

# FAITH MATTERS



PROSPER

**FAITH MATTERS**  
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# Reimagining through the Unimaginable

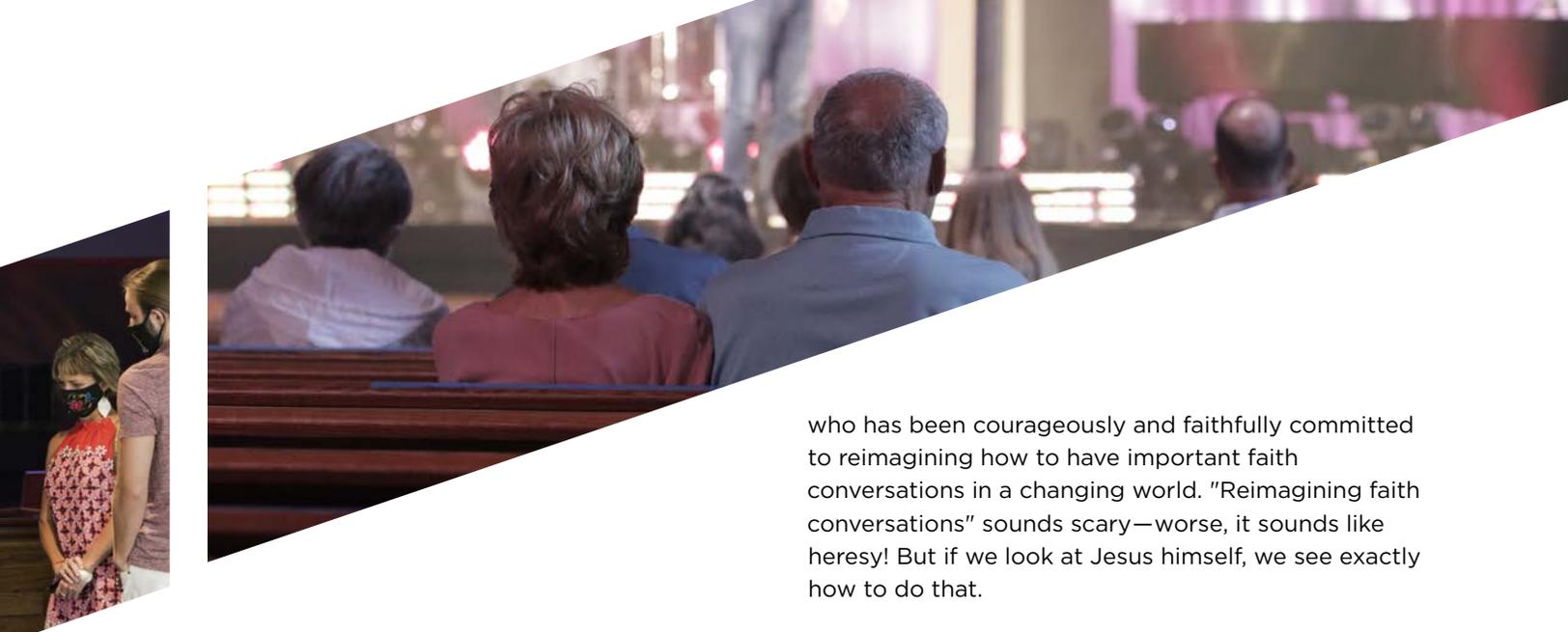
by **DION GARRETT** *Senior Pastor*

One of my favorite moments in the musical *Hamilton* is the song "It's Quiet Uptown." It's a song that grapples with the universal human themes of loss, betrayal, and ultimately forgiveness. The hook of the song says, "They are going through the **unimaginable**." That about sums up 2020.

