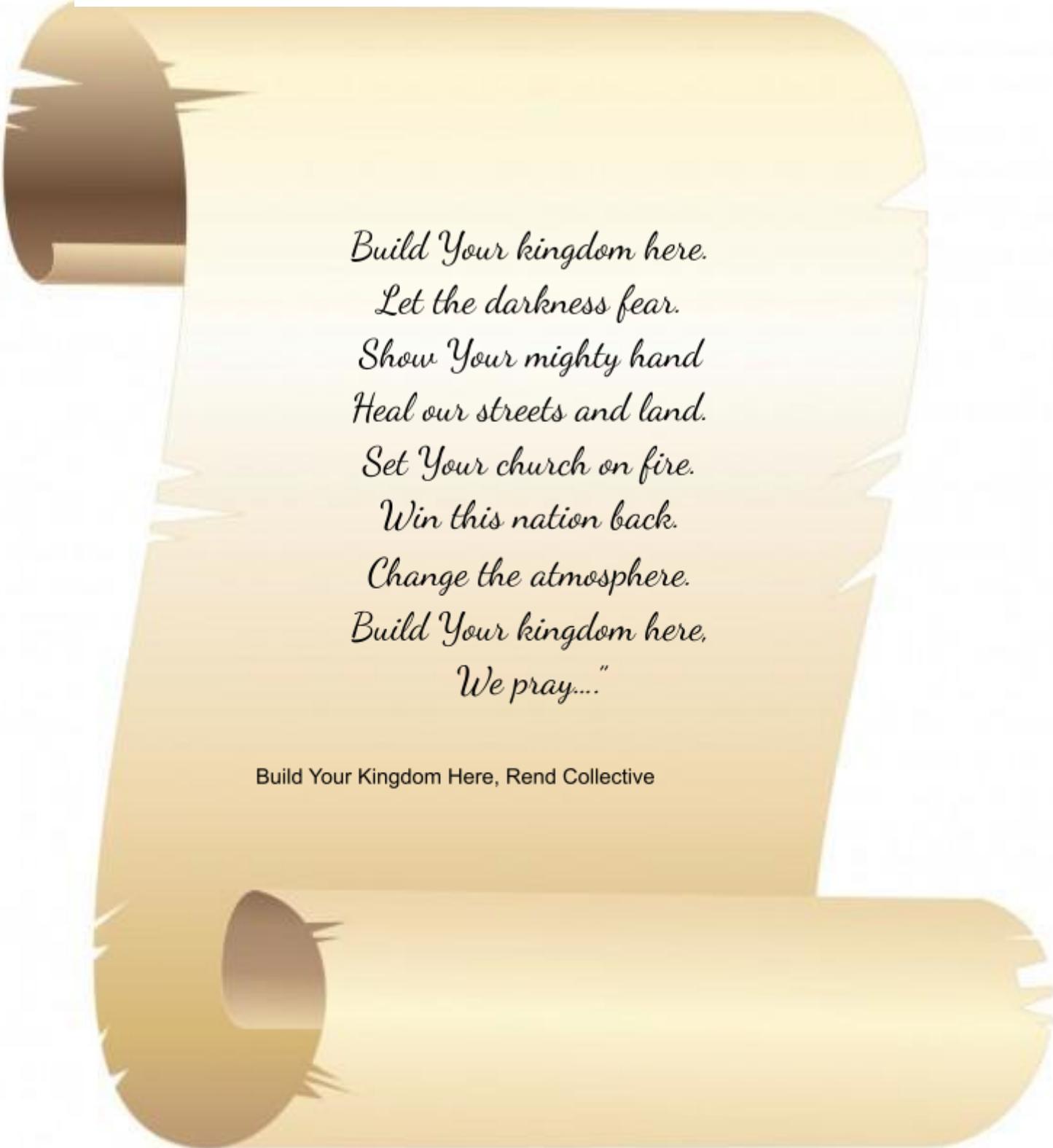


New Life Church Kingdom Project



As told by NLC Outreach Team
Based on Assignment Reports Provided by Participants



*Build Your kingdom here.
Let the darkness fear.
Show Your mighty hand
Heal our streets and land.
Set Your church on fire.
Win this nation back.
Change the atmosphere.
Build Your kingdom here,
We pray...."*

Build Your Kingdom Here, Rend Collective

Build Your Kingdom Here

These words echoed in our minds, hearts, and souls as the members of New Life Church were called to build God's Kingdom here.

It all began with a fond memory of a member reminiscing about how something called the Kingdom Assignment had changed her and her entire family. They were called to participate in the Kingdom Assignment at their previous church home. Both passion and conviction flowed as she shared her Kingdom Assignment experience with the Community Outreach Team of New Life Church (NLC). The Community Outreach Team simmered with a variety of reactions... total awe and wonder, some ready to move forward, some hesitant this could be accomplished at NLC.

What we were forgetting is that it was not what WE could pull off, but what HE would accomplish, if we just had the faith the size of a mustard seed.

The Community Outreach Team continued to pray about the project and read the Kingdom Assignment book authored by Pastor Denny Bellesi and wife, Leesa. We could feel the tug on our hearts and God's nudges in our souls to take the leap of faith and implement this project. It took almost a year for the small team of six Community Outreach members to reach the same place, to have the same level of trust, so we could bring this invitation to build God's Kingdom on Earth before our fellow members. Secretly, Community Outreach members were still skeptical of the mission. Questions continued, some shared aloud, some were kept inside. The trust and faith shown by our Pastor and Elder Team was just what was needed to put God's plan into action.

Finally, a decision was made. The assignment would launch September 18th. The day our pastor would stand before the 150 member congregation and share the message of the Parable of the Talents. It was the day we would see our members' reaction to Pastor George handing out 40, \$100 dollar bills with very few boundaries. You see, \$4000 is a lot of money for our little church. There are needs all around us. Parking lots awaiting repair, community members fighting hunger, church members in poor health, and here the Community Outreach Team and the pastor had chosen to take this sum of money and hand it out, just like that, without any guarantee that it would be God honoring. Would the congregation think we had lost our minds? Would they think we should be more frugal with the funds? Would they want to dismiss us from our roles for being so reckless with this money? Talk about putting trust in God's plan! Some Outreach members trusted. Some needed a reminder of God's message not to worry. As in Jeremiah 17: 7-8 Blessed is the one who trusts in the Lord. Whose confidence is in him. We had to be reminded that it really isn't our money, it is God's money on loan to help us build HIS Kingdom. Money HE would help us use to win this nation back!

The Plan

Each Kingdom Assignment participant is entrusted with \$100 of God's money to change the lives of others by building HIS Kingdom here on Earth. The Assignment is shared with the congregation on September 18. After the message, participants are asked to pray for God's guidance in how they will use their gifts, talents, and provided funds to build God's Kingdom. Upon completion of the Assignment, participants are asked to report back what they learned from the experience and how God's Kingdom grew.

The Assignment, at its core, is an opportunity to learn how each one of us is called by Christ to the great commission. We are modeling through our actions what it looks like to make an impact on others. Participants may work independently or in community with NLC to grow in learning about giving and generosity. The Assignment is an opportunity to learn how all of us can make an impact on the life of another by living out how Jesus works through you as your actions speak louder than words. Subsequently, the Kingdom Assignment is an opportunity for our congregation to learn more about each other and strengthen our congregation.

Very Few Guidelines for Participation

The Community Outreach Team put together the following Kingdom Assignment guidelines for participation. While limited, they are important.

1. Listen to message on September 18th revealing the details of the Assignment
2. Pray for guidance in how the money will be used to build God's Kingdom
3. Complete a Kingdom Assignment agreement form
 - a. The assignment must benefit others in some way
 - b. The assignment must not be affiliated with a school or scouting project
4. Determine the benefactor of the funds
 - a. The benefactor may not be the participant or NLC
5. Implement the plan for multiplying your funds and growing God's Kingdom
6. Complete an Assignment Completion form and share your experience with the church
7. Make the donation to your benefactor and provide the benefactor with a Connection Card

While reading the Kingdom Assignment book is not required, doing so may provide participants greater understanding of the Assignment. Several Kingdom Assignment books are available for checkout by contacting Pastor George or one of the Community Outreach members.

Connection Cards are a vital part of the Assignment. The cards provide the benefactor with the rationale for the gift and connect the intentional act of kindness with Christ and New Life Church.

The Kingdom Assignment is meant to be a fun, faith building activity. It is not meant to be stressful. There is a Resource Table each Sunday with a Community Outreach member

available the first few weeks after kickoff. Questions can also be brought to the Community Outreach for answers and clarification. Seeking help or support, if needed, will make this a fulfilling endeavor for you.

