

LOVE GOD, LOVE OTHERS, SERVE THE WORLD

IN WAYNE & BEYOND

JULY 2022

LETTER FROM THE PASTOR

Dear COS Family,

If you joined us for Vision Day a few weeks ago, you might have heard me speak on Church Renewal, our new Sermon Series, and Kevin's Sabbatical. Here is a recap of those topics!

CHURCH GROWTH AND HEALTH

Before coming to COS, I spent a decade with a denomination, overseeing the renewal of their declining churches on the east coast. The denomination had gone through an alarming decline in membership and growth over the last 20 years, especially among young people walking away from the church. I learned that a church's decline and death do not happen overnight, and it takes a lot of energy and grace to pursue renewal.

Every organization has a life cycle. The beginning is called Birth or Start-up, which, for COS, happened 50 years ago. Shortly after Birth, COS experienced rapid, dynamic, and exciting Growth... often referred to as the organization's Incline. The Spirit of God was clearly at work, changing lives through discipleship. Reaching the lost at home and overseas was a major priority, resulting in many conversions.

Rapid growth, while exciting, creates the need for systems to be established and maintained so that chaos does not stifle growth. This leads to the next phase of the life cycle, the Plateau. The Plateau is the most dangerous phase for a church as they can easily fall into maintaining the status quo. In the Plateau, traditions and nostalgia can prevent growth and expansion. The church can become less prayerful and less dependent on God. Even the most dynamic church can quickly lose its passion for the lost. From the Plateau, an organization or church can move in one of two directions:

Decline: Losing steam, becoming ingrown, losing its missional outreach edge, redirecting its energy into maintaining, making fewer faith-dependent decisions. Church renewal research indicates that if you do not catch decline early, the church may decline too quickly to be rescued. The church will head toward organizational death. (Sadly, I have seen this happen several times...) Most churches in decline are in denial about where they are and do not react quickly enough to recover.

If an organization or church can honestly assess its situation and refocus its energy, it can move into a phase of Renewal.

WHAT'S INSIDE

- Joshua Sermon Series
- Kevin's Sabbatical
- Global Outreach Updates
- Ministry Updates
- Vision Day Thank You
- Giving Update

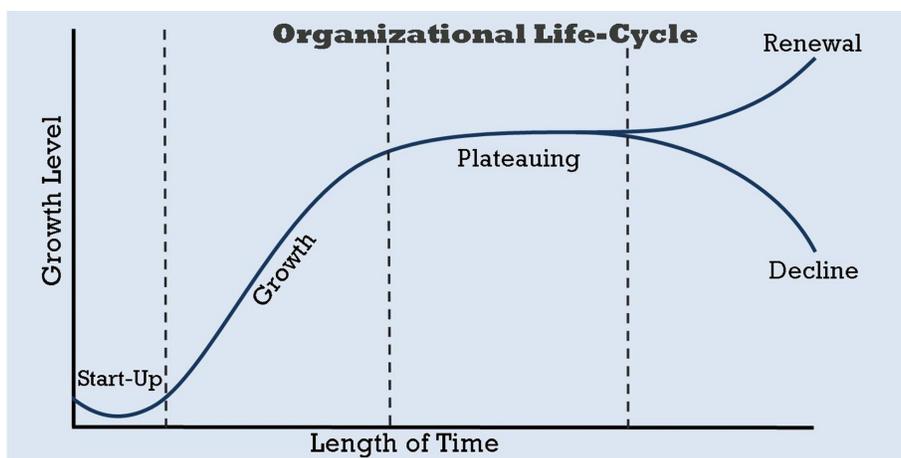
LETTER FROM THE PASTOR

Renewal: For any organization to continue growing and thriving, it needs to be continually renewed for the future. Renewal is almost always VERY uncomfortable. The challenge for churches is that they must not only care deeply for their people but also prioritize reaching those not yet in the church. This often requires us to sacrifice our preferences and pursue a posture of humble dependence on God. While this sounds obvious, it is incredibly difficult to achieve.

