

GRACE POINT



2020-2021

Leading people into a growing relationship with Jesus Christ by creating environments where life change can happen.

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A Letter from Pastor Tim

Nineteen years ago, when I stepped into full-time ministry, I expected difficult years, and I expected good years, I expected weddings and funerals, I expected seasons of change, but I never expected to pastor through a global pandemic. Like an earthquake, COVID-19 shook the structure of what church looks like, and what was left standing was the essence of the early church. We shifted from meeting as a large group, to meeting digitally and in small groups. We relied on each other, we found ways to connect with each other outside

and behind masks. We restarted our weekly gatherings, then restarted them again. But through all the change, God continues to move. He was neither surprised nor stunted by coronavirus.

There were three main things that stuck out to me as this year progressed:

1. Online or in-person Grace Point is a place people love to be. We can't put a number on it, but weekly we had new people showing up at Grace Point, that told us, "we watched your services online, and now we want to be here in person." Or, "I found your website and had to check you out." Our online content is good, but people stick around because of you. Each and every one of you that calls Grace Point your home, is the reason other people want to be a part of this church.

2. I have the pleasure of serving with a creative, energetic, and passionate team. I have told members of the team that this has been one of the hardest years of ministry I've ever encountered. But Frank, Josh, Marc, Niki C., Faith, Niki M., Rhonda, Julie, Ann, Tiff, Chris, Cindy, and Milton faced this year with incredible strength and fervor. They got creative with how to connect; whether it was zoom small groups, delivering Sonic drinks to kids and teens, doing silly social media videos, or sending countless postcards, emails and texts. There are many churches that don't have a team as dedicated and loving, and I am so thankful and proud to get to work with these people every day.

3. Grace Point is one of the most generous churches alive today. I've said it before and I'll say it again, thank you, thank you, thank you for your generous and continued giving. In a year when many churches had to let staff go, cut back ministries, or close their doors permanently, your faithful and continued giving has allowed us to get creative in our ministries, add staff, and continue to support local and international organizations.

So as we pivot into a new church year, I am excited to see how God continues to move. How will he use this place that people love to be, combined with a great team, and your continued generosity to reach the thousands in our community who still need a relationship with him? I hope you'll join me in finding out!

Year In Review



3

New Members



5

Baby Dedications



6

Baptisms

10 Salvations:

People surrendering their lives to the Lordship of Jesus Christ.

Giving:

\$978,772.89

annual giving

\$18,822.56

average/week

3,767



snacks donated for Topeka North Outreach and Operation Backpack.

