# OUR STORY

The creative team would like to extend a very special THANK YOU to Carol Samuelson for following the call of Jesus to document every one of these beautiful stories. This would not have been possible without you. And to Rob Hammond and Kirsten Flower, THANKS for stepping in to help out with photography. We greatly appreciate you.

OTY**CHURCH** 2014 ourcitychurch.org

THREE YEARS HAVE PASSED SINCE A HANDFUL OF FRIENDS BEGAN A NEW ADVENTURE AND STARTED A CHURCH IN THE CITY. THREE YEARS, THREE CHURCHES, AND COUNTLESS STORIES AND FRIENDSHIPS HAVE GROWN ALONG THE WAY. WE'VE SPENT THESE LAST THIRTY-SIX MONTHS BUILDING A HOUSE OF MEMORIES. MEMORIES OF LOSS, MEMORIES OF TRIUMPH, MEMORIES OF PERSEVERANCE AND ILLUSTRATIONS OF THE FAITHFULNESS OF OUR GOD.

WE CAN'T PUT INTO A FEW PARAGRAPHS WHAT BEING A PART OF CITYCHURCH HAS MEANT TO OUR FAMILY. SO MUCH OF OUR STORY IS INTERTWINED WITH THIS STORY. WE ARE GRATEFUL, HUMBLED, IMPERFECT, AND IN NEED OF MUCH LEARNING. WE ARE ALSO COURAGEOUS, MATURING, AND READY FOR THE NEXT SUNRISE.

THE FUTURE OF THIS COMMUNITY DOES NOT KNOW BORDERS OR LIMITS. PEOPLE SAY NEW ENGLAND IS DEAD. IT'S TOO COLD, TOO DISCONNECTED, TOO FAR GONE. WE SAY NEW ENGLAND IS READY FOR A RESURRECTION.

AND THE SUN IS BREAKING THROUGH THE CLOUDS.

THE MIRACLES OF THE LAST THREE YEARS MAKE A WONDERFUL STORY. STILL, SOMETHING DEEPER CALLS OUT TO US FROM THE INSIDE.

SOMETHING TELLS US THAT THIS IS JUST THE OPENING PARAGRAPH IN A MUCH GREATER NARRATIVE.



TWO YEARS AGO, GOD MOVED OUR FAMILY TO NEW HAVEN. WE HAD LIVED FOR OVER 10 YEARS IN HAWAII AND HAD NEVER LIVED IN THE NORTHEAST. IF WE EXPERIENCED ANY TYPE OF CONCERN. IT WAS RELATED TO FINDING A GOOD CHURCH HOME. ALL WE HAD EVER HEARD ABOUT THIS PART OF THE UNITED STATES WAS THAT ITS CHURCHES WERE ANEMIC AND WATERED DOWN. OUR VIEW OF CHURCH IS THAT IT IS NOT MERELY ABOUT WHAT THE CHURCH CAN DO FOR US; RATHER, IT IS ABOUT HOW WE CAN BECOME PART OF A COMMUNITY OF BELIEVERS WHO CARE FOR EACH OTHER AND SERVE THEIR WORLD WHILE STANDING FIRM ON THE WORDS OF THE BIBLE. THE FIRST CHURCH WE FOUND ONLINE WAS CITYCHURCH. SINCE THE VERY FIRST SUNDAY WE ATTENDED, IT HAS BEEN "HOME." WE FOUND IT TO BE EXACTLY WHAT WE NEEDED - A PLACE THAT WELCOMED US WITH OPEN ARMS AND CHALLENGED US TO GROW AND SERVE WITH THEM. WE ARE SO, SO THANKFUL FOR THE CORE WHO OBEYED GOD AND STARTED CITYCHURCH. IT HAS MADE IT EASY FOR EACH OF US TO CONTINUE OUR JOURNEY DOWN THE ROAD WITH JESUS. WE ARE THANKFUL TO SERVE AS ELDER TO THIS COMMUNITY OF BELIEVERS.

ROGER, DEB & "DIZ" ANDRUSS



GOD HAS WORKED TREMENDOUSLY IN MY LIFE IN THE PAST YEAR WHILE I HAVE BEEN AT CITYCHURCH. I HAVE FACED CERTAIN FEARS AND ISSUES FROM MY PAST. IN THE PROCESS, GOD IS BREAKING CHAINS WHICH HAVE BOUND ME FOR YEARS.

A PIVOTAL MOMENT CAME WHEN JOE SILVA PREACHED IN OUR BRIDGEPORT LOCATION ABOUT SEASONS. THIS SERMON CEMENTED MY COMMITMENT TO CITYCHURCH. IT WAS A TURNING POINT FOR ME WHEN I DECIDED TO LET MYSELF MOVE INTO GOD'S SEASON FOR ME; A SEASON WHERE I COULD BE MYSELF AND EXPERIENCE AND GIVE GRACE. THROUGH JOE'S FAITHFUL WORDS I REALIZED THAT MY SEASON WAS TO BE CHARACTERIZED BY FORGIVENESS AND GRACE.

MY ANGRY SEASON WAS OVER AND I WAS FREE!

MY ANGRY SEASON WAS OVER AND I WAS FREE!

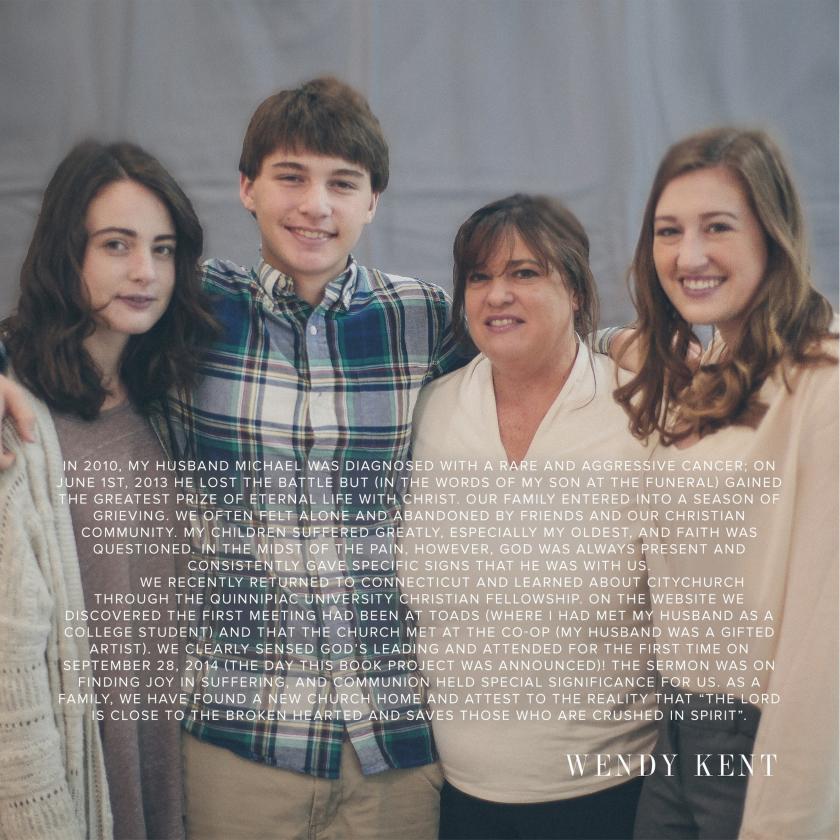
I AM SO THANKFUL THAT I CAN CALL CITYCHURCH HOME! CITYCHURCH ISN'T JUST A CHURCH; IT IS A FAMILY. I AM PRIVILEGED TO SERVE ON THE LOBBY TEAM AS WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF COMMUNITY GROUP. THERE IS AN AUTHENTICITY IN THE LEADERSHIP WHICH DEMONSTRATES TRUE CARING. I CAN'T IMAGINE WHAT MY LIFE WOULD BE WITHOUT CITYCHURCH! IT HAS BECOME A PLACE OF SAFETY, A HOME AWAY FROM HOME, AND MY DIRECT CONNECTION WITH THE HOLY SPIRIT!

# MICHAEL FREITAS



LAUREN CORSO





I CAME FROM A BROKEN AND ABUSIVE HOME. I TOOK REFUGE IN MY CATHOLIC FAITH, IN SUNDAY SCHOOL AND IN BEING AN ALTAR BOY AT THE AGE OF 11. I PRAYED ALL THE TIME TO BE SAVED, BUT IT NEVER HAPPENED. THAT IS WHEN I BECAME ANGRY AND LOST ALL HOPE AND FAITH IN CHRIST. THROUGH MANY TRIALS IN MY LIFE, I FOUND I LOST MY FAMILY, HOME, MARRIAGE AND BUSINESS. MY TEMPER AND EMOTIONS WERE UNCONTROLLABLE. I DIDN'T KNOW HOW TO LOVE, FORGIVE OR GIVE OF MYSELF.

I FINALLY DECIDED TO COME TO CITY CHURCH TO SATISFY MY WIFE. I CAME DURING THE "BROKEN HOME" SERIES AND THE IMPACT ON MY LIFE AND FAMILY HAS BEEN INDESCRIBABLE AND IMMEASURABLE WE HAVE KEPT OUR HOME AND MY BUSINESS HAS BEEN BLESSED. MY MARRIAGE IS GROWING STRONGER IN SO MANY WAYS. MOST OF ALL, I LOVE THE PERSON I'VE BECOME AS I LEARN TO LOVE, FORGIVE AND TO HAVE FAITH. I WAS BAPTIZED THIS FALL IN BRIDGEPORT. I STILL STRUGGLE FEELING UNWORTHY OF THESE BLESSINGS BECAUSE OF THE PAST RESENTMENT I HAD HAD TOWARDS JESUS CHRIST. THANKFULLY, THIS IS NOT HOW HE VIEWS ME. CITYCHURCH HAS BROUGHT JESUS IN MY LIFE. THANK YOU, CITY CHURCH!

CARLOS LEBRON, JR.





I MOVED TO NEW HAVEN TO GO TO COLLEGE ALTHOUGH I WAS A CHRISTIAN, I HADN'T BEEN LIVING THE REALITY OF MY FAITH. I ATTENDED A CLUB FAIR, AND WAS INVITED TO ATTEND A WORSHIP NIGHT FEATURING THE BAND "OUT OF HIDING". GOD CHANGED THE TRAJECTORY OF MY LIFE IN THAT MOMENT! LITTLE DID I KNOW THAT GOD HAD PLANNED TO USE THE BAND TO FOUND CITYCHURCH, AND THAT I WOULD DISCOVER A COMMUNITY OF YOUNG PEOPLE WHO WERE PASSIONATE FOR GOD.

MY LIFE ECHOES THE WORDS OF THE PSALMIST WHO DECLARES "MARVELOUS ARE YOUR WORKS, AND THAT MY SOUL KNOWS VERY WELL" (PSALM 139:14B). GOD HAS DONE MARVELOUS WORKS IN MY SOUL THROUGH CITYCHURCH. HIS WORD HAS BECOME MY SOURCE OF STRENGTH. AS I WALKED THROUGH A LONG SEASON OF CRIPPLING FEAR AND ANXIETY, GOD GAVE ME A COMMUNITY TO JOURNEY ALONGSIDE ME. THEY REVEALED GOD'S FAITHFULNESS AND CHARACTER, AND REJOICED AS GOD HEALED ME. I NOW UNDERSTAND THE REALITY OF AUTHENTIC AND GENUINE COMMUNITY. ALSO, AS A MEMBER OF CITYWORSHIP, GOD IS ALLOWING ME TO EXPERIENCE WHAT IT MEANS TO TRULY WORSHIP IN EXCELLENCE AND TRUTH. HE IS AT THE CENTER OF MY LIFE.

I'M SO GRATEFUL THAT CITYCHURCH EXISTS IN NEW HAVEN AND HAS SUCH A WELCOMING COMMUNITY. I COME FROM THE MIDWEST WHERE FINDING A CHURCH NEVER SEEMS TO BE A PROBLEM. WHEN I MOVED TO NEW HAVEN A YEAR AGO FOR GRADUATE SCHOOL. I HAD THE HARDEST TIME FINDING A CHURCH WHERE I FELT LIKE I BELONGED. AFTER SOME TIME, I DISCOVERED CITY CHURCH. TO MY SURPRISE, I FOUND THAT ONE OF MY FRIENDS FROM MY DEPARTMENT OF CHEMISTRY AT SCHOOL ALSO ATTENDED. I NEVER DREAMT THAT I WOULD FIND A CHURCH HOME, LET ALONE A FRIEND TO GO TO CHURCH WITH! I HAVE BEEN ATTENDING CITYCHURCH FOR THE PAST TWO MONTHS. MY FAITH HAS REALLY GROWN DURING THIS TIME. I FEEL MUCH SO MUCH CLOSER TO GOD. I HAVE SEEN MY PRAYER LIFE BECOME MORE CONSISTENT, I HAVE JOINED A COMMUNITY GROUP AND AM EXPERIENCING HIS PEACE.