The Big Day...Kingdom Assignment Kickoff

The BIG day, September 18th had arrived. Nerves were tested, trust was questioned, at least by a few of the Community Outreach Team members. These thoughts may not have been shared but they were indeed felt. A few even plotted out a plan of when each Community Outreach member would approach the altar to accept God's money, just in case none of the church members chose to accept the Assignment. Just in case they were thinking the Community Outreach Team and Pastor George had obviously gone insane when making the decision to hand out God's money.

Pastor George began his message by sharing the Parable of the Talents, retold here in short form:

The master entrusted talents to three individuals. Five talents to the first man, two talents to the second, one to the third. The master went on his way. The first man took his five talents and put them to work, turning them into ten. The second man, too, used his two given talents and grew them into four. Increasing and making more, growing them, making an impact. The third, took his one given talent and buried it in the ground. Doing nothing with the talent he had been given.

Upon the master's return, the first two men were rewarded. The third, for burying his talent, his gifts given to him by God, was made to give his one talent to he who had ten and was banished into the darkness. Separated from God forever. For it is our duty, our service, to use the gifts, skills and talents God gives us to bring him joy and in return we are joyful when we give, share, and use our given talents. We are not to take what God gave us and hide it away, to bury it, nor keep it for ourselves. Rather than, regardless of our age, our situation, or our lot in life, it is God's desire for us to do what we can with what He has given us.

The invitation finally arrived. Pastor George asked, "What if you were given something of God's and asked to grow it. How many of you would honor God, your master's request, to build God's Kingdom? What gift do you have? What is your talent, your strength to make the environment better? Using what you have been given to make our home better to the best of your ability. Who was being called to take on the assignment? Who was willing to take on the challenge? Who has such belief in God and trust they could use their talents and time to build God's Kingdom here on Earth? Who wanted to be able to hear the words, "Well done, good and faithful servant! You were faithful over a few things. I will put you in charge of many things. Share in your master's joy"."

The talent we as NLC members were being offered was a \$100 bill. This was our talent. God's money funneled through us to impact and grow HIS Kingdom. Like water rushing through opened floodgates after a huge spring rain, members, not just one, not just two, but almost every seated person in attendance stood, walked forward, held out their hand, and graciously accepted God's money! NLC attendees accepted these three parameters:

1. The money, the talent, does not belong to you, it is the Master's.
2. The funds are to advance his Kingdom. To grow it, to use it, to make a difference.
3. Come back in 90 days to report what you did with what God has given.

As 37 bills were transferred from Pastor George's hand to the hand of one of God's children for their family, the Kingdom began to change. Members were encouraged to pray, talk with other believers, and seek scripture on how to grow God's Kingdom.

As members left NLC, the feeling of excitement and willingness to step up to this challenge was in the air. Feelings of nervousness, trepidation, and anxiety began to bubble as members thought about what he or she was going to do with the funds they were just entrusted. This is where the story really gets good!

Let the Prayers Begin

The Assignment, for some, appeared, at least on the surface to be easy, for others, more challenging. Some seemed to know exactly what to do, who to help, and how to pull off the project. Others worried, especially when met with objection, and a lack of encouragement when sharing their mission with those outside NLC. Common ground for all of us were the prayers asking God for his wisdom and guidance, for HE had called us to participate. While NLC is a relatively small church and many members know each other, some do not. This Assignment brought an unanticipated result of strengthening our very own community within NLC. The Assignment moved us all beyond our comfort zones causing us to reach out for help or to help others in need, to pray together for guidance, or work side by side for the good of God's Kingdom. Hearts blossomed as NLC members worked in unison to be like Jesus with skin on doing what God has asked.

Excitement in the Air

As participants began to discuss their projects, whether it be successes or their setbacks, the buzz of energy and anticipation was felt. For the next seven or so months, participation forms trickled in as God's plans were executed! Stories circulated of how participants felt when God's money was placed in his/her hand, how they determined what they would do and who was going to receive the fruits of their labor. Stories of the incredible generosity of others to match the Kingdom Assignment with their own funds, talents, time, and treasure all to build God's Kingdom were being shared.

The Stories

The Biggest Smile....and Grandma's Clock

Nancy Scharfenberg

For Nancy, it all started by not knowing what to do, but knowing she wanted to do something. You see had already been a long year with things around the house needing to be fixed or replaced. Thus, extra funds for personal contributions were not an option at this time. This quandary led Nancy to do a lot of thinking and talking to Pastor George and fellow church members. It also led to a lot of prayer and conversation with God asking, "What can I do?". Then, Nancy thought, Grandma's clock! I could sell it. Though, selling it would mean she would have to give up a valued possession. Nancy questioned whether she could really go through with selling the clock since it would mean giving up something she was very fond of. After a month or two of going back and forth with the idea, praying on it and talking to God some more, asking Him to please help her, she heard God's response and knew selling the clock was the thing to do. Nancy looked in her cedar chest and found a few other things of Grandma's along with some items she had embroidered herself. She gathered those treasures along with Grandma's clock and set out to a couple of antique shops. Her travels led her to a shop owner, Melissa, who was interested in everything she had brought with her that day. Melissa asked Nancy if she was sure she wanted to part with the treasured items as she knew they had to be very valuable to Nancy. That is when Nancy began to explain that her church was doing the Kingdom Assignment. Melissa was familiar. Nancy shared that she had put a lot of thought and prayer into the Assignment and felt at peace with it because it was being given from her heart and she just felt it was the right thing to do because if "someone else could enjoy these things then that would be awesome". Nancy was giving from her heart and she KNEW Grandma would approve.

It was through this experience that she learned to rely more on God's help daily. She learned that God always has a plan, she just needed to figure it out. Through much prayer, suggestions from church members, and a tremendous amount of talking with God, Nancy was able to decipher God's plan. Nancy feels she just needs to be a better listener when God is trying to tell her something. She is thankful God led her to just the right store owner who understood the assignment and had compassion for Nancy as she gave of her treasured belongings. Parting with these cherished items enabled Nancy to make a donation of \$150 to New Life Church. Once the project was finished, Nancy's disposition was noted by a family member who had observed Nancy's struggle in deciding if she could part with the heirlooms. His words to her were, "Nancy, you just seem to be at peace." to which she responded, "I am!"

When asked what fund to place her donation into at NLC, Nancy stated that she just wanted it to go to her church because it has done so much for her. She just wanted to give back. Nancy definitely knows the true meaning of being a Christian as she stated, "If I'm being honest with myself, it's not how much you give, it's the art of giving that matters." As Nancy shared her

story, while it brought tears to the listener's eyes, the smile on her face was evident that, yes, Grandma approved!

Caroling for the Kingdom

Sharon and Gary Goza

The sweet sound and heartwarming gift of music! Sharon and Gary Goza wanted to share the joy of Christmas with people in the community through their vocal talent as well as provide warmth to those at area nursing homes and the Washington Harvest Table. The Harvest Table is a free meal offered to all community members who are hungry, looking to stretch their grocery budget, or in need of companionship.



In hopes of making the evening of caroling a success, Gary and Sharon reached out to their family and friends, inviting them to make cash, hat, sock, glove, and scarf donations. Items could be store bought or handmade. This included an entire bag of hats crocheted using the gift God has given Sharon's friend. Items collected along with \$100 of God's money were to be donated to the Harvest Table patrons. Volunteers were also asked to share the Goza's love of music by singing along on the evening of their caroling. No auditions or talent required for this evening! The singers gathered at the first nursing home and as voices were raised and with music filling the air, joy was spread and showed on the faces of the people hearing this sweet sound. The joy was so

rich, participants did not want it to end! Nursing home residents joined in singing, even those with dementia and memory loss, were able to carry the tune, knowing the words to songs written in indelible ink in their memories so long ago. Undoubtedly this music brought great joy to each person within earshot. The last stop on the musical tour was St. Peter's Church, home of the Harvest Table.

Upon arrival, carolers broke out in spirited songs of Sleigh Bells, Santa, and the most Holy Night, the birth of Jesus Christ. Patrons joined in with the singing, their hearts being filled with lyrics of the true meaning of Christmas. It was shared that the December 17, 2022 Harvest Table dinner was the most vivacious and lively dinner held in a long time.



Ears were filled with music, tummies were filled with a delicious dinner, scarves and hats warmed necks and heads, and socks and gloves were stretched over cold fingers and toes. The donations and lyrical verses filled a great void for the neediest in our community.



The Goza's were overwhelmed by the response from friends and family in their willingness to join in with donations and song. They were also elated by the hand of God in making this evening not only a joyful

experience but faith building as well. You see, a few of the volunteers who set out to just help a friend were so moved by Sharon and Gary sharing God's love for others, and the feeling of the Holy Spirit in their hearts, that they may extend their hand to God as they open their hearts and accept God's love.

