

CHARIS FELLOWSHIP

Year in Review
2024 | 2025



The Charis Fellowship is a family of more than 230 interdependent churches, campuses, and ministries in the United States and Canada who are passionate about Jesus in truth, relationship, and mission.

Charis Fellowship churches and ministries are strongly committed to our shared mission to start new churches, develop leaders, and do good for the sake of the Gospel.

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MOUNT RUSHMORE OF DISCIPLESHIP: A LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

by Randi Walle



“So how do we ‘go therefore and make disciples’? By building relationships where we speak truth and love into one another’s lives. By studying and teaching God’s Word. By modeling obedience to Jesus’ commandments. By continually pointing others to Jesus and allowing ourselves to be continually shaped into His likeness. This is disciple-making, and this is what Jesus calls us to do.”

And Jesus came and said to them, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.” (Matthew 28:18–20, ESV)

Who’s on your Mount Rushmore of discipleship? Who are those people who have invested in you, walked alongside you, and mentored you in your faith? Maybe it’s the Sunday school teacher who first explained the Gospel to you. Maybe it’s the neighbor who demonstrated Jesus’ love to you. Maybe it’s your parents who taught you how to study God’s Word. Maybe it’s the pastor who baptized you.

Maybe it’s the small group leader who regularly prayed for and with you. Can you narrow your list to only four people, or do you need multiple Mount Rushmores to encapsulate all the people who have disciplined you?

Perhaps your list has grown with you, reflecting the different seasons in which you found yourself. Mine has. Growing up in a Christian home, my parents and grandparents were the first and biggest influences in my faith journey. They will forever remain on my Mount Rushmore as those who consistently point me back to Jesus and model His love for others. As a teenager, my youth leaders were instrumental in developing my understanding of what it looks like to follow Jesus. As a newlywed, couples who read books with my husband and I and modeled godly marriages helped shape our relationship to reflect

the selfless love of Jesus. As an adult, pastors who have faithfully taught the scriptures and mentors who have personally invested in my relationship with God have been fundamental to my journey in understanding God’s Word.

I recently completed a 10-month intensive leadership training course at my church. My fellow learners and I read over 2,000 pages of theological texts and wrote over 200 pages in response to thought-provoking questions, working to build a biblical worldview. We met regularly with pastors, elders, and mentors who walked with us through the course, helping us understand biblical truths and how to apply them. Throughout all of it, we were being disciplined as we allowed Christ to work in our hearts to make us more like Him. It taught me that discipleship is multifaceted and there is beauty in pursuing it with others.

This book, our fourth edition of the Year in Review, is a reflection and celebration of how Charis Fellowship churches pursue the Great Commission. In the pages of this book, we see photos of churches making disciples through various types of ministry, including building relationships, preaching the Word, and practicing ordinances. Each article in this book, written by a

Charis pastor or ministry leader, focuses on a different model of disciple-making. In looking at baptism, preaching, teaching, leading, and building relationships as tools for seeking and saving the lost, God’s heart for people to have a personal and saving relationship with Him is evident.

So how do we “go therefore and make disciples”? By building relationships where we speak truth and love into one another’s lives. By studying and teaching God’s Word. By modeling obedience to Jesus’ commandments. By continually pointing others to Jesus and allowing ourselves to be continually shaped into His likeness. This is disciple-making, and this is what Jesus calls us to do. However big or small your own Mount Rushmore might be, follow Jesus’ command and be bold enough in your discipling that you would be counted among the Mount Rushmores in the lives of those around you.

Randi Walle serves as the editor and communications manager for the Charis Fellowship. She is a member and life-long attendee of Grace Polaris Church in Westerville, Ohio, where she serves as the communications director. She and her husband, Jesús, have been married for ten years.

FELLOWSHIP OFFICE



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TIM HODGE
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Networking Coordinator



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WADE RININGER
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RANDI WALLE
Editor & Communications Manager

The Executive Team (executive director, Fellowship coordinator, and networking coordinator) and staff members (Charis Retirement Plan manager & bookkeeper, events & registration manager, creative & design manager, and editor & communications manager) help to provide organization and administration to various initiatives designed to be a blessing and encouragement to our Charis family.

They assist with planning Charis Fellowship Conference and Focus Retreats, facilitate networking opportunities for churches and ministries, provide regular communication on Fellowship-wide news and events, and strive to help create and sustain a culture of movement within the Charis Fellowship.

The Fellowship Council is a group of 16 representatives elected to serve as the official board of directors of the Charis Fellowship, providing leadership and management to the business and affairs of the corporation.

Council members represent the districts from their respective regions, each serving one five-year term. They provide wise and godly leadership to preserve unity, provide protection and accountability, and help advance the mission and objectives of the Fellowship. The Fellowship Council also partners with national ministry leaders to help support their mission and vision and foster unity throughout the Fellowship.

REGION A

Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Hawaii, Iowa, Indiana, Kansas, Texas, Washington, and British Columbia



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MICHAEL SILLIMAN



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KIP CONE



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TIM SPRANKLE
Executive Director

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LABAN REEVES



DEVIN LIVINGSTON



DUSTIN GODSHALL



ANDREW LEASURE

FELLOWSHIP COUNCIL

MADE TO MAKE DISCIPLES: Reflections from the Executive Director

by Tim Sprankle

Tim currently serves as the executive director of Charis Fellowship (2024–2026). Since 2007 he has served as lead pastor at Leesburg Grace Church in northern Indiana. His Charis connections extend widely, including previous ministry in Fellowship churches in Arizona and Ohio, co-leading the Charis Symposium, co-hosting the More of Us podcast, teaching at Grace College, writing curriculum for Momentum Youth Conference, and board terms with several national ministries. Tim earned his B.A. in Biblical Studies at Grace College (2001), M.Div. in Pastoral Ministries at Grace Theological Seminary (2004), and D. Min. in Discipleship at Talbot School of Theology (2023). Tim loves to read, write, run, coach, ask questions, play disc golf, and spend time with his family. His wife Liz and three teenagers bring him great joy.

“No church gets an exemption from the Great Commission.”

My exposure to the Gospel first came at Grace Polaris Church. My father started attending in his early thirties after encountering Jesus. For a couple of years, he dragged the family to church with him. Every Sunday Pastor Jim Custer shared the Good News and invited people to pray the Sinner’s Prayer. I did (three times).

My passion for Scripture — its depth and drama, beauty and complexity, timelessness and truth — accelerated during my years at Grace College. Dr. David Plaster taught me theology, trained me to teach, and baptized me (three dips) at Warsaw Community Grace Brethren Church.

