

MARANATHA!

SHARING HOPE AND COMMUNITY HIGHLIGHTS SPRING 2021

10

HOME SCHOOL
TIPS FROM A
PRO

LARRY HAILEY
ORDINARY MAN
TELLS OF LIFE LED BY
EXTRAORDINARY GOD

Fighting Fear

THE 2020 ISSUE

SCHOOL CLOSURES,
SILVER LININGS, AND
COPING WITH
UNCERTAINTY

CARING FOR THOSE WHO FEEL FORGOTTEN:
HOW ONE PHILLY MINISTRY IS BRINGING
LOVE AND TRUTH TO MEN BEHIND BARS



editor's note

Dear Friends,

2020 was hard right? It was a year of immense change and challenge. Perhaps even a time of loss and grief. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic many of us have tragically lost loved ones, income, and life as we knew it. Our sense of freedom has been shaken. Birthday parties have been canceled, vacations postponed, and holiday plans altered. Social gatherings have been limited, and high school stadiums are lonely for crowds. Education went virtual and children are learning in the living room. Parents are overwhelmed. Face masks have replaced smiles and pursuit of safety is our new idol. Things looked different in 2020 and they continue to look different today.

It's so tempting to dwell on the the negative feelings and events. You may find yourself afraid or hopeless in this changed world. The phrase "we're in this together" has been painted throughout the community yet many of us still feel alone in our struggles, loss, and emotions. Grief is never only grief. Anger, hatred, resentment, sadness, and loss of hope are evident all around us. It's apparent that we are a community who's grieving together and that's okay. Grieving can be healthy. But let's not fret okay?

While 2020 may have seemed like a mess you can be certain that it wasn't a hopeless one. In the midst of the challenge there *was* good and growth. There was joy to be found! There was triumph and hope simply because God is sovereign. God is present. He was present in 2020 and He's present right now. He loves you and wants you trust in Him for all of your needs. We pray that this publication will be a source of joy, comfort, and hope in your life during a time when we're tempted to be shaken by the social climate. Instead rejoice in the hope and promises of Jesus Christ.

- Rosalie Ellis
Editor and Columnist
MARANATHA!

MARANATHA!

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SHEPHERD *of the* **HILLS**
C A L V A R Y C H A P E L



"To Know Christ and Make Him Known"

Shepherd is a non-denominational Christian church, affiliated with the Calvary Chapel Association.

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527 Hoffmansville Road
Bechtelsville, PA 19505
610-754-6446
info@soth.church
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Shepherd of the Hills Church

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FEATURED CONTENT

COMMUNITY

EDITOR'S NOTE 1

SEEDS OF FAITH PLANTED AT LOCAL CORN MAZE 10

GRACE ABOUND - FINDING GOODNESS AMIDST TRAGEDY 13

MINISTRY AT SHEPHERD

HOME SCHOOL CO-OP 15

CHALLENGE 12

CHOSEN BY GRACE 30

MISSIONS 36

Please consider passing this issue along to someone else when you're finished.



COVER

THE SILVER LINING OF SCHOOL CLOSURES 17

RESPONDING TO THE LORD'S LEADING 19

**COPING WITH UNCERTAINTY, 21
ELECTION 2020**

**HOME SCHOOL WISDOM 22
WITH ANNE RENZI**

BRINGING HOPE TO MEN BEHIND BARS 26

FIGHTING FEAR DURING THE PANDEMIC 28

DROP OFF THE KIDS!
EVERY WEDNESDAY



And Adults Join Us For...

VERSE-BY-VERSE BIBLE TEACHING

TOPICS THAT IMPACT OUR COMMUNITY.

COFFEE. SNACKS. FELLOWSHIP

7PM AT SHEPHERD OF THE HILLS CHURCH



STAY A WHILE

Chronicles Christian Book Store offers more than awesome books!

The quaint shop located within the parlor at Shepherd of the Hills, Calvary Chapel, is a great place to study, grab coffee with a friend, or simply unwind.

Chronicles' prices are some of the lowest around and the friendly atmosphere within the church makes it easy to stay a while.

Although, if you can't stay no problem! The shop recently launched an online bookstore and even offers curbside pickup!

Visit www.chroniclesbooks.org today to place your order!

Chronicles is a ministry of the church and does not profit from sales. Proceeds are donated annually to a local non-profit organization.

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Long Time Member of Shepherd Receives College Scholarship

Each year, Shepherd of the Hills church awards a college scholarship to one qualifying youth from within the congregation. The scholarship is given in honor of Peg Merkley and her service to the church.

Traditionally the scholarship is given to a youth who began his or her education at the church's preschool program and has continued involvement within the church throughout young adulthood. In 2020, the award was given to Sarah Smith.

Sarah has been a member of Shepherd of the Hills since she was a child. She is a graduate of Exeter Township Senior High School, class of 2020. While it seemed unnerving to begin college during a pandemic Sarah says "I didn't realize how large my support system was which has been a huge blessing. God brought people around me at the right time to support me when I needed it".

Sarah is currently a freshman at Messiah College, majoring in Biochemistry. Upon graduation she hopes to use her degree for scientific research. Sarah also enjoys singing in the worship band at Shepherd and hopes to continue throughout college.

Congratulations Sarah!



HELPING BELIEVERS SHARE LIFE TOGETHER

Women

Families

Men

Couples

Young Adults

visit www.soth.church for more info





BAPTISMS

"I wanted everyone to know that I have Jesus in my heart."
-Sierra Monger, Age 6



Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

MATTHEW 28:18-19

Seeds of Faith Planted at Local Corn Maze

THOUSANDS LED TO CHRIST



WHAT DOES A CORN MAZE HAVE TO DO WITH CHRIST?

A hidden gem within the community, the newly acquired Gilbertsville Farm provides traditional down-home fun, with a twist! While inside the maze participants have the opportunity to hear the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The 60+ acre farm is owned and operated by the Peiffer family who have been in the corn maze industry for over 16 years. While the maze is their main attraction you can also browse the petting zoo, enjoy a hayride, or cozy up for a summer movie night! Events are open to the public, seasonally, with a special invitation to youth groups across the area.

THE BEGINNING

Jeff Peiffer sprouted the first corn maze nearly two decades ago, when he was the Executive Director of "Christian Endeavor", a youth discipleship organization. He hoped that the corn maze would be a fun way to boost revenue for their ministry.