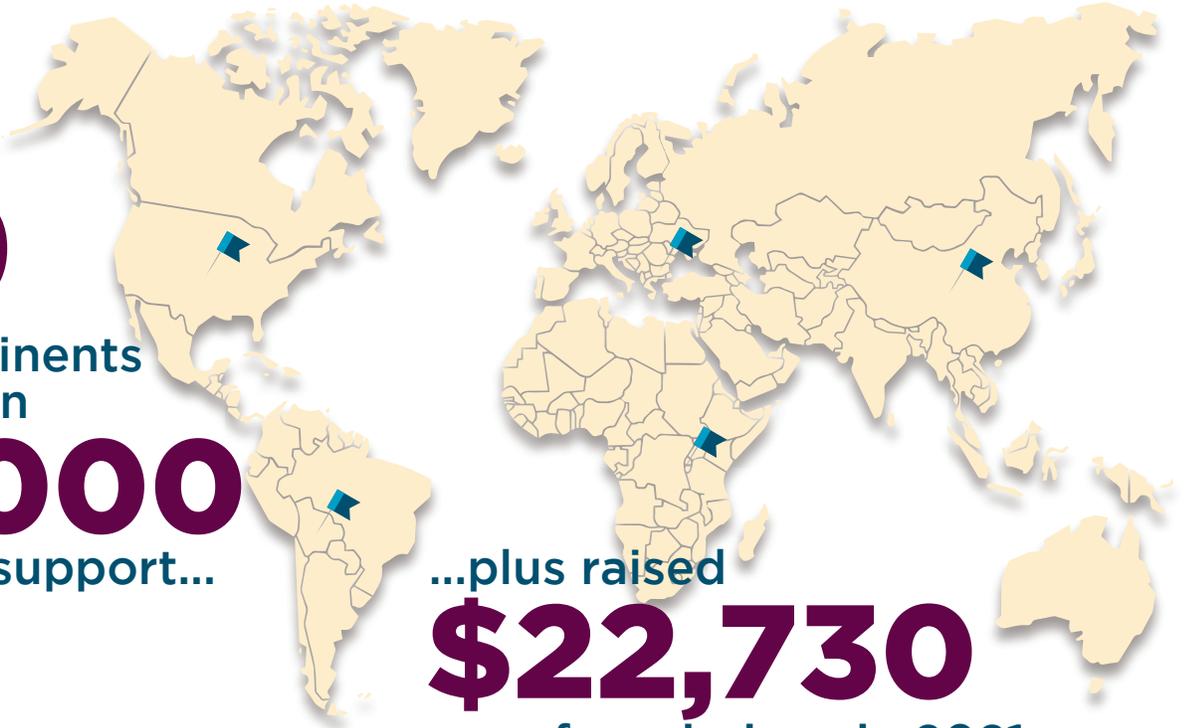
Supporting missions on

5

continents with more than

\$79,000

in support...



...plus raised

\$22,730

for missions in 2021 through Advent Conspiracy



UPSIDE DOWN KINGDOM

Ecclesia I LOVE MY

IT'S JUST A PHASE

10

challenging & inspiring teaching series

—TEMPTING— JESUS

CERTAIN FAITH IN UNCERTAIN TIMES UNCERTAINTY



Josh Cooper

Discipleship & Equipping Pastor

What did Covid teach you about your ministry area?

Where do I begin? The past year - though incredibly tough in many ways - has also been a tremendous gift. I learned a few important lessons this year:

- 1. Smaller is better.** In some ways smaller is safer. Circles, not rows (i.e., what happens outside of Sunday morning services) matters a lot more than we thought. The church's discipleship strategy which leans heavily on the Sunday morning worship experience is important; it's a vital component to a person's spiritual formation, but the Sunday service cannot provide the relationships necessary for a life well-lived in Christ. Only small groups and discipleship groups can make that happen.
- 2. Roots before fruits.** Ephesians 2:10 reminds us that we are God's masterpiece - His workmanship created in Christ to do good works. Works always come as a result of being in a life-giving relationship with Jesus, so I'm spending more time learning to dwell and delight in Christ.

What was the highlight of the year?

One highlight for me was hosting our first Group Leader Lobby gathering. Spending an hour with group leaders to cast vision, reflect on the past year, and have some fun was my highlight for the year.

- 3. "What if people are the treasure?"** This is a question I've been wrestling with in response to reading Jesus' telling of the parable of the talents found in Matthew 25. We tend to think of "talents" as skills, gifts, and money that is entrusted to us by God to be used for expanding God's kingdom, and we should think about our talents in this way. But, what if the talents that God has entrusted to us to invest and multiply has nothing to do with money or gifting? What if it has to do with the people God has placed directly in our lives?
- 4. I am the one in whom Christ dwells and delights.** This phrase, "I am the one in whom Christ dwells and delights" comes from a wonderful book by James Bryan Smith called, *The Good and Beautiful God*. Knowing that this is our true identity is the secret to walking by the Spirit in love and freedom.
- 5. Who I am becoming in Christ matters most of all** - more than anything else that I can possibly imagine. Paul says in Acts 17 that for those who are in Christ we live and move and have our being in God! Repeatedly Paul calls the church to "put on" the mind, the heart, the attitude of Christ and to live our lives as if Christ himself were living our lives.



Who was one volunteer that made this year successful?

Every group leader made this year successful. The struggle to adapt to the changing circumstances and individual preferences with each group was real. I appreciate all our group leaders' efforts to navigate the complexity of gathering together and to keep their group members connected and cared for. And they did it with so much love and grace. I'm immensely proud of our group leaders for all they've done for Grace Point.

This year there is one group leader that caught my attention who deserves special recognition. This group leader caught the vision for discipleship groups and immediately embraced her role as a disciple maker. Tiffany Hurr has been doing an incredible job of helping women learn to trust Jesus and obey Him in every area of their lives. Her commitment to Christ and to leading others through our disciple making strategy is a gift. Tiffany has been a blessing and to see her thrive in her role as disciple maker is an encouragement

3 quick facts:

1. **I lost 10 pounds** - I have 10 more to go
2. **I traveled to Michigan, Colorado, Alabama and Mexico!**
3. **My family adopted a cat** - Tiger was an outdoor stray who showed up at our door and never left. He has brought an unbelievable amount of joy to our home. For the record, I don't like cats.

