



Faith MATTERS

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TROUBLE WITH SITTING STILL

by **DION GARRETT** Senior Pastor

One morning back in June, I was sitting at the big table at Ballwin Starbucks with the group who meets with me each week to study the scriptures and discuss the theme for the weekend's message, when a woman approached us.

"I wasn't eavesdropping, but I couldn't help but notice that you're studying the Scriptures. I have a business where we sell scripture tattoos to help with scripture memory, and I have some left over from last month that I'd love to give to you to share with your kids or anyone else."

She assured us that she wasn't trying to sell us anything, so we accepted some of her temporary tattoos. Once I recognized the verse, I sensed this was a direct message from God for me!

***"The Lord will fight for you; you need only to be still."*—Exodus 14:14**



At the time, I was only a few weeks away from my sabbatical and I had started to doubt the plan I made. Some people work on graduate degrees during a sabbatical, others write books, others do research. Me? I was planning to do three things:

- 1) **Spend time alone, in quiet.**
- 2) **Spend time with my family, a memorable family vacation that would honor our whole family's commitment to Pathfinder.**
- 3) **Spend time with my wife (minus kids), in a way that would honor her.**

I wasn't sure my plans were lofty enough but every time I revisited them, I kept feeling led back to the idea that a sabbatical is supposed to be a Sabbath, which means rest. That day at Starbucks, I felt God reassuring me of my plans and the theme of my sabbatical became Exodus 14:14. The LORD would take care of the things I was leaving behind, The LORD would carry the burdens I was concerned about in my personal and family life. My job for six weeks was simply this, "you need only to **be still!**"

BEING STILL IS HARD WORK

The first stop of my sabbatical wasn't restful at all, but a joy nevertheless. We headed to Michigan to visit family and for me to perform my oldest nephew's wedding. We didn't spend much time there, because I had to be back home to get ready for the first leg of my sabbatical, a silent retreat!

I have long been impressed with (and convicted by) the spiritual greats who regularly practiced the disciplines of silence and solitude. So when someone suggested I consider a silent retreat, as a painfully verbal processor (ask my wife, unexpressed thought sounds like a contradiction of terms), I simultaneously responded, "I can't think of anything more horrifying" and "Wow, that sounds perfect!" So I set off alone for a week of solitude and silence.



My initial plan was ten days, but on the morning of day eight I decided I had had enough. I'm still wondering how Jesus did it for 40 days? Sitting with yourself for that long is a difficult experience. There is no one to complain to, no one to blame, no one to share moments with and no one to lean on. I wish I can say it was a deeply spiritual experience, and in a strange way it was, but not like I had hoped. It was just difficult. I was really sad at times. I missed my family. Even though I was talking to God in my mind, without verbal expression, I felt more distance than I expected. Nevertheless, the time was instructive. I learned a lot about myself and have a sizable list of takeaways and insights from those seven days. Most of all, I learned that **"being still" is hard work!**

And maybe that's why many of the spiritual giants in the Bible did it, not because it's a peaceful and comforting practice, but because sitting with ourselves is kind of terrifying. By being pulled away from the legitimate (and a few of the illegitimate) crutches we have to support us in life, we discover things about ourselves we don't want to know. That was true for me. I came to grips with things I would've vehemently denied just a week before, like:

- Just how much I lean on my support system to sustain me (without connection, I felt like Samson without his hair 😊).
- How much I depend on activity to distract myself from and avoid unpleasant things.
- How often I live with an "endurance mindset," gritting my teeth and pressing on to get through the next challenge, which actually blinds me to what's good in those hard moments.
- How my relationship with God is too one-sided, with me doing a lot of talking and not enough listening.

I tend to gravitate toward challenge, but those were seven of the hardest days of my life. I thought about those in POW camps, those in solitary confinement. I thought of Tom Hanks and Wilson in the movie *Castaway*. Thankfully, I survived and I learned a lot, but for a guy like me, I'm not sure I could've done anything harder.

As I drove toward home, I listened to some of my favorite worship songs, the first time I had heard music in a week. Although my voice was unaccustomed to speaking let alone singing, I sang myself hoarse, so grateful for worship music, for the people who are skilled in writing deep, heartfelt and true lyrics about God and set them to music. I was reminded of how powerfully and intimately God's Spirit moves in me when I'm able to sing about who he is and what he's done for me.