What started as a business venture quickly evolved into an unconventional tool to share the Gospel with local youth. Jeff put his revenue boosting goals aside and set his eyes on a bigger prize. He couldn't shake the feeling the Good wanted to use those rows of corn for something much greater than he



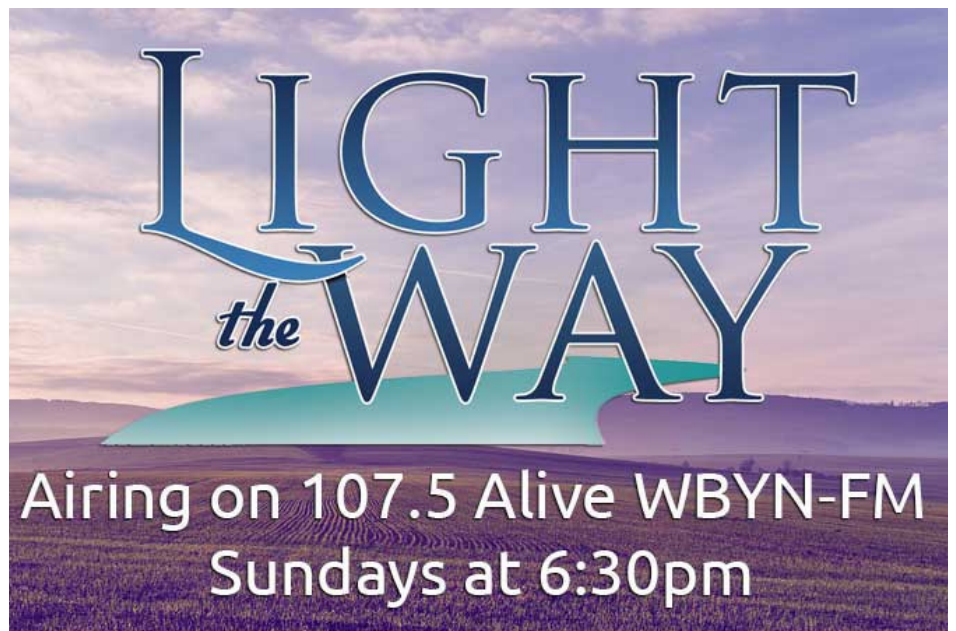
A-maze-ing Grace

originally thought. Jeff has been sharing the gospel in his corn mazes for about twenty years. In that time, he reports that over 4000 people have accepted Christ in the maze.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Logistically speaking - Once each group has made their way through the maze they're invited to stay for a time of refreshment and fellowship. Youth have the opportunity to hear the Gospel, ask questions, and even publicly acknowledge their acceptance of Christ.

This season alone 75 teens found new life in Christ after hearing the gospel at The Gilbertsville Farm.



BE WATCHFUL, STAND FIRM IN THE FAITH, ACT LIKE MEN, BE STRONG

1 CORINTHIANS 16:13



Challenge is a ministry of Shepherd of the Hills, Calvary Chapel. Throughout the Bible God called men of faith to be examples to others, priests in the home, and defenders of righteousness in the culture. However, few men today have been taught what it means to be a godly man. Challenge exists to call and equip men to lives of righteous service to our King, Jesus Christ.

Challenge meets regularly for food, fellowship, and discipleship. The group is open to all men beginning at age 16. Events are normally held once each month on a Saturday

In January the group enjoyed a steak lunch and Bible teaching by Pastor Collin Monger. Will Ellis, a new member of the group, commented: "It is important to have fellowship with other men of the church and be in an environment where you can discover God's design for masculinity. And the lunch was great! Living life as a Christian man is a challenging task, but luckily God tells us exactly how to do it in scripture.

Challenge is helping get men ready to meet that standard God has set. Whether someone is new to the faith or has been in it their entire life it is good to stay in the company of like-minded Christians who want to help you grow in your faith."



**Visit www.soth.church For Updates
or Call 610-754-6446**



GRACE ABOUNDS

FINDING GOODNESS IN TRAGEDY

Caleb and Erin Landis were childhood sweethearts. The couple first met at church when they were barely old enough to tie their shoes. As it goes, they both became busy with growing up and lost touch until 2003. As they reconnected it became apparent that God had much more in store for the couple than they ever imagined. Their friendship turned into an idyllic romance and the couple said "I do" in 2009.

Erin worked at a ski shop, served as a youth group leader, and loved fashion. She had dreams of one day creating her own line of ski wear and loved to shop the latest trends. When she wasn't working, bringing joy to others, or spending time with Caleb, she was preparing for her next beauty pageant. Erin was born for the stage, and later went on to win 4 titles: Miss PA 2006 (NAM), Miss PA 2006 (American Co-Ed) Mrs. PA America, 2011 Mrs PA International 2016,

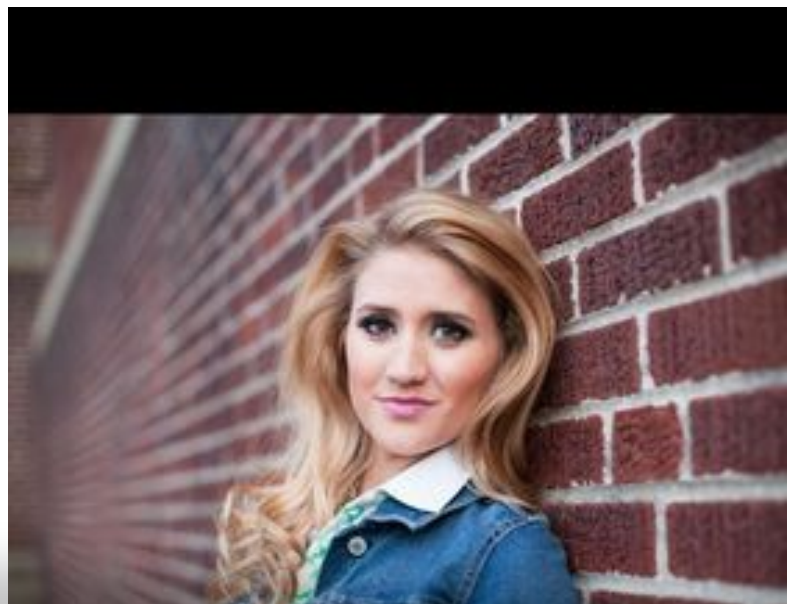
In 2009, Caleb and Erin had their first child, Tommy, on Christmas Day! Erin absolutely loved being a mother. Some time later they were blessed with a second child, Tory. Caleb proudly calls Erin "his princess", and gushes about how much she poured into her children.