Hot Chocolate and Humility Hunter Bakameyer and Family

Washington High School junior, Hunter Bakamayer, reached his hand out when Pastor George extended \$100 of God's money. As the money hit his hand, his nerves spoke to him, saying "Don't lose this money before getting to the car! Humorously, upon arriving at home, Hunter put the money into the Kingdom Assignment envelope and placed it on the table so if it got lost, it wouldn't be his fault. Like this responsible, action-taking, faithful young man would lose God's money.

Like others, the Bakameyer's didn't know what they wanted to do with the money right away. As a family, they prayed on it. Then Hunter and his dad decided to have a Hot Cocoa and Coffee sale at one of Hunter's upcoming high school football games. With permission from the school, a stand was set up with a tip jar and signage stating the proceeds would be given to the family of Caden Leesmann. Caden played baseball with Hunter before losing his battle with cancer.

Hunter was thankful for his parents' supporting role, as he was on the field playing, they sprang into action and executed the sale of the Hot Cocoa, Hot Coffee booth. As others around witnessed the Bakameyer family uplifting God's Kingdom, they too wanted to get involved. Members of the snow cone stand chose to donate \$1 for every snow cone sold to the Bakameyer fundraiser.

In total, \$387 was to the Leesmann family in hope of providing for the myriad of cancer related expenses. Upon contacting the Leesmanns, the Bakameyer's were surprised by the selfless response of the Leesman family. The family suggested that Hunter instead made the donation to the Friends of Kids With Cancer. It was as if Hunter and his family had a front row seat to witness a "pay it forward" movement orchestrated by God for the Leesmanns. This generous act deeply affected the Bakameyers. From strangers helping set up the stand, the donation of money from the snowcone company, the earnings from the tip jar, the suggestion of sharing the funds raised with an organization who had evidently helped the Leesmanns, was proof that, a little act of kindness and the safekeeping of \$100 (Thanks for not losing it, Hunter!) indeed shows God's love does spread.

A Very Special Gift for Some Very Special People
Kaye Chisholm

“Go big or go home” was the thought that popped into Kaye Chisholm’s head as she chose to accept God’s money. The thought resonated with Kaye as she considered another NLC member’s ability to grow God’s Kingdom. She also thought, “God is talking, I better listen”. These nudges from the Holy Spirit were all the motivation she needed to begin her mission. Deciding on how to actually “go big, or go home” was another story.



Thoughtful prayer, conversation with others, followed by more prayer led Kaye to realize there may be people in our community without access to the Bible. Prayer led Kaye to Bethel Hills, a local “non-profit, faith-based community where people with or without disabilities have the opportunity to live life to the full together.”

Finding Bethel Hills was the easy part. The hard part of the mission was finding a Bible that translated into an appropriate reading level for some of the patrons to understand independently. Kaye found Bibles available for just about every other group out there, Bibles for women, Bibles for men, Bibles for the young, large print Bibles, Bibles in just about every language, just not one for those who have intellectual challenges. Kaye continued to pray for guidance to find just the right Bible for the Bethel Hills community members. It was through her prayer that she found the Lifeway Bible Study for those with special needs. She purchased a copy and presented it to the owner and founder of Bethel Hills. It was the perfect fit for their needs. Kaye then purchased nine more copies so each resident could have his/her own materials.

As she was making purchases Kaye used money from her own checking account, later realizing she still had her original \$100 bill. She found that she was a little hesitant to spend the \$100 of God’s money. In lieu of reimbursing her own funds, Kaye donated it to Bethel Hills for additional



study materials or perhaps, to assist someone in translating the Bible for our most special population, those with special needs. Through this experience Kaye learned there are a lot of needs in our community if we only open our eyes, and choose to do something about it. Kaye is praying that her actions will create a ripple effect growing God’s Kingdom. She hopes the experience of using the study materials touches the Bible study leader and as she shares her learning with the

community members, they then can share their learning with others.



God is so good! He continues to nudge, guide, and lead as His disciples lean in to pray, listen and act. During a follow-up, Kaye learned Bethel Hills has been able to take on some new residents. Prayers are being answered! With the new residents and a little more Bible study experience, Bethel

Hills has decided to facilitate weekly in-home Christian Education sessions. The new format is a little more accommodating for the diverse groups' needs.

Kaye started a good thing! Kaye accepted the challenge, prayed, and took the necessary steps of faith to move the mission forward. Residents learned. Others saw God working through Kaye and the Bethel Hills staff. Since the Bible study launch, a video-based series was donated that residents will begin shortly. All of these wonderful things are due to the ripple effect of Kaye putting her faith into action!

New Found Baking Buddies

Cindy and Junior Berg, Penny Lear

Most members of NLC have had a taste of Cindy Berg's extraordinary baking talent. Cindy has shared her culinary skills at NLC monthly ladies' night meetings and has shared her tasty treats in the church lobby on Sundays. Upon accepting God's money, Cindy knew pretty quickly how she could increase her funds to share with a mission for which she is fond. What Cindy didn't know is that she would soon be pairing up with another NLC member.

Meanwhile, Penny Lear, also accepted God's money and prayed intensely on how she could grow God's Kingdom. She spoke with friends and family for ideas and assistance, but was met with resistance and lack of support. She was beginning to feel concerned that she was not going to be able to fulfill the requirements that came with accepting the \$100. Worried, but still wanting to participate, she visited the Kingdom Assignment table where information, support, and prayer was provided for those who needed additional guidance or assistance. Upon sharing her concern, Community Outreach members chatted with her about her specific skills and talents. Penny, it turns out, has a knack for baking. Community Outreach members thought this one was easy, and teamed her up with NLC baking extraordinaire, Cindy Berg. One could say a match was made in Heaven's Kitchen!

Once the connection was made Cindy and Penny prayerfully decided to grow God's \$100 by using it to purchase ingredients for selling Christmas cookies. The ladies jumped into action.



Flour flew, eggs were cracked, dough was made, and cookies were baked, each one meticulously decorated. Finally, the tasty treats were packaged, ready to sell at the local Farmer's Market Expo and at NLC. The day of the big cookie sale finally arrived. Upon registering for the Expo and receiving the vendor map, Cindy was a bit disappointed. She thought the booth they were being placed at was in the back of the Expo, which was not the bestselling location. But to Cindy's amazement and with God's great planning, she realized she had misunderstood the vendor map.

The ladies were actually placed right up front. God had



prepared a perfect location patrons would have to pass by. However, simply passing by was not an option when people saw the culinary creations Penny and Cindy had concocted. The 84 dozen cookies sold like “hot cakes” or probably more accurately



described as “hot cookies”! At NLC, order after order was placed, and more baking ensued. Thus, there was a need for more muscle behind the Assignment to transport cookies orders to and fro. Junior fit the bill!



Cindy and Penny were amazed at how the grace of God helped to grow their \$100. Their excitement for the project grew due to the generosity of people who not only bought cookies but gave over and above the selling price. Some simply made a donation without even sampling the sweet treats. Even after selling so many cookies, these two dedicated bakers still had eight dozen left, which were sold at the Abilities Christmas Holiday Auction, raising another \$90



Cindy knew God is good, but this showed her just how great He really is. The Kingdom Assignment has strengthened her spiritual relationship with Jesus Christ. It also showed her just how strong God is as He kept Junior’s hands out of the cookie jar during the Assignment! A feat in itself! Through Cindy’s participation in this Assignment and ability to give the proceeds of \$950 to Loving Hearts, she has great desire to do it again in the future.

Harmony and Help for Those with Mental Illness

Janice Collier

As Janice shared her experience of the Kingdom Assignment, she stated that she is not crafty and doesn’t possess the skills to make anything. Could it be that Janice just hadn’t discovered the talents that God has given her. Janice holds the gift of compassion and talent of showing kindness to others. It was through prayer, Janice heard her calling to support the organization that had a significant impact on her sister who experiences manic depression. It was through prayer that she was guided to use God’s money to support Harmony House, Washington, MO. Harmony House is a community that focuses on individual goals, strengths, and assets for those with a history of behavioral health concerns. Janice learned the Harmony House participates in a Thanksgiving Pie sale to help members participate in events such as Cardinal’s games, festivals, etc. She started her project by using God’s \$100 to increase the donations used to purchase pie making ingredients. She then prayed the pies, when sold, would bring in much needed funds. Similar to the parable of five fishes and two loaves, those ingredients, purchased by a few, were turned into 115 pies and when sold raised \$1700.

During the process, Janice also learned the members of the Harmony House could use backpacks. The organization also needed prepared food for those who are homeless. So, Janice began collecting these items. She also organized a Facebook post requesting additional donations including household supplies for those fortunate enough to get an apartment. One generous church member even donated a \$20 gas card for a person who was living in his car during the cold Christmas season.

Members of the Harmony House were so thankful for Janice and her donations. The items she collected and funds raised directly supported their opportunities to learn work skills, social skills, and allowed them to celebrate their hard work by attending social functions. They kindly paid her back by doing the heavy lifting of the donated items from car to kitchen.