### KELLY MATERNA







I HAVE WALKED WITH THE LORD FOR 29
YEARS. IN HIM, I HAVE FOUND MY TRUE
IDENTITY. HE IS THE SOURCE OF REAL AND
AUTHENTIC JOY IN MY LIFE. IN HIM, I HAVE
BEEN ACCEPTED, NOT ON THE BASIS OF
WHAT I DO BUT ON WHOSE I AM. AS A
FAMILY, I HAVE HAD THE JOY OF SEEING
OUR CHILDREN GROW IN THEIR PERSONAL
AND AUTHENTIC FAITH WALK WITH HIM –
THERE IS NO GREATER JOY!
IT HAS BEEN AT CITYCHURCH THAT HE
HAS CEMENTED THESE TRUTHS INTO MY
LIFE. I HAVE SEEN HIM BREAK CHAINS IN MY
LIFE. IN THE PAST I HAD BEEN BOUND BY
FEAR – FEAR OF MAN AND FEAR OF
FAILURE! I AM NOW RELEASED FROM THOSE
FEARS, AND INSTEAD, I AM DREAMING BIG
DREAMS IN HIM! THE RECENT SERMON

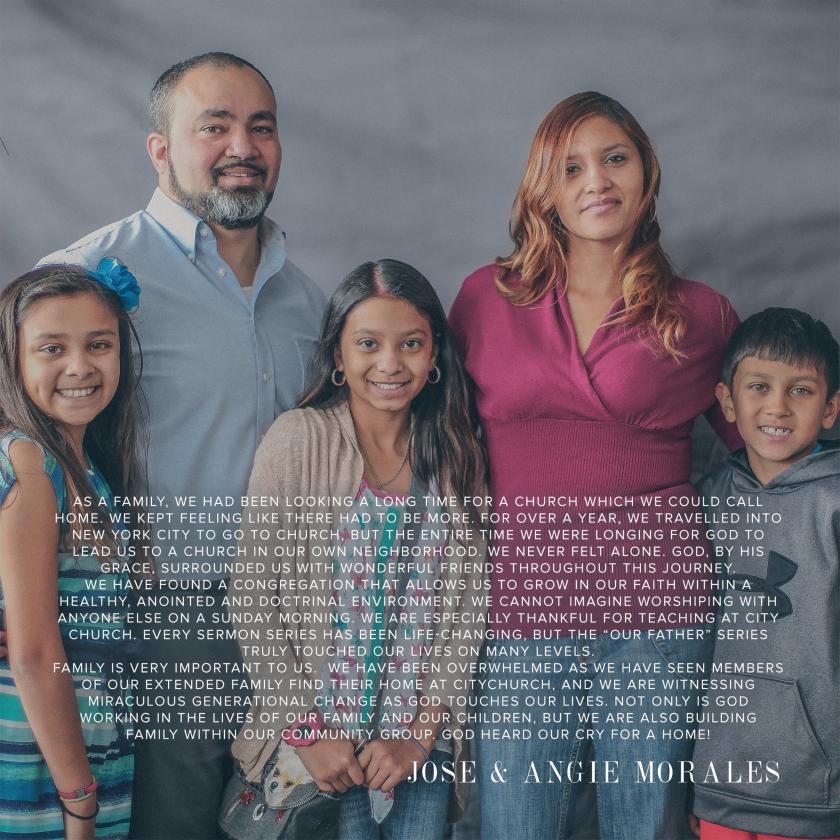
I BELIEVE THAT THE SECOND HALF OF MY LIFE IS GOING TO BE BETTER THAN THE FIRST! GOD HAS IMPRESSED ON MY SOUL THE NEED FOR NEW WINE IN NEW WINE SKINS. I AM EXCITED TO TAKE RISKS FOR HIM AND TO BREAK FREE OF THE PAST AS I LOOK TO AN AMAZING FUTURE IN HIM.

NANCY SILVA



I HAVE BEEN ATTENDING CITYCHURCH FOR A LITTLE OVER A YEAR NOW. IT HAS BEEN A BLESSING IN MY LIFE. IT'S GREAT TO FIND A CHURCH THAT MOTIVATES AND ENCOURAGES YOU IN YOUR WALK WITH CHRIST EVERY WEEK. IT WAS THAT ENCOURAGEMENT WHICH BROUGHT ME TO A PLACE WHERE I REALIZED I WAS HOLDING BACK PARTS OF MY LIFE FROM THE LORD. IT REVOLVED AROUND THE ISSUE OF TRUST, SPECIFICALLY MY LACK OF TRUST IN HIM. I FEEL THAT GOD BROUGHT ME TO CITYCHURCH BECAUSE HE KNEW THAT I NEEDED TO BE PUSHED IN MY FAITH. WE HAD BEEN ATTENDING THE NEW HAVEN CAMPUS AND ON A BAPTISM SUNDAY I KNEW GOD WANTED ME TO BE BAPTIZED. I DIDN'T DO IT. I KNEW THAT GOD WAS CALLING ME BUT I CHOSE NOT TO. THIS SEPTEMBER, I WAS BAPTIZED IN THE HEART OF BRIDGEPORT IN THIS CAMPUS' FIRST BAPTISM. I FELT GOD SAYING TO ME THAT I NEEDED TO LET GO OF MY OWN SELFISH DESIRES AND TRUST THAT HE KNOWS WHAT IS BEST FOR MY LIFE. GETTING BAPTIZED WAS A HUGE STEP IN MY WALK WITH JESUS. I LOOK FORWARD TO ALL THAT HE HAS IN STORE FOR MY LIFE.

PAUL BENO



MY STORY AT CITYCHURCH IS WHERE I BEGAN TO LEARN MORE ABOUT GOD'S ABILITY TO ACCOMPLISH ANYTHING FOR MY GOOD. MY HUSBAND AND I WERE INVOLVED IN THE PLANTING OF CITYCHURCH. AS WE STEPPED OUT IN FAITH AS A COMMUNITY, I WAS CONFRONTED WITH MANY CHALLENGES WHICH WERE COMPLICATED BY DEVASTATING ILLNESS. I QUESTIONED WHETHER GOD'S PROMISES COULD REACH MY CIRCUMSTANCES. I BELIEVED THE SCRIPTURES WERE TRUE, BUT AS I PRAYED FOR GOD TO WORK MIRACLES, AND THINGS DIDN'T IMMEDIATELY CHANGE, MY FAITH WAS TESTED. I STRUGGLED TO RECONCILE THE TWO CONTRADICTIONS BETWEEN WHAT I WAS FEELING AND THE TRUTH OF GOD'S PROMISES.

THROUGH THAT JOURNEY I LEANED HEAVILY ON THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF GODLY WOMEN WHO PRAYED WITH ME, SENT ME SPECIFIC SCRIPTURES TO DECLARE OVER MY FAMILY, AND TAUGHT ME TO USE WORDS CAREFULLY; MAKING SURE THEY DELIVER GOD'S TRUTH INTO THE CIRCUMSTANCE. WE DECLARED IN FAITH THAT HE IS GREATER THAN THE CIRCUMSTANCES. AS VICTORY AFTER VICTORY WAS WON IN HIS NAME, MY FAITH GREW. I LEARNED THAT THE REALITY OF THIS WORLD DOES NOT DEFINE ME. HIS TRUTH IS MY REALITY. I KNOW MORE ASSUREDLY NOW THAT GOD DELIVERS THE OPPRESSED AND REDEEMS THE BROKEN!



CITYCHURCH HAS BEEN A PLACE WHERE GOD HAS BROKEN CHAINS WHICH EXISTED IN MY LIFE. FIRST AND FOREMOST, GOD FREED ME FROM THE MISTRUST WHICH I FELT FOR THE INSTITUTION OF "CHURCH". IN THE PROCESS HE HAS GIVEN ME A NEW HEART AND LONGING FOR COMMUNITY. GOD IS USING HIS WORD TO SPEAK TRUTH INTO MY LIFE. THE "PROVERBIAL SEX" SERMON (FROM THE "SOUND OF PRUDENCE") SERIES WAS ONE OF THOSE MOMENTS. IT NAILED THE COFFIN SHUT ON SEXUAL SIN, AND I SEE MYSELF FOR THE FIRST TIME MORE FULLY, PRECIOUS, BEAUTIFUL, AS A WOMAN OF GOD. I AM ESPECIALLY GRATEFUL FOR THE CONSISTENT MESSAGE REMINDING ME OF MY DEPENDENCE ON THE CROSS. IT HAS REVIVED IN ME THE OBJECT AND OUTCOME OF MY FAITH. I AM SIMULTANEOUSLY HUMBLED AND EXALTED AS I ENJOY A RENEWED RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS. HE HAS EMPOWERED ME TO SEE MY PURPOSE AS I BELONG TO A COMMUNITY ON MISSION.

### DANIELLE CHARLEMAGNE

PATRICK AND I MOVED TO NEW HAVEN IN THE MIDDLE OF WINTER, JANUARY 2012. WE WERE TRAVEL NURSES AND HAD COME TO WORK AT YALE ON A THREE MONTH CONTRACT. WE KNEW WE HAD TO FIND A TEMPORARY CHURCH HOME IN WHICH TO FELLOWSHIP AND GROW. ON RECOMMENDATION OF A CO-WORKER WE CAME TO CITYCHURCH AND WERE BLOWN AWAY. THERE WAS A PALPABLY GENUINE DEVOTION TO CHRIST - FROM THE GREETERS TO THE WORSHIP TO THE PASTORS AND MESSAGE. WE JUST KNEW THAT THIS WAS A PLACE WE COULD DIG DEEP IN THE LITTLE TIME WE WERE GIVEN. WE ATTENDED THE LACOILLE'S COMMUNITY GROUP: LITTLE DID WE KNOW THEY WOULD BECOME OUR DEAREST FRIENDS IN NEW HAVEN. OVER THE NEXT TWO MONTHS WE TALKED, GREW AND WERE STRETCHED IN OUR WALKS WITH THE LORD. BEFORE WE LEFT, MY HUSBAND TOLD ME THAT HE FELT COMPELLED TO DEDICATE HIS LIFE TO THE LORD IN BAPTISM. I HAD TO MOVE AHEAD WITH OUR BELONGINGS. BUT MY HUSBAND WAS ABLE TO STAY BEHIND AND BE BAPTIZED. THE VIDEO CLIP TERESA SENT OF HIS TESTIMONY AND BAPTISM STILL MOVES ME TO TEARS. THIS WAS A BEAUTIFUL, TRANSFORMATIONAL TIME FOR US, AS INDIVIDUALS AND AS A COUPLE. WE THANK GOD FOR ALL OF YOU WORLD-CHANGERS AT CITYCHURCH.

## PATRICK & EMILY MCHENRY



SENSE OF PURPOSE, DELIVERANCE FROM ANXIETY, AND PHYSICAL HEALING.

ONE MESSAGE IN PARTICULAR STANDS OUT AS LIFE-CHANGING; THE FINAL MESSAGE IN LAST YEAR'S "DELIVER ME" SERIES. I SPECIFICALLY REMEMBER BEING AT TOAD'S PLACE AND HEARING JUSTIN'S WORDS: "YOUR FREEDOM BEGINS WHEN IT'S ROOTED ON GOD'S FAITHFULNESS, NOT YOUR FAITHFULNESS. GOD IS FAITHFUL, GOD IS FAITHFUL." IT WAS SO SIMPLE, BUT IT TOTALLY SHIFTED HOW I WAS THINKING AND WHAT I WAS BELIEVING ABOUT

BEING SET FREE.

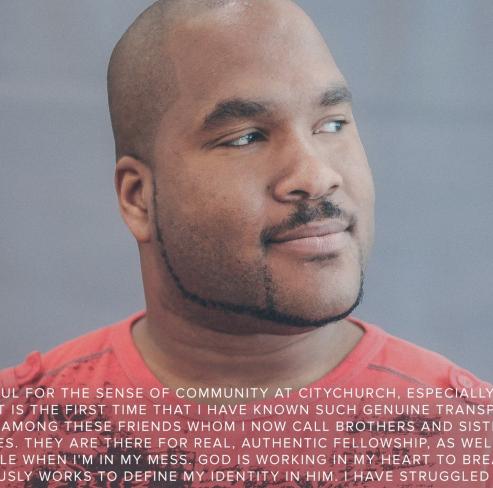
I LOVE BEING PART OF A COMMUNITY THAT'S SHAPED BY THE TRUTH OF GOD'S WORD, THE REALITY OF OUR REDEMPTION IN CHRIST, AND THE TRANSFORMATION THAT'S POSSIBLE WHEN WE CHOOSE TO BELIEVE IT AND SUPPORT EACH OTHER ALONG THE WAY. THANK YOU TO ALL OF YOU WHO'VE SUPPORTED ME AND MY FAMILY - I'M HONORED TO SERVE JESUS WITH YOU.

TRACIE SAMUELSON

ON EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN
LET HEAVEN COME TO
EARTH AS IT IS IN HEAVEN

LET SEAVEN COME

YOU SATISFY MY SOUL YOU SATISFY MY SOUL **YOU SATISFY MY SOUL** WITH YOUR LOVE **NEW HAVEN LOCATION 2013** 



I AM SO THANKFUL FOR THE SENSE OF COMMUNITY AT CITYCHURCH, ESPECIALLY WITH PEOPLE MY OWN AGE. IT IS THE FIRST TIME THAT I HAVE KNOWN SUCH GENUINE TRANSPARENCY AND VULNERABILITY AMONG THESE FRIENDS WHOM I NOW CALL BROTHERS AND SISTERS...AND IT'S HARD SOMETIMES. THEY ARE THERE FOR REAL, AUTHENTIC FELLOWSHIP, AS WELL AS TO HOLD ME ACCOUNTABLE WHEN I'M IN MY MESS, GOD IS WORKING IN MY HEART TO BREAK CHAINS AS HE CONTINUOUSLY WORKS TO DEFINE MY IDENTITY IN HIM. I HAVE STRUGGLED IN THE PAST WITH ISSUES ARISING FROM THE LACK OF AN EARTHLY FATHER. ON AN ENCOUNTER WEEKEND, GOD OPENED THE DOOR TO MY FATHER WOUNDS AND THOSE SINS WHICH HAD LAIN DORMANT FOR YEARS. HE IS BRINGING THOSE HURTS TO THE SURFACE AND HEALING ME DAY BY DAY. SEE THE GROWTH...EVEN THROUGH THE LITTLE VICTORIES. I AM STILL WALKING THAT ROAD, BUT I KNOW THAT JESUS IS FIGHTING FOR AND WITH ME TO ACCOMPLISH HIS PERFECT PLAN FOR ME. HE WILL DO THIS WHETHER I LIKE IT OR NOT! THAT'S HOW MUCH HE LOVES ME. GOD IS BUILDING ME INTO THE MAN HE DESIRES ME TO BE. THERE ARE AREA'S IN MY LIFE WHERE I'VE LACKED CONFIDENCE, BUT JESUS IS SHOWING ME WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE TO THAT VALIDATION IN HIM. I AM CONFIDENT BECAUSE HE IS IN ME. SOMETIMES IT IS FRUSTRATING TO STILL BE STRUGGLING, BUT I KNOW MY HEAVENLY FATHER DESIRES FOR ME TO BE COMPLETE IN HIM.

GEREMY BLACK





SINCE COMING TO CITYCHURCH, I HAVE FOUND GOD TOTALLY REDEFINING MY PERSPECTIVE OF HOSPITALITY. HE IS COMPLETELY EXPLODING MY DEFINITION AS HE INTERTWINES THE CONCEPT OF HOSPITALITY AND THE REALITY OF COMMUNITY. WHEN WE MOVED UP HERE FROM SOUTH CAROLINA IN ORDER TO WORK WITH THE CHURCH, WE FOUND MEMBERS OF THE COMMUNITY OPENING THEIR HOMES AND LIVES IN ORDER TO GIVE US A PLACE TO LIVE. I REALIZED THAT HOSPITALITY WAS NOT MERELY AN EVENT, BUT RATHER A HEART ATTITUDE FOUNDED ON HIS GENEROSITY TO MY SOUL. I AM FINDING GOD BUILDING WITHIN ME SPIRIT FILLED HOSPITALITY AS I LEARN TO EXTEND THE BOUNDARIES OF MY TIME, HOME AND SCHEDULE. AS WE LAUNCH CITYCHURCH MERIDEN, I HAVE A HEART DESIRE FOR AUTHENTIC WORSHIP; WORSHIP WHICH IS AN EXPRESSION OF AN INTIMATE RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD WHICH GOES BEYOND THE CONFINES OF SUNDAY MORNINGS AND INSTEAD FLOODS THE STREETS OF THE CITIES AND THE LIVES OF HIS PEOPLE. IT IS MORE THAN MUSIC; RATHER IT IS A DAILY EXPRESSION OF GOD'S WORK WITHIN US. MY DREAM IS TO SEE THE CITIES OF NEW ENGLAND AUTHENTICALLY WORSHIPING THE NAME OF JESUS!

