his book the Generosity Ladder, Nelson Searcy challenges Christians to grab the next highest rung of the generosity ladder.

Initial Giver | Giving demonstrates your faith in Jesus. When you give, God promises to meet all your needs in Christ Jesus (2 Corinthians 9:8). Why not give online giving and make a one-time gift?

Consistent Giver | When we give consistently, God promises to not only replenish the seeds sown, but to enlarge our store of seed and our harvest (2 Corinthians 9:10). Why not setup automated giving through our website?

Intentional Giver | Generosity impacts circles of people. As we see the gospel's impact, it compels us to exercise greater discipline and use our creativity to expand our generosity (2 Corinthians 9:11). Why not attend Financial Peace University to learn how to maximize your generosity?

Sacrificial Giver | Generosity, especially sacrificial generosity, powerfully demonstrates our gospel hope while profoundly blessing people far from God (2 Corinthians 9:13). Consider how God might use your generosity to deepen and expand Lakeside's impact in this community.

Legacy Giver | Your generosity can impact people for generations to come. Why not visit with an Estate Planner to consider how you can leverage your estate to advance the gospel?



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