When I arrived at home, surprising most members of my family with my early arrival, I'm not sure of a time when their hugs felt better. Bluntly, I was an emotional wreck for a few days, overwhelmed with gratitude for the love God has put in my life.

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VACATION!

A few days later, we packed up again, for a family vacation to Mexico!

It was a complete 180 from my silent retreat. I was in a beautiful place, with my wonderful family, surrounded by good food, drink, and lots of sunshine. Each morning, I'd get up before my family, slip out of the room and watch the sunrise. While enjoying the morning waves, I'd pray and journal. Those moments of stillness took on a new level of sweetness and were probably my favorite time of the day.

While in Mexico, everything came easily, no effort, it was all there to enjoy. It helped me realize that sometimes God invites us out into the wilderness to learn stillness, and sometimes he invites us to a banquet. If God invites me to "be still" so he can fight for me, then maybe sometimes he also wants me to "be still" so he can bless me. That's grace! Lavish things often make me uncomfortable, but for those next seven days, I was able to enjoy the abundance of God's generosity with the people I love most, in a way that filled not just my belly (I did gain back all the weight I lost on my silent retreat), but filled my heart with gratitude and joy.



Family time in Mexico.



Jocelyn and I relaxing on the coast of Oregon.



Our beautiful newborn nephew, Finn.



THE WILD WEST

After we got home, we had a few days to reset, then Jocelyn and I departed (alone) for a week in Oregon. The rugged, mysterious beauty of the Oregon coast holds my attention like few places, so I was delighted when Jocelyn agreed to spend time with me there. The giant conifers, the rocky coasts, and the wild waves, have a way of putting me in my place and making me feel grateful to be so small. We spent time in a coastal town, enjoying the quiet, easy pace of life without kids, dishes, the dog, and life's other responsibilities.

While in Oregon, we got to experience a really rare and sacred kind of stillness, the kind that comes from holding a newborn baby. Our nephew, Finn, the son of Jocelyn's younger sister, was less than 2 days old when we arrived in Portland. He was our other reason for choosing Oregon (along with his remarkable family). Being there so soon after his birth was an incredible gift. Not only was little Finn a model of stillness, but holding him I remembered how perfectly content I can be when I'm left to study the wonders of God revealed in the face of a tiny newborn.

BACK TO WORK

I am deeply grateful for my six weeks away. It was a rare and remarkable season I'll carry with me forever. But here's what I know: Sabbaths aren't meant to last forever, nor are sabbaticals. Although it's easy for me to want to cling to an amazing six weeks of rest, I am also drawn to what God is doing through our work together.

Our work inspires me...the upcoming NEXT Phase 3 changes, the transformation of St. John School through our new LEAD approach, and most of all, the evidence of life change, baptisms, and new people exclaiming that Pathfinder is the church they've been looking for that they didn't know existed.

Being away for so long, I see with renewed clarity what they mean. There's no place like Pathfinder and I'm glad to be home.



LEAD SCHOOL EXPANDS

by RACHEL BAUSCH
Early Childhood Director

The success of the STJ LEAD School has allowed for pronounced expansion in the 2019–20 school year. The LEAD Studio (3rd-5th grade) consisting of 28 students in 2018-19 has grown to two LEAD Studios (3rd-6th grade) consisting of 51 students. STJ LEAD School has not just sparked an internal interest but is resonating in our community. We have 18 new students in Kindergarten-6th grade joining to invest in LEAD programming.

“We are thrilled about the expansion of the LEAD program! We are so proud of the growth—spiritually, socially, and academically—that we saw in our students last year. As the year progressed, we felt so blessed to watch the students develop into the unique individuals that God created them to be.” (LEAD Teachers—Mrs. Holshouser & Ms. Bowman)

We are also excited to weave aspects of STJ LEAD School into our Kindergarten-2nd classrooms in a deeper way. We are creating authentic, hands-on learning experiences that bring subject matter to life not just textbook knowledge. We are giving students the opportunity to learn at their own pace. Most importantly, students are recognizing their unique gifts and those of others around them.

STJ LEAD School has concrete results from year one. In fact, our LEAD students scored better than that of our non-LEAD students in all 4 core subject areas on the Iowa Assessment from 5%-12% points. As an average, they scored 7% points better on the assessment when looking at the total test. We are excited about these results and look forward to how our educational programs benefit the students at St. John.