#### EMILY LETHCO

I GREW UP IN A SPIRITUALLY CONSERVATIVE BACKGROUND WHERE MUCH OF MY FAITH HERITAGE WAS CLOSED TO THE IMPLICATIONS OF THE SPIRITUAL WORLD. SINCE COMING TO CITYCHURCH I HAVE SEEN GOD'S HAND EFFECT A PARADIGM SHIFT AS I AM LEARNING WHAT IT MEANS TO LIVE WITHIN THE SPIRIT, I AM DISCOVERING A HARMONIZATION OF MY PHYSICAL, INTELLECTUAL AND SPIRITUAL BEING AS I DAILY WALK WITH HIM, AND IN THE PROCESS I AM SEEING THE HAND OF GOD IN MY LIFE VIVIDLY AFFECT MY WORLD. THIS TRANSFORMATION HAPPENED LITERALLY IN A MOMENT. MY HEART HAD ALREADY BEEN PREPARED FOR GOD'S WORK IN MY SOUL THROUGH SERMON SERIES SUCH AS "CONTEND WITH ME" AND "THE SECRET LIFE OF GIANTS". HOWEVER, IT WAS WHEN I WENT ON THE ENCOUNTER WEEKEND THAT GOD CHANGED MY WALK OF FAITH FROM AN INTELLECTUALLY FOCUSED EXPERIENCE TO AN OVERWHELMING ENCOUNTER WITH HIS SPIRIT. HE AND I ARE EMBARKING ON A LIFE CHANGING ADVENTURE. AS WE LAUNCH THE MERIDEN LOCATION OF CITYCHURCH, I HAVE A RENEWED CALLING TO SHEPHERD HIS PEOPLE. MY PASSION IS TO GROW LEADERS: TO EQUIP AND EMPOWER THEM TO REACH THIS GENERATION FOR HIM. I AM EXCITED FOR THE WORK OF THE SPIRIT AMONG THIS NEW COMMUNITY.

# LUKE LETHCO



STEPHANIE TAYLOR



I MET JESUS WHEN I WAS 17 YEARS OLD AND FOR 7 YEARS I WAS ON FIRE FOR GOD. I WENT TO SEMINARY SCHOOL IN CALIFORNIA, SERVED AS A LEADER IN MY CHURCH, AND WAS GIVEN THE PRIVILEGE TO PREACH AROUND THE EAST COAST. AT AGE 25, I LEFT THE MINISTRY AND FELL AWAY FROM THE HEART OF JESUS. FOR ABOUT 3 YEARS I WAS VERY BITTER TOWARDS THE LORD, I WAS HURT, AND DIDN'T SEE MYSELF COMING BACK TO HIM.

LAST YEAR, I WAS INVITED TO CITYCHURCH AND MY LIFE BEGAN TO CHANGE. THE SERMONS CAPTIVATED MY HEART. I REALIZED THAT, DESPITE MY EFFORTS, I AM A SINNER AND WILL ALWAYS FALL SHORT OF GOD'S STANDARD. THE ONLY WAY I CAN COME TO GOD IS BECAUSE OF THE BLOOD OF JESUS. EVEN THOUGH I HAD OFTEN HEARD THIS IT WAS DIFFERENT THIS TIME. PREVIOUSLY, IN MY OWN EFFORT I WOULD SOONER OR LATER FIND MYSELF MESSING UP AND SINNING AND BEING DISCOURAGED. THE LOVE OF JESUS HAS RAISED ME UP FROM THE ASHES TO AGAIN WALK WITH THE LORD. I THANK GOD FOR CITYCHURCH. GOD HAS USED THIS CHURCH TO BREAK LEGALISM IN MY LIFE, TO SHOW ME FREEDOM IN JESUS, AND TO ALLOW ME TO ONCE AGAIN MINISTER.

LUIS CASTELLON



THERE ARE TWO AMAZING IRONIES IN MY LIFE WITH REGARDS TO CITYCHURCH. IF YOU TOLD ME 10 YEARS AGO THAT I WOULD BE ATTENDING CHURCH AT THE CO-OP. ACROSS THE STREET FROM THE BAR WHERE I WAS USING MY FAKE ID, I WOULD SAY "YOU'RE CRAZY!". GOD CERTAINLY HAS A SENSE OF HUMOR; NOW, IN BRIDGEPORT, I WALK BY MURPHY'S LAW, ANOTHER ESTABLISHMENT WHERE I WASTED MANY NIGHTS. IT IS A FABULOUS REMINDER EVERY TIME I GO TO CITYCHURCH THAT THE OLD ME IS GONE AND THE NEW IS HERE! I ATTENDED CITY CHURCH IN JANUARY 2012 FOR THE FIRST TIME AFTER LEARNING THAT ONE OF MY STUDENTS HAD JUST BEEN SHOT AND KILLED. MY HEART WAS SO HEAVY THAT MORNING. EVERYTHING CAME INTO PERSPECTIVE WHEN THE BAND PLAYED CHRIS TOMLIN'S "OUR GOD". I REALIZED THAT GOD IS GREATER AND THAT HE IS THE ONLY SOLUTION FOR THE NEEDS OF MY CITY. IN MARCH 2013, JUSTIN PREACHED THE "GREATER THINGS" SERIES AND MENTIONED PLANTING A CHURCH IN BRIDGEPORT. THAT WAS JUST ANOTHER CLEAR REMINDER THAT GOD HAS ME IN BRIDGEPORT FOR A REASON. I TRULY BELIEVE GOD WILL USE ME AND CITY CHURCH IN MIGHTY WAYS IN BRIDGEPORT AS WE ABIDE IN HIM (JOHN 15).

SHERRI SANTANGELO





I GAVE MY LIFE TO CHRIST 7 MONTHS AGO AT CITYCHURCH AND WAS BAPTIZED AT TOADS PLACE A FEW WEEKS LATER. THESE EVENTS WERE THE CULMINATION OF A LIFETIME STRUGGLE BETWEEN MY WILL AND THE PERFECT WILL OF GOD; AND THE BEGINNING OF A LIFETIME OF FREEDOM. AS I LEARN TO PUT FLESHLY DESIRE ASIDE AND LIFE INCREASINGLY BY THE SPIRIT I AM CONTINUALLY ASTOUNDED BY GOD'S GRACE. I'M LEARNING TO LIVE IN HIS FORGIVENESS; A FORGIVENESS THAT CRASHES OVER ME LIKE WAVES AS ITS TRUTH CONTINUALLY PERMEATES MY BEING. LETTING GOD'S PLAN FOR ME UNFOLD HAS TAKEN SUCH A BURDEN OFF OF ME. I NOW NO LONGER HAVE TO STRESS AND PLAN AND FORCE MY WAY THROUGH LIFE, WHICH IS GOOD BECAUSE I WAS LOUSY AT IT! IT WAS GOD'S PLAN FOR ME TO CHANGE MY LIFE AT CITY CHURCH. THE COMMUNITY EMBRACED AND INCLUDED ME INTO THEIR LIVES. WE ARE NOT JOKING WHEN WE SAY THAT WE DO LIFE TOGETHER. "BEHOLD, HOW GOOD AND PLEASANT IT IS WHEN BROTHERS DWELL IN UNITY!" PSALMS 133:1. IT HAS BEEN SUCH A BLESSING TO BE AT A CHURCH WHERE THERE IS SO MUCH JESUS IN THE PEOPLE! CAN'T WAIT TO SEE WHAT'S COMING NEXT!

SEAN SABELLA



I HAVE BEEN ATTENDING CITYCHURCH SINCE AUGUST 2014. AT THE VERY FIRST SERVICE GOD AFFIRMED TO ME THAT HE HAD BROUGHT ME HERE FOR A SPECIAL REASON AND THIS WAS THE PLACE FOR ME. REPEATEDLY, THE MESSAGES HAVE ALIGNED EXACTLY WITH WHAT GOD HAD BEEN TELLING ME IN MY TIMES ALONE WITH HIM. I AM SO GRATEFUL FOR THE WAY THE HOLY SPIRIT DESIGNS THE COMPLETE PACKAGE OF TEACHING AND WORSHIP.

BEFORE THE LAST SERIES ON JOY, I FELT MY JOY WAS BEING ATTACKED THIS SERIES

BEFORE THE LAST SERIES ON JOY, I FELT MY JOY WAS BEING ATTACKED THIS SERIES ENCOURAGED ME TO GO BACK TO THE TRUTH THAT JOY IS FOUND IN CHRIST JESUS ALONE. I HAVE BEEN FOLLOWING THE LORD INTENTIONALLY AND WITH JOY NOW SINCE 2011; I AM NOT THE SAME PERSON I ONCE WAS - AND I LOVE IT! MY DEEPEST JOY IS TO KNOW JESUS! I CANNOT IMAGINE ANYTHING MORE EXCITING THAN HAVING A REAL, TANGIBLE, AND EVEN EXPLAINABLE RELATIONSHIP WITH THE LIVING GOD WHO KNOWS ME AND LOVES ME AS HIS OWN.

I AM SO GRATEFUL THAT GOD HAS CALLED ME TO THIS COMMUNITY. I LOVE HOW CITY CHURCH EXPRESSES THE FATHER'S HEART AND MAGNIFIES JESUS IN EVERY AREA (FROM WORSHIP TO COMMUNITY TO SERVICE).

GABRIELLE DANIELS

WE WERE OUT FOR LUNCH AT A RESTAURANT WHEN A FRIEND INVITED US TO CITYCHURCH. AS SOON AS WE ATTENDED CITYCHURCH. WE INSTANTLY KNEW WE WANTED TO BE A PART OF THIS COMMUNITY OF GENUINE AND AUTHENTIC JESUS LOVERS, GOD HAS BLESSED US IN THIS COMMUNITY WITH INCREDIBLE FRIENDSHIPS AND MENTORS WHO WALK ALONGSIDE US. WE HAVE SEEN OUR HEARTS YEARN MORE AND MORE FOR HIS PRESENCE AND HIS WORD. OUR FAITH AND PRAYER LIFE HAS GROWN AS WE HAVE DEVELOPED DISCERNMENT FOR GOD'S PLAN AND OUR UNIQUE GIFTEDNESS. WE LOVE HOSTING AND LEADING OUR COMMUNITY GROUP AND SERVING WITH THE CITYKIDS AND AUDIO/VISUAL MINISTRIES. OUR MARRIAGE HAS BEEN DRASTICALLY CHANGED THROUGH THE "LOVE AND RESPECT" COURSE. WE WERE BORN AND RAISED IN CONNECTICUT AND ARE THRILLED TO SEE CITYCHURCH REACHING OUR COMMUNITY. WE ARE SO EXCITED AND GRATEFUL TO BE A PART OF THIS MISSION TO BRING GOD'S KINGDOM TO EARTH. GOD HAS ALIGNED OUR HEARTS (MICAH AND MINE) WITH THE CALL OF THE SPIRIT WITHIN THIS CHURCH BODY. WE LOVE INVITING OUR FRIENDS AND FAMILY TO COME TO CHURCH AND HEAR THE GOSPEL AND CANNOT WAIT TO SEE HOW THE CHURCH WILL CONTINUE TO GROW AND EXPAND. WE ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO GREATER SERVICE AND OUTREACH IN THIS COMING YEAR.

#### SARAH FLASHMAN



FURTHER, THE FOUNDATIONAL NATURE OF THE GOSPEL IN THE LIFEBLOOD OF CITYCHURCH HAS MADE IT A PLACE WE ARE EXCITED TO BRING OUR FRIENDS AND FAMILY TO; KNOWING THAT ON ANY GIVEN WEEK, NO MATTER WHERE THEY'RE AT SPIRITUALLY, THEY WILL HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO ENCOUNTER JESUS. THIS HUMBLE DEPENDENCE ON CHRIST TO AFFECT CHANGE PEOPLE'S LIVES IS THE TRUE SOURCE OF OUR POWER AND THE REASON WE ARE SO EXCITED TO BE A PART OF WHAT GOD IS DOING THROUGH CITYCHURCH.

MICAH FLASHMA



AT CITYCHURCH I HAVE BEGUN TO GRASP THAT MY IDENTITY IS ROOTED AND ANCHORED IN HIM. IT IS NOT DEPENDENT ON HOW OTHERS SEE ME OR MY TALENT OR MY APPEARANCE; RATHER, THERE IS AN ABIDING SECURITY IN KNOWING HIM AND BEING KNOWN BY HIM. THERE IS NO ROOM FOR STAGNANCY IN THIS COMMUNITY OF ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRUTH. I LOVE BEING ON THIS KINGDOM ADVENTURE WITH THOSE WHO SHARE THE SAME MISSION. JESUS DESIGNED THIS!

THE "DELIVER ME" SERIES CHANGED MY LIFE. FOR THOSE 3 WEEKS I SAT IN TEARS, AMAZED AT GOD'S TIMING. UNBEKNOWNST TO ME, GOD WAS ABOUT TO RESOLVE A HUGE ISSUE IN MY LIFE. I HAD SO MUCH FEAR IN MY HEART THAT HE WOULD FAIL ME. ONLY WEEKS LATER, GOD PULLED ME OUT OF A "NOT YET" SEASON AND INTO A SEASON OF DEEP TRUST. I CLING TO THE TRUTH THAT JESUS IS ALWAYS THERE IN THE MIDST OF THE "DARKNESS" AND THE "NOT YET'S". HE IS THE ANSWER TO MY FEARS! I HAVE COME TO TRUST HIM AS MY GOOD SHEPHERD. HE HAS PROVEN HIMSELF OVER AND OVER. HIS PLANS FOR ME ARE GOOD, AND IT'S FINALLY BEGUN TO SINK IN. I'VE LET HIM BECOME MY ABBA.

ANNA KUMM



DONNA & RICH HUBER

I WAS ON THE EDGE OF GIVING UP ON GOD WHEN I WALKED INTO CITYCHURCH. NO ONE KNEW THAT BUT ME AS I ENTERED IN, BUT GOD AND I WERE AT A STANDSTILL. THIS WAS IT. I CARRIED WOUNDS INTO THAT PLACE LIKE LUGGAGE. I WAS GUARDED AND NOT READY. AND IT BECAME EVIDENT QUICKLY: GOD DOESN'T NEED YOU TO BE THE READY ONE. YOU JUST HAVE TO GIVE HIM ENOUGH BREATHING ROOM TO MOVE.

