

BRIDGING THE GAP

NOTEBOOK

THE VINEYARD CHURCH | WWW.VINEYARDWHEELING.COM

WESTERN TOWER - SOUTH ELEVATION



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“Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”

MATTHEW 28:19-20

**THIS NOTEBOOK
BELONGS TO:**

IF FOUND, PLEASE RETURN
TO THE VINEYARD CHURCH.

Building A Church For Generations





A Message From Chris



“The best is yet to come!”

Vineyard Family -

For the next six weeks, I want to invite you, along with everyone at The Vineyard, to go on a journey. This notebook is your guide and your journal for this great adventure that we’re calling Bridging The Gap.

I believe with all my heart that God has some amazing bridges He wants to build in your life and through your life for the sake of others. Ahead is a spiritual adventure that will change you personally, our community, and our world if you will come along. It’s not for the faint of heart,

though. We are going to invite God to challenge us, speak to us personally, and call us into deeper waters of faith and service. In the process, we will participate in some exciting high-impact projects and join God in building some bridges.

Here’s what I want you to do with this notebook:

- Be sure to bring this notebook every Sunday as we go through the series and bring it with you to your Life Group meetings.
- Prayerfully read through the material and begin asking God what your bridging the gap story is and how He wants you to move forward in this area of becoming a fully-devoted follower.
- Look for opportunities to share with others your story and how God is challenging you.

The best is yet to come, and this season of our history will truly be historic. Be here every week, listen for God’s voice, courageously follow His lead, and I promise you will never be the same, and neither will our community.

Chris Figaretti

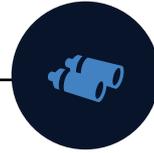
Our mission



Helping people find and follow God.

Our mission is clear and given to us by Jesus himself. Helping people find and follow God is what we do! By its very nature, it's a bridge-building endeavor. Building bridges between God and the people that He so desperately loves.

Our vision



The vision of The Vineyard is to impact so many lives with the Gospel that it changes the very culture of our community. To be a light of grace and love that shines so brightly that it illuminates the darkness and draws people to God.

Our Core Values

1. Found People Find People [John 1:35-51]
2. God's People Grow [Colossians 2:1-12]
3. Saved People Serve People [Matthew 20:25-28]
4. All People Need People [Ecclesiastes 4:7-12]
5. Grateful People Are Generous People [2 Corinthians 9:6-15]

Defining Moments

Unless the Lord builds the house, the builders labor in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, the guards stand watch in vain.



Psalms 127:1



1979 Church Plant

God calls a group from California to plant a church in Wheeling.



1996 Church Construction

After renting multiple spaces over 18 years, a huge step of faith is taken to purchase land and build the facility on Warden Run Road.





2015 Highlands Campus

In search of more space for Sunday services, multiple theaters were rented at Marquee Cinema for an additional location.

2018 Capitol Theatre

Out of space yet again, the church moves Sunday services to The Capitol Theatre to better reach the community and make room for people to connect in the life of the church.

2021 Costa Rica

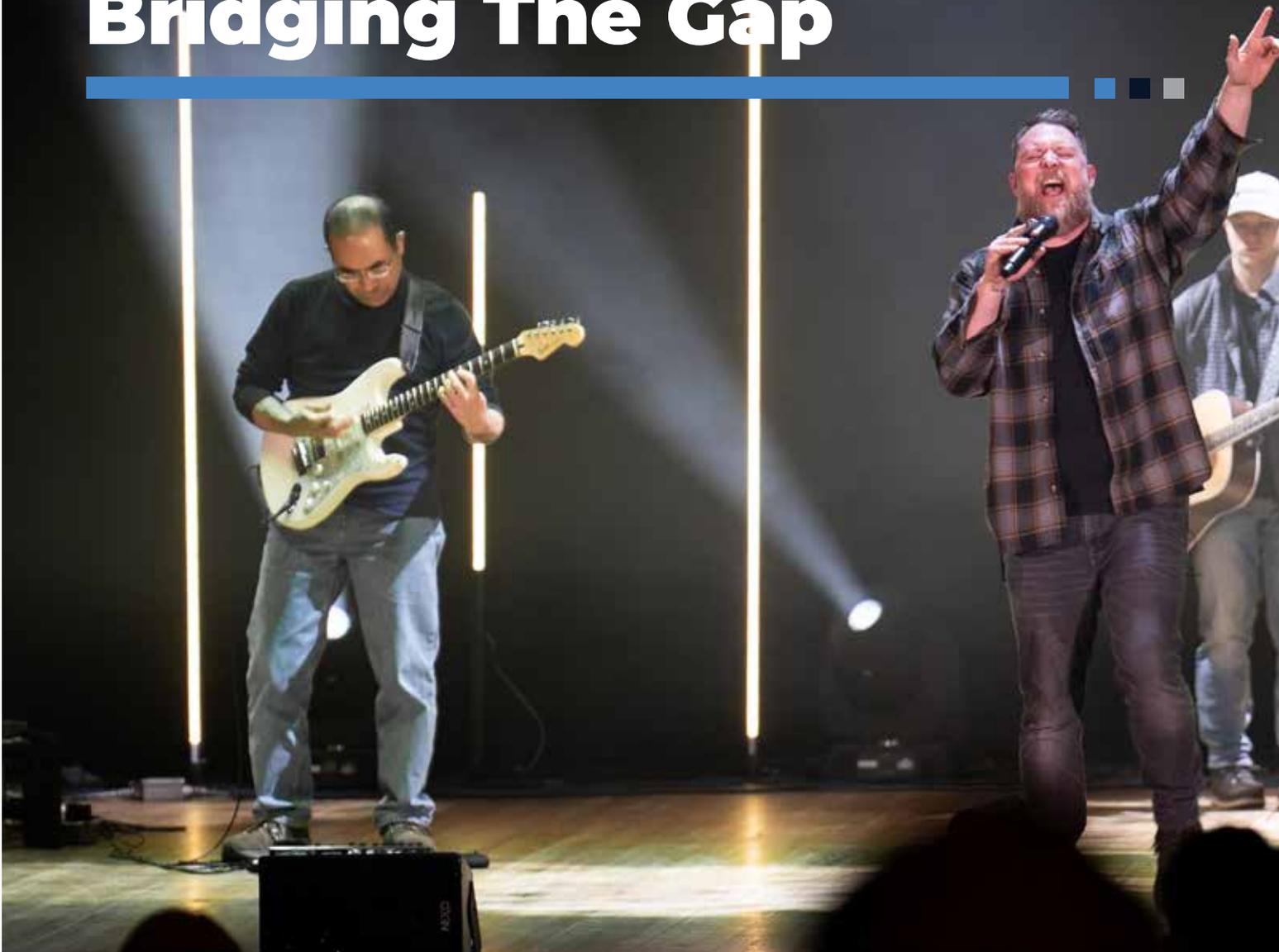
The Vineyard is presented with an international mission opportunity to provide a daily meal and share the gospel with street kids in Costa Rica.

