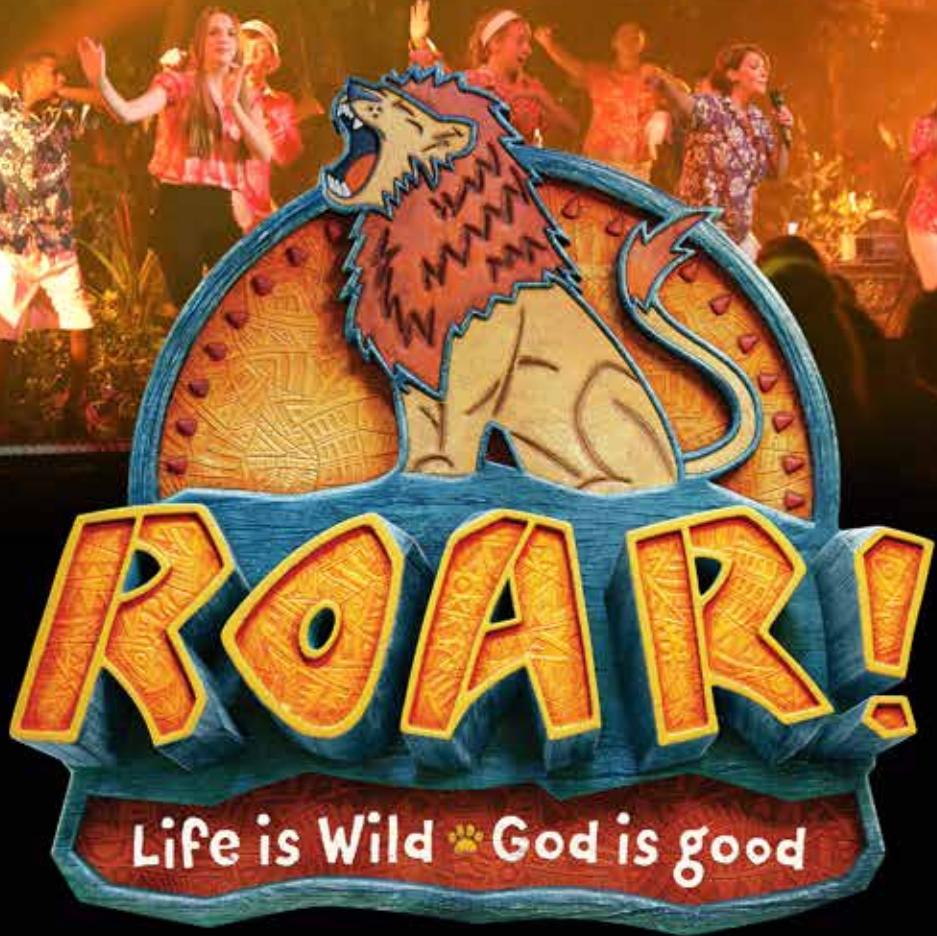


God  
I KNOW YOU'LL SEE ME

Faith  
matters



## VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL BEHIND THE SCENES

FIND OUT WHAT IT TAKES TO CREATE THIS  
UNFORGETTABLE EXPERIENCE INSIDE!

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VOLUME 13 • ISSUE 2

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# WAKING UP THE BODY

by DION GARRETT *Senior Pastor*

**"But in the seventh year the land is to have a year of sabbath rest, a sabbath to the Lord. Do not sow your fields or prune your vineyards. Do not reap what grows of itself or harvest the grapes of your unintended vines. The land is to have a year of rest." —Numbers 25:4-5**

In late December, I finished my tenth year of ministry here at Pathfinder (St. John). This summer, I'll celebrate fifteen years in pastoral ministry. The work God has allowed me to do in that time has been highly challenging, sometimes overwhelming, but always rewarding. I have come to see how seasons of adversity and stress are usually our seasons of greatest growth. Which applies to not only people, but also organizations—especially churches. I think about how God has grown us through the vigorous journey we've been on over the last several years. A senior pastor transition, our NEXT vision, a name change, the launch of a radically innovative (and highly effective) LEAD School are just a few examples. This leg of our long journey has called for perseverance, generosity, patience, forgiveness, and lots of faith... and there's no question, we've grown! Still imperfect, with every step forward, we are becoming more and more like Jesus. For me I'm not exaggerating when I say that I fall deeper in love with this church with every new season.