TO SAY GOD MOVED THROUGH CITYCHURCH TO GET TO ME IS AN UNDERSTATEMENT. HE USED THE CHURCH TO BRING ME TO A POINT IN MY FAITH WALK I NEVER THOUGHT I'D ARRIVE AT: THE POINT WHERE I AM UNWILLING TO LET HIM GO OR WAVER FROM HIS PATH, NO MATTER WHERE THE WORLD COULD PROMISE TO TAKE ME. I KNOW BECAUSE OF THE PEOPLE IN THIS CHURCH THAT LIFE REALLY STARTS WHEN YOU LET PEOPLE IN. IT'S LIKE GOD IS STILL WHISPERING, EVEN AFTER ALL THESE YEARS, "NO MATTER WHERE YOU GO OR WHAT YOU DO, YOU WILL ALWAYS HAVE A PLACE RIGHT HERE. I AM BUILDING SOMETHING GREATER HERE. I AM BUILDING UP A CHURCH NOT MADE OF BRICKS BUT OF BONES."

#### HANNAH BRENCHER

PRIOR TO CITYCHURCH, I ATTENDED A CHURCH WHERE THE MEMBERS SEEMED TO BE 35+
YEARS OLD WITH FAMILIES. I FELT OUT OF PLACE AS A SINGLE, YOUNG PERSON, BUT
WANTED TO CONNECT WITH A COMMUNITY OF BELIEVERS. I GOT A LOT OF PLAYFUL
TEASING ABOUT MY YOUTH (I'M 26) AND BEGAN PRAYING, "GOD, IF YOU WANT ME AROUND
PEOPLE MY AGE, WOULD YOU MAKE A WAY?" TWO WEEKS LATER I MET UP WITH A FRIEND
AND SHE INTRODUCED ME TO CITYCHURCH! I AM SO GRATEFUL TO BE WALKING WITH
PEOPLE OF ALL AGES—BUT ESPECIALLY THOSE MY AGE!

SABRINA DANARD



NICK AND ERIKA KHAMARJI



I HAVE LOVED AND SERVED GOD FOR MOST OF MY LIFE, BUT IT HAS BEEN AT CITY CHURCH THAT HE HAS DRAWN ME CLOSER TO HIS HEART. HE HAS INCREASED MY HUNGER DAILY FOR TIME WITH HIM. HE HAS SHOWN ME THAT SERVICE IS MORE THAN AN ACTION; RATHER IT IS AN ACT OF WORSHIP AND SURRENDER. HE HAS REMINDED ME THAT HE IS THE ANSWER TO EVERY ONE OF MY QUESTIONS. HE HAS ALLOWED ME TO WITNESS MIRACLES. HE HAS BLESSED ME BY ALLOWING ME A PART IN PROVIDING AN ATMOSPHERE WHERE PEOPLE CAN COME TO LIFE AND FIND HIS TRANSFORMATION.

IN THE SUMMER OF 2013, CAROL AND I TRAVELLED TO RWANDA WITH THE TEAM FROM CITYCHURCH. MY LIFE WAS FOREVER TRANSFORMED. I SAW CHILDREN WORSHIP WITH ABANDONMENT, I SAW YOUNG PEOPLE HUNGRY FOR THE REALITY OF GOD'S GRACE. I SAW FAMILIES TRANSCEND POVERTY IN THE LIGHT OF GOD'S RICHES. DURING OUR VISIT TO A REFUGEE CAMP, AS THE BAND PLAYED AND MINISTERED, I SAW AN OLDER WOMAN DANCING AND PRAISING GOD, AS SHE HELD IN HER HANDS A WEATHERED BIBLE. THIS WAS OBVIOUSLY A TREASURE SHE HAD CARRIED WITH HER. GOD HAS BECOME MY TREASURE THAT I NOW CARRY WITH ME.

SCOTT SAMUELSON

I HAVE KNOWN THE LORD FOR 50 YEARS.
HE HAS BEEN FAITHFUL EVEN WHEN I
WASN'T AND THROUGH BOTH THE GOOD
AND BAD TIMES I HAVE KNOWN HIS
PRESENCE. IN MARCH, 2013, GOD LED US TO
CITYCHURCH. I HAD NO IDEA HOW GOD
WOULD USE CITYCHURCH TO TRANSFORM
MY LIFE.

ONE SUNDAY MORNING LAST SPRING. WE ALMOST LOST OUR YOUNGEST GRANDDAUGHTER, FOR 30 MINUTES WE DID NOT KNOW IF SHE WAS ALIVE OR DEAD. THE ONLY PLACE WE KNEW TO RUN WAS BACK TO CITYCHURCH. WE WERE ENGULFED IN FEAR AND TERROR. IMMEDIATELY, OUR CITYCHURCH FAMILY SURROUNDED US, PRAYED WITH US. WEPT WITH US. AND DECLARED GOD'S TRUTH OVER US. IN THE MIDST OF OUR PAIN I FELT HEAVEN SHIFT AND KNEW THAT GOD WAS ENOUGH -REGARDLESS OF THE OUTCOME. GOD PERFORMED TWO MIRACLES THAT DAY. HE BREATHED LIFE INTO LEILA, AND HE BREATHED THE POWER OF HIS SPIRIT INTO MY HEART. AS I WITNESSED THE REALITY OF PRAYER, I BEGAN TO UNDERSTAND THAT I HAD BEEN LIVING ACCORDING TO THE "SEEN" AND NOT THE "UNSEEN" (2 CORINTHIANS 4:18). I HAD BEEN PLAYING IT SAFE, AND GOD WAS CALLING ME TO LIVE WITH UNBRIDLED FAITH, UNSHAKABLE PEACE AND UNWAVERING CONFIDENCE. I AM FOREVER GRATEFUL.

CAROL SAMUELSON





ON OCTOBER 8, 2011, ON THE MERRITT PARKWAY AT 12:30 AM, MY HUSBAND WAS INVOLVED IN A CATASTROPHIC CAR ACCIDENT. HE HAD MULTIPLE BROKEN BONES, AND THE CAR HE WAS IN WAS HIT SO BADLY THAT THEY NEEDED THE JAWS OF LIFE TO OPEN IT UP. AS HE WAS TRANSPORTED TO THE LOCAL HOSPITAL WE WERE NOT SURE IF HE WAS GOING TO SURVIVE.

CITYCHURCH HAD BEEN FOUNDED JUST THREE WEEKS EARLIER ON SEPTEMBER 18. OUR FAMILIES WERE IN NEW HAMPSHIRE AND MINNESOTA AND THIS SMALL, YOUNG COMMUNITY RALLIED AROUND US AND BECAME OUR FAMILY. THEY CAME TO THE HOSPITAL WITH ME, PROVIDED MEALS AND EVEN HELPED JEREMIAH GO TO HIS PT APPOINTMENTS. MORE THAN THAT, HOWEVER, THEY PRAYED! THEY PRAYED THAT HE WOULD LIVE AND HAVE A SOUND MIND. WE NEVER FELT DESERTED; RATHER WE FELT A TREMENDOUS PEACE AS WE REALIZED THAT THIS WAS OUR HOME. WE PRAISE GOD FOR JEREMIAH'S RECOVERY. WE ARE THANKFUL FOR THE YEARS WE HAVE SERVED TOGETHER IN VARIOUS ROLES ALONGSIDE THIS COMMUNITY. MOST OF ALL, I AM SO GRATEFUL FOR THE SWEETEST MOMENTS OF INTIMACY WITH GOD THROUGHOUT THAT WHOLE ORDEAL WHERE HE REVEALED HIS POWER AND COMPASSION. I STAND AMAZED IN WONDER AT GOD'S GOODNESS TO US.

TERESA LACOILLE

I HAVE BEEN A PART OF THIS COMMUNITY SINCE IT WAS JUST 7 OF US SITTING IN AN OFFICE AND HAVING BIBLE STUDIES IN 2007. OUR FIRST ATTEMPT AT COMMUNITY GROUP WAS WHEN 15 OF US HUDDLED IN THE 3RD FLOOR OF KENDRICK'S HOME ON TUESDAY NIGHTS. IT WAS OUT OF THAT PLACE THAT LIFE-CHANGING RELATIONSHIPS SPAWNED. PEOPLE BEGAN TO MARRY. BUY HOUSES, AND SIMPLY DID "LIFE" TOGETHER. THERE WAS JUST SOMETHING SPECIAL ABOUT OUR LOVE FOR EACH OTHER AND JESUS. IT WAS UNLIKE ANYTHING WE HAD EVER SEEN. IT IS JUST AS EXCITING TODAY AS THIS WEB OF AUTHENTIC CHRISTIAN LIVING CONTINUES TO EXPAND. MY LIFE HAS BEEN UNIQUELY IMPACTED WITH EACH WAVE OF NEW GROWTH. I LOVE MEETING NEW PEOPLE WHO ARE SERIOUS ABOUT PUSHING BEYOND A CURSORY RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS AS WE SEE EACH OTHER THRIVE AND GROW, FROM HOUSES, JOBS, HEARTBREAKING LOSS, AND ALL THE JOYS THAT COME WITH RAISING A FAMILY - AT THE VERY ROOT, IT'S THE NEW KIND OF "NORMAL CHRISTIAN LIFE". THAT'S WHAT I CAN'T GET ENOUGH OF. I HAVE (GLADLY) TURNED DOWN MAJOR CAREER OPPORTUNITIES THAT WOULD HAVE FORCED ME TO RELOCATE, JUST SO THAT MY KIDS WILL KNOW THIS COMMUNITY AS "NORMAL".

#### JEREMIAH LACOILLE

WE HAVE GROWN IMMEASURABLY IN OUR WALK WITH CHRIST BY BEING CHALLENGED AND ENCOURAGED AT CITYCHURCH. AS A MILITARY COUPLE, WE MOVE OFTEN AND HAVE TO MAKE A "HOME" IN A NEW PLACE WITHOUT KNOWING ANYONE. THIS CAN BE OVERWHELMING AT TIMES. AT FIRST, WE USED THAT AS AN EXCUSE AND IT PREVENTED US FROM GETTING PLUGGED INTO OUR NEW CITY AND CHURCH. HOWEVER, CITYCHURCH HELPED US GET OUT OF OUR OWN WAY AND IT QUICKLY BECAME OUR HOME. WE WENT FROM ELUSIVE CHURCH-GOERS TO COMMUNITY GROUP LEADERS. ALTHOUGH WE DIDN'T NECESSARILY FEEL THAT WE WERE EXPERIENCED IN MINISTRY OR KNOWLEDGEABLE IN THEOLOGY, WE FELT CALLED TO OPEN OUR HOME FOR GOD'S KINGDOM AND TO WALK WITH CITYCHURCH IN ITS MISSION. THE MENTORSHIP WE RECEIVED AT CITY CHURCH ALLOWED US TO BREAK THE CHAINS OF FEELING INEPT AND NOT "GOOD ENOUGH" TO RECEIVE ALL OF GOD'S ABUNDANT GRACE. WE LEARNED THAT THERE IS NO BETTER TIME THAN THE PRESENT TO STEP OUT AND STEP UP FOR HIM. ALTHOUGH WE HAVE SINCE MOVED AWAY, WE WILL ALWAYS BE SO INCREDIBLY GRATEFUL TO HAVE HAD A COMMUNITY LIKE CITYCHURCH AND WE CONTINUE TO DRAW CLOSER TO THE LORD IN OUR NEW HOME.

### SARAH & JEFF JANERO

IT WAS SO REVITALIZING TO DISCOVER A CHURCH THAT IS UNDENIABLY ALIVE. THE PEOPLE AT CITYCHURCH ARE BOLD, UNASHAMED, RAW, HONEST AND THEY LOVE AUTHENTICALLY. WE HAVE NEVER HAD SUCH EXCITEMENT AND DEEP SPIRITUAL LONGING FOR SUNDAY MORNINGS. WE ARE CONTINUALLY ASTONISHED AT THE PROFOUND IMPACT OF EACH SERMON; WEEK AFTER WEEK THEY ARE EQUALLY CHALLENGING AND ENCOURAGING. I AM GRATEFUL FOR THE DEDICATION OF CITYCHURCH TO ITS CONGREGATION TO CREATE AN AMAZING EXPERIENCE FROM EVERY DEPARTMENT, AND TO ITS CITY. THIS IS EVIDENT IN THE WAY CITYCHURCH PRACTICALLY, AND PHYSICALLY, REACHES OUT TO SERVE AND LOVE NEW HAVEN. SINCE WE STARTED ATTENDING CITYCHURCH ONE YEAR AGO WE HAVE FELT OUR FAITH GROW AND STRENGTHEN IN SO MANY WAYS. CITYCHURCH HAS BEEN TEACHING US WHAT IT TANGIBLY LOOKS LIKE TO FOLLOW CHRIST IN EVERY ASPECT OF EVERYDAY LIFE. THE PEOPLE, SERMONS, VALUES, AND MOVEMENT HAPPENING AROUND CITYCHURCH HAVE A MOMENTUM THAT WE HAVE NEVER SEEN BEFORE, AND IT IS PURE JOY TO BE A PART OF IT.

### ADAM & REBEKAH WAGONER

MADISON COPPLE





GOD HAS BEEN STIRRING OUR HEARTS TOWARD DEEPER LEVELS OF PASSION FOR JESUS. IT'S BEEN VERY EXCITING FOR US TO SEE THIS HAPPEN, AS THERE HAS BEEN A UNIQUE CORRELATION BETWEEN OUR GETTING INVOLVED IN THIS COMMUNITY AND OUR AFFECTIONS FOR JESUS.

ONE OF THE THINGS WE'VE NOTICED HAPPENING IS THAT GOD HAS BEEN BIRTHING IN US A NEW AND PROFOUND LEVEL OF HUMBLE EXPECTANCY, DRIVEN BY THE CONFIDENCE THAT HE HAS GREAT THINGS IN STORE FOR OUR REGION AGAIN. HE'S GIVEN THE TWO OF US DREAMS THAT WE WILL ACTUALLY SEE THESE THINGS COME TO PASS AND THAT THE NORTHEAST WILL AGAIN TURN ITS FACE TO JESUS.

WE ARE GRATEFUL TO HAVE A COMMUNITY TO PURSUE THESE DREAMS WITH; A COMMUNITY WHO ACTUALLY TAKES SERIOUSLY THE MISSION AND MANDATE OF CHRIST TO SPREAD HIS GOOD NEWS. HAVING PEOPLE THAT WE LOVE THAT WE CAN DO THAT ALONGSIDE HAS BEEN INCREDIBLE. THOUGH WE ARE STILL FAIRLY NEW TO THIS COMMUNITY, HAVING STARTED WITH CITYCHURCH IN MID-2014, WE FEEL AS EXCITED AS EVER ABOUT THE PROSPECT OF THINGS TO COME. SO IN SIMPLEST TERMS, WITH WHAT SEEMS TO BE A COMMON PHRASE IN OUR HOUSEHOLD, WE ARE JUST SO GRATEFUL THAT GOD HAS BROUGHT US HERE.