2022 Kids Center

The building at 1015 Main Street is purchased to become the home of Vineyard Kids and a hub for the church on Sundays.



Introducing Bridging The Gap





What It Means To Bridge The Gap

OUR BRIDGES



“Build a place that kids will love, and they will bring their parents and siblings.”

— Pastor Chris

Bridge #1 Kid Center and Fellowship Space for Sunday Morning Services

BRIDGING THE GAP TO THE NEXT GENERATION

— The growth of The Vineyard’s children’s ministry spurred the purchase of The Kids Center on the corner of 10th and Main Street. As culture continues to lead the next generation away from God, the church must build solid, strategic, and compelling bridges to reach them. We have an opportunity here to not only connect kids with Jesus but their families as well. We can transform this tired old building at the gateway to our city into a children’s wonderland with a street-level gathering space that will wow our whole community!

Bridge #2 Bridge Center Childcare and Preschool

BRIDGING THE GAP TO FAMILIES

— An often overlooked crisis in the Ohio Valley is access to childcare. Local providers have a waitlist of 2-3 years. The renovation of The Kids Center will provide space to establish a Christian childcare and preschool center. The center will provide an amazing opportunity to minister to children and families throughout the week.



*Concept art.
Actual may vary.*

Bridge #3: Hope Center for Women

BRIDGING THE GAP TO THE BROKEN

— Last fall, we raised funds to establish a men’s addiction recovery home in partnership with Hope Center Ministries. After almost a year of searching for an appropriate facility, we called the church to pray this past October. A facility was found and purchased, and the center opened in December. Our next step in ministering to the broken and addicted in our community is to open a Women’s Hope Center.

Bridge #4: Church Expansion In Costa Rica

BRIDGING THE GAP TO THE LEAST

— Our church history is rich in making disciples of all nations. Over the last year, we have supported a ministry feeding street kids each day from low-income families in Costa Rica, while sharing the love of Christ with them. We have the opportunity to bridge the gap with the support of additional structures to provide a church space, expand the meal center, and add a childcare facility.

Our Goals:

Primary Goal

100% ENGAGEMENT

Our goal is for every person who calls The Vineyard home, to engage in Bridging The Gap and be willing to take a next step of growth in this area of generosity.

Whether you are a first-time giver, a sometimes giver, or a consistent giver, there is a next step God is asking you to take in this journey.

If 100% of the people at The Vineyard become fully engaged, we expect to see an increase in generosity like we have never seen before.

Secondary Goal

AN ADDITIONAL \$2.5 M OVER THE NEXT TWO YEARS

Our secondary goal is to raise the funds to bridge the gap to the next generation, families, the broken, and the least.

How will you respond?

PRAY

This is the first and most important step in preparing your heart to respond to God's call to action. Ask God daily what He would have you give to Bridging The Gap and how He will use you to influence our community and world.

LISTEN

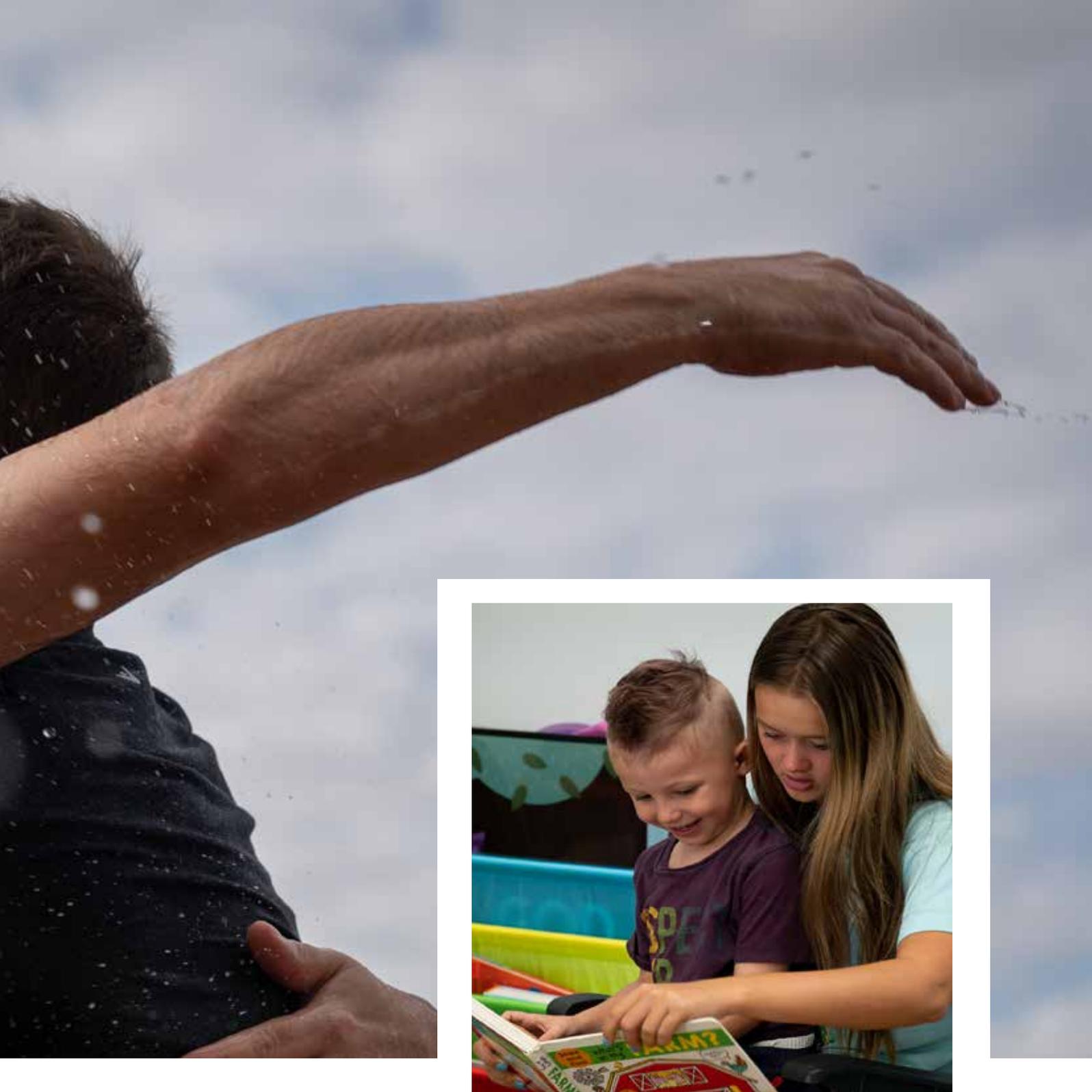
Part of the spiritual growth that God has for each one of us in this season is learning to listen better for His voice and guidance. As you pray, take time to listen for what He is telling you.