Janice knows the power of God's love and while His plan is not always understood, He, indeed, has one. Working through Janice to assist those in need is just one of the many ways God is guiding his children to build His Kingdom here on Earth.

Helping One Organization to Help Another

Sarah and Jon Monzyk Family

After much debate and prayer, the Monzyk family decided to use God's \$100 to purchase jewelry from the Starfish Project Company to sell, utilizing the net profit to donate to the Foster Closet. The desire to support the Foster Closet came to Sarah when disappointment set in as after realizing her and her sister's business, Saffron and Linen, would not be profitable enough to support the Foster Closet. Giving back was part of the mission of the Saffron and Linen business, so learning they were unable to meet this goal was a bit of a blow to the sisters. When NLC decided to do the Kingdom Assignment, it was literally the answer to the girls' prayers. The \$100 was an opportunity to create a stream of revenue that would continue in the future.

The Assignment quickly became a family project. Ava, Sarah's daughter, helped sell at pop up events. Jon, Sarah's husband, was the numbers guy and the muscle behind the scenes. Evie and Scout supported in any way they could as Sarah spent numerous weekends selling the jewelry at festivals, fairs, and NLC. She was finally realizing the dream to support the Franklin County Foster Closet she and her sister had for Saffron and Linen as they raised over \$400 through their sales.



Monzyk's donation has made quite an impact on the Foster Closet. Needed items are able to be gathered by foster parents who want to provide a home for children in foster care but they themselves don't necessarily have the means to fully provide the basic needs for the children they are trying to support. Amber Raney, Franklin County Foster Closet Director, stated 565 children were served in 2022. Through

this Assignment, the Monzyks also learned of the leap of faith Ms. Raney took as she accepted a part-time role at the Foster Closet while she, herself, was unsure how her own family finances would work out. With this new position, Ms. Raney has firsthand knowledge of the great needs of foster parents in the community. When she and her husband made the decision to adopt not long ago, their needs were met by The Foster Closet Program.

The story doesn't stop there though. Not only did the Monzyk's Kingdom Assignment help those in need right here in our Franklin County community, it spread throughout the world when Sarah chose the Starfish Project Jewelry Company to purchase the jewelry to be resold. You see, the Starfish Project is a worthy organization to support even without the additional step Sarah took in donating the profits to the Foster Closet. The Starfish Project Company offers women and girls in Asia an opportunity to leave their dangerous role in sex trafficking and exploitation. At the time of this Assignment, the Starfish Project, according to information obtained through the Starfish website, has helped 150 women have a fresh start in life by arranging safe housing, healthcare, education and training, while employing them to make jewelry and garments to support its mission.



Choosing the Starfish Project allowed God's money to have a positive impact many fold. The impact was not just financial. The Assignment also impacted Sarah and the Monzyk family by causing them to look differently at their larger purpose here on Earth, helping them to use their gifts to serve God first, as well as trusting Him to further His Kingdom in His way.

PJs and Prayer

Marlene and Carolyn Meyer

Picture this, Pastor George is at his finest, delivering an inspirational message based on the Parable of the Talents when he asks the NLC members if they wanted to receive \$100 of God's money to better His Kingdom here



on Earth. Marlene and Carolyn heard this invitation and looked at each other deciding to either "step up" or "step out". They could have stepped out, based on their

seat in the back of church, back to the comfort of their own homes, back into their PJs which is Carolyn's favorite place to be. Well, these sisters did step up! They decided to funnel



their anxieties and love of comfortable PJs into the Kingdom Assignment. The sister's wanted to create nighttime packages of PJs or Cozies, blankets, stuffed animals, toothpaste, toothbrushes, and a snack for children in need on a winter night. The children could then find comfort in their PJs like Carolyn. The sisters also wanted the recipients to know that while it

was through their hands and hearts the children could have this warm and comfy gift it was really a gift from God. The sisters also attached a blessing with a God Loves You card on each of the packages.

The gift wasn't just to the children. The gift was to the many donors whose hearts were warmed as they gave so generously allowing



Carolyn and Marlene to put together 33 PJ packages along with five Christmas stockings containing gas cards for adults. As if this was not enough, Carolyn and Marlene also decided to adopt a widow using their personal funds. The sisters were able to provide gifts to this widow, with very limited means, would have otherwise gone without.



When asked how they benefited from the Assignment, Carolyn and Marlene stated it made them wish they would have contributed more in the past because they had even more available to give. The line in the movie, Schindler's List, "I could have done more." actually came to their minds. However, anyone who knows Carolyn and Marlene, already knows they have gone above and beyond giving in their past. Maybe they don't necessarily see it. The sisters believe it is just what you're supposed to do while in church or in your PJs.

Apple Butter Buddies

Carrie, Carlee, and Mick Maune, Lynn and Mike Haberberger, Carol and Denny Arnold, Barb and Rich Strubberg, Linda and Dave Miller

Linda, being a member of the Community Outreach, had a jump start on determining her project. She also had a copper apple butter kettle sitting in her garage and a burning desire to learn how to make apple butter over an open fire. Apple butter is a good fundraiser, right?



Knowing she couldn't do this project by herself, she started early organizing her experienced expert help, Mick and Carol. Carol had a recipe and Mick searched for the perfect peeler. Not finding one, he designed his own Apple Peeler 5000 (a hand-held electric drill and peeler) which promised to peel a bushel of apples in eight minutes. Linda also added Carrie, Carlee, Mike, Denny, Barb, and Rich to her team. Each



bringing their own specific talent to offer, i.e., cutting, peeling, cooking, labeling, clearing, marketing, etc.

Peeling started on Friday night and within three hours eight bushels of apples had been peeled and stored for cooking. Bright and early at 6:30 a.m. on Saturday morning the fire was lit with a blow torch. Instant fire got them off to a quick start. By 8:00 a.m. the eight bushels of apples were washed and were cooking away in the six-bushel kettle. Pushing beyond limits was the nature of this team, working for God's will beyond their own self-imposed capacity. By 2:30 p.m. the apple butter was cooked and ready to be bottled. An assembly line was set up for scooping the butter, cleaning of jars, putting on lids, and arranging jars for cooling. The system led to 160 pints of apple butter being bottled quickly. After the apple butter cooled for a bit, a label was attached explaining the meaning of the Kingdom Assignment.

All ingredients were donated so there were no expenses. Customers purchased, very literally, the "fruits" of the team's labor. Through the apple butter sales, the team raised \$1945 for donations to the Franklin County Foster Closet, FCFC! The 160 jars of apple butter were sold for \$10 a pint. No, the math doesn't add up as some of the jars of apple butter were purchased well over the selling price after the buyers read the project note attached to the jar.



Why did this group choose the Foster Closet? The NLC Ladies Night Out had recently had a presentation by the Foster Closet. Linda did not know this fabulous charity existed in Franklin County, filling a huge void. Linda did have knowledge of the foster care system. Her daughter had a co-worker friend a few years ago who wanted to adopt through foster parenting. She already had one baby she had adopted two years prior. At 9:00 p.m. one night she got a call from DFS in their county needing a foster home for eight month old twin girls, a two year old boy and his three year old brother. They arrived, all four in diapers. No bottles or formula for the babies, nor did they have any extra clothing. The boys wore the same size clothing, yet only had one pair of shorts, one shirt, and one pair of shoes between them. So, what do good friends do when they hear this? Well, Linda's daughter and her friend went to Wal-Mart and frantically purchased basics while the foster dad was home bathing and feeding. There was no foster closet to get a key from the social worker to go pick up a bag of necessities for each child. How much better it would have been for those children and the parents had one existed. Their focus could have been to just bathe the babies, feed them, and make them feel secure.



Linda and her team of Apple Butter Buddies benefited as much as their chosen charity. They became closer friends through their cooking, camaraderie, and compassion for those who could use a system of support such as the Foster Closet. Their monetary donation will allow for items to be purchased for children in foster care in need of clothing, hygiene items, coats, etc. Being able to provide for the Franklin County Foster Closet kicked off the beginning of the Advent season. A season of giving. This group gave time, talent, teamwork, tasty apple butter, and treasures for those in foster care.

Prayer Baskets

Amber and Andrew Hunewill, Jean Webb, Lisa and Jim Tucker, Mary Day,
Cherie and Matt Monzyk, Kim and Dick Obermark

After hearing Pastor George's message on the Parable of the Talents, the teacher in Jean was silently cheering. Kudos to Pastor George for using an effective teaching technique of getting members physically involved, by asking us to get up and participate in the message. What a great way to help people connect with the message. As Pastor George reached into his pocket and pulled out 45 one hundred dollar bills, Jean thought, "He looks like a drug lord passing out one hundred dollar bills!". However, she soon realized Pastor George was serious. This was real. The congregation is going to enact the Parable. She was in AWE! The awe stayed with her as many people took the money and accepted the challenge. She was in awe when she accepted the money herself. She was in awe until about the time she walked out of church with the \$100.