MIKE & BRITTANY SCHNEPP

WHEN GOD CALLED US TO FOUND CITY
CHURCH, I WAS THE LAST ONE IN THE BAND
"OUT OF HIDING" TO WANT TO COME OFF
THE ROAD. ALTHOUGH I BELIEVED THAT
THE LOCAL CHURCH WAS IMPORTANT, I SAW
MYSELF PRIMARILY AS A MUSICIAN. GOD
KNEW AND GOD CARED! HE SPOKE TO MY
SOUL AND CONFIRMED THAT I WAS
SUPPOSED TO BE A PART OF THE WORK OF
CITYCHURCH. I REMEMBER VERY CLEARLY
THE DAY I WALKED INTO JUSTIN'S OFFICE
AND TOLD HIM I WAS READY TO FULLY
COMMIT TO THE WORK HERE AT THE

MY JOURNEY AT CITYCHURCH HAS
BEEN TRANSFORMING. I HAVE REPEATEDLY
BEEN PUSHED OUT OF MY COMFORT ZONE,
AND, IN THE PROCESS, HAVE HEARD GOD
DECLARING HIS TRUTH OF MY IDENTITY. I
AM GRASPING THAT I AM CALLED TO SPEAK
TRUTH INTO PEOPLE'S LIVES. I HAVE
LEARNED THAT HE IS CULTIVATING
PASTORAL QUALITIES IN MY SOUL. I REALIZE
NOW MORE THAN EVER HOW MUCH I WANT
TO IMPACT THE LIVES OF OTHERS FOR HIM.
I AM STILL CALLED TO BE A MUSICIAN
AND GOD IS DAILY KEEPING MY MUSIC
ALIVE. WHAT I THOUGHT WAS GOING TO BE
LOSS AND SACRIFICE HAS ACTUALLY BEEN
ABIDING GAIN AND PROMISE. GOD HAS
REALLY SHOWN ME HIS INCREDIBLE
PASSION AND VISION FOR OUR REGION.

JON WISECARVER





I WAS RAISED IN A CHRISTIAN HOME AND FOR MUCH OF MY LIFE I TRULY BELIEVED I WAS FOLLOWING HIM. OVER THE LAST TWO YEARS, HOWEVER, HE HAS SHOWN ME A NEW LEVEL OF INTIMACY. I HAD BEEN "DOING" WHAT I THOUGHT WERE THE RIGHT THINGS TO PLEASE HIM, BUT I WAS BUYING INTO SATAN'S LIES WITH REGARDS TO MY IDENTITY, SECURITY AND VALUE. GOD STARTED TO SHOW ME THAT IT IS ALL ABOUT HIM - NOT "DOING" BUT "BEING"! LITTLE BY LITTLE HE BEGAN TAKING AWAY THOSE I LOVED THE MOST UNTIL I FOUND MYSELF VERY MUCH ALONE. ALONE WAS A HARD PLACE FOR THIS EXTRAVERT! THIS WAS PRECISELY WHERE HE WANTED ME SO THAT HE COULD BEGIN A NEW WORK IN ME.

CITYCHURCH IS A PLACE TO JUST "BE". I AM GRATEFUL FOR THE ACCEPTANCE AND OPPORTUNITY TO FEED ON HIS WORD AS GOD POURS HIMSELF INTO ME THROUGH THE ANOINTED MESSAGES. I AM WALKING THIS LIFE JOURNEY WITH PRECIOUS, TRANSPARENT AND LOVING PEOPLE. GOD'S GRACE IS SUFFICIENT, IN HIM IS COMPLETE JOY, AND I UNDERSTAND (PERHAPS FOR THE FIRST TIME) THAT IF I LOSE EVERYTHING, I STILL HAVE JESUS, AND THAT IS ALL I NEED. TO HIM BE THE GLORY!

ROBIN HANNIBAL

IN MANY WAYS WE HAD LOST HOPE FOR COMMUNITY. OVER TWENTY YEARS EARLIER WE HAD EXPERIENCED VIBRANT COMMUNITY WITHIN A COLLEGE MINISTRY, AND HAD BEEN SO IMPRESSED WITH THE PASSION FOR CHRIST AMONG THAT GROUP OF YOUNG PEOPLE. IN RECENT YEARS, HOWEVER, AS WE HAD SEARCHED FOR A CHURCH HOME, WE HAD ONLY FOUND DILUTED VERSIONS OF "CHURCH". WE FOUND CITYCHURCH THROUGH THE INTERNET. FROM THE VERY BEGINNING WE WERE STRUCK BY THE REALITY THAT JESUS IS TRULY AT THE CENTER OF EVERYTHING. THIS ISN'T MERELY A STATED VISION; RATHER IT IS AN INTENTIONAL LIFESTYLE. RECENTLY, ONE OF OUR MEMBERS WAS HOSPITALIZED. THE BODY AT CITYCHURCH SHOWED UP IN OVERWHELMING MEASURE. EVERY NEED WAS COVERED. THIS COMMUNITY ISN'T PERFECT BUT IT IS BASED ON THE UNDESERVED GRACE AND INCOMPARABLE LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST. EVERY STEP IS MOTIVATED BY THE MISSION OF CITY CHURCH, AND THE RESULT IS A VIBRANT COMMUNITY. GOD'S PRESENCE IS ALIVE AND WELL AT CITYCHURCH. WE ARE OVERJOYED TO SERVE WITH A SERVANT TEAM AND TO LEAD A COMMUNITY GROUP. WE ARE EXCITED TO SEE WHERE GOD IS LEADING, AND ARE SO GRATEFUL THAT WE CAN GO ON THIS JOURNEY WITH HIM AND THE COMMUNITY AT CITYCHURCH.







I HAVE ONLY BEEN AT CITYCHURCH FOR SIX MONTHS, BUT IT HAS BEEN AMAZING TO BE ABLE TO TANGIBLY SEE AND FEEL GOD'S HAND HERE. PREVIOUSLY, I WAS PRIMARILY FOCUSED ON MY PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD. I AM NOW SEEING THAT HE IS CALLING ME TO DEEPLY SERVE OTHERS. BY GIVING MYSELF AWAY I AM FINDING A DEEPER COMMUNION WITH HIM. GALATIANS 6:1-10 DESCRIBES THIS CALL TO SERVICE - TO LIFT EACH OTHER UP, TO SHARE OUR BURDENS AND TO UTILIZE THE GIFTS THAT GOD HAS GIVEN US INDIVIDUALLY FOR THE GLORY OF HIS KINGDOM. C.S. LEWIS DESCRIBES THAT STRUGGLE IN THIS WAY, "LOSE YOUR LIFE AND YOU WILL SAVE IT...KEEP BACK NOTHING. ...BUT LOOK FOR CHRIST AND YOU WILL FIND HIM, AND WITH HIM EVERYTHING ELSE THROWN IN."

I'M GRATEFUL THAT JESUS IS THE CENTER OF EVERYTHING AT CITYCHURCH. EVERY SERMON SERIES AND ACTIVITY IS DESIGNED TO SPREAD THE LOVE OF JESUS THAT WE HAVE THE BLESSING OF KNOWING. I HAVE BEEN FREED FROM THE BURDEN OF SEEKING GOD'S PLAN FOR MY LIFE; I KNOW HE WILL LEAD AND GUIDE AS I SERVE. I AM, AS A RESULT, FINDING COMPLETE PEACE IN ALL THAT I DO.

I AM A FRESHMAN AT YALE UNIVERSITY. I HAVE ONLY BEEN HERE A WEEK, BUT I AM SO ENCOURAGED BY THE ENERGY, PASSION, AND FELLOWSHIP THAT CITYCHURCH HAS TO OFFER. IT IS SO ENCOURAGING TO SEE SUCH A LOVING GROUP OF CHRISTIANS IN MY HOME AWAY FROM HOME, AND HAS MADE THE TRANSITION TO COLLEGE SO MUCH EASIER. I LOOK FORWARD TO THRIVING AT CITYCHURCH IN MY NEXT FOUR YEARS AT YALE. THANK YOU, GOD, FOR ALL OF YOUR BLESSINGS.

# EVIE CAI

I MET MY HUSBAND 37 YEARS AGO IN A YOUTH GROUP. WE WERE MARRIED AND THEN RAISED OUR CHILDREN IN THE SAME CHURCH. WE WERE INVOLVED IN EVERY MINISTRY, ASSUMED COUNTLESS LEADERSHIP ROLES AND SERVED UNDER SEVERAL PASTORS. WE WERE COMPLETELY AT THE HEART OF THE CHURCH SERVING FAITHFULLY AND WHOLEHEARTEDLY. EVERYTHING CHANGED 8 YEARS AGO WHEN A NEW PASTOR WAS VOTED IN. OUR ROLES AND RELATIONSHIPS APPEARED TO BE MISINTERPRETED AND WE EVENTUALLY QUIETLY LEFT. THIS WAS AN INCREDIBLE PAINFUL MOMENT FOR US. AS A RESULT, OVER THE ENSUING YEARS, THE WOUND OF THAT EVENT TOOK ROOT IN OUR HEARTS AND WE STARTED TO DOUBT SO MUCH. OUR ADULT CHILDREN WERE GROUNDED AND ALREADY SERVING IN OTHER MINISTRIES. WE HAD, HOWEVER, RECENTLY ADOPTED A YOUNG SIBLING GROUP AND WE KNEW THEY NEEDED TO BE IN CHURCH. OUR OLDEST DAUGHTER INVITED US TO CITYCHURCH. WE HAD TRIED SO MANY CHURCHES AND NEVER FELT A SENSE OF BELONGING. ON THE DAY WE WENT, THEY ANNOUNCED THE MERIDEN LAUNCH. MY HEART RACED WITH ENTHUSIASM! "A PLACE TO CALL HOME" AS JUSTIN PREACHED! BEING INVOLVED AGAIN IS WONDERFUL, BUT AT 52, I AM GRATEFULLY REALIZING THAT RELIGION. WORKS AND PERFECT ATTENDANCE DO NOT COMPARE TO A RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS.

#### DEBRA CANDELORA



MY LOVE FOR JESUS AND HIS LOVE FOR ME WAS RENEWED ONE NIGHT IN DECEMBER WHEN MY DAUGHTER INVITED ME TO TOAD'S PLACE TO CHECK OUT "HER" CHURCH. I HAD NO IDEA HOW THAT NIGHT WOULD CHANGE ME SPIRITUALLY. I HAVE SPECIFICALLY BEEN SO IMPRESSED AND ENCOURAGED BY THE YOUTH AT CITYCHURCH. THEIR PASSION, LOVE AND DESIRE TO SERVE JESUS IS DEEPLY INSPIRING. I HAVE SO ENJOYED SERVING IN THE CITYKIDS PROGRAM; THOSE CHILDREN ARE EVEN MORE FUN THAN THE YOUNG PEOPLE LEADING THE CHURCH!!

MUCH OF MY SPIRITUAL TRANSFORMATION HAS HAPPENED ON SUNDAY MORNINGS.

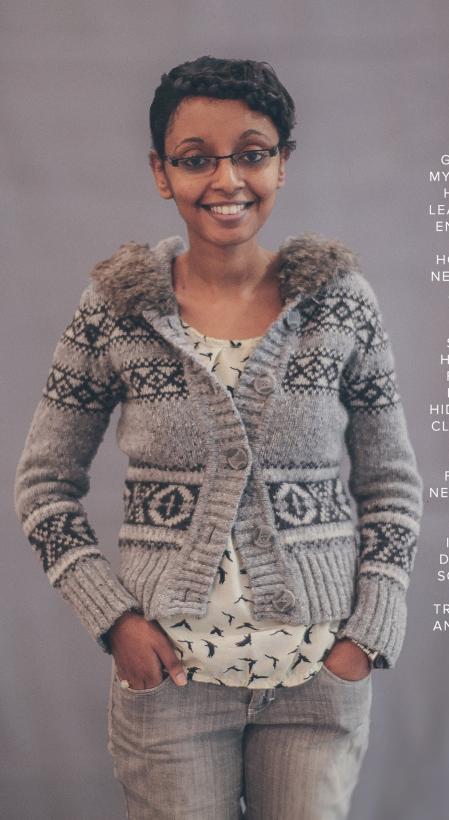
EVERY NEW SERMON SERIES HAS GIVEN ME NEW INSIGHT INTO SCRIPTURE AND A DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF GOD'S LOVE, PLAN AND SACRIFICE FOR ME. THESE SERMONS ARE PRESENTED SUCCINCTLY AND WITH A SENSE OF HUMOR; THEY TOO OFTEN INSPIRE ME TO LOUDLY SAY "AMEN"! IT IS IN THE PHENOMENAL MUSIC AND MUSICIANS AT CITYCHURCH THAT I HAVE DISCOVERED THE FREEDOM AND JOY WHICH EXISTS IN WORSHIP AS I SING AND RAISE MY HANDS TO GOD. GOD HAS TRULY BLESSED ME THROUGH CITYCHURCH.

PAT BRENCHER





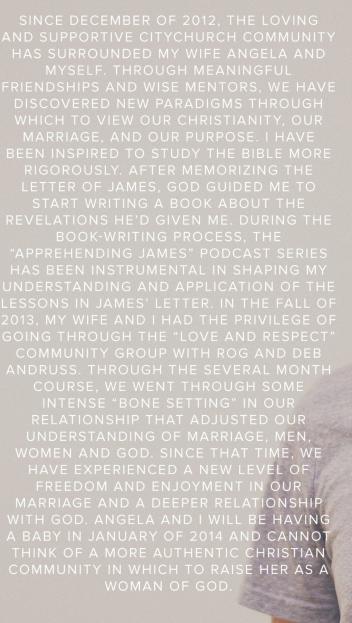




GOD BROUGHT ME TO NEW HAVEN FROM MY HOME COUNTRY OF ETHIOPIA. WHILE AT HOME, I HAD PRAYED THAT GOD WOULD LEAD ME TO A COMMUNITY WHERE I WOULD ENCOUNTER THE PRESENCE OF GOD; CITY CHURCH IS 2 BLOCKS AWAY FROM MY HOME! HE KNEW THAT THIS WOULD BE MY NEW HOME. IN THE PAST YEAR, I ATTENDED A CITYCHURCH ENCOUNTER WEEKEND. GOD USED THIS WEEKEND TO BREAK CHAINS OF DARKNESS AND FEAR AND SHAME IN MY LIFE. SINCE CHILDHOOD I HAD EXPERIENCED A DEEPLY ENGRAINED FEAR OF DARKNESS; GOD BROUGHT ME INTO HIS LIGHT. I HAD SUFFERED FROM HIDDEN SHAME BECAUSE OF PAST SIN: GOD CLOTHED ME IN A "NEW WHITE ROBE" WITH HIS RESTORATION AND PURITY. I HAD HARBORED RESENTMENT AGAINST MY FATHER FOR PAST WRONGS AND COULD NEVER PRAY FOR HIM; GOD GAVE ME A NEW HEART OF LOVE FOR MY FATHER. AS I PURSUE MY DOCTORATE IN IMMUNOLOGY, I AM FILLED WITH A NEW DREAM! I LIVE AND WORK IN A WORLD OF SCIENCE AND RATIONALITY. I AM EXCITED TO SHARE THE GOOD NEWS OF HIS TRANSFORMING GOSPEL WITH MY FRIENDS AND COLLEAGUES WHO MIGHT OTHERWISE NEVER KNOW ABOUT HIM.