Over the last five months, we've had to reimagine nearly every part of our lives, haven't we? As a guy who gets tired of monotony and enjoys creative problem solving, parts of the process have been kind of fun. But I've found that reimagining every aspect of life can also make you tired. For our staff here at Pathfinder, worship was actually the easiest thing to reimagine. The far more complicated issues have been:

- How to grow kids and students when being *together* is such a key part of growth?
- How to do the same in St. John School, our 165-year-old school?
- How to serve "the least of these" (economically speaking) when we can no longer support our mission partners with boots on the ground?
- How to encourage people to still live as the Body of Christ, even when we're scattered and separated in our homes?
- How to give people timely and relevant words of Scriptural encouragement to help them through this disruption?
- How to continue reaching new people with the Gospel of Jesus, without the use of many time-tested methods?





It's been daunting. It's also been faith-building to watch God inspire us and provide for us, as we reimagine through the unimaginable, so we can continue the mission he's put before us:

- We've provided digital resources to kids and parents to help them keep growing, including an all-digital VBS experience.
- We've deployed our group leaders in Kids and Student Ministry to stay connected to their groups, throw birthday parades, and provide support through hardship.
- Providentially, St. John School had already become a *Personalized Learning Academy* before the pandemic. We were able to seamlessly serve our current families and provide a summer outreach to all families in the community who may have gotten behind on school progress.
- We've redeployed our short-term missionaries, who were going to support our mission partners in the field, to serve locally on several projects in the STL region. They're also serving as advocates for at-risk people in our community.
- We've provided new digital content, Hope Updates, Midweek Worship opportunities, and Pathfinder Unscripted, in addition to launching online Life Groups and Care Groups.
- And throughout the shut-down and since re-opening, we've seen *brand new* people taking steps to get connected at Pathfinder *every week!*

I love that our church has long contained, in our very DNA, the commitment to *reimagine* how to reach and serve people with the Gospel.

But all these new methods aside, one of the things that will keep our mission alive and well throughout the pandemic and far beyond is that we're a church

who has been courageously and faithfully committed to reimagining how to have important faith conversations in a changing world. "Reimagining faith conversations" sounds scary—worse, it sounds like heresy! But if we look at Jesus himself, we see exactly how to do that.

**Jesus not only spoke the truth, he was the truth embodied, *incarnate*.** Although the truth can make people uncomfortable, people were strangely comfortable around Jesus. Somehow, Jesus shows us that you can be the living expression of the truth and not drive sinful humans away. The church, at some point, set up a false dichotomy that you have to either offend people or water down the Gospel. Jesus shows us that we can still embody truth *and* draw people in rather than pushing them away. And while the teachers of the law had a sterile, irrelevant way of talking about the faith, we see that "The people were amazed at [Jesus'] teaching, because he taught them as one who had authority, not as the teachers of the law." - *Mark 1:22*. The Pharisees were the ones who were under the impression that the practices of truth and acceptance were at odds, not Jesus.

In a time when you can stream the most polished, best produced, church services in the world, the way in which we have faith conversations at Pathfinder is one of the things that makes us irreplaceable. During the 10-week series on the Gospel of Mark, *Shook*, it was amazing to watch people, who had never heard much about Jesus before, light up as they encountered him there.

While we reimagine so much about how to do ministry, rest assured, we are a faithful church. In the words of Jesus, "What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?" - *Matthew 16:26*. Gains we make as a church, during these unimaginable times, mean nothing if we're not faithful to present Jesus and his Word as he really is. As we live into the very uncertain months ahead, you can count on one thing: we will continue to find new ways to reach you and many others with the life-changing Gospel of Jesus and the life-giving wisdom of his Scriptures.



# CURBING THE TRENDS

## *Launching a New Confirmation Experience*

by **PUA PARKER** and **JON SHEPHERD**  
*Directors of Student Ministry*

Confirmation is a powerful opportunity for students to learn the basics of Lutheran theology and affirm their faith in God. It is designed to launch a young Christian's lifelong pursuit of Jesus. For some students, it has been exactly that. Unfortunately, for many others, confirmation has been viewed as a conclusion of their Christian discipleship. Perhaps that sounds harsh, but let us explain a bit more before offering a few solutions.

We have seen three distinct trends that directly oppose what confirmation is supposed to be in the life of a Christian. These trends exist not only at Pathfinder but also in confirmation programs across the nation.