It was then that the struggle began. The struggle of not knowing what to do with the money. She was all about building God's Kingdom, but now she had one hundred of God's dollars. How was she going to multiply the money? The pressure of making more money plagued her day and night. The struggle became real so she relied on what she knew would work. She relied on prayer. She shared with God her struggle with the pressure of having this money and the expectation to use it to make more. It was through prayer that she heard God's message, "Do not worry about the money. It's not about the money. It's about The Kingdom. Just focus on building the Kingdom". But how?

As Jean was traveling to a NLC member's home with the Prayer Team, she shared her struggle with them. The other team members agreed that they felt the same way. Jean shared that she wasn't keen on trying to grow the money. She also shared how God had changed her heart, helping her to understand she should just focus on building His Kingdom and the money would



take care of itself. After a bit of brainstorming, the Prayer Team decided they could make a greater impact if they had materials to leave with people as they made prayer visits. They put their heads and dollars together to determine just the right materials needed to strengthen prayer among NLC members. The materials included a guide on how to pray and stay focused, books on prayer, and additional faith-based materials. Their goal was to help people enrich and dive deeper into their prayer life long after the prayer team visited. Having \$450 worth of materials made this mission possible. The mission of the

Prayer Team was being accomplished through God's money. Jean's prayers were answered. She and the other Prayer Team members were building God's Kingdom!

The Prayer Team has a goal of visiting with every person in the NLC congregation within the next two years. The materials provided by this



Kingdom Assignment are cultivating a much deeper and richer prayer life among members. What a ripple effect this will have beyond what can be measured today. Jean, herself, had an even greater lesson which she feels she has to keep learning over and over.... Stop saying "woah" to God and rather say, "LET'S GO"!

Private Giving

Laura and John Frankenberg

The Bible shares action after action of people doing. Doing for the sake of others. It says we should be like Jesus with skin on.

Do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love." Jesus showed the ultimate selflessness in laying down his life to set us free. We must always seek to imitate his selfless love by serving others instead of simply serving ourselves. Galatians 5:13

That is exactly what Laura and John Frankenberg did. The couple raised \$600 to privately provide for others as Jesus did.

A Community Coming Together to Feed the Hungry and Fuel the Minds

Matt and Robyn Busekrus, Yvonne and Glenn Ridder, Chris Marquart,
Paul Gregory, Liz and Tim Hellebusch

Matt Busekrus reached out his hand and accepted 100 of God's dollars. Matt prayed and heard God's calling to solicit \$100 from each of his seven fellow administrators at the School District of Washington. The idea at first being to help one family at each of the elementary schools. Then Matt heard God's louder call when he learned of the bleak situation of the Feeding Hunger, Fueling Minds food backpack program. The program had been providing food to children on the weekends since 2013 and now the cupboards were bare and the program was shut down due to lack of funds. Children and families were back to fending for themselves to find food over the weekends. Matt knew he needed to tweak his plan of just serving seven families to more like 50-60 children. After donning his cape, Mighty Matt began sharing his mission of filling the food pantry coffers so all of the children in need could be fed! Matt reached out to his church friends raising \$625 through donations of their Kingdom Assignment money. He then relayed the need to the School District of Washington Board of Education staff who typically adopts one family each year at Christmas. This team instead donated \$250 to feed many rather than a few. Each administrator dug deep into their pockets knowing all too well the impact hunger has on the learning of students.

The next donor Matt called on was the NLC Community Outreach who donated \$2000 from their mission's allocation and the Fifth Sunday Breakfast. After all, if we can feed ourselves, we can surely feed others.

Matt, also a member of the Optimist Club of Washington, whose sole mission is to support the kids of our community, knew they would give optimistically. He quickly presented his plea. The club members didn't have to hear very much about the plight of the program before they voted to donate \$1000 to the cause.

After hearing Matt's desire to feed the children, Kim Obermark, a NLC member, went to her team of wonderful women at the Ladies Realtor Group. Kim delivered the message of the Kingdom Assignment and the food backpack program's lack of funds. The ladies rallied and donated \$500 to the cause. Additionally, just hearing about the Feeding Hunger, Fueling Minds program elicited \$75 in random anonymous donations.

If you are doing the math, you may have already calculated that Mighty Matt's mission managed to raise a sum of \$4542 to save the food backpack program. Students and families now have food to sustain them for the weekend. As stated in Matthew 6:11 Almighty God, it is difficult to see children suffer, especially from hunger. We pray for You to give the hungry daily bread today and end their persistent hunger. Provide the food they need to grow and thrive. God worked through Matt and those who supported his mission to build His Kingdom. For this, Matt is beyond grateful. God called, Matt heard, and the children are being fed.

Let Your Ears Ring with God's Word

Judy Straatmann

Accepting the Assignment was not hard for Judy Straatmann, as a member of the Community Outreach Team, she had a year to pray and prepare. While it was easy for her to accept the invitation, she was still growing in her faith that God would move others' hearts toward action. She was one member, who based on her previous work experience with excessive federal and state reporting requirements, thought there needed to be rules and guidelines to hold participants accountable. She believed participants needed to complete numerous forms with each Assignment for tracking through check-ins and spreadsheets. Talk about a lack of trust in God's plan! Why the lack of faith? Who knows? Well, God did indeed have a plan for Judy, and it would be ringing in many people's ears and hearts!



A little background to set the stage. Judy's two daughters, now grown, were not raised in a church community. Sure, when they were little, books were read and they could share stories of Noah and Jonah, they did not attend church. There were no conversations of faith or daily prayer, not ever for that matter. While Judy believed in God and prayed, the girls were left to their own devices to determine their beliefs. The girls occasionally joined Young Life or began to attend church with friends, but it wasn't Judy who guided them in these experiences. Isn't that just like God to show up in our shortcomings. Thank goodness!

It wasn't until the oldest daughter, Taylor, went to college, that Judy finally decided to join a church after hearing more about Taylor's experiences with InterVarsity Christian Fellowship. ICF is a nationwide college campus ministry that, according to their website, establishes and advances witnessing communities of students and faculty. ICF bridged the gap for Taylor and later on Judy.

As Taylor began to focus her career in campus ministry, Judy began to be still and listen. Listen to not only God, but to Taylor who would share examples of other students who were not exposed to the Christian faith yet. Judy's conviction for ICF helped her know she needed to open others' ears so they could ring with God's word. Using the play on words and numerous beads and craft items taking up space in the Straatmann basement, Judy began to make earrings. The earrings would then be sold to raise money for the Kingdom Assignment. Customers had the opportunity to support InterVarsity Christian Fellowship or a mission of their choice by either buying earrings at \$15 a pair or \$5 with the promise of making a donation to another charity. The idea was to help others be able to experience the gift of giving and have them know the value of growing God's Kingdom. Thirty-three pairs of earrings were sold resulting in Fueling Hunger, Feeding Minds and the Foster Closet each receiving a \$10 donation and InterVarsity Christian Fellowship gaining \$800. Yes, what you are understanding is correct. The math doesn't compute. It doesn't compute due to the incredible generosity of the customers who chose to give way over the earring asking price.

The outpouring of generosity was a result of the stories shared by Judy of how college students wanted to experience the love of Jesus Christ but didn't always have the funds to attend some of the available retreats and conferences. You see, at these conferences students can witness the action of Christians and see others who had never heard God's word being called to open their hearts and their ears to receive Jesus. Fellow Christians knew the importance of providing the young adults with these valuable opportunities and gladly gave of their resources to make the desire a reality.



The phrase, finding Jesus, has become a bit bothersome to Judy as she grows in her faith. For Jesus has always been there. He was never lost. It is us who choose to close our minds, our hearts, our ears to the ringing. We are sometimes lost. It is us who need to be still, LISTEN and then upon hearing, ACT. Act to build God's Kingdom here on Earth.

Hygiene and the Holidays Megan and Ryan Seamon Family

After accepting God's money, Megan had the desire to have the whole family involved in the Kingdom Assignment. She divided the money into two separate pots and off to work they went, serving God to build His Kingdom here on Earth.

First, Megan enlisted the support of a number of her friends using roughly \$70 of God's money and their donations to prepare 40 hygiene bags. Included in the bags were a toothbrush, toothpaste, feminine hygiene items, gloves, a poncho, as well as other essentials. The bags were then given to local food pantries and the police department to be distributed, at their discretion, to those who could benefit from the bags. Megan and her friends' helping hands would help the most desperate, especially those who may be homeless, struggling financially, or potentially in foster placements.