MACY AKALU





EVERETT HILL





CITYCHURCH HAS MADE A HUGE IMPACT IN MY LIFE. THE THING I AM MOST GRATEFUL FOR IS THE COMMUNITY OF PEOPLE SUPPORTING ME THROUGH THIS LIFE. NO MATTER WHAT IS GOING ON IN MY LIFE, I CAN GO TO ANYBODY AND KNOW THAT THEY WILL PRAY WITH ME AND HELP ME THROUGH WHATEVER IT MAY BE.

BEING INVOLVED IN COMMUNITY GROUPS HAS TRULY CHANGED MY LIFE AND THEY ARE ONE OF THE HIGH POINTS OF MY WEEK. GETTING TO FELLOWSHIP WITH PEOPLE IN MY GROUP AND DIGGING DEEPER INTO GOD'S WORD HAS BEEN ENCOURAGING AND HAS CHALLENGED ME TO BECOME THE PERSON THAT GOD WANTS ME TO BE. CITYCHURCH HAS TRULY MADE A HUGE DIFFERENCE IN MY LIFE. I HAVE GROWN CLOSER TO GOD AND HAVE SEEN HIM CHANGE ME LITTLE BY LITTLE.

NINA LANDY



I AM A STUDENT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAVEN AND INSTANTLY FELT COMFORTABLE AT CITYCHURCH. I AM FOREVER GRATEFUL TO FIND A PLACE THAT FEELS LIKE HOME. GOD HAS DRAWN ME CLOSER TO HIM IN MY TIME HERE. HE HAS ENABLED MY MIND TO UNDERSTAND HIS SCRIPTURE MORE THOROUGHLY AND CLEARLY THROUGH JUSTIN'S SERMONS AND CITY WORSHIP. I HAVE BECOME LESS SHY AND MORE INVOLVED, ESPECIALLY SINCE JOINING CITYWORSHIP. THE FIRST TIME I WAS ON STAGE FOR WORSHIP, I TRULY FELT GOD'S DEEP PRESENCE IN MY LIFE. A SERMON WHICH REALLY IMPACTED ME WAS "THE SHADOW PROVES THE SUNSHINE" BASED ON EXODUS 12. I'VE HEARD THIS STORY MANY TIMES BEFORE, BUT, FOR SOME REASON, THIS TIME WAS DIFFERENT. I HAD NEVER FULLY REALIZED THAT IT DESCRIBED CHRIST'S SACRIFICE FOR US. AS JUSTIN TAUGHT THE HISTORICAL ASPECTS OF PASSOVER, I BEGAN TO UNDERSTAND THE IMPLICATIONS FOR MY PERSONAL FAITH. HE TOLD US TO "WAVE THE BANNER OF BLOOD OVER YOUR HOUSE BECAUSE THAT WILL BE THE ONE THAT IS FREE STAY IN THE HOUSE, IN HIS PROTECTION, UNTIL THE SUN COMES BACK UP". I AM SO GRATEFUL THAT THE SON, JESUS CHRIST, AROSE FROM THE DEAD.

KARINA IRIZARRY



SANTOS AND I FOUND OURSELVES IN A PLACE WHERE WE WERE LOST WITH NO SENSE OF DIRECTION. FAILURE SEEMED TO PILE ON TOP OF FAILURE, AND MY DEPRESSION AND LONELINESS INTENSIFIED AS MY SON LEFT HOME FOR COLLEGE.

A SWITCH WENT ON INSIDE OF ME THE FIRST TIME I ATTENDED CITYCHURCH, I FELT HIS PRESENCE WITHIN ME; A PRESENCE OF LOVE BEYOND MY FAILURES, DESPAIR AND SHAME. AS HIS LOVE FOR US BECAME A REALITY, CHAINS STARTED TO BREAK IN US. DISAPPOINTMENTS BECAME WAYS IN WHICH GOD COULD USE US. WE DIDN'T LOSE OUR JOBS BECAUSE WE FAILED; WE LOST OUR JOBS BECAUSE GOD HAD A BETTER PLAN FOR US! WHEN WE INVITED GOD INTO OUR LIFE AND BELIEVED AND ACCEPTED JESUS CHRIST AS OUR SAVIOR WE STARTED TO SEE WITH CLARITY. INSTEAD OF STRESS AND WORRY WE HAVE CHOSEN TO PRAY AND SUBMIT. GOD HAS NOT FAILED US AND OUR LIVES ARE CHANGED.

WE ARE GRATEFUL TO CITYCHURCH BECAUSE WE HAVE A NEW LIFE. WE HAVE MET AMAZING PEOPLE WHO ACCEPTED US WITH NO QUESTIONS ASKED! WE ARE SO THANKFUL FOR THE PRAYERS AND SUPPORT; THE FIRST TIME I SPOKE TO A CITYCHURCH MEMBER OVER THE PHONE THEY PRAYED FOR ME. GOD IS FAITHFUL.

RUTH & SANTOS ORTEGA



I CAME TO CONNECTICUT FROM HAWAII 1 ½ YEARS AGO AND HAVE BEEN ATTENDING CITY CHURCH FOR OVER A YEAR. I CAME FROM HAWAII TO HELP MY SISTER. I DID NOT INTEND TO BE HERE FOR VERY LONG BUT GOD HAD OTHER PLANS. WHEN I FOUND CITYCHURCH, I REALLY DID NOT KNOW WHAT TO EXPECT. IT WAS MY FIRST TIME GOING TO A CHURCH ON MY OWN, WITHOUT KNOWING ANYONE. GOD KNEW! ON MY SECOND WEEK AT CHURCH, I RAN INTO ROGER ANDRUSS WHO USED TO LIVE IN MY SMALL TOWN IN HAWAII AND WHO FREQUENTED THE STARBUCKS WHERE I WORKED. I KNEW THAT GOD WAS LETTING ME KNOW THAT I AM NOT ALONE, EVEN WHEN I AM FAR FROM HOME. SINCE THAT TIME I HAVE COME TO TREASURE THE COMMUNITY OF CITYCHURCH AND THE FRIENDS I HAVE MADE. I AM ALWAYS LEARNING MORE ABOUT MY IDENTITY IN THE BODY OF CHRIST. I NO LONGER HAVE THE SAME HOMESICKNESS FOR HAWAII. I REALIZE THAT THIS IS WHERE GOD WANTS ME FOR THIS SEASON. HE IS DOING SOMETHING BIG IN NEW ENGLAND, AND I AM EXCITED TO STAND WITH THIS CHURCH AND BE A PART OF IT. ALOHA!



I AM A STUDENT AT QUINNIPIAC UNIVERSITY, STUDYING PHYSICAL THERAPY. CITYCHURCH IS VERY SIMILAR TO MY HOME CHURCH, AND I HAD VISITED SEVERAL CHURCHES PRIOR TO FINDING THIS BODY OF BELIEVERS. IT IS NOT ONLY CONVENIENT; IT HAS BECOME MY LIFEBLOOD. I AM SO THANKFUL FOR THE POWERFUL AND RELEVANT SERMONS, THE VIBRANT WORSHIP AND THE PEOPLE HERE WHO ARE TRULY ALIVE IN THEIR FAITH. I AM ESPECIALLY GRATEFUL FOR MY COMMUNITY GROUP!

I HAD A ROUGH FRESHMAN YEAR OF COLLEGE, WHERE I FOUND MYSELF BOUND BY ANXIETY AND FEAR. GOD IS BREAKING THAT CHAIN AS I TURN TO HIM. HE IS ALL THAT MATTERS FOR ME! HE IS MY CREATOR, MY PURPOSE AND MY PROVIDER. IT IS ALL ABOUT HIM. THE ANSWER IS ALWAYS JESUS. THIS TRUTH HAS ESPECIALLY AFFECTED MY PRAYER LIFE. PRAYER HAS ALWAYS BEEN A WEAKNESS IN MY FAITH WALK. PRAYER IS THE BASIC WAY FOR CHRISTIANS TO TALK TO GOD AND FOR GOD TO FULFILL HIS PROMISES AS WE PRAY AND PETITION FOR HIS WILL TO BE DONE IN OUR LIVES AND IN OUR WORLD. SINCE THE "OUR FATHER" SERIES, GOD HAS BEEN CALLING ME TO BE A PRAYER WARRIOR AND TO TRULY BELIEVE IN THE POWER OF PRAYER.

JULIE ROOSMA



EPHESIANS 3:20 SAYS, "WITH GOD'S POWER WORKING IN US, GOD CAN DO MUCH MORE THAN ANYTHING WE CAN ASK OR MAGINE." THE LAST TWO YEARS OF MY LIFE HAVE TRULY BEEN A TESTAMENT OF THIS. I AM LUCKY ENOUGH TO HAVE GROWN UP KNOWING THE LOVE OF JESUS CHRIST. MY PARENTS ARE AVID CHRISTIANS AND TAUGHT ME THE IMPORTANCE OF PRAYER AND FELLOWSHIP. HOWEVER, IT WASN'T UNTIL COLLEGE WHEN I BEGAN TO OWN MY IDENTITY AS A CHRISTIAN. MY FOUNDATION KEPT ME OUT OF TROUBLE BUT MY DEVOTION TO CREATING A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD IS WHAT HAS GROWN MY FAITH. I WOULDN'T HAVE MADE IT THROUGH COLLEGE WITH MY PHYSICAL AND MENTAL WHOLENESS WITHOUT HIS GUIDANCE WHAT I'VE SEEN HAPPEN IN MY LIFE IS TRULY INDESCRIBABLE. I'VE GONE FROM A RESEARCH STUDENT AT COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY, TO A TRACK & FIELD D1 CONFERENCE CHAMPION, TO A POST-GRADUATE STUDENT AT ONE OF THE FINEST UNIVERSITIES IN THE WORLD, YALE, FAITH IS POWERFUL! THE "I FOUND JOY" SERIES HAS REALLY RESONATED IN MY SOUL. I HAVE ONLY ATTENDED CITYCHURCH FOR 2 WEEKS BUT ATTEST THAT GOD HAS GROWN MY FAITH THROUGH THE TRIALS. IN HINDSIGHT, I KNOW GOD ALWAYS CHOSE THE BEST PATH - HE HASIMO SOMETHING BETTER FOR ME. Whitelest States Comment

SHARONMWALE





I WAS INVITED TO ATTEND CITYCHURCH BY MY YOUNG LIFE LEADERS. AT THAT TIME I WASN'T REALLY SURE IF I NEEDED A LOCAL CHURCH. HOWEVER, IN THE SERVICE, WHEN JUSTIN STARTED TO SPEAK, I BECAME CONVINCED THAT THE SPIRIT WHO HAD SAVED ME WAS THE SAME SPIRIT IN THIS CHURCH. I WAS CONVINCED AND I HAVE LOVED BEING A PART OF CITY CHURCH FROM THAT MOMENT ON.

IT HAS BEEN IN THIS COMMUNITY THAT I HAVE FOUND THE FREEDOM TO BE TRULY MYSELF. I CAME FROM A BACKGROUND WHERE I WAS ALWAYS TRYING TO PLEASE OTHER PEOPLE. NOW, THE ONLY PERSON THAT I AM TRYING TO PLEASE IS GOD. THERE IS SUCH INCREDIBLE FREEDOM IN THIS. I TEND TO BE AN OBSERVER OF PEOPLE; AS I HAVE WATCHED THE MEMBERS OF CITYCHURCH INTERACT AND RESPOND TO OTHERS, I HAVE SEEN AN AUTHENTICITY WHICH ALIGNS WITH WHAT GOD IS DOING IN MY HEART. THERE IS ACCOUNTABILITY AND TRANSPARENCY WHICH DEFINES THIS COMMUNITY. MY HEARTS PASSION IS FOR REVIVAL HERE IN NEW ENGLAND. I CANNOT WAIT TO SEE WHAT GOD IS GOING TO DO THROUGH THIS BODY AS WE FAITHFULLY SEEK AND SERVE HIM!

KYVON MCCOWN





BEFORE ATTENDING CITYCHURCH I HAD REACHED A POINT WHERE I WAS DISENCHANTED BY THE CONCEPT OF "CHURCH". AT PREVIOUS CHURCHES, I HAD ALWAYS LIKED EITHER THE COMMUNITY OR THE WORSHIP OR THE SERMONS; THERE WAS NEVER A COHESIVE BLEND. I REACHED THE POINT OF NO LONGER WANTING TO GO TO CHURCH AND, FOR A WHILE, I STOPPED GOING. NATURALLY, MY SPIRITUAL LIFE SLIPPED AND I FOUND MYSELF FEELING FAR FROM GOD. I VISITED CITYCHURCH DURING A COLD WINTER BREAK FROM COLLEGE AND IMMEDIATELY SENSED A DIFFERENCE. I HAD FINALLY FOUND THE CHURCH THAT I COULD BE EXCITED TO ATTEND. CITYCHURCH WAS MY ALL-IN-ONE CHURCH.

I WAS PARTICULARLY MOVED BY THE "CONTEND WITH ME" SERIES; SPECIFICALLY THE SERMON ENTITLED "MORE MIRACLES". JUSTIN SPOKE ABOUT WHAT HAPPENS WHEN YOUR PRAYERS AREN'T ANSWERED ACCORDING TO YOUR HOPES, AND HE ADDRESSED THE ISSUE OF PRAYING FOR HEALING AND NOT SEEING IT MANIFESTED IN THIS LIFETIME. THIS SERMON WAS DIFFICULT FOR ME TO HEAR BECAUSE I HAD BEEN PRAYING FOR MY DAD'S HEALING. I BELIEVE GOD PREPARED THAT SERMON FOR ME BECAUSE THE VERY NEXT DAY MY FATHER PASSED AWAY. GOD USED HIS WORD TO ENLIGHTEN, ENCOURAGE AND PREPARE MY HEART FOR THAT LOSS.