1. Many confirmands are not able to adequately grapple with the readings and teachings in 8th grade. Their answers to questions and scant participation in discussions reveal a lack of comprehension.
2. Upon being confirmed, the large majority of students (60–80%) stop regularly attending and serving within the church. They become disconnected, left with a faith in its infancy.
3. As the program completes within their eighth grade school year, confirmands are leaving their church community right before a major life transition when they need that support the most.

After studying these trends, speaking with fellow churches, and considering several strategic paths forward, we are excited to announce changes to the confirmation program at Pathfinder Church. We pray for these changes to push back on the trends and better equip students for their life journey!

***The most noticeable changes are as follows:***

### **1. NEW CONFIRMATION TIMELINE**

***January of 8th Grade to November of 9th Grade***

This new timeline ensures a connection with peers and mentors as students transition into high school. It also provides extra time for brains to develop before diving into deep theological concepts.

### **2. SUMMER DAY-RETREAT ADDITION**

A retreat to encourage connections as well as provide a forum for students to ask questions and let things they have been learning sink in.

### **3. SERVE TEAMS**

Confirmands will choose a team to serve with at Pathfinder as a part of their service hours. Students can connect with like-minded people, feel a sense of identity, and have an easy way to stay connected after they are confirmed.

Partnered with other aspects of student ministry, we think these adjustments will curb these trends and better assist students as they claim this gift of faith, which God has given them.



## DESTINED TO BE *by DAMOLA OSHIN* Member-at-Large, Pathfinder Church Board of Directors

I have a firm belief that all things work together in accordance with God's plan. As one of the newest members of the Pathfinder Board, I am grateful for the opportunity to be part of the future of the church in this capacity.

I was born in Lagos, Nigeria, and my family immigrated to the suburbs of Chicago when I was in my early teens. As a family, the church has always been the central part of our lives. The faith my parents instilled in my brothers and me has propelled me to this day. My early college days were here in the Saint Louis area, where I earned my undergraduate and graduate degrees. Fortunately, God has taken my family on several adventures that had us move to Colorado, Texas, and Toronto. But through all those journeys and life adventures, we always knew we were destined to be back in the St. Louis area. Ten years and two beautiful children (Makayla and Michael) later, my wife, Kaylin, and I find ourselves where we were meant to be, at Pathfinder Church.

As a business leader for the past 17 years, I find myself nervously excited about the future in front of us. We face a period that has the potential to be one of the most significant we have seen in several decades. Recognizing the moment is one of the most important steps in devising a strategy for meeting the moment.

God makes no mistakes, and sometimes, it requires that we look at events in full view to try to understand what he is trying to do. This brings me to why I am so excited about Pathfinder!

My journey to Pathfinder was fairly short. It was clear that God was leading me here. When I was in the area before the family moved back and scouting on Sunday for a home church, Pathfinder was the first one I walked into. From the inviting staff at the lobby to the Café to the dynamic messages from Pastors Dion and Doug, I knew Pathfinder was the right Church home for my family. I believe that to be God's plan. I would never have imagined, however, that I would be called to serve on board a few short months later. But the more that I have gotten to know the church and the staff, the more I am convinced that this is where I would like to "do life and grow spiritually."

As we look to the future and embark on the mission of the church to reach more people and bring them to Christ, I am excited about the forward-thinking of the Pathfinder team. I am confident that God's plan for the West County area is just beginning and that Pathfinder has a leadership role to play in the revival that is to come.

# UNSTOPPABLE LEADERSHIP



## DOUG MAUSS

*Executive Director, St. John School*

For the last three years, the leadership at St. John School has advocated that the longstanding public educational model has not kept pace with what students need to learn in order to thrive in our ever-changing world. This last spring, what had been an educated opinion was confirmed as fact. As COVID-19 and government-mandated lockdowns changed the face of education forever, one school in our region kept teaching and learning unfazed—our school!

Since 2017, our school leadership team has been steadily transforming St. John School into a Personalized Learning Academy—an educational model whose characteristics are innovation, flexibility, and student-driven learning. Last year, when the whole world retreated into their homes, our students kept on learning, by using the skills and technology we'd been training them in all along. It was messy, and there was a lot of adapting along the way—but that's exactly what we've been preparing our teachers and students for!