OBEY

Do what He tells you. God is looking for followers who will listen for His voice and obey, and that is what we are leaning into in this series. If you do, you will grow personally, and together we will expand our impact in our community and beyond. God's Kingdom will grow and your purpose in it will expand. It doesn't get better than that.

Message Notes & Life Group Guide





MESSAGE NOTES

WEEK 1: Mission

Scripture

Matthew 28:19-20, Romans 10:13-15, 2 Corinthians 5:18-20, Genesis 12:1-2

Notes

Three Gifts

1. You need a purpose to live for that takes priority over your comfort.
2. You have been blessed to be the blessing.
3. You get to choose who you will live for: Him or you.

Group Discussion

Q1: Whether this is the first time you have heard the story of the Vineyard Wheeling or the 100th, what stood out to you in hearing Chris share our history?

Q2: What are some clear ways you can see that God has been at work in bringing the Vineyard Wheeling to where we are today?

Q3: What is the mission of the church? What does that mission mean to you in a practical sense?

Q4: What are the three problems God is calling our church to address and the four bridges He is calling us to build? What opportunities and challenges can you see in these three problems and four bridges?

Group Discussion

Q5: Why is a bridge a good metaphor for our role in advancing God's kingdom? Have you ever thought of yourself as a bridge builder? Has someone else ever built a bridge to you for God to lift you up? Have you or are you currently building bridges for God's kingdom to others? Share your stories in your group to encourage one another.

Q6: Chris told us that God has three gifts for us. What do you think of each of these? What will you do with each of these? Will you let God shape your priorities, perspective, and faith, or choose comfort? Talk about this in your group.

Q7: Read the key scriptures together in your group. Discuss how these apply to what you heard in the message. When you read these together, what is God calling you to do through these scriptures?

Ask

Pray individually and together as a group. Ask God to give you a passion for serving as His ambassador and bridge builder. Ask God to reveal your purpose - both in life and in the church's mission. Ask Him to give you the courage to seek and fulfill that purpose over your comfort. Tell God that you are surrendering your heart to Him because He is good (1 John 1:5), He cares for you (1 Peter 5:7), and you trust Him and His will to result in good (Proverbs 3:5-6 and Romans 8:28).

My Action Steps:

1. Commit to coming back next week.
2. Commit to pray individually and regularly for this bridge-building mission and your role.
3. Join or start a Life Group. If you'd like to join a Life Group, stop by one of the tables in the lobby after church or visit our website (vineyardwheeling.com). If you'd like to start a Life Group with people you know, see one of the staff or volunteers in the lobby after church. We'll help you get started quickly and easily.

MESSAGE NOTES

WEEK 2: Transformation

Scripture

Romans 12:2, 2 Corinthians 10:3-5, Acts 9:1-19, Matthew 6:24, 33, Proverbs 3:9, Genesis 4:1-5

Notes

Keys To Transformation

1. God's desire for your life is nothing short of transformation.
2. Transformation = Information + Application.
3. Transform your giving, transform your faith.
4. When you choose to put God first, and He gets your best, your life will be transformed.

The financial pattern of God's Kingdom is: Give - Save - Spend, in that order.

Group Discussion

Q1: Chris told us this would be one of the most significant sermon series we have done as a church and for you personally. Why do you think it is so significant for us as a church? Why does it have the potential to be so significant for you?

Q2: Has God transformed you? If you said yes, how? Can you think of any steps you took or events that were pivotal in that transformation? Looking back, how would you describe yourself before that transformation(s)? How would you describe yourself since God has been transforming you? If you said no, what do you think is missing? What will you do about that?

Q3: What does it mean to be conformed to the pattern of this world? What does Romans 12:2 tell us is the result of being transformed? Is this something you desire? Why did you answer that way?

Q4: Transformation = Information + Application. What does this mean? Thinking back to the transformation story you shared in Q2, can you apply this method to that story? What information did you have that had previously needed to be added? What step of faith (application) did you apply to that information? Why was the correct information important? Why was the application important to that transformation happening?

Group Discussion

Q5: Why is being in community with others (i.e., in a group) as you walk through this transformation so important (see 1 John 1:3-4)? Talk through the reasons together in your group to encourage each other.

Q6: What does it mean to be a steward or to practice stewardship? What are some differences between a good steward and a bad steward? What are some characteristics of each? What are some outcomes a good steward might see? How about a bad steward? How does this concept of stewardship apply personally to your transformation?

Q7: What is faith (Hebrews 11:1-2 defines faith, and you can read stories of faith if you read all of Hebrews 11)? How is giving related to faith? How is giving your first and your best related to your faith?

Q8: Read the key scriptures together in your group. Discuss how these apply to what you heard in the message. What is God calling you to do through these scriptures?

