

Faith matters



INTRODUCING



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PATHFINDER CHURCH

by **DION GARRETT** *Senior Pastor*

After a long and thoughtful journey, on March 9th and 10th weekend, we officially became Pathfinder Church. I am proud of our 168-year history in our region, and I'm also so grateful for the opportunities that this new identity will give us. I have little doubt that this courageous decision will help *more* people find their way to the life and wholeness of Jesus.

As I reflect on the last three-plus years, I am grateful for how God has guided us through what would be—in most churches—a very divisive process. That's not to say it has been easy or that we walked through it perfectly. Yet, in all of our conversations, focus groups, surveys, town hall meetings, message series, videos, articles, and emails, my eyes were opened to a couple important insights.

First, I now, more than ever, have an appreciation of how much this church means to those who call it “home.” We tapped into a lot of fervor over the last three years and for good reason! We all feel this is a special place, a place worth fighting for—and it is! As I reflect back, I can't say enough about the way our church-family moved through such a significant change. Many of us were passionate; we didn't always agree with each other; while some celebrated others were grieving; and yet we worked through it all with love, respect, concern for one another, and an openness to the leading of God's Spirit. I know some of us may *still* be working through things and that's okay. There's no rush. Still I have been amazed by how open-hearted and humble we've been as we've worked through our differences. It's clearer to me now than ever before that **this is an amazing community of people**; there's nowhere else I'd rather be.

Over the last three years, my eyes have been opened to something else: the potential we have for impact if we can help the outside world understand us better.

- In a time when a lot of people have been made to feel like they don't belong, our world is hungry for unconditional acceptance.

- After experiencing the irrelevance of many other churches, people are sure to love our true-to-life approach.
- In a culture of isolation and loneliness, pessimism and gloom, we can be a beacon of light by inspiring connections to God and others, connecting people to meaningful service and the chance to discover and live out their purpose.
- In a world filled with gurus who claim that by following their ways, methods, and steps you can have everything your heart desires, people are ready to experience the certainty and genuine fulfillment of a God-directed journey.

Some say it's “just a name” (and logo) and we can't expect those things to make that big of a difference. Frankly, I agree. On their own they are probably not enough. But paired with a community of Christ-followers who are excited about Jesus **and** sharing His goodness with others (like we are), I believe we're about to see a lot of people find their way to Jesus and begin a life-changing journey with him. That's not conjecture either. Your conversations with friends, coworkers, and neighbors along with all the favorable media coverage we received are already sparking interest. Our first full weekend as Pathfinder Church, we received more “New Here” cards from guests than we've previously seen! Praise God!

Very few churches get to have as many chapters in their story as we've had. As proud as I am of our 168 years, I'm even more grateful that God is not done with us yet! Church, let's go!

When Jesus saw the crowds, he had compassion on them, because they were harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. Then he said to his disciples, “The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into his harvest field.” Matthew 9:36-38



Pastors Dion and Doug pray with the congregation about our history as well as our future together.



Families and friends, old and young, gather in The Commons to celebrate the launch of Pathfinder Church.



Pathfinder members walk through the Legacy Hall timeline, giving an up-close look into the rich history of our church.



While our logo leans toward the abstract & interpretive, our in-house designers worked to incorporate themes of:

- **Light**, some see a lantern or a lighthouse, symbolizing Jesus (*John 1:9*)
- A **path** symbolic of our life journey (*Psalm 119:105, Proverbs 3:5-6 & Psalm 25:4*)
- Our **new name** itself (look for the letter "P" embedded in the logo)

Our new identity testifies first and foremost to Jesus as The Great Pathfinder, the finder of "the lost sheep," our light, and our guide. It's also a reminder of who we are as *his* body and the light we are called to shine. Finally it's a reminder that we are **all** on a journey, always pursuing Jesus' life and wholeness, but never claiming to have arrived, not until Jesus returns and makes his work in us complete.

NEXT PHASE 3

by **TRACY DUNN** *Director, Operations & Finances*

In December 2018 we technically completed NEXT — our two-year vision for the life of our church. We targeted a year-end giving goal of \$10.8 million and finished at \$10,557,934, which is 97.5% fulfillment of our original projection!

Throughout NEXT we have been Pursuing People Like Never Before, Mobilizing the Next Generation of World Changers, and Taking Our Campus to the Next Level. Through your financial support, your time and effort, and most importantly God's favor, much has already been accomplished in our ministry.

We still intend to do a third and final phase of campus improvements under our NEXT vision. This will be a way to communicate more about who we are here at Pathfinder to anyone who passes by on Manchester Road. We are finalizing the plans for Phase 3, which will beautify our exterior campus by creating green spaces with outdoor areas for gathering; provide clear, intuitive wayfinding that will direct our guests to the main entry areas for the Sanctuary, The Commons, and our Kids Ministry area, as well as address parking flow and drop-off points.