This June, I officially joined the leadership team of St. John School as Executive Director, working directly

with Scott Osbourn (our Principal of Academic Innovation) and Rachel Bausch (our Principal of Learning Experience). The three of us are committed to our school's distinctive promise: *cultivating confident learners and leaders our world is hungry for.*

Scott Osbourn is an academic and accreditation guru. Under his guidance for the last five years, our school has received some of the most exclusive accreditations in the state. I'm also extremely grateful for his forethought during Covid-19 last spring: he made sure to sign up for the first time slot in February to receive our official evaluation. A week later all the schools were shut down, which meant that we were one of only two schools in the whole state to receive any accreditation in 2020; the remaining schools all had to defer. Principal Osbourn has thoroughly processed the latest, innovative educational research and boldly applied those learnings in thoughtful and measurable ways on behalf of our students.

Rachel Bausch has been a steady and open-hearted presence at our school for twenty years! She originally started as an EC teacher, but her emotional intelligence and administrative skills have continuously increased her responsibilities and she has made our EC thrive for the last several years. We have one of the best reputations in West County! In her newly expanded role, she will be ensuring that our students don't just excel academically, but that they develop socially and emotionally. We strive for our students to follow in Christ's footsteps of servant leadership. Principal Bausch brings an amazing philosophy to our school: that all conflict is actually an opportunity for growth and stronger connection.

In my role, I can free our two principals to expand their time and efforts in the areas they do best. I will work closely with Dion Garrett and our principals to keep our school's vision in our sights, and to communicate that vision well to parents and our larger community. This school has something unique and powerful to offer in West County, and I'm so excited to be a part of it!

## SCHOOL OPEN HOUSE

OCTOBER 25 • [STJLS.ORG/TOUR](https://stjls.org/tour)

*Virtual Tours also available*



## SCOTT OSBOURN

*Principal of Academic Innovation*

### What's your educational background?

I received my Bachelor's in Education from Concordia River Forest, and then my Master's in Education Administration from Concordia Wisconsin. I've served, as both administrator and teacher, for 21 years.

### What's a personal career highlight for you?

It meant a lot that a former student nominated me for a Teacher Appreciation Award from the Missouri Scholars Academy in 2008. But I'm also quite proud that I coached a championship winning soccer team!

### How did you first land at St. John School as an educator?

I had a connection with Spencer Peregoy. He asked if I would be interested in teaching math and music and invited me to church. It was such a friendly gesture, and the church and school both felt like a great fit!

### What fun thing do you like to do with your family?

We love to play games, watch movies, and go to the beach for vacations.

### Who has been a hero/role model for you, and why?

My Father, Skip Osbourn. He modeled the Formative Five (Empathy, Self-Control, Integrity, Embracing Diversity, and Grit) before it was a thing. He is a great man of faith and has displayed character traits that I have since tried to model for myself.



## RACHEL BAUSCH

*Principal of Learning Experience*

### What's your educational background?

I have a Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Education from Concordia University Nebraska, and a Master of Arts & Teaching (MAT) from Webster University.

### What's a personal career highlight for you?

In 2011, I was blessed to receive the National Distinguished Lutheran Early Childhood Administrator award.

### How did you come to St. John School?

A former principal, Spencer Peregoy, contacted me while I was teaching in Nebraska. He invited me to start a full-time Preschool Program here.

### What fun thing do you like to do with your family?

We love snow skiing together in Colorado!

### Who's your hero?

My dad is my true hero—because he was a life-long, humble servant of God. He lived each day by these words from Casting Crowns:

*I'm just a nobody trying to tell everybody*

*All about Somebody who saved my soul*

*Ever since You rescued me, You gave my heart  
a song to sing*

*I'm living for the world to see nobody but Jesus*



# PROSPER THE CITY: ORIGINS

by **CHRIS PAAVOLA** *Pastor, All Nations Church*

In 597 B.C., King Nebuchadnezzar II captured the city of Jerusalem. The citizens who didn't die in the fighting were locked in chains and forced to watch their beloved city burn before marching 1,600 miles across the desert to the foreign city of Babylon.