But there's another piece to this. I'm also learning that the body needs periods of rest to recuperate between seasons of growth. Just like how the ground was given a year to recover after every 6 years in ancient Israel, rest has to be a part of the formula. As a result, since the start of 2019, we have intentionally planned for a few months to catch our breath as a congregation, to settle into our new name and new spaces...to rest. Personally speaking, this summer I'm taking the opportunity to go on a six week sabbatical, generously provided by our congregation. My kids keep saying, "Dad, can you believe you won't have to think about work for SIX WEEKS!" I laugh knowing that even if my body is away, keeping my thoughts far from here is impossible. I won't be at work, but I'll be thinking about it!

Breathing room is good; rest is necessary. Too often we disrespect the natural rhythms God has sown into the fabric of our created order by refusing rest. But I want to

be perfectly clear on something. Even though rest is a God-ordained gift for all of us, the body (both our physical being and the Body of Christ, aka the Church) wasn't made for rest. Just like the ground God gave to the ancient Israelites, we are called to be fruitful, to produce. We're here to actively fulfill God's mission for us and to keep moving forward on the Path he is marking out for us. Life and church are the same, we're put on this earth to push, to take new ground, to be a blessing, and to **grow**.

Ironically, even as I'm preparing to pull back, we've been waking up the Body here, signaling that it's time to get active again and pursue God's vision for us. This is happening on several fronts. As we have been doing throughout NEXT, we intend to:

**Pursue people like never before.**

**Mobilize the next generation of world changers.**

**Take our campus to the next level.**

Our church, under our **new Pathfinder name**, continues to gain community attention. Our new website (the full version) is launching in June. We want to keep telling our story, and more important the story of Jesus to our community (which I believe we tell in a unique, compelling, and truthful way). Please know: **There has never been a better time to invite someone to join you at church!**

The **LEAD School**, our new personalized learning academy is also gaining the community's attention. After our first year we've seen:

- Student academic performance surpass that of our conventional classrooms,
- while providing a unique set of real-life success skills that you cannot get in a conventional classroom (students learning to intensely self-advocate, self-regulate, prioritize, schedule, collaborate, and so much more),
- with a superior quality of life to students and their families (learning happens at school, and evenings are for the other important parts of family life).

Hopefully by now you've seen and heard that very soon we'll be embarking on the final phase of our **NEXT** campus vision, **Phase Three**. This phase focuses on the outside of our campus:

Stronger curb appeal from Manchester Road that better communicates who we are (as Pathfinder Church!) and invites people in.

- **Greenspaces and natural buffers that break up the current asphalt-concrete-brick and mortar continuum—more life!**
- **Intuitive wayfinding and fewer confusing decision points to help people find their way to our main entry.**
- **Bringing our unique personality and design from the inside to the outside.**

Some on our Board of Directors have commented that they believe Phase Three is our most important phase to date because it focuses on the things people can see on the outside. People who have no interest in coming in, can learn something important about who we are and what God is doing here just by driving by. I happen to agree with them. It's a very important part of our mission to this community.

In other words, it's time for our Body to give our full attention to what we've been put on this planet to do! And it's going to require more generosity, patience, perseverance, forgiveness, and LOTS of faith. But in the end, we'll keep growing, and so will the number of people who call Jesus their Savior.





# VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL BEHIND THE SCENES

*by SETH HINZ Brand, Marketing & Creative Director*

It's no secret that Vacation Bible School (VBS) at Pathfinder Church is special. Every summer, over 800 kids attend the week-long event experiencing the love of God through 650 volunteers, with Bible lessons tailored for each age group, and an electrifying theatrical environment.

Pathfinder takes VBS to the next level with completely original music, scripting, and costuming. It may have the theme for other area churches, but nearly 100% has been custom-made for our West County kids. “The entire process takes about 11 months. We use the provided curriculum as a springboard,” explains Pathfinder Kids Director, Lisa Schmidt. “We understand the types of elements that kids really respond to, and use our unique voice to tailor the messages and delivery to our community.”