2017, the couple received news that threatened to shake their peace. Erin had a rare form of cancer, and there was no "real" treatment.

"We were relentless in the fight for more time. We cherished every moment and trusted our futures to Jesus.", said Caleb. Doctors tried everything they could. Though Erin was physically weak during treatment, Caleb describes the time they spent together as "beautiful".

Tragically Erin's battle against cancer came to an end but her memory remains very much alive. God is using her legacy to bring comfort and hope to others.

While Caleb admits that the days are hard and the grief is strong, he believes that God is equipping him for his new role as a single dad. "I'm where He wants me, even though it pains





me. I want to be able to finish my race, whatever that looks like. Right now that looks like raising my children. I have to move forward, keep going, bring honor to Erin and point people to Jesus. God is just as good today as he was on our wedding day and I am thankful for the beauty of the time spent with her. My hope is in the Lord”.

Caleb has made a decision to dwell on the goodness found within his tragedy rather than the pain and suffering. He has a peace that surpasses understanding. It's a goodness that can only be found in Christ. “What better joy can a husband have than to know his wife is face to face with Her Savior”?

Caleb wants to encourage fathers, single or married, as they continue to care and provide for their families.

**“You got this! You have to!
Gods Goodness never ceases.
Mercies are new each day. He
remains faithful. Press on.
God will sustain you”.**

**Grief Support is available at Lifegrowth
Psychological Services in Boyertown
1-800-689-0250**

**You may also call Shepherd of the Hills Church for
support. 610-754-6446**

We aren't meant to do life alone.

SHEPHERD *of the* HILLS Homeschool

Co-Op

Old School Feel for a New School Program

The home school co-op at Shepherd is a volunteer ministry dedicated to encourage and support families who are educating their children at home. Classes are open to grades K-5. The group meets for two 16 week sessions in the fall and spring on Wednesday mornings from 9-12. Subjects are taught on a rotating basis and students participate in a (mostly) outdoor gym class weekly.

On any given Wednesday, you're sure to find the co-op brood laughing, learning, and maybe even rolling down the hill out back. They're kids being kids and that's how we like it.

The COVID-19 pandemic has led many families to choose home schooling, out of necessity. The co-op has brought many families together who are new to the endeavor and have become a great source of support for one another. We are all learning how to do this together" says one mom. The Lord has slowed us down". Another mom, Mikaela Engarde, said:

"I have learned a new level of grace. Many days I feel like a failure but the Lord reminds me that my worth is not in what I do. It's who I am".

Mikaela like many other parents has had to adjust her expectations surrounding school and what that actually looks like on a daily basis. The co-op at Shepherd has helped with that adjustment by bringing a sense of normalcy to her children.

"Co-op has been a benefit to Lilly and Mali because it's normal - Normal to go with other children, and learn and play. It has also been a blessing to have this consistency during such a challenging year. Like me, they're learning to be content".

This spring, the kids will learn to play the ukulele, hatch baby chicks, and even go on a field trip!

This mom-led group is truly dedicated to providing a quality supplemental program for their children. "



The support is incredible. My kids love coming to see their friends each week and the moms who volunteer are so great. It feels like I've found my people."

Sound like fun?

The co-op at Shepherd is open for enrollment! For more info contact the church at 610-754-6446 or email info@soth.church



ONE-LINE PRAYER JOURNAL PROMPTS FOR THE MOM WHO ONLY HAS 5 MINUTES



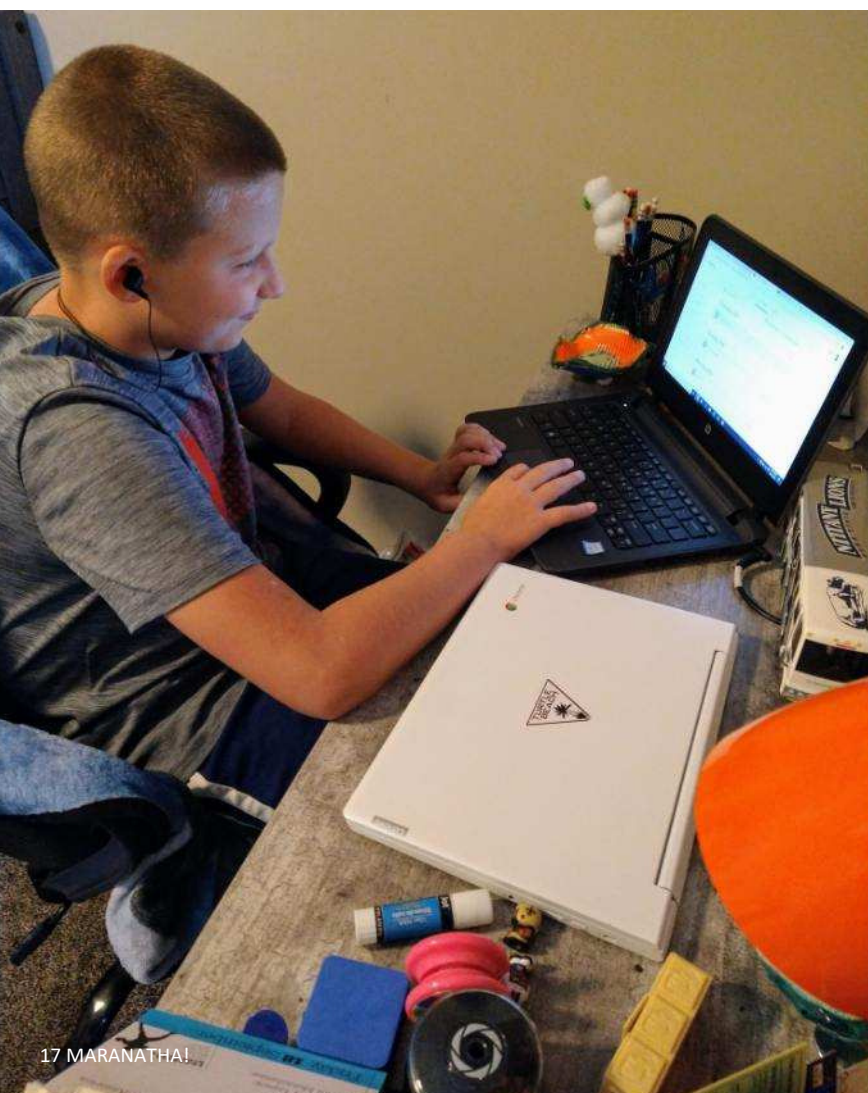
- Even though it seems ugly, I choose to see beauty in _____. Lord, thank you.
- Today it seems like I need _____. Lord, I trust in your provision.
- I messed up when _____. Father, teach me.
- The biggest fear I have for my child is _____. Jesus, open my heart to truth.
- It's hard to admit _____. Father, you already know.