Secondly, Megan's "big" girls, meaning the older of the four Seamon daughters, along with the help of fellow NLC member, Kaye Chisholm, used the other \$30 to purchase baking supplies. Their goodies were sold at one of Megan's business markets. Using the whopping \$201 they raised and amazing deals Kaye found while Black Friday shopping, the girls were able to wrap and prepare gifts to provide a family with four children an entire Christmas! These activities were just a reminder to Megan that when we serve God and do His work, He will always provide a way.

Taking a Chance

Amanda and Dan Engemann Family

Who doesn't love a raffle? We know that at least one school social worker and benefiting students at the Gasconade Co. R-1 School District do! After accepting God's money, the Engemann family decided to take a chance. The funds were used to purchase local Hermann, Missouri restaurant gift certificates to raffle with the goal of raising money to support Gasconade Co. R-1 School District students needing coats and other basic needs. Initially, the family had a goal to double their \$100. Through God's help and blessing, the money just kept growing as the entire Engemann family worked together to sell the raffle tickets to neighbors, friends, family and co-workers. Raffle sales soared way past the original goal. It did not only double, but ended up raising \$700!



When the Engemanns contacted Dawn Grosse, the Gasconade Co. R-1 District Social Worker, to donate the proceeds, she was blown away at their efforts. Sharing the money was definitely God-sent and was greatly needed to fund the Gasconade Co. R-1 Student Emergency Fund.

As the time for the drawing drew near, the family gathered all the tickets that had been sold. The family began to pray that the winner of the restaurant gift certificates would bless someone who needed them the most. As the winning ticket was drawn, prayers were answered! The winner was a neighbor to the Engemanns.

This particular neighbor has an autoimmune disorder that makes it hard to use her hands. She appreciated having meals that she would not have to make.

The benefits of the project did not end there. Doing this project also gave the Engemann family an opportunity to share a bit about the gospel as they shared the story of the NLC Kingdom Assignment with everyone. Who knows the true impact their sharing had on others, and how much the free meals impacted their blessed neighbor!

Music and Helping Others is in the Air

Matt, Cherie and Catie Monzyk

As avid music lovers, Cherie not only plays in the NLC praise band, but along with Catie, they both listen to JOY FM on a regular basis. As the mother and daughter duo were traveling together jamming out to the sweet tunes being broadcast to JOY FM listeners, a plea was made to the Christian community to help financially support BOOST Radio Station. BOOST Radio ministers to God's young adult listeners as it provides a message of hope, letting listeners know that God cares and asks those needing help to reach out for prayer and support. It is sure to be music to the Boost Radio station ears as both Cherie and Catie felt called to help by donating their Kingdom Assignment funds to keep this clean, healthy, spiritual music on the air waves. You, too, can tune in to either Boost KXBS 95.5 FM or 99.1 JOY FM to hear the Christian cadence of their musical masterminds.

While Cherie and Catie were hearing God's call to support the radio stations, enabling so many of God's children to be impacted far and wide, Matt was hearing God calling to him. Recently, when Matt learned of a co-worker's diagnosis of cancer, it hit very close to home. Why? Because Matt is a cancer survivor and knows first-hand the physical, emotional, and financial challenges his co-worker and family will face. With this knowledge and God's nudge, Matt jumped into action asking his work staff for donations to give to the co-worker and his family. The monetary donation was greatly appreciated as it brought some financial comfort to the family. The greater donation was the one that had no cost but significant impact, the donation of care and prayer!

Wouldn't you know, it doesn't end there for the Monzyk family. One of the things they are known for is their belief in and power of prayer. They also decided to join in and support the Prayer Team financially. Part of their funds helped Prayer Baskets to be shared with the NLC members by the Prayer Team. More information on Prayer Baskets is shared elsewhere in this book. Matt is also a member of the NLC Elders Team, who meet monthly to share prayer together, attend to the needs of the congregation, and the future of New Life Church.

It is through their desire to help others that prompted the Monzyks to lift up these three missions, Christian music, care for others, and the power of prayer, leading them to provide support. Through their own monetary donation of \$500 to BOOST, a collection of \$829 from Matt's staff and co-workers to support their ill friend, and the use of the original \$100 to the NLC Prayer team for the Prayer Baskets, they were able to support all three of their passions. There is absolutely no way to quantify just how much the Monzyks have helped build God's Kingdom.

As music hits the airways, the co-worker travels the roadway to recovery, and the Prayer Team paves the way for prayer, God's Kingdom is being built.

Santa Saves the Day

Santa and Friends

How old were you when you learned Santa was indeed a Christian? It's something most people probably don't even think about. But how could the jolly fellow not be. He is like Jesus with skin on only to be covered with a bright red and white suit. He brings joy to both young and old throughout many nations. He shows tenderness and warmth to all the little children of the world and strives to provide for their needs and wants. He loves his little elf neighbors as he does himself. He cares for his animal friends, especially his eight tiny reindeer, make that nine. Can't forget Rudolph! He is charitable and spreads goodwill. He tells children to honor their mother and father. He uses his God given talents of being able to fly around the world on a single night and his ability to lay his finger aside of his nose to rise up chimneys after delivering gifts all in an effort to help celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ at the biggest birthday party of the year! Wow, so much Christianity being exuded by one person!

On top of all that Santa was called by God to help one special young man, Drew Cox, to pursue his dream. You see, Drew was so blessed even before Santa knew he needed help! He was blessed by God with 23 chromosomes, one more than the typical amount God gives most of us. While it has not been proven scientifically, it is presumed that the extra chromosome is put there to house extra the love, happiness, and sociability of those blessed by this addition to their genetic makeup.

Even with this extra chromosome, Drew needed some extra Santa assistance! So, Santa flew like a flash, in a manner so lively and quick, with a wink of his eye and a nod of his head, he raised \$250! Now Drew would have nothing to dread. He would now have some extra funding for his pumpkin patch this year.

Drew's Dream Pumpkin Patch is associated with Bethel Hills Community, a faith-based community where adults with and without developmental disabilities live life to the full together. Drew is an amazing young man with an incredible smile, a love for his pedal cart, and brings awareness to Down's Syndrome. Drew's family founded Drew's Dream in order to help fundraise for other individuals with similar needs. The foundation's goal is to help provide for life skills education, social activities, and contribute to independent living costs. Drew's Dream serves individuals, not old enough to live at Bethel Hills, with things to prepare them for their future. Drew's goal is to hopefully someday live as independently as possible at a place perhaps like Bethel Hills. His family wants to make this something attainable. As God continues to work through Santa, and an anonymous NLC elf, Drew's Dream's will come true!

The Griesheimers Peppered With God's Love

Dayton was moved by God to walk up with her dad, Aaron, to accept the challenge posed by Pastor George. Meanwhile, Amanda and Tucker continued to pour into Sunday school, with no idea the excitement about to ensue. After church the family gathered to discuss the assignment and ideas began to flow. Aaron and Dayton told Amanda and Tucker all about the message and Kingdom Assignment at family lunch after church. Dayton and Tucker were immediately throwing out ideas of small things they could do with God's one hundred dollars. Amanda and Aaron tried to sort of redirect them to bigger thinking and ways to multiply the funds but offered zero concrete proposals. Finally, the group decided the best avenue would be to pray about it, and really hear God's voice. Unfortunately, the Griesheimers' reported that the discernment they so longed for from God, did not happen immediately which may have led to an overall loss of focus for the group. That didn't go terribly well – which is hard to believe out of the Griesheimers, collectively, they lost focus, and self-reported, didn't listen to God's nudging very well.



With time, the Griesheimers witnessed, what seemed like, everyone around them putting wonderful Kingdom Assignment plans into motion at church, in the community and on social media. Finally, Amanda remembered very clearly praying, "Lord, you are going to have to knock me over the head with an idea, because if you are trying to send my family subtle hints, we are not getting it." Wouldn't you know it, the very next day Amanda remembered a time their yard was flocked by flamingo decorations and the kids, who were pretty little at the time, thought that was so cool. Amanda mentioned to the rest of the family that maybe they could do something along those lines. And just like that, "Peppered With God's Love" as Aaron so eloquently deemed it, was born.



- ✓ Dayton: Water Purifier (\$160)
 - ✓ Tucker: Fishing Kit & 2 Chickens (\$100)
 - ✓ Shiloh: Food for 1 Malnourished Child (\$100)
 - ✓ Aaron: Kids Literacy (\$60)
 - ✓ Amanda: Goat & 2 Chickens (\$110)
- plus \$260 to Loving Hearts

\$790 Total Raised

The process for a "Peppering of God's Love" by the family moved pretty smoothly. Folks interested, could fill out and submit an online form with payment. Then, the Griesheimers deliver and/or decorate the indicated yard stealthily at night. They loved the idea that through this assignment, they could not only multiply funds for their chosen charities, but also provide a tangible reminder of God's love here on Earth. This was a way to further God's Kingdom financially and spiritually. It seemed like the perfect project for the Griesheimer family – Aaron having plenty of experience with yard signs through his political endeavors, and Amanda a well trained coordinator in a variety of settings.