My understanding of church leadership expanded while working with Pastor Ed Waken. He preached the priesthood of believers. He embodied encouragement and modeled evangelism for Valley Life, the network of house churches in Phoenix, Ariz.

My appreciation for Christian community has deepened at Leesburg Grace. My church is my spiritual family, missional community, and ministry base. In the past eighteen years, I have developed as a shepherd, leader, and practical theologian. Moreover, I have matured as a husband, father, and follower of Jesus.

My discipleship journey follows a pattern set by Jesus and sustained by His church. No disciple is self-made. We are all the product of faithful followers of Jesus and local churches committed to His mission. Charis churches have shaped pathways for my growth. Fellowship leaders have strengthened my faith. Being part of the Charis Fellowship helps me follow Christ.

At our best, the Charis Fellowship serves as a Great Commission community. Disciple-making is our biblical mandate, Brethren legacy, and best practice. During my appointment as the Executive Director, I want us to stay united in this common mission.

I pray for our churches to become incubators of disciple-makers. I pray we invite spiritual seekers, fledgling followers, and seasoned believers into a whole life, lifelong commitment to Jesus, enjoying His presence, obeying His teaching, and imitating His kingdom mission.

No church gets an exemption from the Great Commission. Small town parishes can and should make disciples. Suburban multisite churches can and should make disciples. Midsized multiethnic churches can and should make disciples. We need disciple-makers and disciple-making churches. Let’s press on toward this goal together.



NATIONAL MINISTRIES OF THE CHARIS FELLOWSHIP

The Charis Fellowship is blessed to partner with several incredible organizations for hands-on training and resource development to equip our churches for effective ministry. The combined impact of our national ministries over many decades has helped our Fellowship become what it is today.



ASSIST CHURCH EXPANSION

Helping our Fellowship be an expanding movement.



GRACE FINANCIAL

Assisting the Charis Fellowship by providing access to financial resources and support.



CHARIS WOMEN

Connecting and equipping the women of the Charis Fellowship.



GRACE COLLEGE

Providing higher education that applies biblical values.



EAGLE COMMISSION

Taking the Gospel of peace to our nation's warriors.



GRACE SEMINARY

Teaching, training, and transforming the whole person for local and global ministry.



ENCOMPASS WORLD PARTNERS

Spreading the knowledge and glory of God among the least reached of our world.



INSPIRE CHARIS PASTORS NETWORK

Encouraging and equipping pastors as we serve God together.



MOMENTUM MINISTRY PARTNERS

Equipping today's young Christian leaders for tomorrow's opportunities.

I vividly remember when the thought first struck me. “We’ve been singing it all wrong. . . backward!” What song, you may be wondering? The Sunday School classic, “I Will Make You Fishers of Men.”

Okay, Okay. . .hear me out! The first verse is not what Jesus said to Simon and Andrew. His seaside words were, “Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men” (Mark 1:17). Yet, we grew up singing, “I will make you fishers of men if you follow me.” It’s a subtle — perhaps eye-rolling — difference, and yet significant.

Now, I do not believe the authors of this song intentionally undermined Jesus’ words. It’s a good little song that gets really good in verse two! Even so, verse one misses the mark by using the conditional “if” and making “fishers of men” the focus instead of following Jesus. The altered words may fit the melody, but they upend Jesus’ command about followership by placing the focus on leadership.

This realization came after a great week at Momentum Youth Conference. Our youth group was transitioning into the school schedule, and I was beginning to refine our first Wednesday night series. Leadership was the topic, and given the number of students fired up from the #bestweekofsummer, I was excited about the possibilities ahead. However, what began to gnaw at me was how our leadership focus — my focus — did not include followership. Or, to say it another way, we looked at what to do with our hands (actions) or increasing the knowledge of our heads (comprehension), but we didn’t stop to consider the posture of our hearts (attitudes). Truth be told, this is often still a struggle.

Maybe it’s because we can quantify actions and knowledge more readily than attitudes. Perhaps we don’t like what we see when we evaluate our attitudes and default to the safer spaces of planning events, reading books, writing papers, sending emails, singing songs, playing games, etc. Sometimes, we may ignore following Jesus because there’s too much work to do for Jesus, and we have misunderstood what Jesus has called us to. Whatever the reason(s) — likely more than just the few offered here — the deeper places of the heart must never be overlooked for the actions of the hands and the knowledge of the head. Our actions and knowledge matter greatly, but they do not matter solely.

The worst examples of this elevate, and even exalt, actions and comprehension in such a way that persistently sinful attitudes and behaviors are rationalized away. “Yeah, we know they can be _____, but look at all the good they’ve done.” “Yeah, I may have _____, but I’m a good preacher!” Or even, “Yeah, we know the Bible says _____ about ministry, but here are all the reasons our ways are better.”

Think about some of the most poignant moments of correction Jesus provided His first followers. Peter pulls Jesus aside for a one-on-one because death and resurrection didn’t fit into his [Peter’s] Messianic schema (Matt. 16:22).

Jesus replies, “. . .you are not setting your mind on the things of God.” Paraphrase? “Pete, you’re not following well” (cf., verses 24–28).

James and John ask Jesus if they should pray for fire to destroy a village of Samaritans who had not shown them hospitality. Jesus rebukes them (Luke 9:51–56). They were not following well.

Not long after this, James and John decided to stomp on and step over their fellow disciples, requesting prominent positions of power (Mark 10:35–41). To them and all the indignant disciples, Jesus replied that they were thinking like Gentiles [unbelievers] (verse 42) and must not do so. They were not following well.

All too often, we can think we have a better plan or philosophy of ministry than the Bible reveals. We can be tempted by a desire to get rid of the people Jesus has called us to shepherd because we’ve decided they are standing in the way. Or we can even employ the power-grabbing, sole-crushing, image-bearer-stomping tactics of the world because we have a vision from the Lord to pursue.

Here’s the not-so-secret secret I need to remember: The ends never justify the means, and the means matter just as much as the ends.

As we abide in Jesus — follow Jesus — we bear fruit because that is what happens when vines remain connected to the branch (John 15:4). And lest we’re confused about the metaphor here, Jesus makes it abundantly clear one verse later, “Apart from me you can do nothing” (15:5).

To be sure, we rarely set out to not follow, not abide, or not prioritize time to abide. Yet, the persistent drum of ministry life — the good, the bad, and the ugly — lures us into functional rhythms where following well often takes a backseat to leading well.