The Silver Lining of School Closures

Overcoming Educational Challenges in 2020

When schools closed for two weeks, in March of 2020, many viewed the hiatus as an additional spring break, a freebie of sorts. Little did we know that the two week closure would extend well into the new year, and that the COVID-19 pandemic would completely change the way we educate our children. The world shut down. Families were under the same roof 24/7. Parents and teachers struggled to juggle responsibilities, navigate new technology, cope with changing schedules, and virtual meetings. Children were forced, very suddenly, to accept mom as their teacher, and the only “kid” on the playground was the family dog. The “new normal” didn’t feel normal at all. The challenges were real and they continue to be, for so many. But hey, we’re not here to focus on the struggles. Let’s talk about the silver linings! Many families have been able to successfully work through the challenges presented by school closures, find joy, and celebrate victories that, otherwise, may have never materialized. Some are even *thankful* for the great school struggle of 2020. For if not for the struggle, they may have missed out on the blessings that were waiting on the other side.



SUDDENLY SUPERMOM

Rachel Kumpf is a third grade teacher at Washington Elementary School in the Boyertown School District. The school closures were especially challenging for her because she is also a mom. Under the same roof Rachel was responsible for teaching her third grade class and supervising her boys' education on Zoom. "The first week I thought I had a plan, and quickly realized that I needed to be more flexible", said Rachel. "Noah needed guidance at times when I wasn't able to help him so the focus changed. I needed to help him learn to be more independent and advocate for himself".

Rachel and the boys agree that it took a few weeks to get used to the new routine. Rachel taught her class from the kitchen table while the boys retreated to their bedrooms. There they'd do Zoom classes and independent work. Planning ahead has been a huge necessity. Rachel makes sure the boys have water, snacks, pencils, and anything else they may need in their rooms before the day begins. That way they don't accidentally interrupt her teaching. "We are still expected to be professional even though we're at home".

At the beginning of the school year Rachel's main concern was whether she would be able to connect effectively with a new class, in a virtual setting. She was surprised by how well it went and how easy it was to bond with the kids.

Once the district changed to a hybrid schedule Rachel was finally able to see her students in person. The transition was seamless and the class didn't miss a beat! What an unexpected blessing!

And that's not the only blessing that Rachel has realized! "I will forever be changed from this experience. The best form of professional development was being forced into a setting where I needed to learn, implement, and facilitate new technologies daily. I am continuing to discover new resources for the kids to make the virtual classroom just feel like our classroom. I have grown so much as a teacher. While the days have been hard and often accompanied by tears they truly are priceless". Rachel is also thankful that her boys have been able to experience an alternative means of education. "It's been a learning curve for them too but I am glad that they have experienced it and know that they can do school from home if they need to".

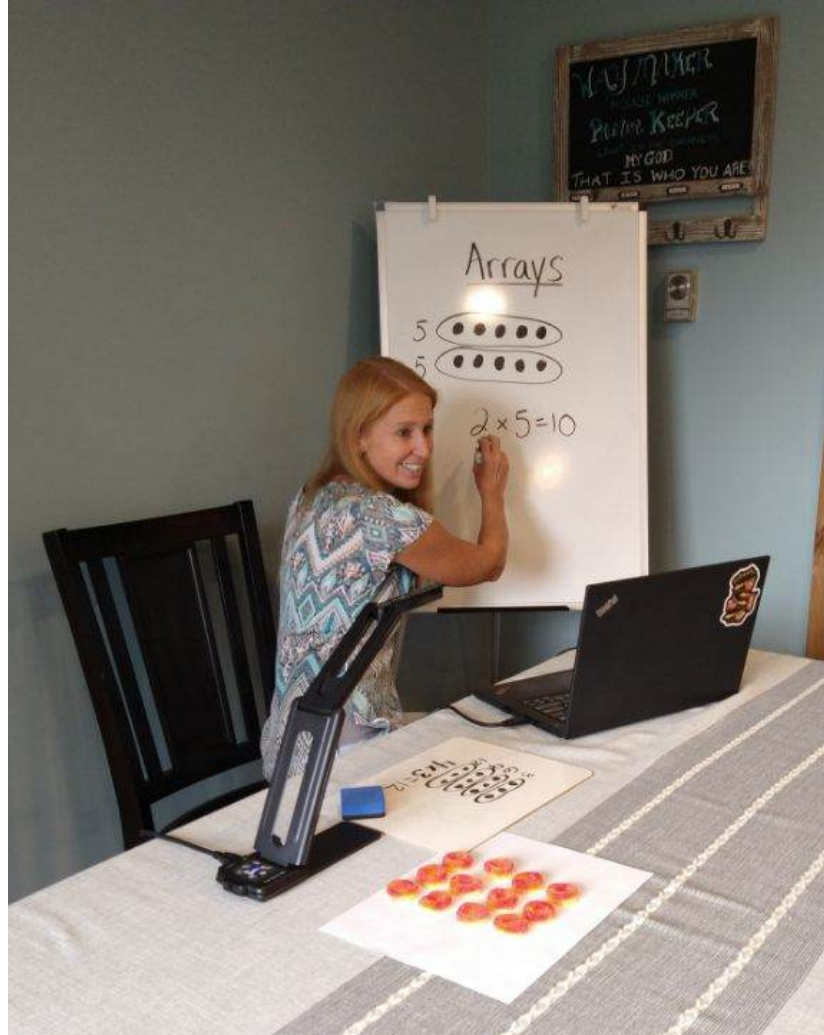
Rachel, her husband Matt, and the boys have also found some hidden perks of home education! "It has truly become a family affair!" You'll often find them going for a leisurely stroll during lunch or cozy-d up on the couch after their work day is over; when normally, they would be driving back home, or running errands. If Matt is home they're able to eat lunch together as a family. The additional time spent together is definitely a plus for the Kumpfs!

Rachel says "There were so many times when I felt like it was too hard and I would see God in little ways. You know, some kind of encouragement that I'm doing okay. God put me in this position at this time for a purpose and I need to be careful not to miss out on that purpose. Every day with these kids (my own and my class) matters. He has equipped me for it. We have our own plans but God has His".