# Original Music Produced & Performed Live

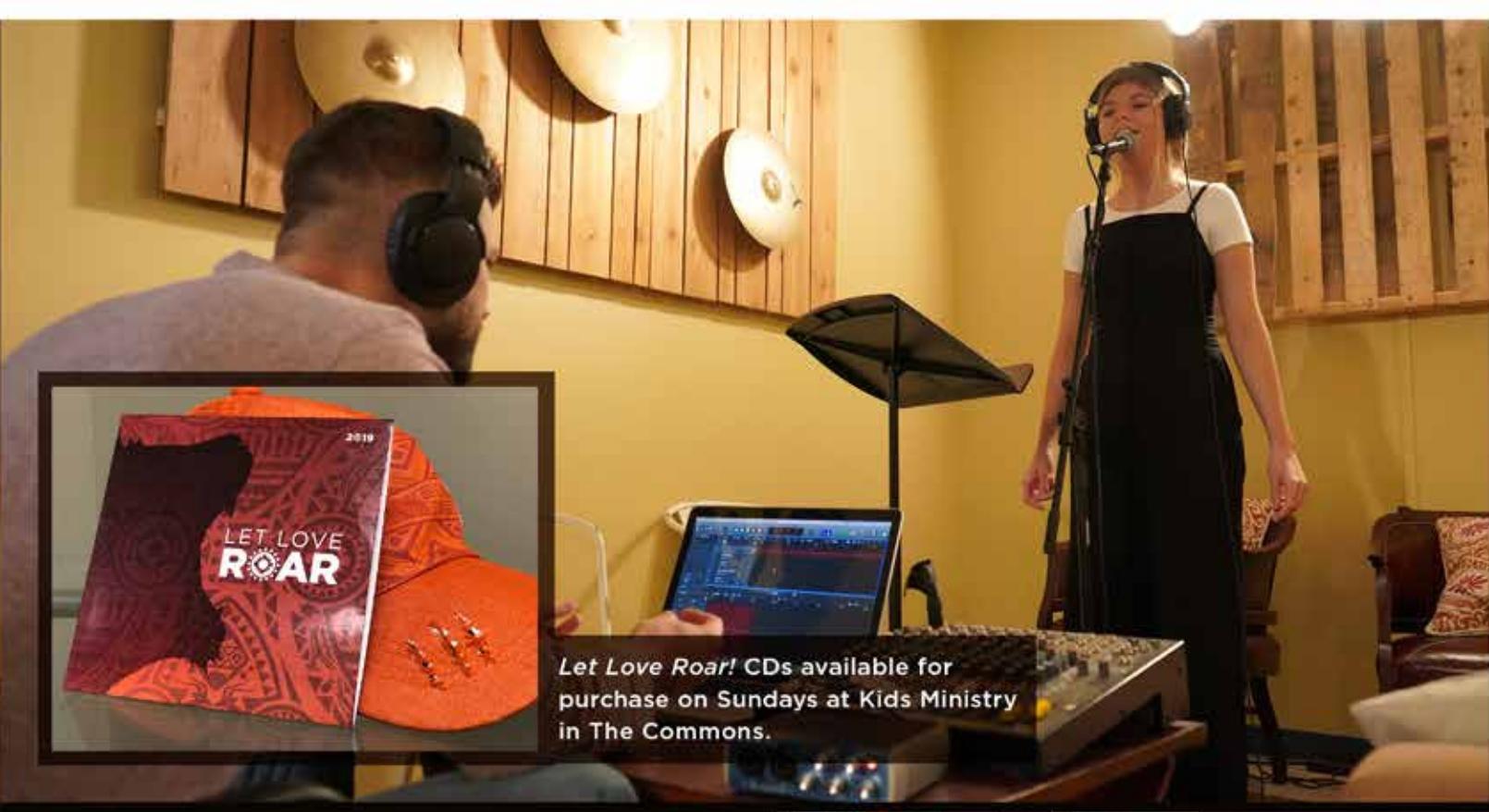
VBS publishers provide music, videos, and content for churches around the country. The challenge they face is having to produce material that works for every type of church, big and small. Tim Reimann, Pathfinder Church's Worship Director, shared, "The way we (at Pathfinder) talk about love, grace, and God's desire for our lives is unique.

Every weekend, our pastors talk about what God wants for us rather than from us. We wanted and needed the music to reflect that. That's why we decided to write and produce all the songs ourselves this year. The lyrics we want kids and parents to have in their heads — those are the words we put on the album."

The research phase for the music began in August 2018. Reimann explained, “Drew Brinkley (our Associate Worship Director) and I pulled out key ROAR! themes: God is good when life is wild, crazy, and scary. We looked at Scripture and brainstormed – putting language to those themes. Over the next 6-7 months, we would gather to write and produce songs for the album.” In total, six original tracks were written and produced. In April 2019, the *Let Love Roar!* album was officially released and songs began to be integrated into the Pathfinder Kids programming on Sunday mornings.