So, what does it look like to abide — to follow first? It’s spending time in the Word of God (John 17:17), walking worthy of the Gospel as empowered by the Spirit of God (Galatians 5:16), and being built up by the people of God (Romans 1:11,12).

Following Christ is not a means to an end, however good, noble, or biblical that end may be. Following Christ is the end.

There is another song from my childhood that needs no tweaking or refinement: “Turn your eyes upon Jesus, look full in His wonderful face and the things of earth will grow strangely dim, in the light of His glory and grace.”

Jesus first commands us to follow, and it is from this posture as followers that we find our lives repurposed for the glory of God and the good of His people, just as He repurposed Simon and Andrew’s.

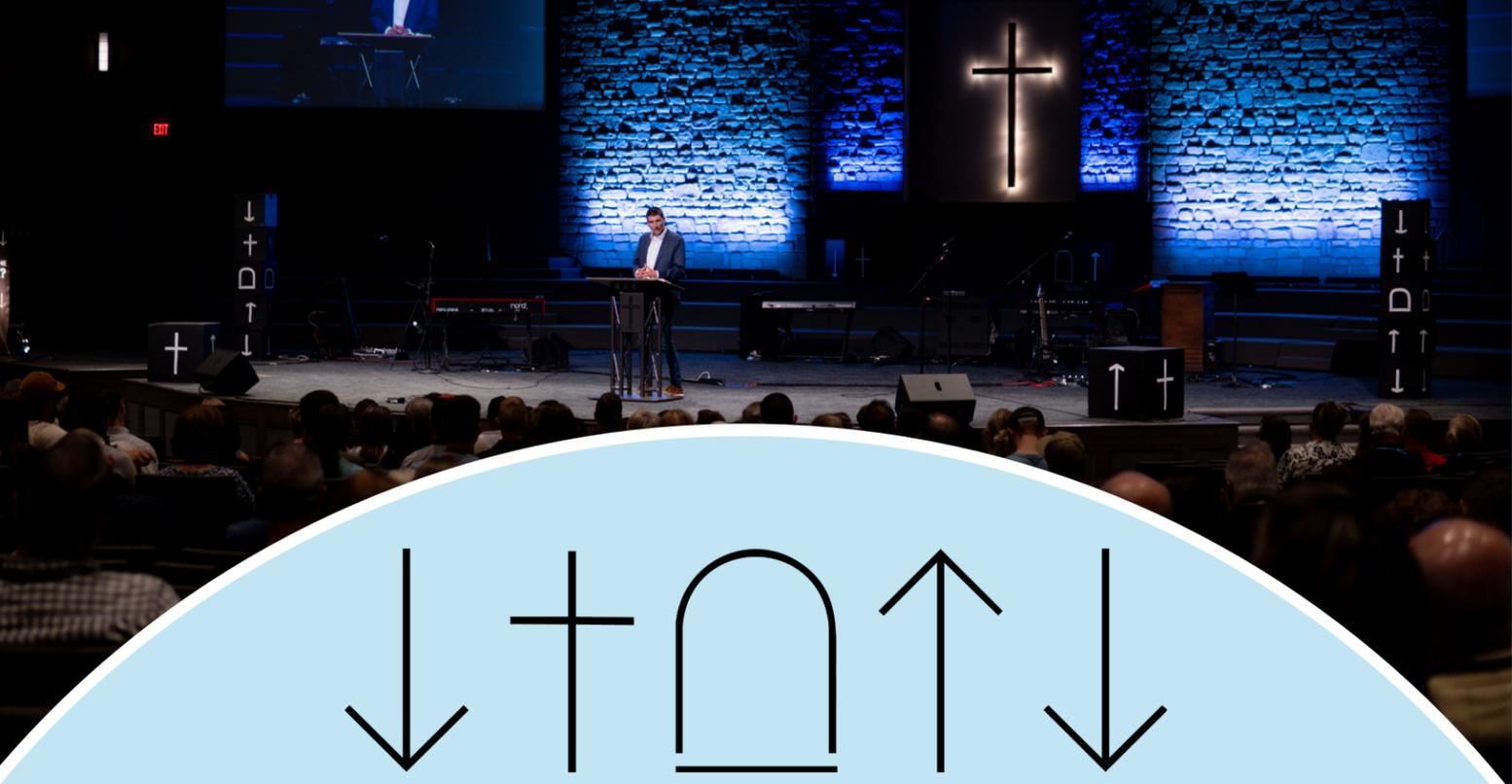
“Sometimes, we may ignore following Jesus because there’s too much work to do for Jesus, and we have misunderstood what Jesus has called us to.”

FOLLOWING TO LEAD

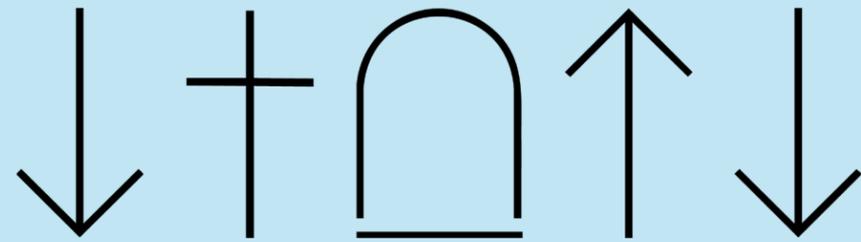
by Tim Clothier

Tim Clothier has served as senior pastor of Waynesboro Grace Church in southern Pennsylvania for almost ten years. He is a published author (To Each is Given) and a Charis Symposium contributor, and he recently completed a DMin. degree in pastoral leadership from Grace Theological Seminary. He and his wife, Carrie, have been married over eighteen years and have four children.





CHARIS FELLOWSHIP CONFERENCE



In early July 2024, nearly 600 people gathered at Grace Polaris Church in Columbus, Ohio, for the annual Charis Fellowship Conference. The theme for the week was, “How Good is the Gospel?” with an emphasis on the grace, peace, power, and hope we have in Jesus Christ.

Each session included a time of worship, led by Danny Nathan and a team of worship leaders from Charis churches around Central Ohio, and a powerful message by a Charis Fellowship leader. Dayne Carraway and Wade Rininger emceed the conference and facilitated group games such as backwards charades, golf, and a presidential-style debate between outgoing Executive Director Dan Allan and incoming Executive Director Tim Sprankle.

The conference kicked off Monday, July 8, with several pre-conference activities. The Charis Symposium, a forum for substantive, irenic, and constructive theological dialogue, held two sessions where contributors read papers related to gender roles in church leadership. The Charis Alliance, our global movement of churches, hosted a cookout. Four regions where the Charis Alliance has a presence — Latin America, Europe, Asia, and Africa — were represented with a booth that offered a dessert unique to that region. Guests at the cookout received a passport, and as they visited each booth they received a dessert, information on the area, and stamp in their passport.