MORE GOOD NEWS

While the community may have been surprised by school closures and drastic reformation of education, God wasn't. It seems unbelievable that something like this would have a purpose, doesn't it? How could God allow this? It's hard. We don't have answers. And as humans that's bothersome.

What we *do* know is that God promises to work all things together for good. We can trust him and sometimes even catch a glimpse of the victory and joy he has in store for us on the other side. It's evident that God provides. He restores and replenishes. He allows us to experience joy even in the middle of trial and tragedy. And so, if you're struggling to find the silver lining of school closures take heart in the truth that God is in control and He has a purpose for this time in your life.



“DON'T GO TO A BAR TO FIND A WOMAN. GO TO CHURCH. BUT REMEMBER, CHURCHES ARE FULL OF SINNERS, TOO.”

-Larry Hailey

RESPONDING TO THE LORD'S LEADING LARRY HAILEY SHARES HIS STORY

On the surface Larry Hailey may seem like an ordinary man. His humble demeanor exudes through his smile and he's the kind of guy you could talk to for hours. By all standards he has lived a conventional life. Years ago, he was a carpenter by trade and taught wood shop. He has always loved to stay active and enjoys working with his hands. His family owns a local farm and Larry visits regularly to help out. He grew up in a Christian home, in Kansas, and vividly remembers the love and persistence of his grandmother. She would often encourage him to memorize John 3:16 "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish, but have eternal life". And when the young Larry needed some extra motivation she encouraged him with a small fortune of nickels. Despite the influence of his Christian upbringing Larry recalls leaving the church as a young man.

THE LOVE OF HIS LIFE

At the youthful age of 20 Larry married a small town nurse named Peg. They couple was wed at Bellevue Baptist Church and Peg quickly became the apple of Larry's eye. Peg was a Christian and under her loving influence Larry was led back to church. He admits with a smirk that at first, he went only to be with his wife. However, as time went on the Lord softened Larry's heart. He felt drawn to church attendance and to scripture. Larry recalls reading John 3:16, the same verse he was taught by his grandmother, when he finally made the decision to accept Christ as his personal Lord and Savior, a day that would change the course of his life for eternity.



Larry and Peg are still married today! Together they have experienced decades of memories, trials, and joys. They have 6 children, 29 grandchildren, too many great-grandchildren to count (seriously), and have enjoyed 62 years of wedded bliss. In fact, Larry's entire face still lights up with joy when he speaks of her. He often wonders what his life would have been like had he not married Peg. "I don't want to think about what would have happened", he laments. "She has been key to my sanctification. She led me to Jesus and helped me know that he died for me. And from this earth we can go right to our heavenly life if we believe. Because of her, I am a better person".

WASHED BY THE WATER

In August of 2020, Larry was baptized in the company of his church family and friends at Shepherd of the Hills, Calvary Chapel, in Bechtelsville. We asked him why he decided to be baptized at this point in his life. Why now? Larry responded that he was "simply following the Lord's leading". If we had to sum up Larry's life in one sentence, that's what it would be. "A life of responding to the Lord's leading".

We asked Larry what advice he might offer to young men. He said: "Have an open mind, go to the Bible, pray, and love your neighbor. In marriage, forgive and marry a woman who is walking with God. Don't go to a bar to find a woman. Go to church. But remember churches are full of sinners too. Forgive. Forgive Forgive",

ORDINARY MEETS EXTRAORDINARY

Larry Hailey seems like an ordinary man because he is an ordinary man! He has worked an ordinary job, raised an ordinary family, and lives within ordinary means. What sets Larry apart is the extraordinary God he serves. All of the ordinary aspects of his life have become extraordinary, simply because Larry has committed his heart to the One who holds all truth, all joy, and all peace. Larry has committed his heart and life to Christ.

**And a life with Christ is where
extraordinary begins.**



COPING WITH UNCERTAINTY

Election Day 2020

Twas the night before history, when all through the house
Every creature was stirring, including the mouse
The ballots were placed in the mailbox with care
With cynical faith that they'd soon arrive there
The children were nestled all snug in their beds
While visions of red and blue danced in their heads
They heard mama say that Joe Biden takes naps
Hunter's Laptop, Trump's hair, COVID this, climate that
When out on the lawn there arose such a clatter
All the neighbors were fighting about things that don't matter
Away to the windows Papa flew in a flash
Tore open the shutters, and yelled "stop the clash"
I'm really unsure how this contest will go
It seems as though everyone wants a big show
Did the man at the polls think my ears couldn't hear
When he yelled at my mama with anger and fear

Fear for the future and fear for his life
If his man doesn't win he seems destined for strife
There must be an answer to all of this mess
We are nervous and tired and spiteful and stressed.
The truth is just maybe it's truth that we need
Jesus, my faith is the size of a mustard seed
So I opened my Bible and a glimpse of His Word
Soon gave me to know that my dread was absurd
He spoke not a word, but went straight to His work
My heart filled with truth and my soul gave a smirk
For whomever will win this prestigious award
We have nothing to fear because Jesus is Lord

Prayer Journal Prompt For 2021

Lord, the world is in your hands. There is nothing that leaves you speechless. Thank you for your all-knowing presence. Today, I feel uncertain about _____. Flood me with wisdom, and peace, as I lay my uncertainties about this world at your feet.



HOME SCHOOL WISDOM WITH ANNE RENZI

So you've decided to home school. Now what? You've probably caught wind of the dreaded "year end evaluation" requirement. To a newbie it sounds completely overwhelming. Not only are you keeping up with the day to day demands of working, cooking, cleaning, maintaining your home and family, but now you're responsible for your child's entire education. You're doing it. You're in it, and you know it's messy.

You *know* you've read like a thousand books. Your children can count to 100 and write a full sentence. They've done art and you've exposed them to music but you're not really sure how to keep track of all that learning in between spilled milk and toddler tantrums. Aside from the tired look in your eyes, how do you prove that you've done those 180 days?

Anne Renzi is a former public education teacher, home school co-op leader, and long time home school mom. She also provides year end evaluations. Her heart is made of solid gold and she will drop what she's doing to help, encourage, and share her wealth of knowledge. At least that's exactly what she did when we asked her to help with this article. Here's what Anne wants first year home school parents to know:

1- Know Your Requirements. Book logs, attendance records, affidavits, objectives, and special ed modifications are just some of the requirements that you'll need to consider. If you're lost The Home School Legal Defense Association (www.hsllda.org) is a great place to start, or check out AskPauline.com, for all things related to home school in PA.

