

"On him we have set our hope that he will continue to deliver us, as you help us by your prayers. Then many will give thanks on our behalf for the gracious favor granted us in answer to the prayers of many." (2 Cor. 1:11)

March, 2021

Leader Spotlight



Lynn Hartigan
Outgoing Volunteer Coordinator

We wanted to say a big THANK YOU to Lynn for being such a fantastic Volunteer Coordinator for the past several years. Managing details for 400+ volunteers and 50-ish projects each year is a lot of work! We have appreciated Lynn's dedication and friendship in this voluntary role, and look forward to seeing her on projects



Lee Neils
Incoming Volunteer Coordinator

Lee has been a Catalyst volunteer for several years, and learned the ropes of Volunteer Coordination from Lynn last year. She brings a very sharp mind, servant's heart, and a willing attitude to do whatever it takes to serve the people who need our help. Welcome to the team Lee!

Lessons From Sabbatical

For most of 2020, many of us said things like "I can't wait until this year is over!" We endured many hardships last year, and have looked ahead to 2021 with hopes for reprieve and "normalcy." I don't know about you, but if my sense of peace & hope & joy are dependent upon what's going in the world around me, so far 2021 hasn't cured my ills. The truth is that the real world, and our individual experiences in it, are always a mixed-bag of beauty & misery, promise & challenge, warm fuzzies & frigid edges. The key to the "abundant life" with Jesus has little to do with how life treats us, and everything to do with how we're allowing Him to lead us.

I recently returned from a 3-month sabbatical, and I'm seeing with eyes that are a bit clearer than they were. I must pass along one of the gems I've (re)learned. Isn't it ironic how we learn life-changing lessons, only to come back to the same places years later in need of receiving them yet again? This was my experience. For many of us, the past 12-months have felt like slogging through a dark valley...and we'd much rather be running free on the mountaintops. God walks very closely to us in our vulnerable times, inviting us to meet Him in our suffering rather than striving to escape it. The truth is that suffering is a catalyst for His work in us.

Like all of us, I entered into a period of suffering last March when COVID began to take hold of our nation. As a consummate busybody and achievement-addict, I had a really hard time emotionally for much of last year; all of my ambitions and goals were either blocked, or required endless "pivoting." I usually tend to move through life as if I'm constantly late for a bus, and don't typically appreciate disappointments or setbacks to my plans. As 2020 wound-up, I was pleasantly surprised by how productive Catalyst was able to be in spite of the challenges, but it left me feeling anxious and depleted...like I had "white knuckled" my way through the whole year. As I entered into the crucible of sabbatical, the Spirit whispered this old verse to turn my head: "It's hard for you to kick against the goads" (Acts 26:14). In other words, I hurt myself (and sometimes others) when I struggle against God's redirecting efforts to steer me through trials & challenges He uses to mold me.

I experienced and learned a lot during sabbatical, but my primary takeaway - the "pearl of great price" - is that living as a beloved son of the Father and apprentice of Jesus is more than enough to keep me fulfilled & joyful, regardless of circumstances. When this is true of me, I can thrive in His peace & power through any storm; when this is not true, I begin to experience instability "like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind." The underlying issue is faith, of course. Not intellectual faith, like believing that God is real and that Jesus died for my sins 2,000 years ago; but an experiential faith that is actively believing that God is constantly interacting with me, inviting me into His heavenly realities in the midst of my daily life. Trusting in this, and living in a way that demonstrates alive trust, is the kind of faith required to receive Jesus' abundance in this life. "Letting-go" has always been the path of faith for me; and this latest surrender is deeper than the last.

Paster Pete Scazzero, author of "Emotionally Healthy Church", said in a recent podcast that *"Jesus did not come to take away your suffering, sorry. But he did come to show you that your suffering has meaning and purpose, to use your gifts and talents and brokenness as a gift to those around you; to love them. Suffering, setbacks & disappointments will slow you down, giving you the capacity to be a compassionate and loving person. In the pit you are stripped of your arrogance."*

These were really timely lessons for me, and the Loving Father is using them still. How is He trying to get your attention? What is He desiring to teach you? You can trust Him.

--Shawn

Prayer / Support

- **2021 PROJECTS** – We are preparing dozens of projects to serve elderly, disabled, and low-income neighbors this year. Please be praying that God will give us wisdom about who to help, that He will provide partners to help accomplish them, and that He will use them to bring people closer to Him.
- **VOLUNTEERS** – Doing construction work while wearing a mask and observing social-distancing is challenging, especially for volunteers who aren't used to it! Please pray that people will be willing and able to come-out on volunteer projects as the pandemic continues.
- **2021 GOLF MARATHON FUNDRAISER: Sat., May 22 at TopGolf** – This year will be our 11th annual event, in which we invite committed volunteers to help us raise the funds that enable us to make Catalyst function. Last year, 30 volunteers helped us raise over \$128k in pledges. Please pray that at least this many people can join us this year, and that we are successful in our efforts.

CATALYST NW VISION

We envision a reality where followers of Jesus are valued for their kindness and generosity toward people in their communities; demonstrating God's presence in ways that transform neighborhoods, equip ordinary people to become His heroes, and draw new people into His family.