

CONNECTED

YOUTH FOR CHRIST of Northern Ohio - Newsletter

Connecting Teens To Jesus Christ And His Church

January 2024



All Things to All People! Really? | Steve Pausch

I am writing this article as I approach an anniversary date for marriage and ministry. December 22nd 1989 I went into full time ministry with Youth For Christ and on December 23rd 1989, I was able to marry an incredible woman who became an unbelievable mother and lifelong friend. On a cold December week 34 years ago, we started a journey and were really not sure what we were in for.

The Apostle Paul in the Book of 1 Corinthians chapter 9 explains his purpose and plan for ministry.... **“I have become all things to all people so that I might reach some!”** 34 years of ministry have definitely showed the many different things we have done to be able to reach the young people God has given us the privilege of working with. Over the years I have been a lot of things: hall monitor, lunchroom aid, basketball coach, baseball coach, football coach, golf coach, soccer coach, weight lifting coach, softball coach, cook for thousands of teens, classroom teacher, cooking class teacher, set up and tear down team member, janitor, driving instructor to teens, horseback rider, wood chopper, trip leader, mission trip leader, home rebuild, fishing teacher, builder, letter writer, and I have been able to share the Good News of Jesus Christ with thousands of young people in this job.

But this year, I became someone I really never thought I would be. When our children were growing up, we never pushed the idea of Santa Claus with them. We didn't want them ruining it for other kids, but in our home, gifts came from people and family not a guy in a red suit. It seemed to be just fine for our family.

I was recently asked to be Santa for Greater Cleveland YFC at their City Life Christmas party run by Johnnie Fine. Johnnie was a young man who, while in high school, was

involved in the ministry I ran with Jeff Thompson (Greater Cleveland YFC Director). I had Johnnie help with some work at my house to earn money to go on a summer trip where he made a commitment to Jesus, and now many years later, he is running the City Life program at YFC in Cleveland. Living my life as an “unbeliever” in Santa created a little confusion



Johnnie and his wife with Santa Steve



for me as I entered the night, but behind my suit and beard I was able to talk to teens who would probably not normally give me the time of day and share with them how Jesus is the Reason for Christmas. It was a good night to see old friends and share an eternal message with other students.

I am looking forward to many more “New Things” in 2024 and with your prayers and support we know that we will be able to do more in 2024!

Family Christmas Card | Matt Mountjoy

It’s that time of year again where you start to receive all the fun family photos taken and put on Christmas cards. I have a confession to make: I love receiving those, even better are the ones that come with updates. I love hearing about what’s going on in people’s lives and sticking the pictures up on the fridge While it was too late to try and go out and do a “Family Christmas Photo,” I thought about the joy of hearing updates of people I care about, and I began to think about the Biblical precedent for importance of such things. First, there are books like Philippians where Paul is writing to thank and update people who support him. Second, you have passages like Psalm 107 encouraging believers to share their testimonies of what God has done in their lives. In the class I lead at church, we were recently discussing testimonies, and a woman who consistently shares great wisdom stated, “I’ve found that the most impactful testimonies are recent and specific. ‘God sustained you through hard times’..great, now tell me how!” So while it is too late for a Mountjoy family Christmas card, I figured this month’s newsletter could be a great substitute for you as you care for us and our ministry.

Dana and I are now approaching 15 full years of marriage. We have hit a really fun landmark date of having been together for half of our lives as we started dating 18 years ago at the age of 18. God has certainly been good to us in our marriage by giving us each other as partners for life. He has helped us grow together, and blessed us in our most important role of being parents. On that note, Connor

recently turned 4 and is enjoying pre-school. God made him full of excitement and joy. His love, sweetness, and attitude is something God uses constantly to make me smile on tough days. Our daughter, Delaney, turned 1 at the beginning of August, and she is a pistol. She is cuddly and fun, but also smart, tough, and stubborn. We call her "sweet and spicy." Watching Connor love on her and play with her is so much fun, and watching her want nothing more than to be like her big brother and mimic him is adorable. They are living reminders of God's blessing in our lives and motivation to keep Him at the center of our family. Dana and I are both also blessed to be in great job situations. Dana has been working at the accounting firm Bober Markey Fedorovich for 9 years and I have been here at YFC and coaching at Wadsworth for 8 years. Both of us have been blessed to be able to work with wonderful people at those places. That consistency is another blessing that God has given our family. This year has had many difficult struggles as we have dealt with tragic loss of life of a friend and illness of a loved one. Through this, though, God has sustained us, and I'll be specific. God has put in our lives many close friends who have been able to come along side us to pray with us, talk with us, laugh with us and more. He has given us a home Church where we can live life alongside other believers and with whom we can go through all of these things. He has given us families who know Him and that gives us comfort. We have so many blessings and reminders that regardless of what trials may present themselves that He is God, He is in control, and He is to be praised! Thank you for supporting us and the ministry, and above all thank you for your prayers!



The Hope of Jesus | Laurie Beal

It's a true blessing to be able to spend time with teens and be part of their life! I thought it would be cool this month to give you a peek into the thoughts and life of one of our students with whom God has let us be connected for almost 6 years! Meet Ahna!

How did you first hear about Garage Ministry?

My older sister had started going to the Garage a year or so before me. She told me about it and she always seemed to have fun. So, when I was old enough, I decided to start coming.

What was your prior experience with church/God before you came to the Garage?

Before the Garage, I didn't have a great relationship with Christ. I was struggling a lot mentally, and I was very alone and angry at seemingly everyone and everything. I was extremely lost.

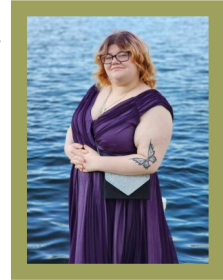
Did you think differently about God after starting at the Garage?

I started thinking very differently through my years at the Garage. I accepted Christ into my life and to this day is the best decision I have ever made. I still struggle day to day, but because of my relationship

with Christ, it's much easier to handle. I've grown so much as a person since I started coming to the garage and building my relationship with Christ, and I don't think I would've had this blessing to grow and accept and love God as I do without the wonderful leaders and the community at the Garage.

What did you like most about coming to the Garage?

The thing I like most about the Garage is being able to see the good that God does firsthand. Seeing people, who are all so different, coming together to worship Christ and send love and help to anyone in need. It's a beautiful thing to see.



Tell about your current relationship with God.

My relationship with God is stronger than ever before and grows every day. I'm a much happier person now since starting to follow him. My life has improved greatly and my view on life has changed completely for the better. Though I still have my rough patches, knowing I have Christ and the Christian community with me makes me feel so much better during those times.

What are your plans for your future?

I've just gotten accepted into a Christian College. I'm very excited to be surrounded by so many wonderful people and share my experiences with Christ as I navigate my way through college. I'm also hoping in the future I can be a part of something like the Garage to give back to the world and help people find Christ and be saved like I was.

Anything else you want to share?

The Garage is a blessing for me. The leaders and people there changed my life so drastically and I cannot say that or thank those people enough. I'm in such a better place mentally and with Christ than I could've ever imagined. These people are absolute angels and are filled with love. It is amazing to be a part of such a wonderful community.

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