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR ISRAEL

When the Exiles staggered into Babylon, their hearts full of grief and anger, God would speak to them through the prophet Jeremiah. But instead of a message of resistance, or a promise of vengeance, God issued a challenge,

This is what the Lord Almighty, the God of Israel, says to all those I *sent* into exile from Jerusalem to Babylon: ...seek the peace and *prosper* the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the Lord for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper.”  
–*Jeremiah 29:4-7, emphasis mine.*

In the centuries since, the term *Babylon* became a metaphor of life for followers of Jesus—we are like Exiles in Babylon, waiting for God to bring us home to the New Jerusalem. Every time we pray, “...thy kingdom come...” we are reminded this world is not our home. But while we live in Babylon and long for Zion, our instructions are clear:

### ***Prosper the city.***

Don't fight and burden the city. And don't just tolerate and coexist in the city. Let the city rejoice because of how hard you work to prosper it.

## INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE CHURCH

Three years ago, when we were planting All Nations Church in University City, we decided to take God's instructions in Jeremiah 29 and launched Prosper the City teams to create a service project that would make an immediate impact in their neighborhood.

On the surface, this may not seem like a revolutionary strategy, but the Lord's command in Jeremiah 29 is more than simply serving the city, it's serving *alongside* the city. It's serving *with* people who look and think differently and using our collective assets for the good of the city we call “home.”

*What happened next was greater than anything we could have planned.*

The projects the Prosper the City teams created were more unique, impactful, and meaningful than anything we could have created from a top-down approach. We made connections with new organizations in the city. We served with new people in the city. We discovered new gifts within the people of the church.

Because it was such a positive experience, we decided to do Prosper the City projects again the next year. And the year after that. Every time, we not only improved the process, but the momentum became bigger than our church.

That's why, this year, we are honored and thrilled to officially partner with Pathfinder Church to see what happens when we come together to #ProsperTheCity.



# PROSPER THE CITY: 2020

by **DAVID JAMESON** *Director of Community Engagement, Pathfinder Church*

Together, we can make in a huge difference in a small amount of time. The goal is to launch 50 teams that will begin meeting in late September.

Teams form in several ways. If you know who you want on your team, move ahead, and assemble your team! If you'd like us to connect you with a team, complete the signup online. We'll match people up by zip codes, availability, and in-person vs. virtual preference (COVID-19 will NOT stop us from prospering our city!). Once matched, your Team Captain will contact you about the first meeting!

Each team utilizes the Prosper the City discussion guide. Videos set the stage for weekly meetings. Teams process through questions and activities that help to accomplish each week's goals. In the first week, teams will do "asset mapping" to discover the combined skills, passions, and resources. In Week 2, teams use a point-based voting system in order to select a project collectively and plan the project's details. Week 3, teams finalize plans and ensure everyone knows their role in the project. In the 4th week, teams will complete the project together!

There is a growing number of team captains, who will be trained to facilitate the 4-week project launch. I can't wait to see how God prospers St. Louis (and beyond) through Prosper the City this year!

## PROSPER THE CITY

**TEAMS FORMING NOW**

**LAUNCHING SEPTEMBER 26/27, 2020**

Prosper the City is an initiative that launches service teams across St. Louis.

Every team project is unique, created and designed based on combined skills, passions, and resources.

**WEEK 1 → Meet and Asset Map**

**WEEK 2 → Plan the Project**

**WEEK 3 → Finalize the Project**

**WEEK 4 → Complete the Project**

Join a team by texting

**PROSPERSTL to 474747**

or visit **prosperthecity.com**

# PATHFINDER

No doubt that this summer wasn't our typical summer at Pathfinder. Our family's commitment to staying connected has never been stronger.

## PATHFINDER WORSHIP



▶ We opened our doors again with new protocols so our guests can feel safe when they come to our campus.

▶ In July, we had our annual Neighborhood Walk Weekend.