The most extreme example I witnessed was a church in NJ that once had over 1000 members in the 1980s and 1990s. They had over 100 vibrant committees with an extremely engaged congregation keeping all their ministries active. However, over the years they slowly became inwardly focused. By the time my team began working with their leadership, they were down to 100 people with the same number of committees - 100! Their people were exhausted, but they refused to adapt and change.

Happily, this is not our story at COS! We are actively working toward a phase of Renewal. From my perspective, church renewal is a rare gift to be celebrated!

As I understand our more recent history, around 7 years ago the elders recognized that COS had plateaued and probably had begun to decline. They decided to intentionally hire a senior pastor who was not a maintainer but who was wired as a visionary/change agent. Change is hard, but, praise God, we are on a good path! While we maintain the same foundational commitments from our inception 50 years ago, the expression of our values is adapting and changing to reach the future. I would urge all of us to pray that this renewal continues and grows.



COS has a great mission, and the Lord has given us the most wonderful privilege of being His ambassadors to a culture and a generation that is bleeding in both despair and hopelessness. At our recent Vision Day, Pastor Kevin presented a big vision for COS to guide us over the next year. As we live **FOR THE ONE**, both in service of our great God and in intentional, outward momentum toward those around us, we desire to reach our local and global communities for Christ and to see our church community fully re-engaged following the challenges of the pandemic.

For this vision to be achieved, we need to experience God's presence so we do not shrink back or give up. To help us with that, we are going to study the book of Joshua these next few months to renew our faith as we see God's presence with ancient Israel!

LETTER FROM THE PASTOR

JOSHUA SERMON SERIES

Our exciting new sermon series on the Old Testament book of Joshua began on June 19 and will continue through October 9. Joshua is the 6th book of the Bible and is often referred to as a bridge book linking the Pentateuch (the first five books of the Bible) with the rest of biblical redemptive history. Joshua recounts the events surrounding Israel's capture and settlement of the land of Canaan with particular emphasis on God's fulfilled promise to the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Israel was promised by the Lord to be chosen and blessed to be a great nation, serving as a signpost to God. Israel was promised a land of rest where they could flourish in a close relationship with God. After the nation wandered in the wilderness for 40 years, Joshua becomes their new leader, the 'new Moses', who by faith will lead God's people into the land and divide it among them as their inheritance from the Lord. Here are just a few of the many rich themes in Joshua that we can look forward to applying to our hearts and minds over the next few months:

- The Lord's abiding presence is the key to strength and courage.
- Listening and obeying the Word of God is our guide to fulfilling the mission He has given us.
- The land and rest are divine gifts.
- The Lord has a heart of the mission and desires to save the 'outsider'. The nation of Israel is blessed and chosen to be a blessing to the other nations.
- The faithfulness of God fulfills His good promises.
- The unity among God's people is crucial to achieving God's mission.

KEVIN'S SABBATICAL

As you know, Pastor Kevin and his wife Cheryl began their sabbatical this month. We are very excited for them to have extended time with God and with their family. Please pray for the Flannerys to have a wonderful season of refreshment.

Drew

Executive Pastor | Acting Senior Pastor

Pastor Drew telling the staff, "Don't worry; we'll be fine!"



GLOBAL OUTREACH UPDATES

What does your summer look like? For many of us, it's a season filled with fun outdoor activities, travel, and time with family and friends. The rhythm of life has a different pace since many of our regular activities take a break during the summer, and we fill the long days with other activities. It's a blessing to be able to have this special season each year.

When we hosted the Welcome Picnic for Afghan families in May, we found a unique open door to be able to step through and bless others with the love of Christ. Many of the families we met are in the middle of a transition. Not only are they learning a new place, language, and customs, many are in temporary housing and don't have family or friends established yet. As we have been learning more about their needs, what we can do to assist, and how to go about doing so, one thing has become abundantly clear, this unique open door won't stay open long. While it's tempting to wait until the summer is over, we have been reminded about how valuable the investment is right now.