The achievement of the STJ LEAD School has led parents, students, and the larger community to view education through a new lens. A lens that focuses on tailored design, where each student is truly known for who they are and learning is individualized by each student’s ability and personal level. STJ LEAD School is not just producing academic learners but is cultivating confident leaders by supporting growth of real-life skills. We are developing students to be resilient and capable to communicate, be creative, and think critically.

St. John School is leading the way in educational reform in the West County area and beyond. We are creating tomorrow’s leaders with a passion to change the world in Jesus name. We cannot wait for the 2019-20 school year to be underway!

Learn more about LEAD at stjls.org



Spend FIFTEEN MINUTES each day in a faith-building discipline

by JULIE LORENZ Strategic Project Manager

“I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. - John 15:5

Our relationship with God grows as we daily connect with Him. Often when God feels distant, or when my relationship with him feels stale, it’s usually me. Bible reading, prayer, fasting, meditation, confession, online devotions, and Bible studies are some great ways to connect to God, but when I don’t do any of those things, I don’t feel connected. At Pathfinder Church, we want to help make it easy as possible for you to spend FIFTEEN, so we have developed Growing Deeper. Growing Deeper is a five-day Bible study, based on the current week’s message, and designed to be completed in approximately fifteen minutes a day. Regular worship attendees often share with us that the messages they hear during worship apply to their daily lives in impactful and practical ways. I feel the same way. And when I am especially impacted by a message, I think I will always remember what I learned. Yet, that’s not always the case. Digging deeper into the concepts I’ve heard in weekend messages, allows me to the opportunity to further process and take hold of those concepts, all the while spending time connecting daily with God. There’s nothing magical about fifteen minutes, but it’s a great place to start. By committing FIFTEEN minutes a day in faith-building discipline, your relationship with God will deepen and grow, and so will you.

If you’d like to receive Growing Deeper daily in your inbox, send an email to growingdeeper@pathfinderstl.org or pick up a printed copy at the Information Station in the Sanctuary Lobby.

Into the Field

by TARA REIMANN
Missions & Community Engagement Coordinator

Pathfinder Missions sent over 80 people into the mission field in 2019, encouraging and supporting our ministry partners around the world!

CAMBODIA: faithfulness in moving

A significant economic shift disrupted the Sihanoukville community in Cambodia, forcing our partner, Stronghold Cambodia, to relocate to Kampot. Our team provided encouragement and support in a season of change.

NICARAGUA COLLEGE TRIP: taking a step on life journey

High school senior, Jaime Speichinger, decided to forgo her graduation ceremony and opted to join the mission trip to Chinandega, Nicaragua. When our partner, Amigos for Christ, heard what Jaime gave up to live out her faith, they threw a graduation ceremony for her and even found a cap and gown!

NICARAGUA: first timers/mission partners

This was our team's first time serving in Nicaragua; we supported and encouraged the staff of Amigos for Christ by having our group of 40 pray over their team. We worked alongside rural families as they constructed modern bathrooms that build up dignity and cut down on disease.

DISASTER RESPONSE: impact on partners

Laura is a horse trainer who lost her home and training facilities. We learned that 15 minutes before our team and trailer pulled onto her property, she had been praying for a miracle. When she saw the angel painted on the side of our trailer, she knew her prayers had been answered. She plans to join our team next year!



BELIZE: life change through our support, three generations

In Seine Bight, new town council members shared their vision; former attendees of the Belize Mission Society VBS are now mentors to the young kids; and we met teenagers who travel great distances to apply for the Belize Mission Society scholarship program.

PORTLAND, OREGON HIGH SCHOOL MISSION TRIP: team bonding and shared stories

We held worship night at the beach! Also, a youth we met shared some at-home struggles he faces with parents and addiction. His perspective was inspirational for our team, knowing that God will provide for his family even in the hardness.

WYOMING: first timers

Wyoming offers stunning views AND stunning poverty. As difficult as some of the stories of the Native Americans on the Wind River Reservation are to hear, every year the life change experienced by our team, the native children and our partners grow tenfold. Some of the people who went on this trip for the first time this year said they felt like they belonged from the very first minute and that they have new friends for life and new experiences that significantly grew them. God is Good.

These snapshots from the field hopefully provide a glimpse of how God is working around the world. There are so many more stories that each trip participant could share about pouring into others and experiencing life change.

