



FOUNDING PARTNER

To our Grace Family,

Growing up in Colorado, I have always loved aspen trees. Walking through a grove of aspens feels like being in a natural cathedral, with their bright, alabaster bark, column-like trunks and shimmering stained-glass leaves. Even as I write, I can hear the soft rustling of their leaves and smell their fresh fragrance.

Not until recently did I learn the amazing fact that aspen forests are actually one single organism; the largest organisms on planet earth, propagating over whole mountainsides through subterranean root systems. They are clonal colonies.

Isn't this a magnificent image of the Kingdom of God—a single sacred organism, interconnected in invisible ways, always expanding?

We began Poema with just this in mind: to support the growth of the Kingdom in the city Chicago by fostering the vital interconnectedness of God's sprawling work among emerging leaders.

Despite the challenges of 2020 and the pandemic, we have already begun to see the horizons of what God will do through Poema: supporting and coaching local ministry leaders, creating campus-wide and city-wide learning opportunities, building a network of mentors, and tending to the rhizomes of interconnection between church and para-church ministries through prayer and relationship, even seeing these dialogues span into national conversations with leaders engaged in similar work. The virtual realities of pandemic ministry have actually revealed these otherwise invisible connections and have allowed us to transcend physical geography in partnership!

This is undoubtedly what Jesus prayed on the night before he gave his crucifixion:

"I pray also for those who will believe in me through their message, that all of them may be one, Father, just as you are in me and I am in you. May they also be in us so that the world may believe that you have sent me." (John 17:21-22)


And, through your generous participation in this burgeoning work, you have played an extraordinary role. Henri Nouwen writes of such "acts of generosity" that they "grow into something far beyond what we could ever ask or imagine—the creation of a community of love in this world, and beyond this world." Through your investment, you have been vital part of this eternal organism.

We thank you for your generosity and for your faithfulness to the work of Jesus among the 250,000 students of "this great city," and want to honor your role in what Zechariah called "the day of small things." (4:10)

This medallion is etched on a disc made from the branches of an aspen tree. You might put it on a shelf, hang it on a bulletin board, set in on your desk or even in a desk drawer, but we hope that each time you see it you are reminded of God's work among students in the city of Chicago and of your own vital connection to what God is doing here—and your singular place as a "founding partner" in this new expression of God's kingdom.

It is no small thing to see a new work of God begun. It requires active faith, expectant hope, and sacrificial love. We are so honored to have you as a founding partner in this endeavor!

With Joy & Gratitude,


Matthew Podszus
Director | Poema

So grateful to partner with
you for the sake of the gospel!



For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship (**poema**), created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

EPH 2:8-10