

LIVING
IT OUT



**DAILY
BIBLE
STUDY**



CEDARCREEKCHURCH

The Rock We're Built On - 25 Years

October 12, 2020

This past weekend, CedarCreek celebrated its 25-year anniversary. Do you realize just how long 25 years is? That's long enough for a child to be born; grow into an adult; get a bachelor's degree; spend a year or two wondering what she's doing with her life and if God has a plan for her; apply for an internship she's not even sure she wants at the church where she grew up; get accepted; realize she loves the work she's doing there; and eventually, get hired. And that's my story.

You could say CedarCreek has played a huge role in my life, and I'm proud to call it home, especially because of the key themes that have been part of CedarCreek's story throughout its 25 years.

Here at CedarCreek, we believe the local church is the hope of the world.

People don't change because of laws, facts, convincing arguments or interesting information. Do you know what consistently changes lives? God's love as seen through the kindness of other people.

Big changes require a lot of small, individual changes. If you want to transform the world, you have to start at home, then in your own community, one person at a time. That's what the local church—*all* local churches—are for. They are part of a life-giving movement, bringing about God's redemption one individual story at a time, all across the world.

So how do people reach other people?

Here at CedarCreek, we have a rebellious spirit that demands "real."

If you want to see your life change and help others do the same, you'll need to start by taking off your mask and showing the world the *real* you. God's light doesn't shine through "perfect people"—it's best seen through people who will honestly admit: "This is who I was before Jesus. These are the things I've done, the people I've hurt, and what's been done to me. I was just like you—but listen to what Jesus did for me and is now doing through me."

2 Corinthians 12:9

Each time he said, "My grace is all you need. My power works best in weakness." So now I am glad to boast about my weaknesses, so that the power of Christ can work through me.

Recognizing your need for Jesus Christ is just the first step—a huge, significant, life-changing step, but God has so much more in store for you!

John 10:10

“The thief’s purpose is to steal and kill and destroy. My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life.”

Here at CedarCreek, we passionately invite people to take next steps on their spiritual journey.

God wants us to know him personally, finding true freedom and healing through his love. He wants to redeem us from the attitudes and actions that hurt others. He wants us to discover how he designed us for a life of purpose and meaning as we serve the cause of Christ. And he wants us to share his love with others. Now that’s a life worth living.

Some people think the Christian life is boring, but when I hear all of that, I get so excited. It sounds like an adventure!

Here at CedarCreek, we will call you to boldly lay down your life for a greater adventure.

Matthew 16:25

“If you try to hang on to your life, you will lose it. But if you give up your life for my sake, you will save it.”

Thank you, CedarCreek, for helping me to know God, find freedom, discover my purpose, and make a difference in the lives of others. Thank you for the role you played in making me the person I am today and for the way you’re shaping my future. May I, in turn, do all I can to help provide the same for others.

Over the next four days, we’ll examine other key themes from our church’s story. If you’re new to CedarCreek and want to know what we’re all about, you picked a great week to be reading the [LivingItOut](#). Even if you’ve been part of CedarCreek for years, I highly encourage you to read it every day this week—it’s good to be reminded exactly why we do things the way we do as a church.

Questions:

Do you agree with the values mentioned here? Which do you agree with most?

Which is most important to you? Why? How can you live out that value in your daily life?

Next Steps:

If you agree with these values, live like it. Get connected with and advocate for your local church. Be courageously real, and be a safe person for others to be real around. Look for your next step, and help those around you to do the same. Be willing to set down your preferences and comforts in favor of the more satisfying adventure Jesus invites us into!

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, thank you for the local church—for CedarCreek, and for all local, life-giving churches. Thank you for the way they're introducing people to you and changing lives like mine. Thank you that, because of you, we don't have to wear masks or pretend to be okay. Thank you for the satisfying adventure you invite us into! Help us to be authentic, to take next steps and to help others do the same, and to boldly lay down our lives for you. May your will be done in us and through us. Amen.