# THABANI DHLAKAMA



THE PAST YEAR AND A HALF WAS A SEASON OF CHANGE. MY HUSBAND ZAC AND I MOVED FROM MY HOME STATE OF TEXAS TO TULSA FOR 3 SHORT MONTHS BEFORE MOVING TO NEW HAVEN IN MAY. THREE MONTHS LATER WE FOUND OUT I WAS PREGNANT WITH OUR PRECIOUS BABY GIRL, TATUM. MOVING AWAY FROM ALL OUR FAMILY AND FRIENDS IN TEXAS HAS BEEN INCREDIBLY HARD. I HAVE TIMES OF DOUBT, CONFUSION, AND LONELINESS WONDERING WHY GOD HAS BROUGHT US SO FAR AWAY FROM THE FAMILY THAT I LOVE SO MUCH.

GOD HAS USED THIS DIFFICULT SEASON IN MY LIFE TO GROW MY TRUST IN HIM. I'M STILL IN THE PROCESS OF PUTTING MY DESIRES AND WANTS AT HIS FEET IN SURRENDER TO HIS PLAN FOR MY FAMILY. I'M THANKFUL FOR THE CITYCHURCH COMMUNITY AND THE NEW PRECIOUS FRIENDS THAT ENCOURAGE AND PRAY FOR ME. I AM CONTINUALLY REMINDED THAT GOD IS FULLY FAITHFUL AND CARES FOR ME--EVEN WITH THE SMALL THINGS WHICH WEIGH AT MY HEART. EVEN THOUGH I CAN'T SEE THE WHOLE PICTURE RIGHT NOW, I KNOW THIS WILL BECOME A TIME IN MY LIFE WHICH I WILL TREASURE AS I SEE GOD BECOMING MY CONSTANT AND CONTINUAL SOURCE OF STRENGTH, JOY, AND PEACE.

# MEREDITH MOWERY



JOEY SILVA



THROUGH CITYCHURCH, GOD ANSWERED MY PRAYERS TO GROW SPIRITUALLY WITHIN A COMMUNITY OF BELIEVERS. I AM SO THANKFUL THAT GOD IS CAUSING MY FAITH TO THRIVE (AND NOT MERELY SURVIVE) THROUGH MY COLLEGE YEARS, WORSHIP HAS ESPECIALLY BEEN POWERFUL AND LIFE CHANGING. AS I HAVE BECOME MORE INTENTIONAL IN LIVING OUT MY FAITH AND SHARING THE LOVE OF CHRIST WITH OTHERS, I'VE EXPERIENCED SO MUCH FREEDOM IN CHRIST FROM FEAR AND PRIDE. IT HAS BECOME IMPORTANT TO ME TO GIVE THE FIRST FRUITS OF EVERYTHING TO GOD, WHETHER TIME, MONEY, OR WORK. LOOKING BACK OVER THE LAST TWO YEARS, I CAN SAY THAT I KNOW GOD SO MUCH MORE THAN I DID BEFORE. "THE ONE THING" SERMON REALLY CHANGED MY HEART. I HAD BEEN CAUGHT UP IN "DOING"; THIS SERMON REMINDED ME THAT IT IS GRACE AND NOT MY PERFORMANCE WHICH DEFINES MY POSITION IN GOD. I HAVE STARTED TO SUBMIT MY SCHEDULE TO GOD AND AM DEVELOPING A HABIT OF MEDITATING ON THE LORD AS I GAZE UPON HIS BEAUTY. AS A RESULT, I AM EXPERIENCING GREATER INTIMACY WITH GOD IN THE CONTEXT OF A DEEPER UNDERSTANDING OF HIS GRACE. I AM EAGER TO SHARE THIS JOY WITH OTHERS.

MOLLY MICHAELS

MY LIFE VERSE IS PSALM 46:10 – "BE STILL AND KNOW THAT I AM GOD." THIS VERSE IS SO PRECIOUS TO ME BECAUSE I WAS NOT BROUGHT UP IN A HOME WHICH WAS STILL AND FILLED WITH THE PRESENCE OF GOD. INSTEAD, I GREW UP WITHIN AN ATMOSPHERE OF REJECTION, ABUSE AND FEAR. WHEN I CAME TO CITYCHURCH I REALIZED THAT GOD WAS GOING TO BREAK THAT CYCLE. THE FIRST WAY IN WHICH I SAW HIS HAND WAS IN THE WAY THAT HE DREW MY DAUGHTER TO HIM AND HEALED HER. I AM SO VERY GRATEFUL FOR HIS SAVING HER LIFE. HE HAS ALSO BEEN CHANGING MY HEART. I AM LEARNING TO "LEAN BACK" INTO HIM. I AM ABLE TO TRUST HIM AND HIS PROVISION FOR ME. I AM ABLE TO CAST MY WORRIES ONTO HIM. I AM BEGINNING TO SEE MYSELF THE WAY HE SEES ME. PREVIOUSLY, I HAD ALWAYS FEARED REJECTION AND WOULD CONSEQUENTLY NOT SPEAK OUT, EVEN WHEN I NEEDED TO. ALL OF THAT IS DIFFERENT NOW. I AM FINDING MYSELF LIVING WITH GOD'S BOLDNESS AND STRENGTH. I AM LEARNING WHAT IT MEANS TO LIVE IN HIM AND TO SPEAK ON BEHALF OF OTHERS WITH HIS COURAGE.

### MORGAN ZELAZKO

I ONLY CAME TO CITYCHURCH ON MOTHER'S DAY BECAUSE MY MOM TRICKED ME INTO IT!

IT WAS ON MY SECOND VISIT THAT I REALIZED THAT IT WAS REALLY GOD WHO WAS

CALLING ME TO BE THERE. TWO WEEKS PRIOR I HAD BEEN IN THE HOSPITAL AFTER A

FAILED ATTEMPT TO END MY OWN LIFE. AS JUSTIN SPOKE THAT SUNDAY, GOD USED HIM

TO SPEAK TO ME. JUSTIN OBEDIENTLY SPOKE GOD'S WORDS, AND I KNEW THAT DAY THAT

GOD WAS CALLING ME TO BE HEALED OF THE PAIN, THE ABANDONMENT AND THE FEAR

WHICH HAD OPPRESSED ME FOR SO LONG. AFTER THE SERVICE I PRAYED WITH A MEMBER

OF THE PRAYER TEAM AND WAS ABLE TO TALK MORE WITH JUSTIN. GOD DID A MIRACLE ON

THAT SUNDAY! MY LIFE IS RADICALLY DIFFERENT. I WAS ABLE TO TESTIFY TO THIS NEW

BIRTH IN BAPTISM THIS YEAR. WHAT A JOY IT WAS TO SHARE MY TESTIMONY! I AM ALSO

NOW LIVING IN COMMUNITY AND AM A MEMBER OF A SERVANT TEAM. MOST IMPORTANTLY,

I KNOW THAT GOD HAS HIS HAND ON ME, THAT MY LIFE HAS VALUE TO HIM, AND THAT HE

HAS A PURPOSE FOR ME.

## HARLEY ZELAZKO



I'M A 20 YEAR OLD COLLEGE STUDENT AND WAS RAISED A "CHRISTIAN" MY WHOLE LIFE. SINCE I STARTED ATTENDING CITYCHURCH ABOUT A YEAR AGO, GOD HAS PUT ON MY HEART TO STOP GOING THROUGH THE MOTIONS, AND TO CENTER MY LIFE AROUND HIM, ONCE AND FOR ALL. I'VE FINALLY BEEN ABLE TO WRAP MY HEAD AROUND GOD'S FREE GIFT OF GRACE AND HIS IMMEASURABLE LOVE FOR ME. THAT NEVER STUCK BEFORE. NOW I KNOW THAT I DO NOT HAVE TO HIDE FROM GOD WHEN I FAIL. I'VE FOUND JOY AND COMFORT IN THE CONSISTENCY OF CHRIST. I BELIEVE IN MY SOUL THAT GOD IS GOOD ALL THE TIME AND THAT HE IS FOR ME. I AM MORE CONFIDENT IN MY FAITH AND SHARING IT WITH OTHERS. MY PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS HAS FLOURISHED AND I AM TRULY HAPPY. MY BATTLE WITH ANXIETY HAS EVEN STARTED TO BE LESS OF A STRUGGLE.

I LOVE COMING TO CHURCH AND SERVING IN CITYKIDS! I'VE EVEN JOINED A COMMUNITY GROUP AND HAVE MET SOME AWESOME (AND YOUNG) PEOPLE TO CONNECT WITH. GOD IS SO GOOD. MY LIFE HAS TRULY BEEN BLESSED BY PASTOR JUSTIN AND THE WHOLE CITYCHURCH COMMUNITY.

## KAIT HARTENSTEIN





I HAD TWO INTRODUCTIONS TO CITY CHURCH. I STARTED COMING LAST SPRING WHEN A FRIEND TOLD ME ABOUT IT, BUT ALMOST IMMEDIATELY LEFT FOR A YEARLONG MISSIONS TRIP AROUND THE WORLD. WHEN I RETURNED, I CAME BACK TO CITYCHURCH IN TIME FOR THE "I HEART NEW HAVEN" DAY. I WAS EXPERIENCING INTENSE REVERSE CULTURE SHOCK BUT IMMEDIATELY WAS OVERWHELMED BY THIS GENUINELY COMMITTED GROUP OF CHRIST FOLLOWERS. I QUICKLY JOINED A COMMUNITY GROUP AND SERVE ON A SERVANT TEAM. MY FAMILY DOES NOT YET KNOW THE LORD. I AM CAUTIOUS AND PROTECTIVE OF THEM; CITY CHURCH HAS BEEN A PLACE WHERE I DO NOT NEED TO FEAR INVITING THEM. I KNOW THAT THEY WILL SEE JESUS WITHIN THIS COMMUNITY AND I AM COMFORTABLE BRINGING THEM INTO THIS COMMUNITY. I HAVE FOUND GOD DEVELOPING MY SPIRIT IN THE AREA OF BOLDNESS. HE IS SHOWING ME THAT THE GREATEST ACT OF LOVE IS TO TELL OTHERS ABOUT HIM. I DON'T CARRY THE RESPONSIBILITY OR RISK WHEN I SHARE GOD'S LOVE; RATHER, I MERELY NEED TO WAIT ON HIS TIMING AS HE REVEALS HIMSELF AND HIS LOVE. THERE IS REAL FREEDOM IN THAT!

JULIA STAHNKE





RECENTLY I HAVE RETURNED TO MY WALK WITH JESUS. THANKFULLY, I WAS MOTIVATED BY FRIENDS, FAMILY, AND CITYCHURCH. I WAS BROUGHT UP IN A RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND SINCE BIRTH AND ALWAYS KNEW IN MY HEART HE HAD A PLAN FOR MY LIFE. BECAUSE IT WAS SUCH A STRUGGLE TO STICK TO MY FAITH AND MORALS THROUGH HIGH SCHOOL, I WALKED AWAY FOR A SHORT TIME. NOW, AS A RETURNING BELIEVER AT CITYCHURCH, I YEARN FOR A STRONGER RELATIONSHIP WITH MY LORD AND SAVIOR. CITYCHURCH HAS AWOKEN MY SPIRIT, AND I AM BEGINNING TO SEE A NEW, BEAUTIFUL CHANGE IN MY HEART.

MACHOL BUTLER





I AM SO THANKFUL TO GOD FOR LEADING MARK AND I TO CITYCHURCH THROUGH OUR SONS DAVE AND WILL, WHO HELPED OUT IN THE OFFICE AND ON THE ROAD WITH HOLYFIRE MINISTRIES BEFORE THE CHURCH WAS BIRTHED. HOW COULD WE NOT BE DRAWN INTO THIS FELLOWSHIP OF AUTHENTIC CHRISTIANS WHEN THE CHURCH BEGAN? THEY WALK IN FELLOWSHIP WITH JESUS SEVEN DAYS A WEEK. WHAT HAS BEEN SO FREEING TO ME IS SEEING STRONG BELIEVERS WHO ARE NOT AFRAID TO BE BRUTALLY HONEST ABOUT THEIR OWN SHORTCOMINGS, AND YET WHO REST IN THE INCREDIBLE LOVE OF GOD OUR FATHER. WHEN JUSTIN PREACHES, GOD'S WORD COMES ALIVE (HEBREWS 4:12). I ESPECIALLY LOVED THE "OUR FATHER" SERIES. OVER THE PAST YEAR OR TWO, THE IDEA OF GOD BEING MY LOVING HEAVENLY FATHER HAS GONE FROM A DISTANT CONCEPT TO ONE THAT HAS PENETRATED MY HEART. I TRUST THAT HE LOVES ME WITH ALL HIS HEART. NOW MY HEART IS BREAKING FREE IN LOVE FOR HIM, BECAUSE I'M NOT WORRIED ABOUT LOSING HIS LOVE; JESUS PROVED THAT TO ME ON THE CROSS. I CAN FREELY ADMIT MY MISTAKES, BECAUSE I KNOW HE IS OPENING HIS ARMS WIDE TO ME IN LOVE.

CAROLYN BRUNO





CITYCHURCH WAS MY FIRST CHURCH HOME AWAY FROM HOME. I CHECKED OUT A FEW CHURCHES INITIALLY, BUT ONCE I FOUND CITYCHURCH I NEVER LOOKED BACK. I HAVE BEEN HERE FROM THE VERY BEGINNING; I ATTENDED THE LAST PRE-LAUNCH MEETING IN NEW HAVEN BEFORE THE FORMAL LAUNCH. IN THE BEGINNING I ONLY INTERACTED WITH OTHER STUDENTS FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAVEN. I THEN LOST MY JOB, AND STARTED TO ATTEND EVERY COMMUNITY GROUP THAT I COULD. GOD STARTED TO BREAK CHAINS IN MY LIFE. I LEARNED TO TRUST. I WAS ABLE TO BE AUTHENTIC WITH OTHER PEOPLE. I STARTED TO LET OTHER PEOPLE GET CLOSE. THIS IS A COMMUNITY LIKE NO OTHER. IT IS A HOME WHERE HIS LOVE IS EVIDENT. I AM MOTIVATED TO STEP OUT OF MY COMFORT ZONE AND TAKE RISKS ON A REGULAR BASIS. GOD IS GROWING ME SO QUICKLY, PRIMARILY IN THE AREA OF SERVICE. I ATTENDED MY FIRST ENCOUNTER WEEKEND 2 YEARS AGO. IT WAS SCARY TO SEE THE HOLY SPIRIT WORK IN MY LIFE. RECENTLY, I ATTENDED ANOTHER ENCOUNTER WEEKEND. I FOUND NOT ONLY THAT GOD HAS BEEN CHANGING MY LIFE, BUT I FELT TREASURED AND CARED FOR. I AM THANKFUL FOR CITY CHURCH.

