



THE

Able

LIFE



WINTER 2019-20

Stories of ordinary people in the Carmel Family cultivating lives which abide in Christ to build relationships and live the Gospel with everything.

our lives
His story

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WINTER 2020

Carmel Friends and Family,

We've transitioned into winter - the leaves are gone, frost coats the morning grass and the colors that filled our flower pots and garden beds have faded. As fall came to a close, I prepared my home garden for this transition. I pulled spent plants, prepared the soil, pruned perennials, planted bulbs, replenished mulch and cleaned my tools. Completing these tasks reminded me that God is at work in every season, through every transition in our personal lives and our life together as a church family. Seasonal transitions celebrate what was and usher us into what is next - whether it is in our gardens or our Carmel family.

God's mission for our church - to make disciples of those Nearest, our Neighbors and the Nations - was lived out beautifully in 2019. The pages that follow celebrate a handful of the ways He was faithful, even amid the changes.

Here are just a few of our seasonal changes from 2019:

- We integrated **prayer altar time** at the end of each worship service.
- We celebrated our final Joy Prom and shifted to **year-round discipleship of special needs families**.
- We sent two pastors and 30 families to plant **Redeemer Church Charlotte**.
- We grafted a churchwide monthly **Midweek Serve** experience into our Wednesday nights.
- We **celebrated retirements and filled open positions**.

In it all, I overflow with gratitude for all God has done and am filled with anticipation for what is to come next. I hope you are too!

As we step into this new year and this new decade, let's do so with gratitude and anticipation - but also with confidence and a renewed commitment to see lives transformed. Let's intentionally steward our time, talent and treasure so we can be vessels used to build His Kingdom here on earth. Let's surrender our plans for His purposes.

I can't wait to see how He continues to use us in 2020 and beyond!

Love you Carmel,

Pastor Alex

PS. Please join me for these 3 unique opportunities our team has planned this winter - our *Community Conversation on Mental Health* (Sunday, Jan 26), our *Charlotte Leadership Summit* (Saturday, Feb 29) and *The Experience* (Sunday, March 15). See back cover for details.

2019 Praises

How has God used your weakness in 2019 to show His glory?

How have you seen God move in 2019 - in your life, in your family, in your church and on your street?

What was your most fervent prayer of 2019?
How did God answer that prayer?

2020 Ponderings

What single thing you plan to do in 2020 that will matter in 10 years?

What is the most humanly impossible thing you will ask God to do in your life in 2020?

Who is God calling you to build a stronger relationship with in 2020?

Our Prayer

Lord, thank You for choosing us and filling us with Your Holy Spirit. We praise You for all the seen and unseen ways You have worked in our lives in 2019. We commit all of 2020 to You - asking You to fill us with Your love for Christ and others, Your peace, Your wisdom and Your strength as we follow You, surrendered, into this new decade.

Amen.

WHAT'S YOUR STORY?

How is God at work in your life? Share your story with a member of our team or email it to communications@carmelbaptist.org.

MAKING DISCIPLES OF THOSE *NEAREST*

As believers, we seek to cultivate what we call "ABLE" lives. Lives that:

- Abide in Christ (John 15) to
- Build relationships with the lost and found (John 13:35) and
- Live the gospel in word and deed (Colossians 3:17) with
- Everything we are and have (2 Timothy 2:1; Ephesians 4:11-16)

We celebrate how God is changing lives through His word and through community here at Carmel! Our lives. His story!

GROWING THROUGH HIS WORD



"We tend to talk ABOUT God in the green pastures, but we talk TO God in the valleys."

"Whatever fear you have, instead of staring at the fear, stare at the Shepherd. Fears shrink when we look at the majesty of God."



"The Gospel is Jesus plus nothing. The Gospel is not Jesus plus anything. The Gospel does not make good people, become better. It makes dead people, come alive! "



"May our REMEMBRANCE of His faithfulness, FREE us to live in obedience! "



"The way God has set up the passing on of the faith is from one generation to the next. We do that by spending time showing the next generation what faith looks like and how it impacts our whole existence."



"Christians, you should be the most loving people in the room, because the Lover of humanity lives within you."



"When we live in fear, we live in isolation, but when we live in love, we live in community."



"For all of us who have bought into the enemy's lies that we are too young or too old for God to use us for His glory, let us put down those lies and step into the truth, that while we are all unlikely, God can and will use us."



Lord, we celebrate how You are changing lives thru Your Word and we invite You to continue to change our hearts and make us more like You!



"The only One to devote my life to, to entrust with my future and rely upon for the salvation of my soul is an unchangeable God, He is our immovable rock, our solid anchor and an ever-present help in time of trouble."

A FEW OF THE NUMBERS



64 Scheduled Prayer Gatherings



1 Sacred Assembly

1800+

of you gathered to be challenged by Bob Goff to "live on the edge of yikes" & to "get to know the person under the hat."