This post was written by Payton Lechner, a regular contributor and editor of the LivingItOut.

Relentless God - 25 Years

October 13, 2020

My family started attending CedarCreek Church 21 years ago when our two daughters were in preschool and kindergarten. Although I had accepted Jesus as my Savior as a young girl, I would have considered myself “saved” but not in a relationship with Jesus. My husband, Jeff, was raised not to believe in God. He was taught that all a church wanted was your money. He attended CedarCreek for about a year and read his Bible, but he made the choice not to believe in Christianity. At that time, the Bible didn’t make sense to him, and he just wasn’t interested.

My husband is a wonderful man. He’s always had strong morals. He is an excellent husband and father. He knew how important church was to me and he completely supported me raising our girls in the Christian faith. Out of respect for me, he would attend with us on Christmas and Easter.

I remember once when the girls were teenagers, we went to North Myrtle Beach during spring break. I wanted our family to go to a sunrise Easter service on the beach. My daughters had a fit because they didn’t want to get up early. I remember him telling them, “You are Christians, and I am not. I am going because it is important to your mom. And you are going too!”

Although my husband was not a Christ follower, he always appreciated all that CedarCreek did for the community, and he encouraged me to support CedarCreek financially. I remember one Christmas, about five years ago, CedarCreek asked for financial giving at the end of the year. I went to Jeff and asked him if I could give more than we had allotted; he said, “No.” During the Christmas Eve service, they discussed how a church that CedarCreek was partnering with, Rock City, made a difference in their community. They showed a clip of a young woman who was pregnant. She was not receiving support from her parents, and one parent was encouraging her to have an abortion. She felt defeated, but after attending a Rock City church service, she felt so much love and support that she decided against it. Then a picture of this woman’s daughter was displayed—she was beautiful! My husband was so touched by the difference a church made in this woman’s life that he leaned over and whispered, “You can give whatever you want.”

That Christmas Eve service affected him so much that Jeff began attending church with me a few weeks later. He didn't go because he believed—he went because he thought the services made him a better man, husband, and father. He went for many Sundays, and slowly, God began to reach him. After years of praying for him (thank you to the many people at CedarCreek who also prayed for him), Jeff accepted Jesus Christ as his Savior. He was baptized on August 28, 2016, by Tom Martin and me. I was overjoyed! I know the angels in heaven were celebrating.

Luke 15:7

In the same way, there is more joy in heaven over one lost sinner who repents and returns to God than over ninety-nine others who are righteous and haven't strayed away!

This weekend, Lead Pastor Ben said, “we are driven by God’s relentless heart for the lost.” This has been one of the themes throughout CedarCreek’s story. I praise God that he never gave up on my husband. I praise God for the wonderful people at CedarCreek who loved and supported him and me. I love that I belong to and serve at a church that does anything short of sin to win people to Christ.

Questions:

What is your CedarCreek story? How has your life been blessed by God through CedarCreek? What are you doing to help the people in your life find Christ?

Next steps:

Invite someone to church. Be prepared to tell them your life change story. Pray for Christ followers to step out and tell others about their hope in Jesus. Pray for God to soften the hearts of the unchurched so they may be saved. Pray that CedarCreek will continue to bring glory to God.

Prayer:

Jesus, I am amazed and overjoyed that CedarCreek is celebrating its 25th anniversary. I praise you, Jesus, that you have a relentless heart for the lost. I rejoice in all who have come to know you, been saved by you, and serve you at CedarCreek. Thank you for using us to reach the lost. Fill us with your love and compassion for each other and the lost. Please, help CedarCreek to continue to fulfill your mission. Help our church to continue to bring glory to you. Amen.

This post was written by Marsha Raymond, a regular contributor to the LivingItOut.