This year, VBS will feature a live band for the first time. “There’s a human connection element that is pretty powerful when you’re talking about God’s love, grace, mercy, and His character. Live instruments – guitars, drums, bass—it elevates the energy. Also, having a face to the music builds a stronger connection to the message,” said Reimann.





## Stage Production - Dream, Create, Do

63 volunteers are part of this year's VBS stage production, including 24 actors and dancers, 12 writers, and 28 in backstage production. Steve Wheeler, director of VBS stage production, explained, "The process is made up of 3 distinct seasons: dream, create, and do. In November, we gather together and dream BIG. What we produce needs to capture and be culturally relevant to our audience, but also creatively weave in biblical messages, morals, and life applications that guide the next generation on their life journey."

## JUNE 17-21 **ROAR! AT PATHFINDER**

"We host VBS to bring Jesus to our community, especially to those who don't know Him. We don't assume anyone attending knows the stories. We have an opportunity to share how Jesus lets love roar," said Lisa Schmidt. Wheeler continued, "the kids who attend are so excited after their experience that they go home and share the basic truths learned with their friends and family. Our dedication to this production and to the next generation drives us — it builds on our mission to empower, grow, and make His kids a priority."

*Discover VBS at Pathfinder Church:  
**PATHFINDERSTL.ORG/VBS***





# LEAD SCHOOL

## Year 1 in Review

by SCOTT OSBOURN St. John School Principal

STJ LEAD School is celebrating the completion of its inaugural year. This first year of our new approach encompassing personalized and project-based learning exceeded our expectations.

### *By The Numbers*

Every month, students took tests that scored them against national norms. In each category, students displayed growth and positive results. In Reading and Math, our 3rd – 5th grade LEAD students scored with an average grade equivalency of 6.2. The STAR Assessments revealed that our students rose in their national percentile for Math by 11% this year! Typically, classrooms are expected to begin and end the year in the same percentile. But we saw increase! On average STJ LEAD students are in the top 29% nationally, which is higher than the 2018 school year and higher than the conventional classroom. This is great news for LEAD! It means that students are meeting and exceeding the curriculum requirements, in addition to receiving the other benefits of LEAD.

### *Skills for Life*

By planning their day, students are expected to self-regulate, advocate and direct themselves throughout the day. The hands-on learning opportunities also foster collaboration, creativity, communication, and critical thinking. As we look back on the year, STJ LEAD students have seen tremendous growth in these areas. One parent

noted, "This is clearly student achievement and not 'parent achievement.' My child is clearly learning how to self-direct and self-advocate. I do not have to own it for them. I can let go of nagging, fighting, and hours of homework, and my child can still do GREAT academically."

### *Stronger Families*

LEAD School contributes to a better quality of life for families. As noted by the parent above, students are excelling and completing school work during the day. Evenings open up for families to invest in quality time with each other and additional extracurriculars as they see fit.

### *The Promise*

We delivered on the STJ LEAD promise of 1) academic achievement at or above conventional classrooms, 2) students and families experienced a superior quality of life, and 3) students developed real-life success skills that cannot be taught in conventional classrooms. We are grateful for this and believe we'll see further success as we continue to build up this program and extend it to Grade Six in the 2019-2020 school year. We give thanks to God for allowing STJ LEAD to set the standard in a progressive educational approach.

*Learn more about LEAD at [stjls.org](http://stjls.org)*



# HOW TO SHARE YOUR STORY

by JULIE LORENZ *Pastoral Ministry Assistant*

***1 Peter 3:15 tells us, "...Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect."***

How exactly do we do that? Too often we feel like we need to live perfectly or be some kind of an expert to share our faith. Fortunately, one of the best ways is to share your own story. You may not even realize that you have one, but God has given us an amazing tool by giving each of us our own unique story to tell. And, it does not have to be something crazy or traumatic to reach people, it just has to be real. When we share how God has worked in our life, people can clearly see that Jesus has power to transform their lives too.

For many of us the hardest part is knowing where to begin. Here's one process that can help you craft your story. It just takes a little time to prepare and a few more steps to hone, but the effort it takes will be worth it the next time an opportunity arises for you to give a reason for the hope you have in Jesus.