On Tuesday conference attendees had the opportunity to engage in ministry-specific cohorts in the morning and afternoon. Each cohort was led by two or three ministry professionals in areas such as youth, women, worship/tech, communications, missions, outreach, discipleship, and young adults.

Pastor Josh Wilson spoke during the first main session on the topic of the grace of the Gospel in Ephesians 2. Lunch

on Tuesday was sponsored by Grace College & Seminary, and dinner was sponsored by Encompass World Partners. In the evening session Knute Larson spoke on the peace of the Gospel from Romans 5. Following the session Bellefontaine Grace Church hosted a Charis Game Show where participants answered Charis Fellowship history questions and played a round of family feud.

Wednesday began with breakfast sponsored by Assist Church Expansion, and Florent Varak spoke from Romans 1 on the power of the Gospel in the morning session. Lunch was sponsored by Inspire Charis Pastors Network and Charis Women. Attendees had the opportunity to attend workshops both in the morning and afternoon on topics such as thriving in Gospel relationships, the great commission and the local church, discipleship through disaster relief, and equipping missional marketplace leaders. During the afternoon many opted to attend the Charis Conversation (Delegates Meeting). Dinner was sponsored by Eagle Commission and Grace Financial.

Local youth groups were invited to attend the evening session on Wednesday, which included a message from Pastor Tim Clothier on Romans 8 and the power of the Gospel. After the session, Momentum Ministry Partners hosted a glow in the dark party with ice cream, music, games, and glow sticks.

Thursday morning offered a limited number of seminars to attend — the church and politics of a country, testimonies of the Gospel in everyday life, and fresh news from the front lines — followed by the final session. Dan Allan, Charis Fellowship executive director at the time, set the stage for threefold communion and remembering the Gospel, and Pastor Zac Hess gave a short reflection before each element. The conference concluded with a love feast of Chick-Fil-A.





DISCIPLESHIP IN THE CAMP SETTING

There is a quest among young people to find their way, to find transcendent truth, to find meaning in life. There is also a purposeful campaign of deception by our culture that offers those same young people an alternative way, a relative truth, and ultimately an empty life filled with anxiety and fear.

For over 60 years Camp Conquest has offered young people the opportunity to meet Jesus. Through caring counselors and sound Biblical teaching, campers experience the love of Christ. They find that He is the Way, the Truth, and the Life that they seek.

A note from a camper: *"Hello, Thank you so much for the scholarship. I came here honestly not excited; and now I'm wishing it wasn't over ... I've always had this bad view on Christianity, and now my view has changed drastically. It was so easy to let go and open up for once in my life. I felt so welcome and finally accepted somewhere. This experience has completely changed my life, with so much help from you... Thank you."*

A note from her mom: *"My daughter spent the week at Camp Conquest. I was so shocked when she, as well as her sister, requested attending camp. They have been there before, so were well aware of the Christian emphasis. I brought a young girl who had turned all of her anger from the past, from being abandoned of her father, on to God. One who was torn, hurt and empty. I did not pick this same child up. I picked up a young lady on the verge of spiritual transformation. One who felt the Lord's hand upon her life while at camp."*

At Camp Conquest we believe that a week of camp is the most effective tool for evangelism and discipleship available to the church today. God works in the hearts of campers and staff while spending time away from distraction in the midst of His creation.

Your district camp is looking to partner with you to enhance the discipleship experience within your local church. Purposeful engagement with your local camp will help equip your people to serve others and ultimately build up the body of Christ within your community.



Learn more about how
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Strengthen & Encourage...
So that every remote Alaskan village has a thriving Gospel presence.

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Arctic Barnabas Ministries serves approximately 95 ministry families throughout Alaska. Our best estimate is that only 10-15% of Alaska's roughly 240 remote villages have a planted Gospel church.

We believe an essential prerequisite of seeing Gospel churches planted in every remote Alaskan community is keeping pastors and missionaries currently serving those areas on the field.



135 North Willow Street // 907-283-3377 // info@abmalaska.org // arcticbarnabas.org







YEAR 24/25 In Review

HOW ASSIST CHURCH EXPANSION IS STRENGTHENING THE CHARIS FELLOWSHIP ONE CHURCH AT A TIME



God has worked powerfully through Assist Church Expansion to strengthen churches, equip leaders, and expand the Charis Fellowship. Through your prayers, generosity, and dedication, we have seen milestones in church planting, revitalization, and leadership development. Here's a look at the impact we've made together.

CHURCH PLANTING AND EXPANSION

- Pataskala Grace (OH) announced plans to plant a new church in Newark, OH by 2026 with their current associate, Josh Rollins, becoming the planter.
- Community of Hope (Columbia City, IN) took major steps toward planting a new church in Ft. Wayne, IN.
- Bear Creek Community Church (Lavon, TX) partnered with Assist and hired their first pastor, David Watson, a pastoral residency graduate.
- Formation Church (St. Petersburg, FL) launched in January 2025 under the leadership of Wade Ringer.
- Grace Fellowship Canada opened a new storefront office in Aldergrove, British Columbia, as a strategic move toward expanding the Charis Fellowship in Canada.
- The Inaugural Ed Jackson Church Multiplication Award was presented to Mark Artrip, Pastor of Movement Church in Hilliard, Ohio.

- We have 19 official Revitalization & Restart Partners across the USA.
- The Revitalize My Church podcast with our own Nathan Bryant and Bart Blair began in July 2024 and released new episodes on the 1st and 15th of each month since. Listen at WWW.REVITALIZEMY.CHURCH
- Grace Fellowship (Anderson, SC) called Pastor Jerry Kociuruba.
- Meyersdale Grace Brethren Church (PA) welcomed Pastor Justin Putnam.
- Pastor Chad Barr became the Lead Pastor at Grace Church Waldorf (MD).
- Assist coaches walked alongside multiple churches to support their pastoral search and leadership transitions.
- Bootcamps were held in Huber Heights, OH (August) and Hope Bible Church, Roanoke, VA (September), helping multiple churches refocus on their mission.

ADVENTURE TEAMS 2024

Assist Adventure Teams mobilized students and adults to serve Charis Fellowship churches through hands-on ministry and spiritual encouragement. With volunteers from Winona Lake, IN, and Aiken, SC, **THE D.C. TEAM** partnered with four churches for urban outreach, prayer walks, and service projects—including a mosque visit and a tour of Washington, D.C.