Ask

Pray individually and together as a group. Ask God to reveal to you where your heart and mind are - are they conformed to the pattern of this world? If so, listen to what God tells you to do to renew your mind and be transformed. Ask God to give you the courage to look honestly at your finances and (if you're married) to have that hard conversation with your spouse if needed. Ask Him to transform your financial pattern into His financial pattern. Invite Him to be your Savior and the Lord of your life, and commit to listening and obeying Him.

My Action Steps:

1. Take the step of faith (application) in transforming how you manage money to match the financial pattern of God's Kingdom: Give - Save - Spend.
2. If you lack the information on how to get out of debt and manage your money, sign up for Financial Peace University Online at vineyardwheeling.com or contact the church.
3. Commit to pray, listen for God, and obey what He tells you.

MESSAGE NOTES

WEEK 3: Trust

Scripture

1 Corinthians 9:6-11, Joshua 3:13, 15, Joshua 6:2-5, Proverbs 3:5-6, Malachi 3:10, John 3:16-17

Notes

Keys To Trusting God

1. Until you trust God with everything, you will trust Him with nothing.
2. Trust is built on believing God and stepping out in obedience.
3. Trusting God is the secret to the best life.
4. First and best, giving teaches our hearts to trust.
5. God made the first move.

Group Discussion

Q1: What do you consider to be “your community”? Do you love your community? How do you show your love for your community? Do you have a burden for your community? How does this burden work out in how you live your life?

Q2: What does it mean to trust God? Do you believe that you trust God? Does how you live and steward your resources show that you trust God?

Q3: Steps of faith: Trust = Belief + Application
What does this mean? Can you think of a time when you trusted God for something that everything around you said didn't make sense? Thinking back to that time, can you apply this method of trust to that occasion? What happened? What step of faith (application) did you apply to your belief? Why was the application step of faith necessary for your trust in God to grow?

Q4: What are the goals of tithing and giving extravagantly? Is it to become a good giver, to earn something from God, or something else? If something else, what?

Group Discussion

Q5: If you tithe, do you have any stories about how God has blessed you as you've trusted Him? Share these stories in your group to encourage one another.

Q6: Have you trusted Jesus to save you from your sins? Is there anything you are not trusting to Him?

Q7: Read the key scriptures together in your group. Discuss how these apply to what you heard in the message. When you read these together, what is God calling you to do through these scriptures?

Ask

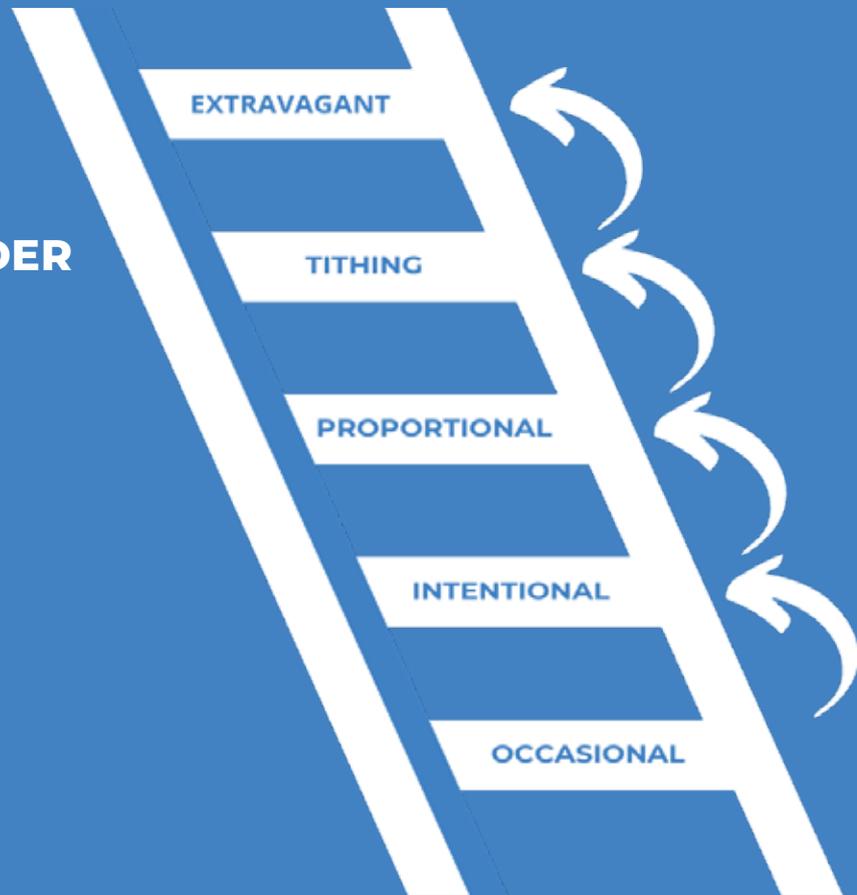
Pray individually and together as a group. Declare that you believe in God; ask God to help you with your unbelief (Mark 9:24). Declare out loud that you believe God is smarter than you are. Declare that you believe that God loves you. Declare that God's plan is better than your plan. Declare that God is good.

If you've never asked Jesus to be your Savior, you can ask Him now - Lord, I confess that I am a sinner, and I know I can't save myself. I'm sorry for my sin and I turn from what I know is wrong in my life. Thank You that You died on that cross for me to save me from my sin. I accept Your gift of forgiveness and ask You into my life. Please send Your Holy Spirit to live in me, guide me, and teach me to live for You as my Lord. In Jesus' Name, I pray. Amen.

My Action Steps:

1. Take the step of faith (application) of trusting God and obeying Him with your finances. See the diagram below, (see page 46 for descriptions). Where are you now? Where will you commit to being?

GENEROSITY LADDER MARK YOUR STEP



2. Sign up for Financial Peace University Online at vineyardwheeling.com for practical steps to get out of debt and manage your money.