Stay tuned for January 2020, when we'll hold the next Experiencing Missions Open House. If you'd like to learn more about short term missions trips, be sure to check out our website. For more info about getting plugged in, contact Tara Reimann at tareimann@pathfinderstl.org

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MORE than

7,000

Enter the Missouri foster care system **each year.**

8YRS

Average age of a foster child.

2 YEARS

The average length of stay for a Missouri child in foster care.

500 KIDS

Annual amount that age out of the Missouri foster care system without a permanent, legal family.



A new care ministry launching to support families who foster

by DAVID JAMESON *Community Engagement Director*

The numbers above show a real picture of the population entering the foster care system in our state. A startling statistic for kids who age out of foster care without a permanent, legal family is that by the age of 24 only half will maintain steady employment and 1 in 5 of these individuals will end up homeless. In Missouri alone, this translates to 125 young adults living without shelter. Thinking about issues like these is uncomfortable – it can feel overwhelming and depressing. It may even begin to feel too big and pervasive to overcome. But we know

that our God is big enough to use our church to make a difference!

As the Community Engagement Director, it is my job to dream up new ways to serve and love our community. I have become convinced that our church is uniquely positioned to support foster children and foster families in a big way.

In January 2019, with the help of a newly formed

Fostering Together Steering Committee, we set out to pilot a foster care ministry to determine if this is something that we could accomplish. The goal was to form two groups of people, called care communities, which would surround two foster families with care, love, and support as they did the same for their foster children. The program is modeled from a similar ministry that another church has been successfully running for the last 10 years. The program is structured as a three-tier ministry. The first tier (and primary emphasis of the ministry) will be care communities for foster families in our church and surrounding community. These are people who want to help with foster care but aren't ready to be foster parents. The second tier will be an email alert list that anyone can join and respond to needs that foster families in our community have. Finally, the third tier will be Fostering Together events which will include educational opportunities, fun parties and events for the families, as well as supportive and encouraging events for the parents.

The pilot included two foster families and eight volunteer families/couples/individuals, who desired to help with foster care, whom we called "Supporting Mentors." We wanted this pilot to be internal because we knew we wouldn't have it all figured out off the bat. Jen and JC Murray agreed to be one of the pilot foster families, and so we needed one more. As it turned out, my wife and I felt called that it was our time to get licensed. Being foster parents was a dream of ours since college, and God made it clear that now was the right time to take that leap of faith, and so we became the second pilot foster family!

The first six months taught us a lot. We learned about helpful ways to build new relationships among the care communities, how to best launch them, and how the needs of the foster families vary based on the age of children and length of fostering. However, the most significant thing that the pilot did was confirm that this is a ministry that we need to prioritize. I watched as God orchestrated a new friendship between the Murrays' foster child and another child in the care community, complete with a couple of playdates! I saw how taking a foster child dress shopping can form a special bond between her and the supporting mentor! There was much to celebrate throughout this pilot, and I thank God for that.

We heard from many people, people who weren't a part of the pilot, that they had heard about Fostering Together and were excited that our church was stepping

into a need like this! I wish I could tell you the number of people who have expressed to me a desire to be involved with foster care in our church! It is clear that you, the church, are ready to take on a challenge like this, and I couldn't be more excited for Fostering Together to launch!

How you can get involved

Fostering Together needs your help to get going!

Join a Care Community

Starting now, we are looking for people who can be a part of a Care Community. If that is you, or if you're curious, *please email me at djameson@pathfinderstl.org.*

Attend the Launch Party

We will be hosting a Fostering Together Launch Party this Fall and I encourage you to come to that as well!

Pray

Keep Fostering Together in your prayers as we work together to make a big splash in the world of foster care, and ultimately for God's children in our community!



In This House

by **DOUG MAUSS** Pastor, Small Groups & Care Director

We've had a lot of visitors come check out our church since our name change in the Spring. And it's been good to let new people know (and remind those who've been here a while) what it is that makes this place home. In our series, "In This House..." we highlighted some of our distinct approaches to a God-Directed Journey:

We start from an assumption that **"We All Belong."** At Pathfinder Church, we strive to be a community who is close-knit but not exclusive. The basis of our belonging isn't earned, it's given. From this place of unconditional acceptance, we also encourage people to **"All Pitch In."** We all have gifts. And all gifts are meant to be shared with the greater family. This blesses others and ourselves.