Later, **THE TORONTO TEAM** supported Renew Church's relaunch with surveys, flyers, a car wash, and ministry at a refugee transition house. They also experienced cross-cultural learning with a temple visit and a trip to Niagara Falls.

FINAL THANKS

We are privileged to serve the Charis Fellowship and seek to help our Fellowship be an expanding movement. None of this would be possible without your prayers, support, and generosity. Together, we are seeing lives transformed, churches strengthened, and the Gospel advanced. Thank you for being part of this incredible journey.

With gratitude,
THE ASSIST CHURCH EXPANSION TEAM

CHURCH Revitalization

LEADERSHIP Development



ASSIST
CHURCH EXPANSION
hello@assistcx.org
ASSISTCX.ORG

Let's be honest — preaching can feel like planting seeds in a windstorm.

You spend hours in prayer and preparation. You labor over every word, every illustration, every point of application. Sunday comes and you deliver the message God laid on your heart. And by the time you hit the parking lot, someone's asking if you've seen their kid's missing shoe or whether the thermostat can be adjusted next week.

By Monday morning, you're wondering if anyone heard the most important thing you said. By Tuesday, you're questioning if you remember it.

Whether you're preaching to thousands across multiple campuses, shepherding a faithful flock in a town with more cows than people, or setting up folding chairs in a rented school gym — there's a moment when every pastor asks, "Is this really working? Is anyone being changed?"

And if you're sitting in the pews, maybe you've felt it too — that subtle drift toward thinking the sermon is just another part of the service. Something to endure or enjoy, but not something that actually shapes your life.

Here's the truth we all need to remember: Preaching is discipleship.

Not just occasionally. Not just when the sermon "hits different." But every single week, when God's Word is opened, Christ is proclaimed, and the Spirit is at work — discipleship is happening. Slowly. Steadily. Powerfully.

In a world chasing the next big strategy for spiritual growth, we risk forgetting that God has already given us one of His primary tools to shape His people: the faithful proclamation of His Word.

PREACHING IS DISCIPLESHIP

Our modern mindset often separates preaching from discipleship. We assume discipleship happens in coffee shops, small groups, or personalized mentorship — and yes, those are beautiful, necessary expressions

THE FORGOTTEN POWER OF PREACHING: How God Forms Disciples One Sermon at a Time

by Joshua Rollins

of Christian growth. But biblically, discipleship begins in a place we often overlook: **the pulpit**.

When Paul describes his ministry, he doesn't say, "Him we discuss over lattes." He says, "Him we proclaim, warning everyone and teaching everyone with all wisdom, that we may present everyone mature in Christ" (Colossians 1:28, ESV).

Proclaiming Christ is not a side activity — it's central to forming mature disciples.

Preaching isn't a weekly performance or a theological lecture. It's God's chosen means to reorient hearts, renew minds, and reform lives around the Gospel. It's where the church, gathered as one body, hears the living voice of God through His Word.

HOW GOD DISCIPLES THROUGH PREACHING

You might not notice it week to week. Most people don't walk out of church saying, "Wow, I just took a giant leap in sanctification!" But here's how preaching consistently disciples God's people.

It Reshapes Our Story. We live in a culture that constantly tells us who we are — through social media, advertising, politics, and entertainment. Every voice says, "You are the hero of your story."

Preaching reminds us that we are not the hero — Jesus is. It places us back inside God's grand narrative, where sinners are rescued by grace and called to live for a kingdom far greater than their own.

Each sermon re-centers us in that story. That's discipleship.

It Trains Us to Think Biblically. We don't naturally interpret life through Scripture. We interpret it through feelings, trends, and opinions.

But when pastors faithfully open God's Word — whether through expository series or topical messages grounded in Scripture — they're teaching more

than content. They're modeling how to read, understand, and apply the Bible. Over time, congregations begin to think theologically, discern truth from error, and filter life through God's lens.

That's discipleship.

It Lifts Our Eyes to Christ Again and Again. Our hearts are prone to wander — not just into sin, but into spiritual forgetfulness. We forget the Gospel. We forget grace. We forget that Jesus is better.

"Preaching reminds us that we are not the hero — Jesus is."

Preaching, at its best, doesn't just tell us what to do — it shows us who Jesus is. It lifts our eyes from our circumstances to our Savior. It exposes idols and invites us to treasure Christ above all.

That's discipleship.

THE SLOW WORK OF GOD

Here's where we need encouragement: **Preaching is the work of seasons, not seconds.**

We're conditioned to expect instant feedback and visible results. But preaching isn't fast food — it's more like tending a garden. You plant, you water, you wait. And often, God is doing His deepest work beneath the surface.

Isaiah 55:11 promises that God's Word will not return empty. Every sermon faithfully preached, even the ones you thought fell flat, is being used by the Spirit to form Christ in His people (Galatians 4:19).

So, pastor — when you wonder if it's worth it, when you feel like no one's listening, remember this: **God is always working through His Word, even when you can't see it.** Whether you preach from a stage with lights or from a wooden pulpit in a drafty chapel, heaven is not measuring your effectiveness by applause, attendance, or social media shares. Faithfulness is the metric.

And church member — when Sunday feels routine, when your mind drifts during point two of a three-point sermon, don't underestimate what God is doing. Week by week, He's forming you into someone who knows Him, loves Him, and reflects Him more.

WHY THIS SHOULD GIVE US HOPE

The beauty of discipleship through preaching is that it doesn't depend on human brilliance. It depends on God's design. He has chosen "the foolishness of what was preached to save those who believe" (1 Corinthians 1:21, NIV).

It's not flashy, but it's powerful.

So, let's recover our confidence in this forgotten power. Not confidence in the preacher, but in the God who speaks through preaching. Let's remember that every time Christ is proclaimed, the Spirit is at work — calling sinners, strengthening saints, and sending His people into the world.

And when we don't see immediate fruit, let's trust the Gardener.

Because one day, when Christ returns, we'll realize that those ordinary Sundays — the ones where you wondered if anything happened — were the very Sundays God was shaping His people for eternity.

Until then, keep preaching. Keep listening. Keep trusting.

Joshua Rollins serves as associate pastor at Pataskala Grace Church in Pataskala, Ohio, where he prioritizes Christ-centered preaching, discipleship, and church multiplication. He and his wife, Jen, have been married for



nine years and are leading the church planting effort for Newark Grace Church in Newark, Ohio.