3. Commit to pray, listen for God, and obey what He tells you.

MESSAGE NOTES

WEEK 4: Sacrifice

Scripture

Romans 12:1-2, Genesis 22:1-19, Hebrews 11: 11-12, 17-19, Luke 21:1-4, Genesis 13:1-4, 8-9, Proverbs 19:17, Proverbs 11:24, Luke 6:38, 2 Corinthians 9:6-8, 10

Notes

1. Living sacrifices crawl off the altar.
2. God blesses the uncomfortable sacrifice.
3. God will test your faith from time to time through sacrifice.
4. The pathway to blessings runs through sacrifice.

Group Discussion

Q1: We talked about Romans 12:2 a couple weeks ago; let's revisit that - what does it mean to be transformed by renewing your mind? How is that transformation related to God's will? What is the relationship between Romans 12:1 and 12:2?

Q2: Does your current level of generosity and giving require you to have faith that God will provide? Why or why not did you answer this way? C.S. Lewis wrote, "The only safe rule when it comes to generosity is to give until it scares you because only then do you know that you are giving by faith." When you read that quote, what comes to mind? Does that describe you? Is that something you want?

Q3: In Genesis 22, God asked Abraham if he was willing to sacrifice the thing he loved the most, Issac, through whom God had promised to make a nation of God's people from Abraham's descendants. Share with your group what you think and feel as you read Genesis 22 together. When you read Hebrews 11:11-12, 17-19, what is God telling you about how sacrifice and faith are related?

Q4: Why do you think God asks us to sacrifice? What is something you own that you think you couldn't live without? What comes to mind if you think of giving or selling that item and giving the proceeds away? Why do you think you have that reaction to "losing" that item?

Group Discussion

Q5: Do you believe that God tests us? Have you experienced this? What happened? Share with your group?

Q6: What might God be calling you to sacrifice?

Q7: Read the key scriptures together in your group. Discuss how these apply to what you heard in the message. When you read these together, what is God calling you to do through these scriptures?

Ask

Pray individually and together as a group. Thank God for His grace, mercy, and provision in your life. Praise Him for who He is. Read Psalm 139:23-24 to God in prayer. Ask God to search your heart - is there anything He reveals that you have not been obedient in? Is there anything or anyone that you are placing above God (an idol)? Confess that and promise to turn from that (repent). Ask God what He's calling you to sacrifice or give up. Ask Him to give you the faith and courage to trust Him enough to obey Him in this.

My Action Steps:

1. What might God be calling you to sacrifice or give up? If it's financial, is it to the next level on the generosity ladder (see pages 46-47)? Or is He asking you to sell something because of it's hold on you? If He is calling you to a generous sacrifice, what will you do with His call?
2. Commit to pray, listen for God, and obey what He tells you.

MESSAGE NOTES

WEEK 5: Surrender

Scripture

Luke 21:1-4, 1 Kings 17:7-14, Romans 8:28

Notes

1. Surrender is the commitment move.
2. In God's economy, the amount sacrificed is more important than the amount given.
3. If you surrender everything to God, He will provide everything you need.

Group Discussion

Q1: Chris defined surrender as doing what God says (obedience) even if it makes you uncomfortable and/or you don't understand. Why is it hard to surrender what you want to God and choose what He wants instead? Can you think of a time God called you to something that made you uncomfortable or you didn't understand? Were you afraid? What happened? What did you do? What was the outcome?

Q2: How is surrender tied to your heart? How do trust and faith tie in?

Q3: Last week, we asked you to pray persistently and ask God if He is calling you to sacrifice something. Have you been praying? What has God revealed to you? What is He telling you to do about that? How will you get the courage and faith to do what He's telling you to do?

Q4: How does the thought of surrendering to God make you feel? Excited? Afraid? Anxious? Hopeful? Expectant? Talk this over in your group. Encourage one another (the origin of the word encourage means to "put courage into") and lift one another in prayer!

Group Discussion

Q5: Read Romans 8:28 together out loud in your group. How does this verse tie into the concept of surrender and, specifically, what He is calling you to surrender?

Q7: Read the key scriptures together in your group. Discuss how these apply to what you heard in the message. When you read these together, what is God calling you to do through these scriptures?

Ask

Pray individually and together as a group. Thank God for His grace, mercy, and provision in your life. Praise Him for who He is. Declare to God that everything you have is His, and you will obey Him because you believe His promises to care for you, provide for you, and cause all things to work together for good. Ask God to stretch your generosity and as He does so, grow your faith. Thank God for putting you into a community with other believers (this group) who are here to encourage you, pray for you, and be there for you as you follow God.

My Action Steps:

1. Last week, we asked you to ask God what He is calling you to sacrifice. What is He telling you? What will you do with what He's telling you?
2. You received a commitment card - pray over the specific step you're going to make, fill out that commitment card, and bring it back next week.
3. Commit to prayer, listen for God, and obey what He tells you.

MESSAGE NOTES

WEEK 6: Commitment

Scripture

1 Chronicles 2

Notes

1. God owns everything.
2. He asks us to give Him the first and best part of what we have.
3. Heart Check Moment: Giving reminds our hearts that God is our God and money is not.
4. Giving is an act of worship. We are telling God that He is first.
5. Giving is an act of participation in His Kingdom. We seek His Kingdom first and know everything else will be OK.

Group Discussion

Q1: What is a defining moment? Can you think of any defining moments in your life? In your family? What were the risks in those defining moments?

Q2: Why are comfort and preferences a threat to the collective mission God calls us to, as followers of Jesus? How are they a threat to what God is calling you to personally?

Q3: Chris called us to commit to re-ordering our life according to God's priorities. What will that look like in your life, not just financially but with all your resources and commitments? What will that look like In your family?

Q4: In making our commitment, we receive gifts: a vision worth sacrificing for, a purpose worth participating in, a practical step to take in our discipleship, an experience of God's blessing, and a tangible act of worship. Think about each of these. Can you see how each is a gift? Are there any you're not sure about? Talk this over in your group together.

Group Discussion

Q5: Read the key scripture together in your group. Discuss how it applies to what you heard in the message. When you read this together, what is God calling you to do through this scripture?