## PATHFINDER MISSIONS



▶ Instead of mission trips, socially-distanced teams served at multiple locations including All Nations Church, Chesterfield Central Park, St. John Cemetery, and River Roads Lutheran School.

# ER SUMMER



While our world has changed these past several months, our church as our Pathfinder summer events were reimaged.

## PATHFINDER KIDS



Friday Frenzie Summer Splashapalooza with fun water games and activities.



A virtual Vacation Bible School, Roar Again! (Plus our album, *Let Love Roar* is now on Spotify and Amazon Music!)

## PATHFINDER STUDENTS



Summer Sessions near Cornerstone.



Lunch Break picnics and hiking in local parks.



# PROJECT COMPLETE

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

It is official, we have received our final inspection from Ellisville for our NEXT Phase 3 improvements, and the project is complete! The goal was to beautify our campus grounds by creating green spaces with outdoor areas for gathering, provide clear and intuitive wayfinding to direct guests to the main entry areas, and address parking flow and drop-off points.

I loved seeing how the project moved from concepts on paper to something better than I could have imagined. Our landscaping has come to life this season, including the seeds that you helped us sow from the Pathfinder launch anniversary weekend back in March (right before the COVID-19 closure). As we have reopened our campus, the new signage has already been beneficial to visitors.

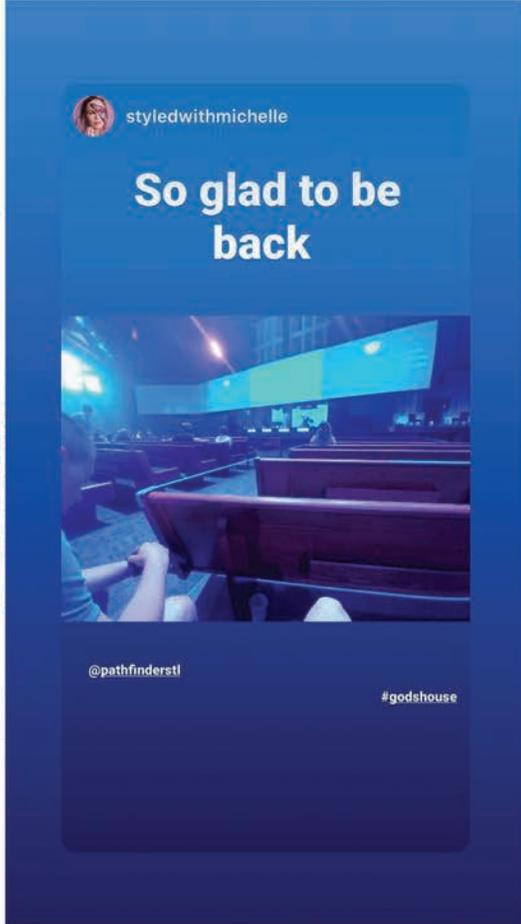
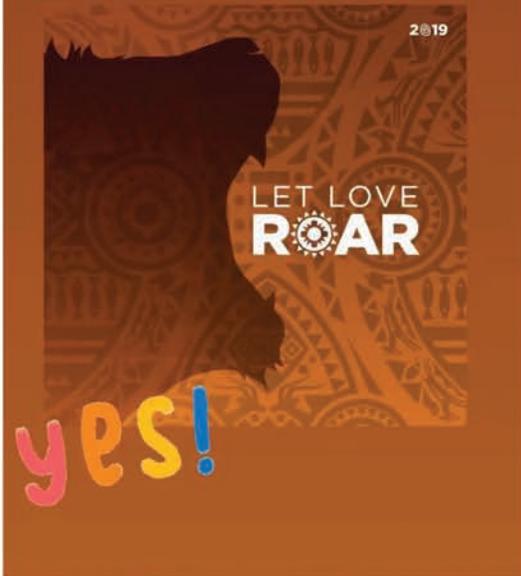
We look forward to continuing to be a place of hope in our changing world, and we're confident the campus improvements outside now better reflect the life-giving ministry happening inside. Thank you for your support for this ministry that God uses to reach the West County community and beyond.



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