FOCUS RETREATS

One way we seek to fulfill our mission of training leaders is by providing opportunities for connection and instruction throughout the year. Focus Retreats are designed for leaders to enjoy times of fellowship, engage in meaningful discussions on ministry-related topics, pray for one another, and collaborate on new initiatives. The goal is for participants to leave feeling refreshed, encouraged, and inspired to continue in Great Commission work.

The theme for Focus Retreats in the 2024–2025 ministry year was *Integrated: Exploring How Ministry Requires All of Me*. Ministry faithfulness and effectiveness are tied to our spiritual health and wholeness. Of course, God uses broken vessels, weaklings, and imperfect people. That’s us, and His grace is sufficient. But more often a spiritual leader gives from the overflow of his vibrant life in Christ. Healthy leaders are integrated, caring for their bodies, emotions, relationships, ethics, and minds. Each session of the retreats was full, holistic, and focused on long-term viability in ministry and provided both large-group instruction and small-group discussions.



This year there were five focus retreats held around the country in Ohio, Maryland, California, Alaska, and Florida. While every retreat had the same theme and was facilitated by Executive Director Tim Sprankle, each retreat had unique elements to it.

The Central Focus Retreat in Ohio had two sessions facilitated by Jon Rauch and John Teevan, worship was led by Danny Nathan and Jordan Gillette, and a group game was led by Mischelle Hill and Ethan Bunce.

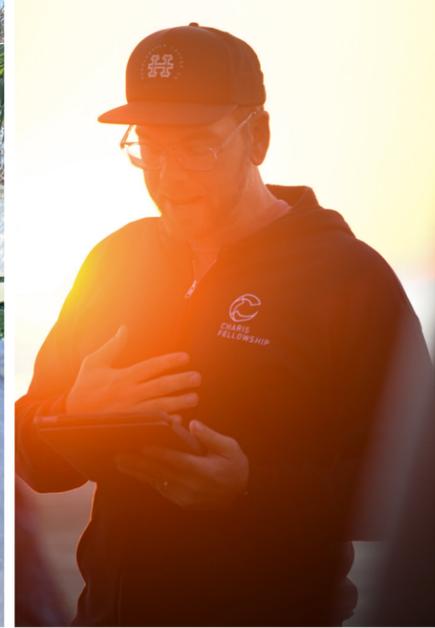
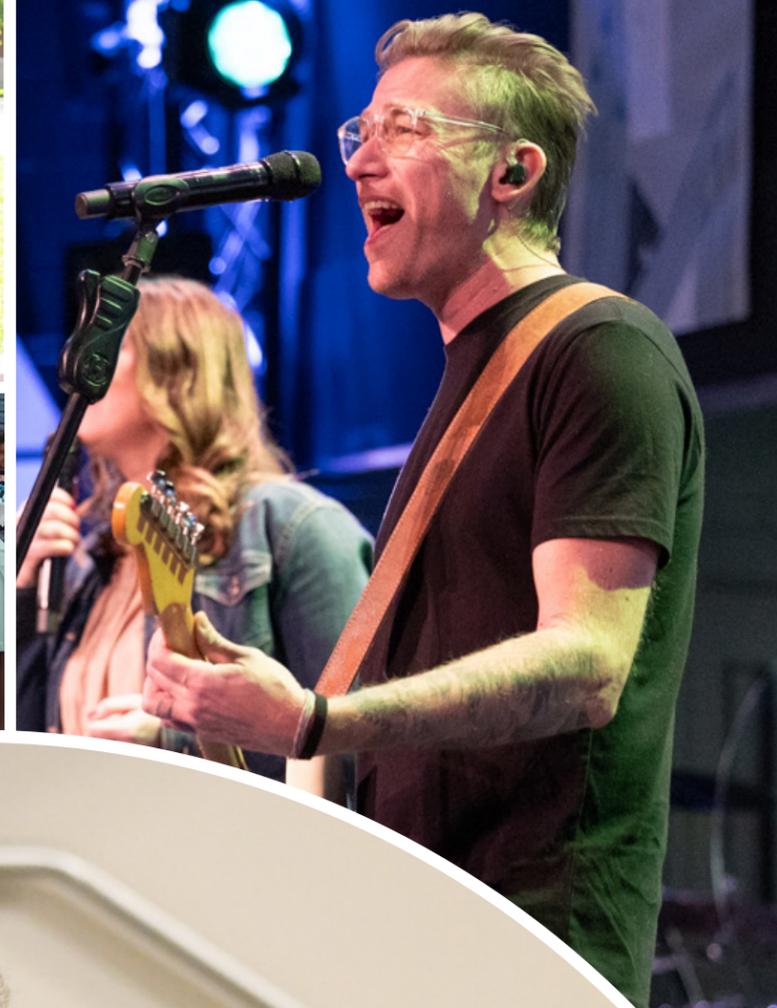
The East Focus Retreat in Maryland had two sessions led by Tim Clothier and Mark Lingenfelter, worship was led by Ryan Ritchey, Scott Avey, and Megan Johnson, and a group game was led by Mischelle Hill and Dayne Carraway. Attendees enjoyed a special sunrise worship gathering on the beach with a devotional and time of praise.

The Southwest Focus Retreat in California had a session led by Mark Lingenfelter, and worship was led by Chris Howard. Nestled in the Malibu mountains, this retreat offered attendees the opportunity to hike and enjoy the nature setting.

The Alaska Focus Retreat had two sessions led by Adam Copenhaver, Tim Hodge, and Andrew Saunders. Worship was led by Luke Magnusson. This was the first focus retreat held in Alaska, and attendees had the opportunity to connect with national ministry leaders and enjoy outdoor activities like a whale-watching excursion and a prop-plane tour.

The South Focus Retreat in Florida had a session led by Tim Hodge and worship was led by Seth Tweeddale and Josiah Thomas. Attendees had the opportunity to enjoy the beach and an afternoon boat ride.







CHARIS WOMEN



OUR VISION

Connect women to each other. After all, we are stronger together. We can inspire and complete each other through our unique gifts and experiences. Collaboration is possible now in ways it never was before, and we want to be iron sharpening iron to each other.

Equip women to serve God's purposes. From knowing how to study the Bible to how to follow God's heart in ministering to those around us, we all benefit from being equipped and ready to take advantage of every opportunity.

Get More Info at CharisWomen.com



CONNECTING AND EQUIPPING THE WOMEN OF THE CHARIS FELLOWSHIP

THRIVE

Gathering, encouraging, and supporting women in the unique role of pastor's wife.

CLASSES

Building foundations and inspiring service through the IGNITE 31:26 program.

CREDENTIALING

Becoming a commissioned leader in ministry to contribute to the building of His Church.