1100+

kids & students disciplined on Sunday mornings

1000

kids & students disciplined thru Summer camps

500+

women disciplined through Bible Studies

100+

men disciplined through Men's Journey groups

70+

disciplined thru 6 Care Groups

40

families served & disciplined thru Joy Ministry

2

Respite Saturdays for Special Needs families

GOD TRANSFORMS LIVES

God is patiently showing me the benefits and joy of having a close group of Christian women as my closest friends. I am unique, beneficial and loved by my Creator. The freedom I received from this study is priceless. **It is finally well with my soul.**

- Women's Bible Study participant

Special Needs Respite Care for my son gave me precious and rare one-on-one time with my daughter - 100% of my attention - uninterrupted.

- Joy Ministry mom

GriefShare made me realize that I am not going crazy.

- GriefShare member

[This Bible study] gave me an invitation to joy through Jesus, and opened my eyes to the power of being a part of the body of Christ with these women.

- Lynnea, Women's Bible Study

Being with other women who love men who are battling sexual sin is healing as we share our pain, loneliness and betrayal with one another. Knowing they understand makes it easier to share some very hard feelings.

- Women Living Well participant

The Conquerors group at Carmel gave me the help I needed to break free from the slavery to pornography I was under for so many years.

- More Than Conquerors participant

It's powerful to have men with whom we can be brutally honest and know that we will pray for each other and check up on each other. My life has been positively impacted in a practical way as my brothers ask probing questions and offer wise counsel.

- Ron, Men's Journey

At the end of our study, I see that leadership is humble servanthood resulting in radical obedience to God's prompting.

- Men's Journey participant

Fellowship with other believers and moms "in the trenches" made a world of difference in an incredibly difficult season in my life. - Abby, Women's Bible Study

I now have hope to be set free from this addiction.

- More Than Conquerors participant

My son loved the afternoon of Special Needs Respite Care and we did, too! We were able to take our other son to a movie - something we have never been able to do before!

- Joy Ministry Parents

GriefShare put me back together again.

- GriefShare participant



Lord, thank You for surrounding us with loving support thru life's unexpected challenges. Help us to trust You as You transform us.

BEING *JESUS* TO THE HURTING



Early in ministry, Clay Barnes found himself helping young couples with financial challenges and quickly realized their struggles were deeper. This led him to pursue his PhD in Counseling and set the path for 29 years of faithful service at Carmel and the creation of the Carmel Counseling Center.

Clay Barnes began counseling part time at Carmel in 1991 at the request of the Pastoral team, who were seeing many in the church struggling with marriage issues. By January 1993, Clay was full time and a year later this ministry was formalized into the Carmel Counseling Center.

The Counseling Center has grown to almost 20 counselors, ministering to 70% of the Carmel family in the last 3 years. It also serves as an outreach with half of all counseling hours caring for neighbors in our community. It is Clay's prayer the Counseling Center continues to be "Jesus with skin on" to those in need.

After stepping in to serve as Interim Executive Pastor in June of 2018, Clay is retiring from his full time pastoral role and returning to the Counseling Center 2-3 days a week to continue to pursue his "first love in ministry - caring for those in some level of crisis or hurt."

With his additional time, Clay looks forward to helping Anne, his wife of 42+ years, in her garden and ministering together to young couples in ministry. He concludes, "Anne has sacrificed much in supporting me in my ministry. For this I am so grateful."

We have little issue seeing the doctor if there is a physical ailment. Why do we struggle to see the "doctor" when it is a mental struggle? In my opinion, seeking help for relief of mental issues is actually a sign of spiritual maturity.

- Clay Barnes

A FEW REFLECTIONS



It's difficult to adequately describe the legacy Clay is leaving here at Carmel. His ministry as a pastor and counselor has impacted thousands of people over the last 29 years. From the privacy and confidentiality of his counseling office to the very public space we call the pulpit, Clay has loved the people of Carmel so very well. The gospel of Christ and His love has been the heartbeat of his ministry here. And lastly, I would say on a personal level that Clay has been, and will continue to be, one of my closest and dearest friends.

- Alex Kennedy, Senior Pastor



Clay has taught me through his actions what it can look like to be the hands and feet of Jesus in ministry with people in need. "Well done, good and faithful servant!"

- Wendy Skenderi, Care & Counseling Minister



Lord, we thank You for the legacy of Your humble servant Clay Barnes. May You bless this new season in his life with great joy!

Congratulations to my friend and co-laborer on a lengthy, fruitful ministry. To me, Clay has been that consistent, committed servant, who was always ready and capable to handle any assignment and fill any gap, with or without notice. He is an apt teacher of God's Word with depth and understanding. He helped begin and develop Carmel's Counseling ministry which has ministered to scores of individuals through the application of biblical truth. It is impossible to estimate the impact the counseling ministry has had on individuals and families in the Charlotte area.