One family that we met through the picnic was living in a hotel downtown with their kids in May. A person from our church made friends with their family at the picnic and has gotten together several times over the past month. They visited them at their hotel and had tea together. They invited the family over to their home to have a picnic and play Uno. They took the family to Longwood Gardens for a day away from the city. The COS family has invested in this relationship despite the language barrier, knowing that this gift of friendship would bless both of them. In the past month, the Afghan family has moved from the hotel to other temporary housing and has now signed a lease for a place their resettlement agency found for them in northeast Philly. The Afghan family has asked our COS family to be present as they move into their new home as they are the only people they know from the USA aside from their caseworker. This relationship has flourished in this short window of time, and, while the family is now moving far away, we don't know what the future holds.

There are many families in this same situation. They are still living in hotels downtown, waiting for their resettlement agency to find them housing and a job. They are taking once-a-week English classes online with no one to practice English with them. They don't have friends or connections or networks here to help teach and help navigate this new place. While we can't address every need we come across, there are several ways that we can help. Professionals with great English skills can help create an American resume and network into a job. We can help with practicing English. We can create fun spaces for their kids to play and make friends with American kids. We can create a workshop to learn basic life skills in America. And we can be a friend.

We have created a sign-up list with ways of how you can join in now and be a part of loving the Afghans we have met. [Sign up here!](#)

We also have an opportunity for you to grow your skills and feel more comfortable and confident as you engage. Join a local missions experience. The Muslim focus will be Friday, August 5.

[Sign up here!](#)

MINISTRY UPDATES

SUMMER CAMPS AND STUDENT MISSIONS PRAYER REQUESTS

CAMP LITTLE BEAR (3YR - GOING INTO KINDERGARTEN) - JUNE 20-25

Our campers had an amazing time over the last week learning about God, playing games, making crafts, and creating friendships. Pray that our campers would understand the lessons they learned and form a lifelong connection with God!

C-CAMP (1ST - 4TH GRADES) - JULY 11-15

Pray our campers will enjoy their time at Creation Camp learning about God's truths through Bible time, crafts, games, and snacks. Please also pray that they would understand how God made them uniquely with a purpose to glorify Him! Pray for our volunteer team to be a blessing to our campers and one another, glorying God in all things. Also, we still need volunteers ages 7th grade & up.

ADVENTURE CAMP (5TH - 7TH GRADES) - JULY 31-AUGUST 6

Pray for an awesome week at Streamside Camp in the Poconos! Our theme this year is from John 14:6: "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life. No one comes to the Father except through me." Pray our campers will embrace this truth in their hearts and minds. Pray also for safety, God's wisdom, and the Spirit to lead and guide our camp.

MIDDLE SCHOOL MISSIONS TRIP

Pray that we do God's will as we lead kids' clubs and minister to the local neighbors. Pray also for boldness to share the gospel with the people we meet.

HIGH SCHOOL MISSIONS TRIP

Pray for opportunities to share God's love with refugees and the people in Kansas City. Pray also that our transportation needs will be met as we continue to run into difficulties finding vans to rent.

VISION DAY THANK YOU

Looking back at an amazing Vision Day and 50th Anniversary Celebration! Thank you to all who took part in this special day!



GIVING UPDATE

FISCAL YTD FINANCIAL UPDATE

	<u>Ministry/Operations</u>	<u>Missions</u>
GIVING TO DATE	\$2,750,526	\$695,334
BUDGET	\$2,842,156	\$828,605
OVER/(UNDER)	(-\$91,630)	(-\$133,271)



Text Messaging

Text "**JOIN COS**" to **833-744-9334** to receive alerts or important messages from COS.

Questions & Feedback

We welcome and encourage all inquiries: info@coswayne.org

SOCIAL MEDIA

Follow us on social media by searching "Church of the Saviour" on Facebook and Instagram!