2. Start Early. Don't wait until the end of the year to assemble your portfolio, record attendance, or log books. For a stress free portfolio Anne suggests using a 3 ring binder. Add your child's completed work throughout the year starting on day one. Before your evaluation you can easily go through and take out anything that doesn't showcase your child's best progress. Update book logs and attendance records,

3. Don't Be Afraid To Ditch a Curriculum. You bought a fancy pants curriculum at the beginning of the year but midway through you realized that it's terrible. On paper it seems great but it doesn't work for your child, you, or your lifestyle. You want to throw it off the balcony but can't because it was part of your plan! Anne warns of becoming too attached to a particular plan or curriculum. Ultimately, if you try to force a curriculum that's not the

right fit your child will know it, and your evaluation will show it. Ditch the curriculum, and find something new.

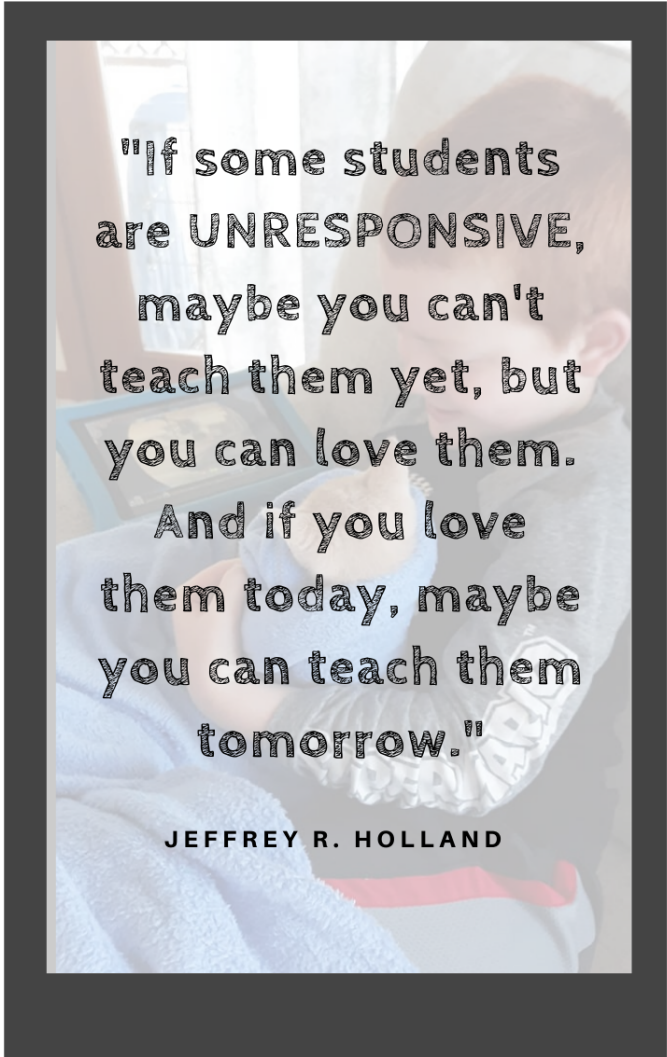
4. Find An Awesome Evaluator. He/She may become your person, your amigo, your lifeline. You'll want to find someone who is knowledgeable, open to various methods of education, and who can get on board with the vision you have for your education program. Your evaluator is not there to judge your child, test them, or measure their intelligence. The only benchmark an evaluator should be looking for, as it pertains to your child, is progress. The job of the evaluator is to ensure that you, the parent, aka supervisor of the education program, has delivered a program that meets all of the requirements set out by the state, and that your child is making progress towards his/her educational goals.

5. Adjust Your Expectations. Home schooling, by definition, is not comparable to a brick and mortar program. It's not supposed to be! Many parents become discouraged when their young child cannot sit for hours of instruction or it seems like they can't get much done in between dirty dishes and folding laundry. While structure is important for children it's unrealistic to think that your home school program is going to look the same as a traditional classroom. In between science projects and math worksheets you're living life together. That can be confusing and feel chaotic. Anne encourages parents to adjust expectations, embrace the chaos as best you can, and remember that some of the most important work we can do with our children is a matter of the heart.

Deuteronomy 11:18-19 says "You shall therefore lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul, and you shall bind them as a sign on your hand, and they shall be as frontlets between your eyes. You shall teach them to your children, talking of them when you are sitting in your house, and when you are walking by the way, and when you lie down, and when you rise". The work you are doing matters even if you put off that math worksheet until tomorrow. In fact, the work you're doing matters for eternity.

6. Consider Nixing Grade Level. At least, for now. Seasoned home school parents and evaluators want you to know that grade level doesn't really matter. Progress matters. It's tempting to get hung up on bench marks, reading levels, and whatever else you think your child "should" be doing but that's not necessarily what's important. During your evaluation you need to show progress and that will look different for each child. There's nothing wrong with using grade levels if that's your thing. It's just not required and certainly not worth the added stress.

7. Get Creative. The 3 ring binder is not a requirement. "Don't be afraid to think outside the box!" she says. "Some parents have brought boxes filled with work or actual workbooks to highlight their child's progress while others have created slideshows or photo albums." Anne encourages parents to have fun with the evaluation and showcase their child's progress in any way that they see fit!



**"If some students
are UNRESPONSIVE,
maybe you can't
teach them yet, but
you can love them.
And if you love
them today, maybe
you can teach them
tomorrow."**

JEFFREY R. HOLLAND

8. Involve Your Child. So your child learned an instrument. Or maybe he learned how to tie his shoes. Awesome! Rather than document his accomplishment with a write up why not have your child perform a song for the evaluator or lace up? For many children this is an exciting time to step out of their comfort zone and show their skills to a “real” audience. So if your child did a really awesome science project or created beautiful works of art, bring them along and celebrate all that's been accomplished!

9. Take Care of Yourself. You and your child are working hard. Give yourself a break! If you have young children it may be impractical to sneak away to your bedroom during the day but there must be some other way you can unwind, right? Take advantage of local co-ops, trade babysitting, drop your kids off at youth group, or vow to wake up 20 minutes earlier than usual to soak in the silence. Home school parents wear many hats and it's easy to burn out. Remember, you can't be your child's best teacher unless you are well enough to teach!