**1. Pray – God knows your story better than anyone. Invite him to guide your process and open you up to seeing the work he has done in your life.**

**2. Consider the times in your life that have been most transformational. Here are some questions just to get you started, but do not be limited by them. Journal the answers to the questions, so that you can refine your thoughts and recognize some patterns.**

**a. Think about the challenging times of your life. What was the result?**

**b. Consider the seasons of joy, what events preceded that season?**

**c. When have you felt closest to God?**

**d. How have you seen your prayers answered?**

**e. If you came to know Jesus as an adult, how was your life changed after knowing him?**

**3. Determine your main point. What is the one takeaway that you'd like others to hear from your story? Which event or season of life best exemplifies your main point?**

**4. Order your story. The event that best exemplifies your main point can make a great "middle." Describe what life was like before, during, and after that event. Every story has a beginning, a middle, and an end. Since God still has plans for you, we cannot write an ending. Instead, write your beginning, middle, and what's next.**

**5. Finally, refine your story. Remove any details that detract from the main point. God is amazing, he works in countless ways in our lives, both obvious and subtle; if we listed all of them, we'd need a book with an index and cross references to keep up with them. (Sound familiar?)**

Lastly, share your story with someone you love. Ask them to give you feedback on your story. Then ask them to pray for you to have the courage to share your story when the opportunity arises.

**We'd love to hear your story!  
Share it with us at [stories@pathfinderstl.org](mailto:stories@pathfinderstl.org)**



## Meet Seth Hinz

### Brand, Marketing & Creative Director at Pathfinder Church

#### What is your role at Pathfinder?

I have the privilege of sharing the Pathfinder Church and St. John School story with our community. Part of sharing the story involves developing marketing & advertising plans, working with local media, and discovering new opportunities to build relationships in West County. We're also exploring how online platforms will help us reach people like never before. I'm thankful for the creative team on staff, who bring excellence to video productions, worship technology, and graphic design.

#### What did you do before you came on staff?

I worked at the Michigan District of The Lutheran Church – Missouri Synod as Web/Media Director for 8.5 years.

#### What's your favorite thing about Pathfinder so far?

My favorite thing about Pathfinder is the willingness to try something new, to reach out in new ways, to test ideas, and to refine processes.

**Wife:** Rachel

**Kids:** Judah (7), Samson (5), Evangeline aka Evie, (2)

#### Lightning Round

**College:** Concordia University Ann Arbor, BA '06 in Communications & Business Administration, MS '09 Organizational Leadership & Administration

**Hometown:** My dad is a pastor so we moved around a bit. I was born in New York, then moved to St. Louis near Concordia Seminary for several years. We moved to Michigan when I was in third grade. Returning to the St. Louis area is kind of like coming home.

**Favorite Team:** Michigan Wolverines or Washington Redskins. It was fun to watch the St. Louis Blues this year — they really turned around their season after I arrived, not that there's a huge correlation, but it didn't hurt.

**Favorite Band:** NEEDTOBREATHE

**Favorite discovery about St. Louis:** That you can travel 1 mile and cross through 15 municipalities? Our family has really enjoyed visiting the city – going to the Arch, City Museum, Science Center, and the Magic House. Everyone says it's a great place to raise a family, and we're discovering how true that is.

**Last book you read:** I listened to *The Creative Curve* by Allen Gannett

**Best way to relax:** Playing basketball with my kids, watching Netflix or a premiere league soccer game, or mowing the lawn.

**Favorite Food:** Loco Chorizo Frita at Frita Batidos in Ann Arbor, Michigan. No question.

# SUMMER AT PATHFINDER

JUNE 17-21

Vacation Bible School: Roar!



JUNE 1-JUNE 30

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WEDNESDAYS, MAY 29-AUG. 7

Lunch Break

STUDENT MINISTRY



Lunch Break

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### Informational Meetings

Sunday, June 9, 4-5:00pm

Pathfinder Church, Ministry Center, Room 250



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Travel Dates: September 7-16, 2020

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Additional departure cities available upon request

### Register

[RegisterNow.ittworld.com](http://RegisterNow.ittworld.com) Tour Code: *HowerG20*

### Informational Meetings

Sunday, June 9, 5-6:00pm

Pathfinder Church, Ministry Center, Room 250

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



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**ROAR!**  
Life is Wild God is good

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL  
**JUNE 17-21**

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[PATHFINDERSTL.ORG/JULY4](http://PATHFINDERSTL.ORG/JULY4)