This endeavor would go off without a hitch.....right? While the family had a wonderful time and a lot of laughs, lessons were learned and character was built!

It turns out, while the Griesheimers are quite gifted in enthusiasm and good intentions, stealthiness and finding addresses in the dark are another matter. The family's first attempt at peppering a yard came with a few hiccups. They missed the recipient's home by just one driveway, peppering the neighbor's yard instead. They were actually caught by a very sweet older lady as she drove down the street with her daughter while the God-guided trespassers were standing in her yard. In fact, in the first two nights, they went to three incorrect addresses. The Griesheimers maintain that God was still leading them to the yards He wanted peppered even with the mishaps. That first woman and her daughter thought it was one of the best gestures that season. Another of the "accidental recipients" ended up visiting the "Peppered With Love" website, requesting a DIY pack for her to pass it forward. She revealed that her and her teenagers loved the project!



Once all of the shenanigans of peppering yards ceased without arrest or major incident, the family raised a total of \$790. Determining the recipients of funds was also a meaningful opportunity for the family. They each took time to watch videos and read about the various needs of God's people through the World Vision website. Dayton, an avid WHS swim team member, chose to secure a water purifier for a family. The cool, huge nets for fishing caught Tucker's eye. He decided to purchase fishing kits and two chickens.

This purchase gave new meaning to the phrase, "If you give a man a fish, he has food for the day, but if you teach a man to fish, he has food for a lifetime" for Tucker. Shiloh, feeling blessed by her parents to always have food on the table, determined food for a malnourished child was a good choice. Due to his voice changing talents while reading to his kids, Aaron decided to help support World Vision's desire to teach children to read. Amanda chose to buy a goat and two chickens, presumably due to her ability to scale yards like a Billy goat while peppering it with God's love. The total World Vision donation amounted to \$530. The remaining \$260 was given to Loving Hearts, a local food pantry and service organization in the Washington, Missouri community.

Even though it made for a seemingly chaotic December, and every trip wasn't exactly a scene from a Hallmark movie, the Griesheimers had a great time peppering yards and being used by God to bring joy to others. It was especially joyful on a day when no yard peppering was scheduled, and Aaron suggested that the family go to a friend's mother's house. She had been going through cancer treatments and he thought it would be a nice pick-me-up. After receiving the peppering of God's love, she sent a message detailing how much their surprise meant to

her. It was great to be able to have the kids experience how taking the time for something simple like that can make a big difference in someone's day or even life.

The Griesheimers think they would be up for the challenge again if called to participate in the Kingdom Assignment, even if it's just them choosing people to surprise, because that was a lot of fun for them! While the impact of the funds being raised will feed countless families around the world, bring the joy of reading and literacy to others, the ripple effect of spreading joy is immeasurable.

Operation Christmas Child...on overload!

The Bollmann Family

For the Bollmann family, it all began with what they thought was just one more of Pastor George's rhetorical questions often posed to the members of NLC. Little did they know what they were actually being asked to do. As they listened to Pastor George share the Parable of the Talents, he asked who would be willing to come forward and participate in the Kingdom Assignment. Typically, this would be met with members raising their hands in an equally rhetorical response without actual action. More like a teacher with a rhetorical question and students raising their hands. This week was different. When Pastor George posed the question of who would be willing to participate in the Kingdom Assignment, Lisa raised her hand in response, but then saw people actually walking to the altar. Her first thought was, "we are actually going to do this!?" However, she rose and accepted the challenge. Once she received God's \$100, like many others, the panic began to set in, what now? Lisa prayed over what to do. Then, she asked church members if they had a plan. As people shared their ideas, she realized what others were doing wasn't necessarily what God had planned for her. She talked to her family, and was met with a bunch of, six as a matter of fact, "I don't know" responses. You see, Lisa is totally outnumbered in this family of six with all boys. Finally, an idea came to her.....she had her calling! The Kingdom Assignment was beginning around the same time as Operation Christmas Child program was set to launch. During Operation Christmas Child, members of New Life Church fill boxes with small Christmas presents, a book sharing the story of Jesus's birth, and pay the shipping to have them sent to children around the world who may only receive one Christmas present in their lifetime. The Bollmann family typically participates in this activity every year, however, they could feel God at work this time. They felt God's call to fill 30 boxes, ten for each age group. This is what you call Operation Christmas Child Overload!

The Bollmanns began sharing their idea with some very generous donors, raising an additional \$460 on top of the original \$100. People were so excited to give them funds to support the Kingdom Assignment. Those who donated funds, received the gift of not having to shop for shoebox items themselves. The task of shopping and filling the boxes fell on Jess, one of the younger sons. Jess did his best to find items for children to help them know and learn about God. Thanks to Jess and Lisa's thrifty shopping, they were able to fill 32 boxes with gifts communicating their love for others as well as God's love for all his children. After relying on the muscle of some of the other men in the Bollmann family, the boxes were ready to go, almost.

Each box still needed postage. Through the generosity of a very giving and caring business, a \$320 postage donation was provided for all 32 boxes! The Kingdom Assignment showed the Bollmanns that while most of the time when Pastor George asks rhetorical questions, the questions are designed to make us think but, in this instance, it was intended to make us ACT! The Assignment showed this family just how giving people could be allowing them to share gifts to spread the good news of the birth of Jesus Christ.

A Friend in Need, has Friends Indeed

Jennifer and Hallie Giesike

Accepting the Kingdom Assignment challenge was a no brainer for Jennifer Giesike. Still grief stricken after attending her uncle's funeral the day before, she knew exactly what God was calling her to do. Jennifer felt she needed to raise money for underfunded paranoia and schizophrenia research. You see, her uncle battled this illness. When Jennifer arrived home, she shared the Kingdom Assignment message from Pastor George with her daughter, Hallie, a college sophomore. Hallie, like her mom, was soon called by God to act in faith, but in a different manner than her mom.



Although Hallie may have been unaware at the time, God had already begun preparing her for the Kingdom Assignment in advance of the kickoff. Like typical college students in July, Hallie and her friend, Cheyenne, were discussing upcoming living arrangements when Cheyenne divulged that her dad was ill. Cheyenne wasn't sure what college was going to look like for her in the fall. Naturally, Hallie knew Cheyenne would be her roommate and the two worked out the details. Later in September, while Hallie and Cheyenne were purchasing groceries, she noticed

Cheyenne wasn't quite able to cover her bill. Hallie, like any good Christian friend would do, gladly paid for Cheyenne's purchase. During this tough time, Hallie learned the extent of Cheyenne's dad's illness. While he was diagnosed with cancer in January of 2022 a more recent diagnosis determined it was Stage 4 Melanoma. The grim outlook indicated Cheyenne's dad had about eight months to live. It was pretty clear that God wanted to work through Jennifer and Hallie to raise money for Cheyenne's family. Jennifer and Hallie set their sights on raising \$1000. God had a different plan.



Jennifer, Washington Missouri Chamber President and Fair Manager, had been traveling around the world attending conferences meeting some amazing people. These Fair Managers were familiar with executing fabulously large fairs, why not ask them to help to build God's Kingdom?

Jennifer drafted a letter sharing details about the Kingdom Assignment project along with her and Hallie's calling to help Cheyenne's family. Then, the ladies mailed the letter to Jennifer's wonderful friends and colleagues far and wide. Low and behold, money started flowing in! It was through these world-wide donations that Jennifer and Hallie were blessed with funds greatly exceeding their original \$1000 goal.

Having already shared the Giesike's Kingdom Assignment plan with Cheyenne's mom, Cheyenne and Hallie planned the big reveal to happen over Facetime with Cheyenne's dad. Cheyenne's parents were so surprised when Hallie shared that \$3,250 had been raised for them. They were so happy and gracious, not only with the donation, but that their family was thought of as part of God's plan in the Kingdom Assignment. Jennifer and Hallie felt great about being able to help someone they saw in need but would never ask for assistance. They were also thrilled to be able to spread God's love to others. It was such a wonderful experience for them to see people around the world being so giving and wanting to help. Jennifer and Hallie, like Jesus with skin on, became the way maker, the light in the darkness for this family in need.

Tractor Time

Terri and Rich Hilkerbaumer

"Fire up the tractor, Rich. It's time for the Knights of Columbus Journey for Charity Tractor Cruise!" These are the sentiments likely to be spoken by Terri. Each fall the Hilkerbaumer's shine up their tractor and take a 30 mile ride throughout Franklin and Warren Counties collecting food and cash to support the local food pantries.