These changes are going to give our campus a new look and feel, making it much more inviting for guests. But, since we are not taking on debt to accomplish all of this, it is critical that we continue to give financially, so this final phase can become a reality. Be encouraged, with three months left in our fiscal year, we're tracking along really well! Keep up the generous giving! In the coming weeks, we will be sharing the concepts and design plans for Phase 3 — be on the lookout!



At our Pathfinder Launch weekend, you were asked to take a packet of seeds. These are Missouri native flowers that will be incorporated in our future landscaping beds and become a part of our new campus plan. In the meantime, put them in a visible, but also safe, cool, and dry place, so that every time you see it, you remember to pray for our mission, for the seeds of the gospel we will sow out in our community. Pray that God would enlarge the harvest of those turning to Jesus. If you missed our launch weekend and need a seed packet, send an e-mail to prayer@pathfinderstl.org.

Legacy Hall



Sampling of Legacy Hall timeline

The journey began 168 years ago!
Stop by the Sanctuary's east hallway and explore our church's storied history, discover the events that forged our future, and meet the trailblazers who led the way.

1871

Twenty years after the first log chapel was built on Reinke Road, a larger, brick church was built (1871) on our present Manchester Road lot.

1909

In 1909, a cistern was dug and a chicken house was erected near the church parsonage.



HOLY WEEK EXPERIENCE

WALK IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF JESUS

Jesus' last week on earth is an astonishing series of events that go from his triumphal entry into Jerusalem, riding on a donkey and end with his crucifixion on a cross. The Holy Week Experience (formerly known as the Prayer Labyrinth) allows participants to take an unflinching look into this tumultuous week to reflect on the events and range of emotions he experienced as he walked willingly toward the cross.

The Holy Week Experience (HWE) is a self-guided series of interactive stations designed to help participants personally encounter Jesus' incredible sacrifice and to reflect on the significance that sacrifice has on our lives today. Each participant is given a guidebook that leads them through the HWE with scripture readings for meditation, suggestions for reflection, and prayer prompts. There's even a version written specifically for younger children and families. Whether you take the journey on your own or with others, it is intended to be a time of self-reflection, examination and prayer. In short, it's a great way to prepare yourself to celebrate Jesus' ultimate victory over sin and death on Easter!

The Holy Week Experience takes approximately 30–45 minutes, and is offered from 6pm–9pm on Wednesday, April 17 and 6am–9pm on Thursday and Friday, April 18 and 19. For a complete experience, the HWE is designed to be embarked before or after one of the worship services on Thursday or Friday.

Holy Week Experience

April 17 | 6pm–9pm

April 18 | 6am–9pm

April 19 | 6am–9pm

Services

April 17/18 | Last Supper

April 19 | Good Friday

April 20/21 | Easter

Check pathfinderstl.org for our Holy Week service times.



Spiritual Growth Experience

by **DOUG MAUSS** *Pastor | Small Groups and Care Director*

One of my favorite things about Pathfinder Church is that people can tell there's something different about the people in this place. I believe it's the way we value unconditional acceptance, a true-to-life approach, inspiring connections, and a God-directed journey. These are the values that set us apart. But how do those values play out when we apply them to something like Bible study? Discipleship? Evangelism?

The answer to this question sets us apart from the tired, failing approaches of modern American Christianity. And with our unique, Pathfinder Church perspective, we are poised to be trailblazers who help breathe new life into the Church, with a model for a simple-but-profound approach to faith growth.

It starts with a couple of premises: **First**, is that everybody—anyone who is sincerely trying to live a life of meaning and purpose—is on a journey. They're searching for truth, because very few people actually want to follow or believe a lie. This means that we can respect and support any other person's journey towards truth, whether it matches our own journey or not.

The **Second** premise is that there is not more than one truth. Our God is the author of all truth in this created world. This means that even secular people or those who follow different religions have at least some small piece of God's ultimate truth. It is easy to scoff at people's wrong beliefs, or to think that they have some sort of "alternate truth" that is in conflict with biblical truth. But I believe it is more accurate—and certainly more effective—to affirm whatever glimpse of God's truth someone might have, and then gently and encouragingly reveal the bigger picture God has revealed to us. This way we can help them take a "God-directed" next step on their own journey.


These premises change our approach in significant ways. First, we no longer have to position ourselves as "keepers" or "protectors" of the Truth. Like Spurgeon's lion, God's truth is powerful enough to reveal itself to any well-intentioned seeker. Second, it allows us to be explorers of other people's stories—witnesses and cheerleaders of their own, unique journeys!