Who Knew? - 25 Years

October 14, 2020

It has been the second most impactful thing in my life—being part of the group that started CedarCreek Church in the late fall of 1994. I had only been a Christian since February of that year, but Lee Powell invited me to be part of a group that wanted to plant a new church. I'm not sure I even knew what that meant! But we began to meet and pray. Our main question was, "What would it look like for us to be the kind of church God intends for the world?"

On large sheets of paper, we began brainstorming what a new testament church should, could, and maybe would look like. We could shape it however the Lord led us—and based on our hopes and past experience, that's what we set out to do. We had no money except for what the 25+ of us could put together among ourselves. Our attempts to raise significant donations were unsuccessful. We finally received a contribution for \$2000 from an organization that one of the pastors, Steve Hutmacher, belonged to, and we had to decide what would be our best return on that endowment.

"Not Your Mother's Church"

That was the advertisement we came up with. It was with extreme nervousness and a huge sense of adventure that we put up billboards and sent our mailers to the 43615 zip code. Under Lee Powell's direction, and since then Ben Snyder's leadership, we've tried hard ***not to be your mother's church!***

We have pushed conventional church values, and we have always been faithful to the message of the gospel: Jesus loves you! You matter to him!

How have we promoted that message?

Through advertising, casual dress environments, church partnerships, and contemporary worship music. By sending trucks full of supplies to areas damaged by natural disasters, planting and supporting satellite churches in communities here and around the world, and by helping single mothers with car maintenance. By celebrating Christmas Eve services with music from Trans-Siberian Orchestra or a trashcan rendition of "Little Drummer Boy," and having Easter services featuring "the thief." And, yes, even by hosting Group "Happy

Hours,” unveiling the S*X series, and the April Fool’s campus beer production. We will do anything short of sin to reach people who are far from God! This has been a theme in our church’s story.

First Jesus, and then the apostle Paul, used stories and illustrations that people outside the church could relate to. They did this in order to establish the common ground upon which they could proclaim the Good News: Jesus sacrificed himself to bring us back into a right relationship with God.

Matthew 13:34

Jesus always used stories and illustrations like these when speaking to the crowds. In fact, he never spoke to them without using such parables.

1 Corinthians 9:22-23

²² ... I try to find common ground with everyone, doing everything I can to save some. ²³ I do everything to spread the Good News and share in its blessings.

Lee taught us that the church wasn’t about us. The tight-knit group that had met together for nine months, praying and dreaming about the plan God had for our church, met together for one last time, October 1, 1995. Lee told us that what we experienced during that time—the love, the closeness, the community—would never be the same. I mourn that to this day because it was sweet, it was wholeness, it was agape love that we felt for each other. But it was the sacrifice we were willing to make, because God had called us to be the local church. We believed, and still believe, that the local church is the hope of the world!

Who knew? God did! He invites you! Join us!

Questions:

Have you felt the call of God in your life? How have you responded? Will you go?

Next Steps:

When you feel God speak to you about what your next step should be, listen and put a plan in motion to do it! Talk to your life group or a trusted Christian friend about what you feel God has placed on your heart. Enlist their help to plan your next step and to hold you accountable for it.

Prayer:

Heavenly Father, words cannot describe how grateful I am that you invited me to be a part of this church! I continue to pray that you invite other people to feel this call and to make a commitment to serve you in the local church. Use us, Lord, to invite people into this life-changing adventure! Amen.

This post was written by Lauri White, a regular contributor to the LivingItOut.

When I Grow Up - 25 Years

October 15, 2020

When I was little, I wanted to be a dance teacher, singer, and artist. As I learned those things were probably not happening, I switched gears and became a nurse. I worked at a hospital for seven years and had a great team of coworkers and so many unforgettable patients. Then God guided me to stay at home with my kids.

It was a difficult decision for me because it meant pausing, and potentially ending, my hard-earned career as a nurse. Now that I've been at home for three years, I'm homeschooling, leading a Bible study group, writing about my faith, and recently, I've started a sticker business on Etsy. If you had asked me five years ago where I'd be now, I never would have guessed *here*.