COHORTS

Growing your ministry capacity through character and skills development.

As Callie came up out of the water, baptized in Christ, I couldn't help the tears flowing down my cheeks. I had prayed for this moment for over eight years. Eight years of on and off contact, not knowing where she and her sister were living. Hoping they were okay. Not sure what God's plan was in all of this. Her sister had been my student in second grade, but they had been whisked away to another town, their mother hoping to evade the law. Eventually they were removed from parental custody and placed with various relatives over the years, and I saw them occasionally around the county. But in 2021, Callie's sister reached out to me on my school email looking for a tutor in eighth grade algebra. It had been a long time since I had studied that, but I was trusting that this was the opening for which I had been praying. I began to meet with them regularly and was able to invite them to things outside of tutoring.

“Relational ministry is a long game. There is no timeline, no guaranteed outcome.”

Eventually my job changed from teacher to Executive Director of Youth for Christ Highlands County. I invited them to one of our clubs and to our YFC summer camps, and it was there in 2023 that each girl received Jesus as their Savior. That fall, Callie asked to be baptized. Now in tenth grade, she is a part of our church's Student Leadership Cohort and tags along with me to YFC events.

Relational ministry is a long game. There is no timeline, no guaranteed outcome. As the Executive Director of a Youth for Christ chapter, our team sets goals and prays to see more teenagers know Christ. But the darkness our teens are facing is thick. Students we've served have watched their friends die in the street due to gun violence. They are adrift, with no safety and security. Some just want someone to listen to them, to care about them, to love them. You never know how that conversation or car ride or dinner invitation will turn out. You never know what the Lord will use to draw someone to Himself.

It sometimes seems intimidating. The media tells us that kids these days don't want relationships with us. But I have found that to be categorically untrue. The things students have told me by me just focusing my complete attention on them and asking questions is astonishing. Most of my students jump at the chance to grab a coffee, get a ride to church, just hang out at my house doing nothing seemingly important. In those moments, seeds are planted.

A girl in our youth group texted me recently asking if she could be picked up for youth that night. When Audrey got in my car, I asked her if she wanted to get some Chick-fil-A with me first, knowing that she might not have had dinner since she was often alone at her house. As we waited in the drive thru, I asked about her thoughts of the youth group. “I like that the students are nice. They don't judge me for dressing differently like my old church.” I looked at her Slipknot t-shirt under her usual black jacket. I next asked her about what it meant to follow Jesus with her life. “It means to not choose a temptation, but to choose what Jesus would do.” This question was a good segue to ask her the question I'd been waiting awhile to ask her. “Have you ever made the decision to follow Jesus?” I grabbed the food from the window and handed it to her. “I don't think I'm ready yet,” she replied. “That's okay,” I said. “It's an incredibly big decision, so you need to make sure before you do it.”

When I was the same age as Callie and Audrey, I was privileged to have caring adults invest in my life. One of those adults, Megan Johnson, recently reminded me how we need to focus on our call and let the Holy Spirit do His job. She sent me “A Liturgy Before Serving Others” by Douglas McKelvey. The last portion really stood out to me.

“I cannot know the end of another person's story. Our lives so often only briefly intersect. So let me be content to minister regardless of visible outcomes, trusting that the small mercies I extend will be woven in to the larger theme of redemption at work in the lives of others as you woo them to yourself, drawing their hearts by graces offered, and shaping my own heart too in this process of learning to serve well, and by learning to serve well, learning to love well.”

I'm not sure how Audrey's story will end or what my part will be in it. But I do know that I am being faithful to what God is calling me to do in her life. And that is all I can do. The rest is up to God.

Meredith Russell is the Executive Director of Youth for Christ Highlands County, the wife of Pastor Ben Russell, and mom to two boys. She graduated from Valley Forge Christian College with a degree in Early Childhood Education. For almost nine years she was a teacher in Highlands County, Florida, before accepting her current role. She and her family are part of Neighborhood Church in Sebring, Florida, where she volunteers with the youth group. Meredith enjoys hanging out with her friends and youth students, playing board games, reading, and gardening.



THE MINISTRY OF RELATIONSHIPS

by Meredith Russell





THE EAGLE COMMISSION

TAKING THE GOSPEL OF PEACE TO OUR NATION'S WARRIORS

FEELING CALLED TO MINISTRY BUT NOT IN A CHURCH?



BECOME A MISSIONARY TO THE MILITARY.

SERVING



We **SERVE** our military with competent, compassionate and caring chaplains who represent our fellowship.

RECRUITING



We **RECRUIT** highly qualified men with a clear sense of calling and financial partners who sustain them in this ministry.

We **EMPOWER** through prayer networks in the Charis Fellowship and tuition assistance for our endorsed Chaplain Candidates.

EMPOWERING



OUR VISION: To catalyze a team of Christ followers who are passionately committed to carrying out the great commission to our military, our veterans, and their families.

JOIN US AT WWW.EAGLECOMMISSION.ORG

FOLLOW US ON FACEBOOK



CHARIS CONNECT

Charis Connect seeks to provide connection points for Charis Fellowship churches and ministries by sharing news, photos, updates, event information, historical content, and theological articles. For more information and to sign up for our weekly newsletter, visit CharisFellowship.com/Connect.

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CHARIS FELLOWSHIP CONFERENCE

July 21–23 | Grace Fellowship in Pickerington, Ohio

2026

Baptism is an essential event in the life of a disciple of Jesus. Depending on your own faith journey, you may have seen or experienced baptism in a variety of ways. Denominations vary in the mode of baptism regarding direction (forward or backward), number of times (one or three), and method (sprinkle or dunk). A deeper look at the historical context and early church practices will provide an understanding of the Charis Fellowship's practice of triune immersion.

WHAT IS BAPTISM?

The first mention of baptism in the Bible occurs when a man named John shows up on the scene in the Gospels and begins dunking people as they respond to his message of repentance. When John was calling people to be baptized, it was in conjunction with a call to repent and turn back to God. The word “repent” literally means to change directions — to make a u-turn. John was calling people out for following a life-path that was contrary to God's best plans for them. So, when people responded to John's message, they were acknowledging their desire to repent, make that u-turn, and get on God's path.

HOW SHOULD A PERSON BE BAPTIZED?

When it comes to the method or mode of baptism, there are differing practices among Christian churches today. Some sprinkle water on a person's head, some pour water over the head, and others immerse the person completely under water. Which of these methods is most in line with what we see in the Bible?