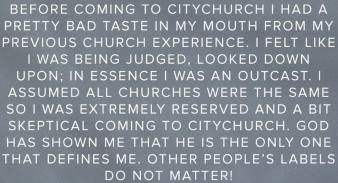
ELIZABETH HIRSH



I MOVED TO NEW HAVEN 2 YEARS AGO FOR A JOB AS THE ASSISTANT TENNIS COACH AT YALE. IN THE PROCESS I LEFT A CHURCH IN COLUMBUS, OHIO WHICH HAD BEEN AN INCREDIBLE SOURCE OF SPIRITUAL NOURISHMENT. I FEARED THAT I WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO FIND ANOTHER FAITH HOME BUT THEN I WAS INVITED TO CITY CHURCH. MY WALK WITH GOD HAS BEEN ONE AMAZING CRESCENDO (IRONICALLY, "CRESCENDO" WAS THE NAME OF MY COMMUNITY GROUP IN COLUMBUS). HE IS GRADUALLY BUILDING INTO MY SOUL ONE LAYER AT A TIME. HE MOVED ME TO NEW HAVEN, HE INTRODUCED ME TO HIS PEOPLE, HE LED ME TO A COMMUNITY GROUP, HE ALLOWED ME TO SERVE AND LEAD A SERVANT TEAM, HE TRAINED ME TO LEAD A COMMUNITY GROUP, HE OPENED THE DOOR FOR ME TO INTERN AT CITY CHURCH AND PURSUE A BIBLICAL DEGREE -IN EVERY STEP, HE IS CREATING THE CRESCENDO.

LAST SUMMER THERE WAS A BAPTISM AT TOAD'S PLACE. I WAS SUPPOSED TO "WORK" THE BAPTISM AND INSTEAD, I FOUND MYSELF OBEYING HIS CALL TO BE THE FIRST ONE BAPTIZED. MY WALK WITH HIM IS ONE WHERE HE IS DAILY MOVING ME INTO GREATER AUTHENTICITY, COMMUNITY AND SERVICE.

KIRSTEN FLOWER



THE ENCOUNTER WEEKEND IN MAY 2014 REALLY IMPACTED ME IN AN UNFORGETTABLE WAY. I WASN'T SURE WHAT TO EXPECT; WHAT HAPPENED WAS THAT I ENCOUNTERED GOD. I HAD AN ONGOING STRUGGLE AND HAD BEEN CONSISTENTLY ASKING GOD FOR HELP BUT FELT MY PRAYERS WERE UNHEARD. DURING WORSHIP ON THE LAST DAY, A FRIEND CAME OVER AND SHARED A VISION OF GOD POURING WATER OVER ME. IN THE PROCESS HE WAS WASHING ME CLEAN AND GIVING ME A NEW START! THAT IS EXACTLY WHAT HE DID. I HAVE FOUND FRIENDS AT CITYCHURCH WHO ENCOURAGE ME TO FOLLOW HIS PATH FOR MY LIFE. THEY HOLD ME ACCOUNTABLE AND ENABLE ME TO STAY ON TRACK WITH MY FAITH WITHOUT GETTING SIDETRACKED BY THE SUPERFICIALITY OF THE WORLD.

NICOLE ROMANO





HOME. THERE ARE A LOT OF WORDS TO DEFINE IT BUT, FOR ME, IT MEANS A COZY CABLE KNIT BLANKET, A CRACKLING FIRE AND A HOT CUP OF TEA; ALL PART OF LONG NIGHTS SPENT LAUGHING AND DOING LIFE WITH FRIENDS. 6 YEARS AGO I MOVED FROM COPENHAGEN, DENMARK BACK TO MY HOME STATE OF CONNECTICUT. I HAD SPENT 5 YEARS SERVING IN THAT CITY THAT STOLE MY HEART. IT HAD BECOME HOME AND, JUST WHEN I THOUGHT I COULD SPEND THE REST OF MY LIFE THERE, GOD CALLED ME BACK TO CONNECTICUT.

FOR THREE YEARS I STRUGGLED TO FIND A CHURCH HOME. MY FIRST VISIT TO CITYCHURCH WAS A BREATH OF FRESH AIR AND, IMMEDIATELY, MY HEART FELT LIKE IT HAD FOUND ITS HOME. IT WAS A PLACE I BELONGED. A PLACE I WOULD BE PROUD AND EXCITED TO BRING MY FRIENDS TO. IT WAS A PLACE WHERE COMMUNITY, VULNERABILITY, AND INTENTIONALITY WERE ALL WOVEN TOGETHER INTO THE FIBERS AND FOUNDATION OF THIS FAMILY CALLED CITY CHURCH. IT WAS THERE THAT I FOUND A PLACE TO CALL HOME. I SUPPOSE IT'S A BONUS THAT I'M NOT THE ONLY ONE THERE WHO IS OBSESSED WITH TEA, CABLE KNIT, AND CRACKLING FIRES!

ALICIA DAW



WE CAME TO CITYCHURCH INCREDIBLY BRUISED AND BATTERED BY OUR PREVIOUS CHURCH EXPÉRIENCES. GOD HAS BEGUN THE PROCESS OF REDEFINING THE CONCEPT OF "CHURCH. HE HAS FAITHFULLY REVEALED THE TRUTH OF HIS PLAN FOR US AT CITYCHURCH BY SHOWING US THOSE LIES WHICH HAD BOUND US IN A DYSFUNCTIONAL VERSION OF COMMUNITY. WE CAME FROM A PAST WHICH, ON THE OUTWARD APPEARANCE, CLOAKED ITSELF IN THE TRAPPINGS OF FAITH AND FREEDOM, BUT IN REALITY ENSLAVED US. WE WERE SICK AND WE DID NOT REALLY KNOW HOW SICK WE WERE! AT CITYCHURCH, GOD HAS BEEN REVEALING HIS INTENTIONAL DESIGN FOR COMMUNITY. WE ARE SO GRATEFUL TO BE LABORING TOGETHER WITH THE MEMBERS OF HIS BODY, AND ARE EXPERIENCING HEALING AND FREEDOM AS WE SEE HIM WORK IN OUR LIVES. IT HAS BEEN A PROCESS. YEAR ONE WAS THE MOMENT OF REVELATION. WE BEGAN TO SEE TRUTH! YEAR TWO WAS WHEN GOD TAUGHT US WHAT IT MEANT TO PRACTICALLY LIVE WITHIN A COMMUNITY OF BELIEVERS AND HOW TO HOLD EACH OTHER ACCOUNTABLE IN GRACE. AS WE ENTER YEAR THREE, WE ARE SEEING GOD DIGGING OUT THOSE FINAL ROOTS OF UNBELIEF AND SLAVERY. WE CANNOT WAIT TO SEE WHAT IS NEXT!

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JULIE & JAMIE STONER



GOD HAS ALLOWED ME TO USE MY
CREATIVE GIFTS TO ENCOURAGE &
EMPOWER HIS CHURCH HERE IN NEW
HAVEN. GOD IS BRINGING ME TO NEW
LEVELS OF ARTISTRY, ESPECIALLY
THROUGH FILM. I LOVE THAT I GET TO USE
TECHNOLOGY TO SPREAD GOD'S MESSAGE
OF HOPE. I SAW THIS PRACTICALLY LAST
CHRISTMAS. OUR CHRISTMAS
PRODUCTION, "THE GIFT", WAS A HIGHLY
VIDEO-DRIVEN EVENT. WORKING WITH THE
CAST & CREW WAS EXTREMELY FUN, AND IT
WAS A WHOLE NEW EXPERIENCE FOR ME.
GOD USED THIS PROJECT TO ILLUSTRATE A
NEW ELEMENT OF HIS GRACE IN MY LIFE.
IT IS INSPIRING TO SEE HOW GOD IS
WORKING HERE AT CITYCHURCH. WE DON'T
JUST "DO CHURCH." WE PARTICIPATE IN
GOD'S WORK. HE IS MOVING AND DRAWING
HIS PEOPLE BACK TO HIMSELF. HE ALLOWS
US TO USE OUR GIFTS AND TALENTS TO DO
IT, TOO. HE DOESN'T NEED OUR HELP, BUT
HE LOVES US SO MUCH HE ALLOWS US TO

A DA M Z VA NO V EC





NOELLE HILL





WE CAME TO CITYCHURCH AT OUR DAUGHTER'S INVITATION. MY LIFE FOREVER CHANGED FROM THE MOMENT I WALKED THROUGH THE DOORS. I HAVE BEEN SAVED FOR ABOUT 37 YEARS, HAVE ATTENDED 4 DIFFERENT CHURCHES AND MY WALK HAS BEEN THROUGH UPS AND DOWNS. ON THIS SUNDAY MORNING, HOWEVER, IT WAS A VERY DIFFERENT FEELING - IT WAS AS IF A FIRE WAS SET DOWN IN MY SOUL AND I COULDN'T CONTAIN IT! I WORSHIPED LIKE NEVER BEFORE.

AS I LISTENED TO JUSTIN SPEAK, I KNEW
GOD WAS USING HIM. ONE OF THE FIRST
SERMON SERIES WE HEARD WAS
"REINTRODUCING JESUS". MY DESIRE TO
GET TO KNOW JESUS IN A MORE INTIMATE
WAY GREW EACH WEEK. I HAVE COME BACK
TO MY FIRST LOVE. HE IS ALIVE IN ME! "YOU
SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL
YOUR HEART AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL
AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND." (MATTHEW
22:37) WITHOUT A DOUBT, THIS DESCRIBES
MY LOVE FOR HIM!

NOT ONLY HAS MY LIFE CHANGED, BUT SO HAVE THE LIVES OF OUR FAMILY. I HAD BEEN KEEPING JESUS IN A BOX AND LIMITING HIS AWESOMENESS. HE IS OUT OF THE BOX NOW AND I AM NEVER GOING BACK! OUR GOD IS AN AWESOME GOD!

LORI ACERRA



GOD HAS WORKED IN MIGHTY WAYS IN MY LIFE SINCE COMING TO CITYCHURCH. WHEN I FIRST BEGAN ATTENDING, JUSTIN WAS PREACHING A SERMON SERIES ENTITLED "GOOD SEX". PRIOR TO ATTENDING CITYCHURCH, I HAD BEEN TRAPPED IN LUST AND EXISTED IN BONDAGE TO PORNOGRAPHY. GOD KNEW EXACTLY WHAT I NEEDED AND HE WALKED ME RIGHT INTO THAT SERMON SERIES. HE USED THE TEACHING TO RADICALLY CHANGE MY LIFE. I AM NOW FREE! JESUS DID ALL THE WORK BY HEALING ME WHEN I COULD NOT DO IT MYSELF. I AM LIVING THE MIRACLE OF A SIGNIFICANTLY TRANSFORMED LIFE THAT FINDS IDENTITY WHOLLY IN CHRIST. IT WAS THE VERY NEXT SERMON SERIES WHICH CONTINUED THIS JOURNEY OF HEALING AND RESTORATION. IT DEALT WITH THE REALITY OF FAITH. I BEGAN TO SEE JESUS MOVE POWERFULLY ALL AROUND ME. I REMEMBER WEEPING DURING WORSHIP AS JESUS AWAKENED MY HEART TO HOPE IN HIM AND THE SUPERNATURAL AGAIN. I AM SO GRATEFUL FOR THE COMMUNITY OF CITYCHURCH. I AM IN AWE AT THE DEVOTION TO THE PERSON OF JESUS CHRIST AND THE COMMITMENT TO THE REALITY OF THE GOSPEL. IT REALLY IS ALL ABOUT JESUS. HE IS AT THE CENTER OF EVERYTHING AND MY LIFE IS FOREVER CHANGED.

MATTHEW KUMM





IT IS HARD TO SAY WHAT I'M MOST GRATEFUL FOR IN CITYCHURCH OR HOW IT HAS CHANGED MY LIFE BECAUSE THERE'S JUST TOO MUCH TO SAY. THE MUSIC AND SERMONS ARE AMAZING AND THE COMMUNITY OF CITYCHURCH IS A BLESSING. I'VE GOTTEN TO KNOW SO MANY PEOPLE BETWEEN COMMUNITY GROUPS AND LADIES NIGHT. AS A COLLEGE STUDENT WHO IS LIVING FAR FROM HOME, IT IS AMAZING TO FIND A GROUP OF PEOPLE THAT HONESTLY CARE ABOUT YOU, WILL PRAY WITH YOU IN HARD PATCHES AND REJOICE WITH YOU IN HAPPY TIMES. CITYCHURCH HAS CHANGE MY LIFE IN SO MANY WAYS; HOWEVER, AT THE TOP OF THAT LIST, IS HOW IT HAS SHIFTED MY PERCEPTION AND HELPED ME TO START LIVING AN AUTHENTIC CHRISTIAN LIFESTYLE. I NOW TRY TO VIEW THE WORLD IN TERMS OF ETERNITY AND REMEMBER THAT THE HIGHEST HONOR OF HUMANITY IS TO BE A CARRIER OF THE NAME OF JESUS.

EVELYN GAINES



I STARTED ATTENDING CITYCHURCH ON AUGUST 24, 2014. I HAD MOVED TO NEW HAVEN THE DAY BEFORE FROM FAYETTEVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA IN ORDER TO ATTEND QUINNIPIAC UNIVERSITY. EVEN BEFORE MOVING HERE, I HAD DONE SOME RESEARCH ON CHURCHES IN THE NEW HAVEN AREA. AT THAT TIME I HAD DISCOVERED CITYCHURCH ONLINE AND LISTENED TO A PODCAST ENTITLED "PROVERBIAL SEX". I CRIED SO HARD BECAUSE JUSTIN ABSOLUTELY CAPTURED HOW I FELT IN MY LIFE; I HAD NEVER SEEN ANYONE SPEAK SO POWERFULLY TO ME THROUGH SCRIPTURE.

WHEN I ARRIVED AT MY APARTMENT ON AUGUST 23RD, I WAS SECOND GUESSING MY DECISION TO MOVE HERE WITH NOTHING BUT MY PUPPY AND MY LIFE IN THE BAGS OF MY LIVING ROOM. I HAD A PRETTY HEALTHY BREAKDOWN! AFTER SERVICE ON THE 24TH, I WENT FORWARD FOR PRAYER. AMIDST MY SOBS, CHRISY PRAYED AND I WAS OVERWHELMED WITH THE CONFIRMATION THAT I WAS HERE BECAUSE OF GOD'S PLAN FOR MY LIFE. SHE ASKED GOD TO REVEAL HIMSELF AND HIS PURPOSE FOR ME. HE CERTAINLY DID! GOD HAS GIVEN ME A FAMILY IN CITYCHURCH AS I DIVE INTO MY WALK WITH JESUS.

SLOANE DEVENS



"WHAT JOY FOR THOSE WHOSE STRENGTH COMES FROM THE LORD, WHO HAVE SET THEIR MINDS ON A PILGRIMAGE...WHEN THEY WALK THROUGH THE VALLEY OF WEEPING, IT WILL BECOME A PLACE OF REFRESHING SPRINGS."

-PSALM 84:5-6A



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