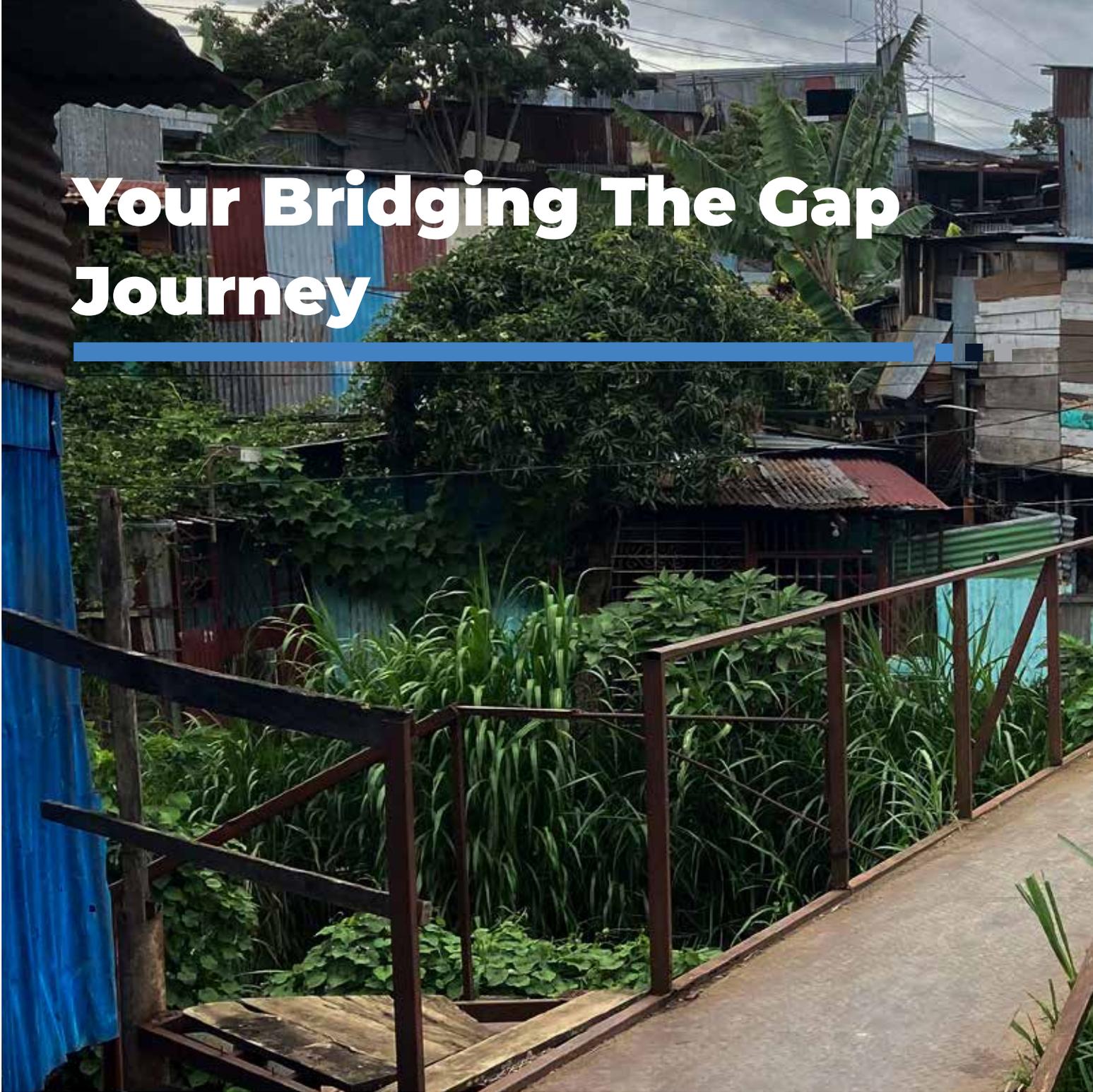
Ask

Pray individually and together as a group. Spend time praising and worshiping God together as a group. Thank Him for what He has done over the past six weeks and continues to do in each of your lives and your group. Thank Him for how He has been answering your prayers during this series, and ask Him to continue to give you the courage you need as you keep on surrendering to Him as He calls you to.

My Action Steps:

1. If your group is temporary, talk about committing to becoming a Life Group and continuing to meet regularly to encourage, share, and pray for one another.
2. Commit to pray, listen for God, and obey what He tells you.

Your Bridging The Gap Journey







Taking The Next Steps



As we focus on Bridging The Gap, we will all have the opportunity to make a commitment by filling out a commitment card. This card is designed to help you arrive at the total amount that you believe God is calling you to give to Bridging the Gap over the next two years.

We hope you'll sense this as an essential discipleship moment as you take the next steps to grow in generous giving like never before. Whether you're brand new or have been giving to The Vineyard Church for a long time, you're invited to prayerfully consider taking a bold step forward.

A dark, moody photograph of a couple embracing, serving as a background for the text. The image is in black and white, with the couple's forms silhouetted against a slightly lighter background. The man is on the left, and the woman is on the right, her arms wrapped around his neck and shoulders. The overall atmosphere is intimate and romantic.

**A lifetime
of faith
starts with
a step of
obedience.**

Next Steps In A Life Of Generosity

OCCASIONAL GIVER

An occasional giver gives sporadically and usually when they have something left over at the end of the week, the month, or the year and/or are emotionally moved in the moment.

INTENTIONAL GIVER

An intentional giver has made a choice to practice and grow the habit of giving. They give a regular amount on a regular basis.

PROPORTIONAL GIVER

A proportional giver has set a percentage of income as their giving amount and has made the decision to give God the first part of the increase He has blessed them with.