- Wayne Poplin, Carmel Senior Pastor (1991 - 2011)



For the past 29 years, Clay Barnes has done the unseen work of the Gospel and demonstrated his unique calling to the least of these. Clay's ministry of caring often led him to those who felt lost, alone, beat up, marginalized, depressed, and taken advantage of. His longevity as the Caring Pastor takes courage as well as a tremendous toll. Clay somehow understood the great cost of caring for those who suffer and fully accepted it. It is hard to say how many people he has impacted through his ministry whether through personal counsel, hospital visitation, family crises, or the loss of a loved one - Clay has been a picture of Jesus with skin on. He has been a pastor to the pastors, and a Shepherd to many here at Carmel.

- David Dixon, Care & Counseling Pastor

MAKING DISCIPLES OF OUR *NEIGHBORS*

We celebrate how God is changing us and impacting our neighbors as we seek to be the hands and feet of Jesus to vulnerable families in the Charlotte area. Our lives. His story.

If we see ourselves
as "losing" a culture
rather than
BEING SENT ON MISSION.
we will be outraged
& hopeless, instead of
COMPASSIONATE & CONVICTIONAL.
If we do not **LOVE** our
MISSION FIELD,
we will have *nothing*
to say to it.

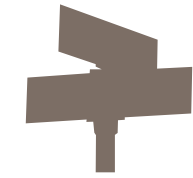
- Dr. Russell Moore



Lord, teach us how to be Your hands and feet
as we do life with those around us and give us
boldness to share Your love in impactful ways.



A FEW OF THE NUMBERS



1 Churchwide Challenge
to Prayer Walk our
1500+ streets

\$537,000

invested in **15** local ministry partners

900+

participants across
4 generations at
3

MidweekServe
on-campus,
outreach events

700+

participated in
2 Carmel Serve
events impacting
15

local partners

615

uniforms provided
to our partner
school, Merry Oaks
Elementary

275

foster kids served by
Mosaic Style with Love
Store

Supporting Those Who Choose Life

Carmel provided financial support for the second Continuum of Care Coordinator at Charlotte Women's Clinic. Often a woman determined to abort her child is overwhelmed in her circumstances. The promise of our/your support through our Continuum of Care program makes a previously-impossible decision feasible; it transforms families and saves the lives of preborn children.

- Erin Forsythe
Human Coalition/Women's Clinic



GOD AT WORK IN OUR CITY

East CLT Collaboration

The work at Country Club Apartments and here at Merry Oaks is invaluable simply because it communicates love; it gives our Merry Oaks families visible and tangible signs that there is hope; that there is friendship; that there is a God and His people who love them without condition.

- Mark Landon
East Charlotte Collaborator



Nursing Home Neighbors

We have loved serving at Carriage Club because it is an outreach our whole family can do together. We met a woman named Marie, one Sunday I asked if she knew if she had eternal life. She said, "No, I don't." We started visiting her weekly, built a relationship and had many conversations about the gospel. She was 101 and ended up receiving Christ about 3 weeks before she passed.

- Karen Coffey
Carmel member



Foster Care Investment

Thank you for hosting our We See You 2019 foster family event at Carmel. We couldn't have pulled this off without Carmel. The beautiful space, awesome volunteers, delicious food, talented A/V team - all of it! I received at least 20 calls, texts, and emails about how encouraging the event was - a true celebration of this foster community. We are grateful for your missional heart as a church.

- Nicole Taylor
Congregations for Kids

MAKING DISCIPLES OF OUR NATIONS

We celebrate how God is working in and through the Carmel family to pray for, go to, and share the good news of Jesus with those who have never heard. We celebrate our collaboration with global ministry partners and the work of indigenous churches. Our lives. His story.



Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.

Matthew 28:19-20



Lord, give us a heart for the nations and show us how to be world-changers for Your glory..

A FEW OF THE NUMBERS



2 new global partnerships in Albania and the Middle East



3 new missionary families:
The Sulas (Albania)
The Hallahans (France)
A & K (South Asia)



5 global partnerships across **21** countries

3.19 BILLION

people without access to the good news of Jesus Christ

\$610,000

invested in Nations ministries (missionaries, Bible translation, seminaries, global partnerships, and short term trips)

\$50,000

invested in 2 Bible Translations

106

people on 17 short-term trips supporting 4 ministry partners

Let's look more and more like Jesus in 2020!

Check out carmelbaptist.org for ways to connect, grow and go!

Join us for these unique opportunities at Carmel this Winter:



Sunday evening January 26

The Carmel Counseling Center and Silent Images partner to facilitate a community conversation on mental health that includes the screening of two documentary short films on the topics of trauma and suicide.
carmelbaptist.org/conversation



Saturday morning February 29

Carmel hosts a city-wide morning with Chris Horst, co-author of Mission Drift, and other local leaders to equip and empower church and nonprofit volunteers and leaders to keep mission central.
charlotteleadershipsummit.org



Sunday evening March 15

Make plans to join us for this churchwide event that will bring Carmel's vision to life.
carmelbaptist.org/experience



Carmel is committed to making disciples of those Nearest, our Neighbors and the Nations.

1145 Pineville-Matthews Road / Matthews, NC 28105 / 704.847.8575 / carmelbaptist.org