The Hilkerbaumers are not new to donating and serving. The Journey for Charity ride has been God's calling to the Hilkerbaumers over the past few years, long before the NLC Kingdom Assignment was implemented. So, once again, Rich and Terri gave their time and their canned goods to support the children of God who are less fortunate, feeding not only their stomachs, but their souls through this God-like act of giving.

Fighting Hunger, Fueling Minds Through Facebook, Friends, and Family

Kelly and Pastor George Dohm

Souls on Fire, was the song the NLC membership had just finished belting out when Kelly and Pastor George stepped up to present their assignment. Along with the other participants doing the Kingdom Assignment, the Dohm's souls were on fire! Kelly and Pastor George have been such integral parts of this project. Kelly is on the Community Outreach Team and Pastor

George is, well, the pastor. Both were in on the planning of this endeavor for about a year. Similar to others on the Outreach Team, Kelly wondered how many people would actually step up for the assignment. Kelly was out of town on September 18th, the day the Kingdom Assignment was announced, thus missing out on the feeling that filled the air of NLC as member after member stepped up to the challenge. She did have the opportunity to watch the message online when she got home. She was absolutely blown away by the magnitude of people who had accepted the challenge.

Similar to other members, when Kelly and Pastor George accepted the challenge, they weren't sure what to do with God's money other than to ponder and pray about it. Eventually, they heard their call. There had been so much conversation about the needs of the Fighting Hunger, Fueling Minds food program and the shortage of food available to provide to students who lack adequate meals on the weekends. As an employee of Compass Health, based in South Point Elementary School, Kelly sees, on a daily basis, the demand for this program. Since she and Pastor George both have a passion for youth, they were led to focus their Assignment on providing food to children in need. Kelly and Pastor George reached out via Facebook to family and friends who share the Dohm's passion to serve children, youth, and their families and conveyed the premise of their Kingdom Assignment, i.e., how they wanted to raise funds to help meet the needs of the Fighting Hunger, Fueling Minds food program. There were also a few people from New Life, who had not given directly at the time of the plea for donations, who contributed to the Dohm's Assignment. (Dave & Nancy Scharfenberg, Marie Spires). One of these households even sold items of value in order to make a greater difference with their contribution, see Nancy's story elsewhere in this document.

Eventually, after the donation period was over and funds had been collected, Kelly and Pastor George met with Lindsey Jasper, School District of Washington Social Worker, who helps coordinate the Fighting Hunger, Fueling Minds food program, and presented her a check for \$724.



Lindsey is so appreciative of all that NLC does to support the Fighting Hunger, Fueling Minds food program. Lindsey, NLC, and the Food Backpack program, as our members have fondly termed Fighting Hunger, Fueling Minds, have a history together. Since its inception, in February 2013, the Food Backpack program has partnered with members of NLC to pack and deliver the backpacks to schools on a regular basis.

The Kingdom Assignment was a reminder to Kelly and Pastor George to trust in God even more. This is the Dohm's faith in action, seeing a physical need and attempting to meet it. As can be read in James 2:15-16, "If a brother or sister is without clothes and lacks daily food and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace, stay warm, and be well fed' but you don't give them what the body needs, what good is it?" Kelly and Pastor George have been so excited to see how God has worked through other people. As Pastor George states, "God continues to nudge us to

get out of our comfort zones and trust him more - using all our gifts to build the Kingdom of God around us.”

A Hat-Trick of Help

Kim and Dick Obermark

Kim and Dick Obermark gladly accepted the Kingdom Assignment as just one more way in which they put their faith in action. Dick is an active member of the New Life church family who is often found providing maintenance at church, making repairs or cleaning up debris from the numerous falling trees crushing the fence during heavy storms. While Dick is tinkering around, Kim is actively praying for others with the Prayer Team in between selling houses and helping others find the right forever home. It was no surprise to learn they helped grow God's Kingdom in three different ways.

When hearing about the state of the Fighting Hunger, Fueling Minds food backpack program, Kim not only donated her own funds to the program enabling children to be fed, she used her networks of Women With a Purpose and Business Women of MO to share the Assignment. The group members responded with a donation of \$500!

Next, Kim added materials and resources to Prayer Baskets provided to NLC members who are visited by the Prayer Team. While these prayer materials may not have a measurable dollar amount, the ripple effect of a strong prayer life is far and wide. The prayer materials provide recipients the opportunity to strengthen their relationship with God and their prayer life.

Lastly, Dick busied his crafty hands selling some of his creative works at a craft show. The profits afforded he and Kim funds to fulfill Christmas wishes of gifts and a monetary donation for a family with three children.

The Obermark's generosity was well received by the adopted family and undoubtedly greatly appreciated by those being prayed for and being fed. These seemingly small displays of God's great love have the ability to create such a large impact on both the giver and receiver. Both are blessed by the hand of God.

What we Learned

To Listen. To Pray. To Trust. To Believe! To Have Faith!

What started as an idea brought by one faith filled, ambitious, community building, NLC member turned into an epic mission impacting people throughout the world. As Jesus stated in Matthew 20, if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you" (NIV). The members learned that if you listen, pray, trust, believe, and carry a faith the size of a mustard seed, then anything is possible. While the *40 NLC Kingdom Assignment participants each took a step in

faith, growing \$3700 into over \$20,399.46, with still more to come, the immeasurable impact on the members and God's Kingdom is priceless. *Three families participated but did not take money

What we know for sure is:

- 60 students will go home with food bags each weekend
- 160 people are enjoying creamy, tasty apple butter
- Numerous foster families are being served
- 26 children received letters from Santa
- Drew received funds for his dream, his pumpkin patch
- 35 people rallied to help a family of four by providing funds to pay bills, taking pressure off a dad with a life-threatening illness
- 125 NLC members will be prayed over with Prayer Basket materials
- 160 people have Christmas music still in their hearts and minds
- Many people have warm hands, heads, necks, and feet
- Jewelry is being worn by many as a reminder of their donation to the Foster Closet
- Additional foster families are being served
- Women and girls in Asia are being freed from sex trafficking
- 84 people munched on delicious homemade cookies
- Loving Hearts participants are being fed and clothed
- 40 children are snuggled up in their PJs
- 5 adults received Christmas stocking gas cards
- 1 person strengthened their Bible knowledge
- 20 people have access to Bible materials at their learning level
- 3 people have been helped by an anonymous donor
- 20 people saw the calling and gave to Fighting Hunger, Fueling Minds
- 60 students will have food on the weekends for even longer
- 2 people rode tractors for charity
- Food pantries were filled
- 20 people hear God's word ringing in their ears
- 8 college students get to attend conferences to strengthen their relationship or to open their hearts to God
- A lot of delectable pie was eaten
- Harmony House members were treated to festivals and events
- A homeless person was provided a gas card
- 950 children could benefit from warm coats, hats, and gloves at Hermann Elementary
- One lucky winner had the burden of cooking lifted for a few meals didn't have to make some meals
- Many people learned about the gospel
- 100 people drank warm coffee or cocoa
- A grieving family humbly shared their gift with Friends of Kids with Cancer
- 40 hygiene bags were provided to the homeless

- 2 little girls learned to bake and understand the meaning of giving to others
- 29 people felt God's love during the Christmas season as their yards were Peppered With Love
- Water purifiers were purchased so others could have clean drinking water
- 2 Fishing nets were bought so families could feed themselves
- Malnourished children are being fed
- Chickens and goats were provided to families for eggs and milk
- Children were learning to read
- A young man and his mom bonded over Christmas shopping
- 30 children received Christmas boxes, possibly the first in their life
- The buyer of Grandma's clock is enjoying a priceless heirloom
- Proud Grandma is smiling down on her granddaughter
- Facebook members are learning about the Kingdom Assignment
- 60 children are guaranteed several more weekend food bags.
- Radio listeners are able to hear clean, wholesome, Christian music
- A family of an ill coworker has much needed help to pay bills
- Another family was adopted for Christmas

According to the math above, over 2224 of God's people benefited from the Kingdom Assignment, but as we all know, people talk and people share. Many chose to tell stories of how they purchased something, heard songs, or were the recipient of the gifts of those who participated. Then, those people told two people and those people mentioned it with two people, and so on, making the ability to determine the impact of the good will done for others, now or in the future, impossible.

Who knows, a child in foster care, may grow up to be president. A girl saved from sex trafficking may become the doctor who finds the cure for cancer. A child having food for the weekend may become a pastor. A homeless person may find a home, job, or church. A college student attending a conference may choose to receive Jesus Christ. We will never know the full impact of the NLC Kingdom Assignment this side of Heaven. What we do know is we were called, we listened, and we had faith. God guided us and we served through Him. We became the waymaker and in one small manner, maybe, a miracle worker, the light in the darkness, for at least one of God's children.

New Life Church...well done, good and faithful servants. May you continue to share in your Master's joy.

Stay tuned for Kingdom Assignment Part. 2: Kingdom Building Blitz...Our Mission Continues!