10. Home School With Jesus. The best home school program is one that is centered on Christ. Have you consulted your creator before choosing a curriculum? Did you seek wisdom before making those co-op commitments? We spend an awful lot of time trying to figure out all these details on our own, don't we? That can feel heavy. The truth is, every time we make a decision, we have an opportunity to grow closer to Christ by including Him in our decision making. When you do, you can home school knowing that you're headed in the right direction even when it seems like you've made a wrong turn.



Anne Renzi
Home School Mom
Leader of World Changers Christian Co-Op
Home School Evaluator



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BRINGING HOPE TO MEN BEHIND BARS

CALVARY CHAPEL PHILADELPHIA PRISON MINISTRY

“As men sometimes we think we know everything. Sometimes we are too proud to ask for help. God does his best to get our attention; sometimes, that's prison. In prison, God gave me an opportunity to make a choice. My soul was at stake”.

-Stuart Branch

Stuart Branch is a loving husband and father. He works hard, lives for the Lord, and tries his best to provide for his family. His voice brings hope, encouragement, and a sincere desire to help others grow in their faith. You may never guess that at one point he was facing 25 years to life in prison.

Stuart grew up among ten siblings in a modest Philadelphia home. When Stuart was facing big time in prison his dreams began to fade along with his hope and plans for the future. He was sentenced to eight years in the state penitentiary. At the time, he didn't know the Lord.

In 1987 Stuart met Frank, of Calvary Chapel, while he was incarcerated. Frank would visit him often, sometimes driving three hours each way. He became a valued mentor, friend, and intricate part of Stuart's spiritual journey. Through the study of God's Word Frank helped Stuart have a better understanding of the Lord

and what it meant to be a Christian. He poured into him and his efforts would seal Stuart's eternity. While incarcerated, at the age of 32, Stuart accepted Christ as his personal Lord and Savior.

Years later Stuart found himself back in the courtroom. While his faith in Jesus never waned he struggled with sin. "God has given me a trillion chances" says Stuart as he recalls the day of his second sentencing. This time he would serve only 6 months in prison if he promised to work towards reformation. It felt as though a giant weight had been lifted off his shoulders. In that moment, he was sure that God had big plans for him.

In prison Stuart became involved with a Bible study group that was led by Pastor Al Garcia of Calvary Chapel, Philadelphia. The ministry serves both juvenile and adult male inmates by providing them with Bibles, visits, books, group studies for new believers, and encouragement through correspondence. Al describes the ministry as "true hospitality mixed with pastoral care". He is passionate about helping men behind bars know Jesus who may feel alone and forgotten.

Stuart: "Al treated me like a brother, not an inmate. Lots of other ministries come in and out but don't make you feel welcome once you're released from prison. Calvary Chapel is different. Al talked to us like he was in there with us. He met me where I was at and made me feel like family. The study group allowed me to see men who knew the Lord and be with men who cared about my soul. They cared about my family too".

Al's prison program expanded to include "Spirit of Truth Ministries" which offers a transitional housing program to help inmates get back on their feet once they're released from prison. Men are provided with housing, community connections, and spiritual guidance. They are encouraged to work, and continue their involvement with the church. However, Al doesn't push it. He says "We want to see the Holy Spirit moving, not man moving". The quaint brick transitional home houses 3-4 men, at any given time, and also provides support to the former inmates' families, if necessary.

Currently Stuart is employed and living in freedom. We asked what advice he might give to those in a constant battle with sin. He says, simply:



"Turn to the Lord or continue to be a slave to the world. You're either in the army, or you're serving the enemy".



FIGHTING FEAR

DURING THE PANDEMIC



You're worried. I can feel it through your words. You love your family and want to protect them at any cost. It feels like some other people aren't taking this seriously! Why can't everyone just do what they're told so this can go away? I feel that.

Conflicting information, grim statistics, and conspiracy theories are flooding your news feed, and maybe you're confused. Every other minute someone in your Facebook group is posting about the seriousness of COVID-19 yet your mother-in-law believes she can cure it with a shot of whisky and essential oils. Who on earth do you trust? I feel that too.

One day you're totally okay with sending the kids to school, sans masks, and a day later you're looking for some kind of germ proof bubble suit on Amazon. No matter how you slice it these decisions seem flat out impossible.

Right now people everywhere are being threatened somethin' awful by panic and mass confusion. So much, that it seems like we have stopped trusting ourselves and maybe even God. Natural instincts and common sense seem to have been replaced by extreme safety measures and life altering decisions. We are naturally driven by love to protect our families which is a good thing. But hey now - let's not confuse love with fear.

Love brings you to "go all Proverbs 31 up on Walmart" and stock your pantry. Being prepared is a good thing. Love brings you to research data, talk to your doctor, or be open to opposing views, so that you can make the best decisions for your family. Due diligence is a good thing. Love may also bring you to order a germ proof bubble suit on Amazon if that's what you *need*. Advocating for your family is a good thing. Love even means admitting that you're wrong. Love doesn't lie.

Fear is a different animal. It's manipulative. It causes you to act on emotion without thinking things through. It suffocates your voice, your instincts, your independence, and tricks you into believing that you are incapable. It renders you dependent upon someone or something else. Fear is so strong that you may not even realize when it has consumed you. It's a jumbo sized emotion, full of panic and deceit.

Fear wants you to buy that bubble suit, but not because your child needs it.

It wants you to buy it simply because it told you to, or because you're imagining the worst case scenario, or because you don't have all the information, or because your once peaceful spirit has been consumed by panic. Well, as Zach Williams said, "fear is a liar", and COVID-19 fear is no exception.

If your first reaction to a news headline or grim statistic is fear just pause. Stop right there and get your head right. If your next move is rooted in fear it can't be trusted.

Replace that word with something else. There's nothing to fear; however, maybe there's something you need to be prepared for. Or, maybe there's a question you need to ask your doctor. See? Take back your emotions and watch how quickly your mind clears. A clear mind is capable of making decisions based on love not fear, and that's a wonderful thing!

So friends, let's prepare. Let's make a plan for the "what ifs". Write it down if you need to. Let's help each other do research and compare information. Let's come together as a community, advocate for our children, do our due diligence, respect one another, and be confident in the decisions we make for our families.