To that end, we've been running an experiment here on campus for the last couple of months. We call it the Spiritual Growth Experience. In it, we're practicing an "other-centered" approach to mining for the truth in other people's lives, trusting that God's Word will illuminate their circumstances and lead people towards himself. To guide us in engaging with others without agenda or judgment, we've been using what I call the "magic questions." These three questions open up hearts and minds. They help us bring people's journeys into the light. And they guide us in encouraging people on their next steps towards God's ultimate, healing truth for their lives.

THE MAGIC QUESTIONS

- What is new or inspiring to you? And why?
- What is difficult or challenging to you?
- What are you trying to accomplish right now?

This approach allows us to get back to the way Jesus disciplined and witnessed to others, and it allows us to unleash the power of the Good News in a distinct, Pathfinder Church way! If you're curious, you should join us on Tuesday nights.



Saturday Social

by **CHRIS TOOMEY** *LIFEjourney Director*
& **COREY PARKER** *Hospitality Director*

St. Louis is home to some outstanding and unique restaurants and venues. Not only do they serve delicious food, but they have created interesting spaces that draw people in. There is a plethora of these places to explore in the city...but what about in West County?

Here is where Pathfinder Church enters the picture. One of our primary goals is to create spaces and moments that inspire people to connect. We recognized that our Commons is an excellent venue for people to come together and find community. So, we began brainstorming ways to more regularly utilize that space to foster connection. We identified Saturday nights as a great place to start -- could we host a weekly event that provided a fun, engaging, and comfortable environment to connect?

Cue the Saturday Social theme music! (Well, we don't have theme music, but we **TOTALLY** should!) Our weekly Saturday Socials began in February and there has been a great response from our people! So, what is it exactly? A relaxed atmosphere where a dinner option and drinks

are always served, along with sports on the TVs and board games on the tables. Oh, and don't forget about the giant-sized Jenga set. Finally, each week has something a little unique to look forward to – things such as trivia, food trucks, live music, open mic nights, specialty catering nights and so much more.

So far, we have seen generations, which don't normally have an opportunity to connect, hanging out together sharing laughs, playing games, listening to music, and enjoying each other around dinner and drinks! This is for everyone, literally **EVERY PERSON**, that is interested in building community and making new connections. Also, Saturday Socials are a natural and easy first step for inviting someone that hasn't experienced Pathfinder Church (or church in general). Our ultimate hope and prayer is that the combination of our worship service and Saturday Social will be a way to engage people in our community, as well as give our members an outstanding venue to inspire connection for themselves. This is just the beginning. Come join us and invite a friend to come too!



LATEST from LEAD SCHOOL

When our school's leadership took a step back and evaluated how best to prepare learners for the path ahead, we took a hard look at the unmet educational needs in the area. While every school asserts a focus on academic excellence, few programs also devote energy toward real-life success skills and the cultivation of the whole person.

Not only are test results showing progress at or above traditional classroom students, but LEAD School students are demonstrating remarkable developments in self-advocacy, confidence, critical thinking, and collaboration.

Growth in National Percentile Results



*Top 19 percentile in Math
Up 11 points*



*Top 26 percentile in Reading
Up 4 points*

"I am excited about these results because it displays data points that align with the academic growth we are witnessing in the classroom. Schools don't anticipate percentile growth over the course of a year. Yet, LEAD School students are making tremendous gains in an environment that is flexible and encourages them to work through content at a rate that fosters competence." *Scott Osbourn, STJ School Principal*

Hear from LEAD School Parents

"The focus on social skills and being able to work as a team is invaluable. My daughter has grown in her confidence and communication with adults and other children. She's learning empathy and showing it to me. She's self-advocating, if she needs help. I think having the ability to speak up for yourself and speak up for your education and needs – that's a big, big thing. It's been a transformation." *Faith & Nathan Thomas*

"Our home environment is different for us since we started the LEAD School. Getting his work done during the day means we have more family time at home. So, we're building on our family dynamic as opposed to sitting down doing homework all night long. It's been a great experience for us. I think we're all happier as a family. We can go out to dinner, spend time together, play games – and he's still getting the education that he needs." *Kris & Eddie Heckmann*

Learn more about LEAD at stjls.org



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Informational Meetings

Sunday, April 14, 4-5:30pm **OR** Sunday, May 5, 4-5:30pm

Pathfinder Church, Ministry Center, Room 250

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Informational Meetings

Sunday, April 14, 4-5:30pm **OR** Sunday, May 5, 4-5:30pm

Pathfinder Church, Ministry Center, Room 250

For more information, please contact: Pastor Stephen & Carol Hower at 314.803.0674 or howercarol@gmail.com

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