We also reject a common Christian misunderstanding that anybody ever "arrives" at perfection. Here, **"We Keep Taking Steps,"** because God always has more adventure, learning, and growth in store for us! And these next steps ultimately point us outward, where we can **"Love Our Neighbors,"** which we modeled in a radical way during our annual Neighborhood Walk Weekend.

And because we believe that everybody is ultimately a "Pathfinder," taking steps on their journey of life and faith—we want as many as possible to join this particular community. This means **"We Invite Others In."**

And if you yourself have experienced hope, compassion, and purpose in this house...if you think we are a place that's special...then we encourage you to invite somebody else in. Don't wait for the right weekend or the right moment. There are people who need what we have, and they need you to open that door. Connect with someone in your life who's looking for something more, and invite them to see how we live...in this house.

September 14 & 15 we are hosting The Great Bible Giveaway and also Invite a Guest Weekend. If you've been thinking about inviting a friend, neighbor, colleague, or family members – know this is a perfect weekend to do it! We'll be taking extra steps to ensure that all visitors feel especially welcome in this house.



Meet Steve Wheeler Creative Arts Director for Pathfinder Kids

What is your role at Pathfinder?

I serve in a part-time role as the Creative Arts Director for Pathfinder Kids. My job primarily involves creating overseeing the four worship experiences that happen every Sunday morning for Pathfinder Kids. Each worship experience has teams of technicians, actors, to worship leaders that requires age-appropriate scripts, props, and details to engage kids.

I also serve as the Stage Production Director of our annual Vacation Bible School. Pulling the team together, helping get creative folks - all volunteers - to create that experience. I also help create our Family Forward events.

What's your background?

I'm a landscape architect at a local architectural firm (Christner Architects.) But, I also have a minor in theater. I spent 10 years in Florida, part of that time with Disney, working on theme park design and in the entertainment department. When we moved to St. Louis, I started volunteering with Kids Ministry here at church. As Lisa Schmidt and I got to know each other, she asked if I'd be willing to volunteer to help create a stage show experience for preschoolers (Studio Jam). Eventually, a part-time role opened at church, and both organizations were willing to work with me to balance both roles. For the past 10 years now, we've been growing and transforming Kids Ministry experiences here at Pathfinder Church.

What's your connection to the Next Phase 3 project?

I've always had a passion for experiences that have a story, and outdoor environments are where I shine and

excel. That's the world I've known and gone to school for. When I heard that leadership wanted to help change the face of the outside of our campus, I was excited to see how they were

willing to embrace that. Because of my background, I was asked if I wanted to be involved – I said I'd love to be a part of that team! Having been here for ten years, I have a unique viewpoint and know how this campus works. I have brought oversight, counsel, guidance, and—at times—interpretation to the table, helping leadership walk through processes and working with the city.

What energizes you to serve here?

I appreciate how our church gives the next generation a priority here. A lot of churches don't do that. I think that's what makes us successful as a church as a whole. We're growing that next generation of leaders.

Lightning Round

Wife: Terri (we just celebrated our 20-year anniversary!)

Kids: Sam (18) and Katie (15) – both alums of our school

Favorite Disney Character: Woody from Toy Story! I have to be careful how I phrase this... but Woody is my very close and personal friend. He and I "worked together" as characters at Disney.

Favorite Hobby: Mowing my yard, listening to show tunes, and dancing in my backyard at the same time. My neighbors think I'm crazy. I particularly enjoy dancing to the musical Grease.

Favorite Summer Activity: I love going to The Muny.

Favorite Vacation Destination: Grand Haven, Michigan

Favorite home-cooked meal: Sloppy joe



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- Jim & Karhy Zeller



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FALL AT PATHFINDER

SEPTEMBER 8

Getting Started

OCTOBER 11

Oktoberfest

DECEMBER 8

Advent by Candlelight

SEPTEMBER 8

Baptism Orientation

OCTOBER 13

Getting Started

DECEMBER 11, 13, 14, 15

Sounds of Christmas

SEPTEMBER 9

GriefShare: Loss of a Spouse

OCTOBER 13

Baptism Orientation

SEPTEMBER 15

Getting Connected

OCTOBER 18-20

Middle School Retreat

SEPTEMBER 14 & 15

The Great Bible Giveaway

NOVEMBER 27

Thanksgiving Eve Service

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