How was God working in your ministry?



“If there was a legitimate excuse (or even an illegitimate one), I thought of it,” said Tim. “My reluctance was on steroids. And, yet, for some inexplicable reason, I still agreed to give this D-group thing a try – perhaps because I simply didn’t know how to say ‘no.’ Today, I can say without reservation, it was one of the best decisions I’ve made – a decision that in some ways changed my life. My life continues to be filled with stresses, deadlines and pressure. And I’ve yet to become a theologian or experience some metamorphosis from being a deeply private person to a dynamic personality. I’m still largely reserved and frequently confounded by biblical passages that leave me with more questions than answers. But my life has changed. He’s helped me create time and space to breathe each morning, even if it’s only for 10 or 15 minutes in His presence. He’s covered me with a refreshed sense of peace. Finally, He’s provided new perspectives, starting with this one: since my D-group began meeting, I’ve come to realize that Jesus steps with us when we step beyond our comfort zones. He often presents us with opportunities so He can stretch and encourage us.”

What did Covid teach you about your ministry area?

As the pandemic began to play itself out, I knew we were going to have to pivot and do so quickly. As I prayed and listened for direction from God, I knew for certain that our methods would change, but that the mission would never change. When everything else changes, one thing remains - **Jesus' love!**

We will always exist to share Jesus' love with kids, and to help parents as they disciple their families. No matter if we get to do that in KidsPoint environments or if we have to stand on driveways, parking lots or meet together on FB live, and through ZOOM, we will share God's love with our community of kids.



Who was one volunteer that made this year successful?

Picking one volunteer as the answer to this question is torture! When I reflect back on the last 12 months, I would love to thank each one of the team members who went the extra mile to connect with their kids while we were not able to meet weekly. Many volunteers reached out to the kids through postcards, little visits and by being a part of our outdoor Summer Jam event and Parking Lot Parties.

As we reopened, much changed about our weekly gatherings, but our leaders did not! They came back to RECONNECT with their kids and they were excited to do so even if they were not sure it was the safest way to spend their time! Those teammates who needed to stay home longer, joined with us through much needed prayer.

I really cannot look at our team and pick just one who made it a successful year because we are just what we say are - A GIANT TEAM made up of the most amazing types of people with one thing in common - we will do just about anything to help kids know how much Jesus loves them.



How was God working in your ministry?

God is always working ahead of us! Each time an event was canceled or our plans were changed, God presented a new idea! Not a big surprise, but the new plans were always better than the original event.

We learned to get comfortable learning new ways of using technology while we kept focusing on Jesus. Throughout the year, parents had more time with their kids at home; which led to more Spirit-led conversations. **We have had more children choose to follow Jesus over the last year than any year before.** More time at home together = more salvations. God showed us that more than ever, parents are the number one influence in a child's life.



What was the highlight of the year?

RECONNECTING!!! Getting to be in person with our kids again was by far the BEST HIGHLIGHT OF THE DECADE! Being in the Fort, The Hollow and in The Nest is our favorite way to spend our weekends! We loved watching our kids reconnect with each other, with their small group leaders and with their Jesus!

3 quick facts:

1. Cats are easier to introduce on Zoom calls than dogs.
2. Siblings love to wrestle while doing Fort Zoom Calls.
3. The church basement can completely fill with water in less than 30 minutes.



Faith Hansard

Student Ministries Pastor

What did Covid teach you about your ministry area?

Covid confirmed just how important connection is. People need connection, especially students who are in an important phase in life. They need to know that there are people who love them and want to be their biggest cheerleaders. I am so thankful that I get to love these students at Grace Point.

Who was one volunteer that made this year successful?

Our volunteers did a fantastic job this year. They went above and beyond to love our Loop kids and Tandem students so well. I am honored to serve on a team with these wonderful people each week. I can't pick just one to honor because, this year especially, we need them all.

How was God working in your ministry?

The conversations that the leaders and I were able to have with the students were amazing. This has been a challenging year, so creating a safe place for our students to talk and have someone listen was very important. There were countless text messages, phone calls, Zoom calls and even staying late after Tandem and praying together this year. All because students needed a safe place to be heard and shown the love of God.

What was the highlight of the year?