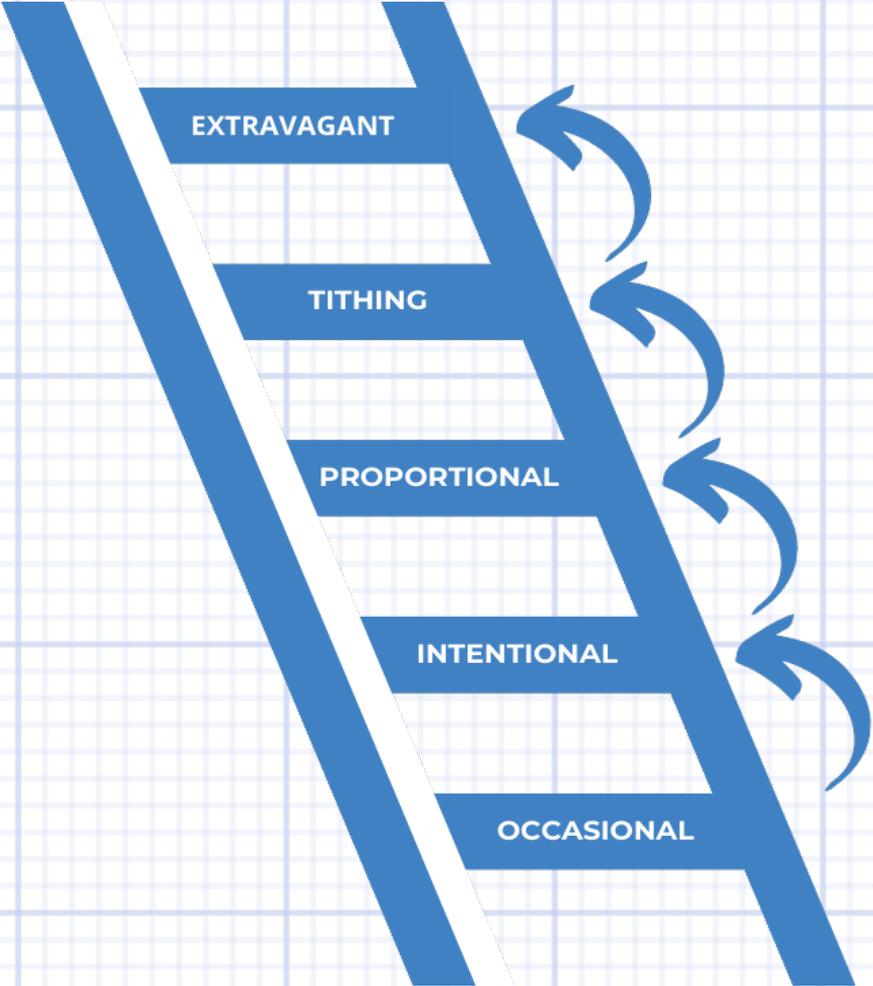
TITHING GIVER

A tithing giver is a proportional giver who has decided to give back to God the first 10% of their income by donating to their local church.

EXTRAVAGANT GIVER

An extravagant giver gives the 10% tithe plus. They may increase their percentage over time or make specific offerings over and above the 10% tithe. Extravagant givers tend to be more concerned with what they are not giving rather than what they are and recognize that everything they have is 100% God's.

Where are you on your giving journey?



Where is God calling you to be?



Guide To Your Commitment Card

Pray over your commitment card as you prepare to present your card on Commitment Sunday, March 19th. Use this sample as you prayerfully consider your commitment to Bridging The Gap.

MY COMMITMENT

\$ _____ What I/we normally give in a year

+ \$ _____ My/our additional annual
generosity commitment

= \$ _____ x 2 = \$ _____

My/our stored resources
(savings, stocks, real estate, etc.)

\$ _____

**MY TOTAL GIVING OVER
THE NEXT TWO YEARS**

\$ _____

GIFT CHART

Every single gift will contribute to our overall vision. Allow this Gift Chart tool to inspire and challenge you toward great generosity as we embark on Bridging The Gap together. What would it look like for you to grow your generosity and stretch beyond your comfort zone?

TWO-YEAR GOAL: \$2.5M				
GIFTS NEEDED	TWO-YEAR GIFT LEVEL	ANNUAL GIFT OF	MONTHLY GIFT OF	GIFT LEVEL TOTAL
1	\$250,000	\$125,000	\$10,417	\$250,000
1	\$150,000	\$75,000	\$6,250	\$150,000
2	\$100,000	\$50,000	\$4,167	\$200,000
4	\$50,000	\$25,000	\$2,083	\$200,000
4	\$30,000	\$15,000	\$1,250	\$120,000
6	\$24,000	\$12,000	\$1,000	\$144,000
8	\$20,000	\$10,000	\$833	\$160,000
10	\$15,000	\$7,500	\$625	\$150,000
20	\$12,000	\$6,000	\$500	\$240,000
25	\$10,000	\$5,000	\$417	\$250,000
35	\$7,500	\$3,750	\$313	\$262,500
40	\$5,000	\$2,500	\$208	\$200,000
50	\$2,500	\$1,250	\$104	\$112,500
MANY	\$1,000	\$500	\$42	\$50,000



Frequently Asked Questions



What are you asking me to do?

We are asking you to pray and seek God for how He wants you to respond. Prepare your heart to hear Him and listen to what He says. Talk with your spouse and your family about what this commitment will mean for this next season. Respond to the generosity of the Gospel by giving extravagantly for the progress of the Gospel in our church family, among our neighbors, and around the world.

How long is my commitment?

We are asking that everyone make a two-year commitment. The fulfillment period for your commitment will begin with our first Bridging The Gap Commitment Sunday on March 19, 2023, and will culminate in March 2025.

What if I'm new around here?

We're excited that you are considering partnering with us! The local church is God's "Plan A" for helping people follow in the way of Christ, reaching our community, and bringing the Gospel to the nations. Bridging The Gap is a great time and way to identify as one church body and say, "I am all-in for the Gospel!" We'd love to talk with you about how you can get connected with the Vineyard. And of course you are always welcome to visit our website (vineyardwheeling.com) to take a look around and see what's going on.

What if I've never given to The Vineyard before?

If you have never given financially to The Vineyard, Bridging The Gap is a great first step! Bridging The Gap offers an opportunity for everyone in the church to give so that everyone can be part of what God is building. God is the ultimate Giver and He calls His people to give generously and sacrificially. This project is a call to radical generosity for everyone at The Vineyard. If you have never given before, this is your chance to join us with a joyful commitment.

What were the results of the NEXT Initiative, from November 2012 to November 2015?

NEXT was our kick-off to reaching our community and the world for Jesus. We ended the initiative with over \$711,000 raised to achieve these life-changing results.