**As mothers, fathers,
friends, and family, we
are driven by love - all of
us; and simply, there is
no room for fear in love.**



9 FEAR FIGHTING TRUTHS

- **Your days are already numbered. Psalm 139:16**
- **God loves you. Romans 5:8**
- **God will strengthen you. Isaiah 41:10**
- **God knows you. Psalm 139:1-2**
- **God's plan will not be thwarted. Romans 8:28**
- **God will forgive you. Hebrews 8:12**
- **God will provide for you. Philippians 4:19**
- **God can use evil for good. Genesis 50:20**
- **You can find peace in Jesus. Philippians 4:7**



Chosen by GRACE

Women's Ministry



VISION AND EVENTS IN 2020

Are you a woman who has a heart for service? Looking for a fun group of women to hang out with? If so you may want to consider joining the women's ministry at Shepherd! There is always room for more!

For Christmas the ladies enjoyed a cookie swap complete with card making. The handmade notes were then delivered to those in need.

Chosen By Grace is committed to developing Godly women by serving the community and fostering close knit relationships rooted in Christ. Renee Miller, director, has a vision for the ministry that extends well beyond the church walls.

While 2020 has put a damper on many activities the women of Shepherd have continued to be a light in each other's lives, and the community.

Fall began with a tone of reflecti as the group gathered for breakfast, worship, and devotion. Fleece blankets were handmade and tucked neatly away into donated backpacks for children in need over the holiday season.



If you'd like more info, or want to register for future events, please contact Renee Miller.

**610-754-7664 or
rmiller@soth.church**

FROM SMALL HOMETOWN EDUCATION TO NATIONAL ACCREDITATION

THE TRANSFORMATION OF CCU - A UNIVERSITY PROVIDING QUALITY ACADEMIC PROGRAMS TO STUDENTS WHO HAVE A SERVANT'S HEART



Calvary Chapel University is an accredited, Christ-centered online institute of higher education, offering certificate and degree programs, in the areas of ministry, biblical teaching, counseling, leadership, and education. Their genuine love for people, and Jesus, sets them apart from many other post-secondary options. They truly delight in providing a high quality education to students, while helping them to develop their God-given gifts and talents.

While CCU has recently experienced record enrollment, its humble beginnings are a testament to

the fruit of fearless obedience by its leaders, and the incredible plan God has had for for the endeavor.

The school, formerly known as Rock University, began as a small online discipleship program in San Diego, California. It's founding group consisted of just a few people who simply believed they were called to be "a helper of people's joy", through providing higher education to the local community.

Founded on the Great Commission, to make disciples, programs aim to equip students with the biblical wisdom and practical

education necessary for a lifetime of service to God and others.

Rock University soon became a pillar of the local community and, in 2005, joined with Calvary Chapel San Diego. Under the partnership, the need to serve educators was realized. As a result, Rock University became Calvary Chapel Teachers College, and their reach expanded to include Christian Educators from around the world.

The Lord continued to grow their vision to include the launch of a Biblical Studies program, in 2009, that served Pastors under the leadership of Calvary Chapel. With this new vision, came another new name - Calvary Chapel University.

Over two decades later, a program that started with an earnest prayer in San Diego now serves students, pastors, and other professionals on 6 continents world-wide! CCU has even earned accreditation through the Transnational Association of Christian Colleges and Schools. Stay tuned for enrollment options in PA!

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*At Shepherd of the Hills Church,
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Christmas at Shepherd



Sovereign Lord, as you have promised, you may now dismiss your servant in peace. For my eyes have seen your salvation, which you have prepared in the sight of all nations: a light for revelation to the Gentiles, and the glory of your people Israel.

Luke 2:29-32



Our Savior is Born





All Things *Kid* at Shepherd

- SUNDAY SCHOOL
- CHILDREN'S CHURCH
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www.soth.church/ministries/discipleship-oasis

LIGHT *the* WAY

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Join us each Sunday evening as we enjoy the Bible teaching of Dr. Collin Monger!

Pastor Collin serves as the Senior Pastor and Bible Teacher of Shepherd of the Hills Church and Light the Way Ministries. He has authored two books, "The Pastor's Commentary: James" and "Meet Jesus: A Pastor's Guide to the Seven Signs and I Am Statements of Jesus".

At Light the Way, we believe the most powerful tool you will ever possess when sharing your faith with others is the Word of God.



What We Do

At Shepherd of the Hills our mission is to Know Christ and to Make Him Known. Our missions fund allows us to extend the reach of the Gospel, by supporting missionaries in different parts of the world. Each month we focus on two different types of missions projects: a Mission commitment to the long-term missionaries we support each year, as well as a Missions Visionary Project where we support a new cause, visiting missionary, or urgent need.

Long Term - David and Lee

When David began in ministry it was with Haven of Hope in Philadelphia. Their objective was to be a place where the Gospel is presented boldly and women imprisoned by drug addictions can have a new life through faith, hope, and strength in Jesus Christ. Moving on from there David worked at World Evangelization for Christ (WEC) headquarters in Fort Washington, PA. WEC helps local churches strategically focus their mission and ministry.

They develop partnerships with missionaries in the field, recruits missionaries, and sends out short-term teams. It was while working here that David and Lee gained a desire to see the people of Morocco reached with the message of Jesus.

Feeling a calling from the Lord to use his gifts and talents to help evangelize and disciple, David is currently serving as a pastor of a congregation consisting of mostly sub-Saharan African Christians in the country of Morocco. Lee, his wife, is also working with the church in discipleship and women's ministries.

David: "We ask that you pray for us to be able to visit the new attendees of our church; It's hard to fit in all that we have todo. Pray also for the deepening of the spiritual lives of our leaders and that they will resist the huge temptations that are constantly in their face. Pray for the



continued progress on the sanctuary enlargement and that we can learn who to go to, to get the authorization. Please continue to pray for a hunger and thirst for the Word of God by our church members. At times, it seems like they are mainly interested in miracles, supernatural manifestations and "prosperity" more than the Giver Himself. Lastly, pray that God will draw those who are in the peripheral of the church family into a vibrant relationship with Him."

One 2020 Visionary Project: Genesis Women's Clinic

The Genesis Women's Clinic provides loving and honest pregnancy, parenting, and reproductive health services to women, and young women, of all ages.

Services include pregnancy testing, first trimester ultrasound examinations, disease screening, client advocacy, and material assistance such as diapers, and clothing.

Wendy Burpee, Executive Director, works tirelessly to advocate for mothers and provide them with truth, resources, and alternatives to abortion. Recently the clinic expanded it's reach and opened a second office in Phoenixville, PA.



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Women's Clinic

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