I've taken the Spiritual Gift assessment a few times, and contrary to what one might expect from a nurse, healing and mercy were never my results. My tests have always reflected teaching, wisdom, and discernment. As a nurse, there were endless ministry opportunities but very few instances where it even occurred to me. I was too focused on the chaos to notice God working. There are plenty of nurses who stay centered in their faith as they work. But this was not the way God gifted me. Even though on paper, I was doing big things—helping save lives and making major decisions—I didn't feel the impact of my actions.

But now that I'm home, doing seemingly small things, I know God is using my gifts for his glory. I am using my gifts to help people in my small group discover the heart of Jesus. I'm writing about my faith in several outlets. I'm teaching my kids in the ways they need right now. And my little-kid-self who loved the arts is enjoying selling my art through stickers. As "small" as my life seems right now, my impact is so much bigger.

Here at CedarCreek, we are driven by living out our faith in big ways. It has been a theme throughout our 25-year history and remains to be. We focus on how and where we can make the biggest impact. We encourage each other to find out where God has gifted us so that we can use our gifts and discover our purpose! The great thing is that even if we don't get it "right" right away, God will continue to guide us in the right direction.

Ephesians 2:10

For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.

Ephesians 3:20

Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think.

Questions:

Are you being impactful with your spiritual gifts? Or are you like I was—in a place with great opportunity but simply not equipped with the tools to make the biggest impact? Where can you make your biggest impact?

Have you ever found yourself comparing your gifts to others? What can you do to help yourself see God's glory in your own gifts? (Check out [1 Corinthians 12:18-21](#).)

Next Steps:

If you haven't done so already, sign up for GrowthTrack! There you will discover your Spiritual Gifts and learn where you can use your gifts to serve others. If you already know your Spiritual Gifts, take a look at how well they are being used. Push yourself to find one area where your gifts can be used even further.

Prayer:

Dear God, help me to use the gifts you gave me to serve your kingdom, giving all the glory to you, the gift giver! Thank you for the gifts you have given me. I pray that I will recognize the opportunities to use them for the biggest impact. Also, thank you for CedarCreek, a place where we can encourage each other while always pointing to you. Amen.

This post was written by Ashlee Crossjean, a regular contributor to the LivingItOut.

Discover Your Part in God's Story - 25 Years

October 16, 2020

Amazingly, CedarCreek is celebrating 25 years as a church.

Twenty-five years ago, I was a 16-year-old kid who had finally passed my driver's test after the third attempt. Good grades, sports, Dietsch Brothers ice cream, and MTV Jamz made up my week, but my Sundays belonged to the church.

As a Christian, I tried to play the part taught to me, but I held onto the gifts God blessed me with. Rarely did I share them outside of my home church. I had yet to learn my purpose, and religion was something we did rather than live out in our daily lives. Our faith was as traditional as Thanksgiving dinner—seasonal, and the details rarely changed.

Luke 6:38

"Give, and you will receive. Your gift will return to you in full—pressed down, shaken together to make room for more, running over, and poured into your lap. The amount you give will determine the amount you get back."

It takes time for many of us to discover our God-given gifts and even longer to understand that God's purpose for us isn't meant to be confined. We get to play a part in the story God is writing. Heaven blessed the day God sent you here. Think about how heaven rejoices when you discover WHY God sent you here.

Questions:

Are you sharing your faith with everyone, or are you too comfortable only living life with fellow Christians? Part of our journey requires growth, so how has your spiritual walk changed over the years?

Next Steps:

Take GrowthTrack to unlock your spiritual gifts. Join a small group and invite others to do the same. Let your unchurched friends know about CedarCreek, or ask them to check out other local churches.

Prayer:

Lord, thank you for blessing me with an opportunity to share your love. Continue to show me new ways to make a difference in the world. Please, forgive me when

I fall short of my purpose. Help me see my community's heart with a broader view so that I may reach those who are lost. Amen.

This post was written by Jaron Camp, a regular contributor to the LivingitOut.