Discipleship Results:

- 367 New Believers
- 1165 First-time Guests
- 167 Believers Baptized

Expansion Results:

- Purchased the Outreach Outfitter, a warehouse and logistics center for outreach and service to our community and world. The outfitter has served as a staging ground for ministry in the community, offsite events, and is the regional headquarters for Operation Christmas Child, and more.
- Outfitted 8 churches in Vietnam with audio visual equipment and trained 70 pastors.
- Launched a video campus at the Highlands that eventually led us to the Capitol.

Video Campuses remain part of our long-term vision of reaching the state of West Virginia, but we believe God has led us to concentrate on Wheeling in this season.

Are there additional ways besides cash that I can give to Bridging The Gap?

Be creative as you explore ways you and your family can give. Consider stored assets that you own. Gifts of appreciated property (stocks, mutual funds, etc.) often make great gifts with significant tax advantages. Please consult with a professional advisor for advice in your particular circumstance. If you need assistance with making a gift of stock, we would be happy to help. You can contact Julie, our Executive Director, for questions and instructions on how to do this (julie@vineyardwheeling.com).

What if I'm a college student?

God has blessed The Vineyard by allowing us to invest in the lives of college students here in The Ohio Valley. Although college students are notorious for living on tight budgets, the college years are an ideal time to develop a Kingdom-focused plan in personal budgeting and generous giving. This is a time when students from the colleges and universities represented at The Vineyard Church can join forces and go all-in by giving over the next two years to help us bridge the gap.

What if I don't have a job right now? What does that mean for my Bridging The Gap commitment?

God knows our every need, and The Vineyard wants to help meet the needs in our church and our community. If you do not have a job and are actively seeking one, we'd love for you to share this with Mike (mike.camden@vineyardwheeling.com) our Campus Pastor, so that our prayer team can be praying for you. Also, consider connecting to a Life Group, where you will find a community of people ready to encourage you and pray with you. We hope that you will be able to find a job so you can be engaged in all that God has for you.

What if I can't afford to give right now?

Even in times of scarcity, God wants our hearts. The widow who gave her last mite did not make a very big financial contribution, but Jesus said she gave the most significant gift of all. Bridging The Gap is about all of us coming together, giving as God leads, and trusting God to do the rest. It may mean that God is asking you to trust Him by making a faith commitment that you do not know how to fulfill right now. God has supplied our every need in Christ, and we trust that He will honor a heart that wants to give faithfully in response to the Gospel. Bridging The Gap means all of us, together — for each other, for our neighbors, and for our world.

There may also be ways to be sacrificial with your lifestyle to create margin for generosity in your life. Some will cancel cable, and some will ditch subscription services. Others will play a little less golf, while others will forego a few caramel macchiatos or dinners out. Some families will buy a smaller home or rent a smaller apartment to be able to give generously for the progress of the Gospel. Find ways to involve the entire family in the process. Use this as an opportunity to teach children and grandchildren to obey the Lord with a generous heart and to trust Him. This is a great opportunity to take a look at our overall stewardship of all that God has entrusted to us.

What if I'm in debt right now? Am I still supposed to give?

It's important for generosity to be part of our lives at every point. If you are in the process of paying off debt, we commend you, and you should continue to do so. But, the Bible does not teach that we withhold giving until we are debt-free. When we honor God first with our giving, He promises to be involved with every other aspect of our finances. Also, we invite you to attend Financial Peace University, where you will learn some great principles of personal finance and God's perspective on our stewardship of His resources. You can let Mike (mike.camden@vineyardwheeling.com) our Campus Pastor, know you're interested in attending, and he will connect you with resources and help you sign up for the next class.



How much is enough?

Knowing that we should give can be easy, but knowing how much to give presents a greater challenge. God has always had His people give the “first fruits” of His provision back to Him. Throughout the Old Testament, this took the form of the tithe. Approximately 400 years before the Biblical Law was given, Abraham and Jacob offered the Lord a tithe of everything He had given to them. The word “tithe” simply means “a tenth.” In response to the provision and the promise of God, these heroes of the faith offered the Lord not merely a tenth of their income but a tenth of everything God had given to them.

The Law codifies the principle of giving a tithe, but it also makes provision for peace offerings and freewill offerings to the Lord. Even the Law encouraged the people of God to exceed the minimum requirements of the Law!

Christ fulfilled the promise of the Law. Rather than giving us an excuse for no longer giving a tenth, it should motivate us to give in grateful response to God. He keeps His promise and allows us the joy of being a part of His plan for meeting the needs of His people. In Acts, the Church did not allow a legalistic reading of the tithe to limit their generosity. Instead, they saw the immense needs among the Body of Christ and gave accordingly.

In short, “first fruit giving” is a universal biblical principle. The tithe is an excellent place to start for many Believers, but it is not a good place to stay. The principle that guides us as we give is this: “For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though He was rich, yet for your sake, He became poor, so that you by His poverty might become rich.”

(2 Corinthians 8:9).

The King of Kings left heaven to give His life. So, how then shall we give?

Why do churches talk about money and finances?

Jesus spoke more about money than he did about heaven and hell combined. People take different spiritual steps at different times. Some people begin praying before they attend church. Others go to a Life Group before they begin talking to God in prayer. Giving is a critical spiritual step; it comes at different times for different people. Like all other spiritual disciplines, giving draws us closer to God, and God expects that faithful followers of Christ will be joyful and generous givers. Paul is so concerned about our tendency to separate our giving from our living of the Christian life, that he admonishes us to excel in the grace of giving (2 Corinthians 8:7). Giving is an essential part of the Christian life.

We talk about money routinely because money is a frequent area of spiritual attack. The enemy wants to rob you of the joy of giving and allow Christians to excuse their failure to give. He does this because a person that gives generously is a person that knows the joy of the Lord and is making an impact on the community. We refuse to believe the lie that we can be devoted followers of Christ while we are stingy with God's resources.

Jesus tells us, "Where your treasure is, there your heart will be also" (Matthew 6:21). The questions God calls us to consider are, "Do you love Christ and His Gospel?" "What is Christ worth?" and "How much do you long for the progress of the Gospel?" According to Jesus, your answers to these questions are found in where you place your treasure. What does your treasure say about your heart for Christ and His Gospel?

**Let's build bridges
between Jesus
and people for
generations to come!**



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