Being able to connect with teens in new ways. Our once-a-month game nights were amazing. It has really helped us as leaders build connections with the teens. Game night is the first Wednesday of the month, and teens come to just have fun and build relationships.



3 quick facts:

1. I delivered 108 Sonic drinks and 35 boxes of candy to students.
2. I participated in more than 103 Zoom calls.
3. We used more than 22 gallons of paint in the Tandem and Loop areas.

What did Covid teach you about your ministry area?

Covid reinforced for me that we are bound together by Jesus. It also showed me that my team is relentless in their pursuit to serve Christ and His Church.

How was God working in your ministry?

I saw God bring unity through HIM, not through us or our efforts.



What was the highlight of the year?

Hiring Chris Ireland as our Technical Director. I was sweating it when Cody left, especially because our ministry was operating so heavily through online technology. But Chris has been rock solid to step in during the craziest year, and with the most technical challenges ever... And we couldn't have done it without him.

3 quick facts:

1. I got a Facebook account when I realized people weren't going to have as much access to each other as we had been used to.
2. I've drunk roughly 72,000 Chick-Fil-A sweet teas this year (I'm rounding down).
3. I still have not tried Chick-Fil-A sauce.

Who was one volunteer that made this year successful?

Bryan & Jan Gauntt have been a true inspiration to me this past year. They've battled Bryan's cancer, maneuvered difficult extended family circumstances, and other challenges. But they have remained encouraging, full of faith, and dependable. If you want to see a picture of the hands and feet of Jesus, they look like Bryan and Jan Gauntt.

What did Covid teach you about your ministry area?

COVID was a reminder of how very much people need people. In Hebrews 10:24-25 we're told to be faithful in meeting together - to spur one another on. That happens best in person and is a solid reminder of the importance of "connections" at Grace Point.



How was God working in your ministry?

Personal "touches" matter! Even though we could not personally meet together, connections happened through old fashioned phone calls, text messages, emails, and postcards. God used them to remind us that we are His, we are family, we matter, and that He is with us.

Who was one volunteer that made this year successful?

I am so very grateful for the MANY faithful Connection Team servants! For the sake of the question however: Jeff and Stephanie Brown. As we began meeting again in person and volunteers were vital, they served in back-to-back services multiple times. Their attitude and hearts were always: "What can I do to help?" Jeff and Stephanie represent the best in Jesus' followers at Grace Point.

What was the highlight of the year?

The "return" to gathering in person! The personal smiles, fist bumps, and hugs ... those happen best in person!

3 quick facts:

1. 20 brand new Connection Team members
2. A baker's dozen of kids serving with parents as greeters
3. Fifty plus fat-free, calorie-free, sanctified granola bars consumed

What did Covid teach you about your ministry area?

What a year to start in vocational ministry...an international pandemic and I had my first baby. As I asked questions and learned about the business of ministry, I often heard “Well, before Covid...” I have a feeling this next year will teach me as much about ministry as my first year did. But, my biggest take-away from the year has been that ministry is a team effort. Whether it was getting the right communication to the right group of people, or connecting with young adults, or planning for maternity leave, I wouldn’t have been able to do it without the wonderful people I work with.

What was the highlight of the year?

1. Celebrating a baptism at The Point.
2. Getting to know my teammates better through our 4-Minute Fury Videos.

Who was one volunteer that made this year successful?

Thank you Carrie, Cindy, Dustin, Heather, Jacquelyn, Joe, Josh, Sarah, Sharon and Zuzu. But I want to give a special shout out to Zuzu Hoffman. She stepped outside of her comfort zone and took on social hosting whole-heartedly. If you know her bubbly personality face-to-face, she also exudes it behind the screen, welcoming those who join our services digitally.

3 quick facts:

1. We grew our Facebook following by 16%.
2. I wrote and asked 176 get-to-know-you questions for the 4-Minute Fury.
3. I’ve changed more than 1000 diapers (my conservative estimate).



How was God working in your ministry?

For the last two years God has been showing me and reminding me that his eternal perspective and timeline are always better than my own. From the way He provided this position, the skills He grew in me beforehand that He knew I would need here, to even Nolan arriving two weeks late, so that my parents were no longer in Covid quarantine, God knows what He is doing. It’s not my job to understand the path, but rather to take the steps laid out before me. There is a chorus that has become my anthem this year, “I will look back and see that you are faithful, I look ahead believing you are able, Jesus Lord of All!”