Let's start by looking at a couple of key baptism passages: Acts 8:39 and Matthew 28:19. In these very famous (and very important) instructions from Jesus, He gives the command to baptize new disciples. The Greek word translated “baptize” is “baptizo,” which literally means “to dip, plunge, or immerse.” It was used in Greek literature to describe things like a piece of cloth being dipped in dye, or a ship being sunk (plunged) into the sea. The very meaning of the word points to immersion as the proper mode of baptism.

LESSONS FROM HISTORY

Even the earliest Christian writings outside the Bible point to immersion as the standard practice. The Didache, a Christian teaching document dating back to the late first or early second century, says:

“Baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit in running water. But if you have no running water, then baptize in other water; and if you are not able to baptize in cold water, then do so in warm. But if you have neither, then pour water on the head three times...”

This early Christian instruction manual treats immersion (in running water or at least a larger body of water) as the norm, with pouring only allowed as a backup option if immersion is not possible. This suggests that the earliest Christians, those closest to the time of Jesus and the apostles, understood immersion to be the proper mode of baptism.

The practice of baptism likely finds its roots in the Jewish practice of the tevilah. As you may recall, the tevilah is a ritual cleansing in a mikvah where the participant immerses themselves into water for purification. This is commonly done as a complete immersion into the water.

While we want to be gracious towards those who practice baptism differently, the clear witness of Scripture points to baptism by immersion. This mode is in keeping with the literal meaning of “baptizo,” it fits the examples we see in passages like Acts 8, it most closely resembles the practice of tevilah, and it powerfully portrays the spiritual reality of dying and rising with Jesus Christ that baptism represents. As those seeking to faithfully follow Jesus and His Word, immersion is the mode of baptism that allows us to most closely align our practice with the teaching and model of the Bible.

“But it's not just about history. There's a deep meaning to triune immersion.”

ONE DUNK, TWO DUNKS, THREE DUNKS

When people think of baptism, it's common to picture someone being sprinkled with water or having water poured over their head, or perhaps a single dunk under water. But there's a way of baptizing that many people are less familiar with — triune immersion. That's when a person is immersed three times, once for each member of the Trinity: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. And while it may seem unusual to many, there are compelling reasons to believe this is how the early church baptized.

While the Bible itself does not explicitly describe how many times a person was immersed, the writings of the early church fathers suggest that triune immersion was the standard practice. Tertullian, writing around 200 AD, states: “Thence we thrice immerse, answering (that is, fulfilling) somewhat more than the Lord had decreed in the Gospel.” Tertullian treats it as the accepted method, indicating it was already well established by his time. Other church fathers like Basil, Jerome, and the Apostolic Canons also refer to baptism being done with three immersions.

THE GREAT COMMISSION

While this historical evidence is noteworthy, the primary reason triune immersion was practiced seems to be rooted in the language Jesus uses in His command to baptize. In the Great Commission, Jesus instructs His disciples: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” (Matthew 28:19).

The key is the word “baptizing.” The word is used in the plural form, which infers multiple dunks. When a person is plunged under the water three times in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, they're not just showing their union with Jesus Christ in His death and resurrection. They're also acknowledging the Trinity, the three-in-oneness of God. Each immersion honors each Person of the Godhead. It's a powerful statement of faith in the triune God.

THE EARLY CHURCH

This might sound like we're adding something to Jesus' instructions that isn't there. However, when we look at the very earliest Christian writings outside the Bible, it seems the early church understood Jesus' command this way. We've already noted that Tertullian, writing not long after the apostles, describes baptism as being done with three immersions. Other early church leaders also speak of a threefold baptism.

But it's not just about history. There's a deep meaning to triune immersion. The emphasis on three immersions in Christian baptism further strengthens the connection to tevilah. Scholars suggest that this practice may have originated from the threefold repetition of the word “mikveh” in the Torah. A common practice of tevilah is to do so by immersing three times and reciting a prayer between each submersion.

In the end, the number of times a person is immersed doesn't determine their salvation, for baptism itself is not a means of salvation. Rather, baptism is an outward expression of an inward transformation. But for those who want to be baptized in a way that's true to Scripture, honors the early church's practice, and powerfully symbolizes both Jesus' death and resurrection and the triune nature of God, triune immersion is worth serious consideration. It's a beautiful and meaningful way to publicly declare your faith and commitment to follow Jesus.

Adapted and edited by Bart Blair and Tim Hodge from “In the Name of the Father, the Son & Holy Spirit: A Study of Triune Baptism for the New Christian,” a new study guide by Bart Blair. This resource is now available on Amazon and can be used by churches looking to strengthen their baptism preparation process while honoring the ancient traditions that have shaped Christian baptism for nearly two millennia.



IMMERSED IN TRADITION: Bridging the Gap in Understanding Triune Baptism

COOPERATING MINISTRIES OF THE CHARIS FELLOWSHIP

The Charis Fellowship is honored to recognize and partner with a number of Cooperating Ministries that serve in specific areas of ministry both regionally and internationally.



ARCTIC BARNABAS

Helping advance the Gospel of Jesus Christ throughout remote Alaska.



GRACE REFUGE OUTREACH WORLDWIDE

Rescuing at-risk children, restoring their broken lives, and equipping them to impact their families and communities.



METROGRACE

Serving and developing urban churches by connecting urban leadership teams, cultivating growth, and caring with support.



VISION ALASKA

Facilitating fellowship, encouragement, training, support, and connection with the Charis Fellowship throughout Alaska and the world to glorify God.



ASIA'S HOPE

Providing family-style, community-based care for orphaned and vulnerable kids in Cambodia, Thailand, and India.



GRACE VILLAGE

Enabling older adults to live to their fullest potential.



SEEDNET

Giving hope to spiritually, emotionally, economically, and developmentally oppressed people-groups by proclaiming the Gospel and giving them their own church.



WATER FOR GOOD

Tackling water poverty in one of the world's most forgotten countries by providing clean, lasting water for every man, woman, and child in the Central African Republic.



CARIBBEAN VISION MINISTRIES

Assisting and connecting local churches to reach the Caribbean with the Gospel.



GREAT COMMISSION BIBLE INSTITUTE

Producing people of godly character who are biblically grounded and effective in practical Christian ministry.



THREE STRANDS

Providing compassionate, competent, and Christ-centered medical care focused on underserved people in the developing world.



DESTINY RESCUE

Rescuing kids from sex trafficking and exploitation and helping them stay free.



GROW NEW ENGLAND

Establishing healthy and reproducing churches throughout New England that cooperate in relationship and mission through the Charis Fellowship Commitment to Common Identity.



Send

Your church can launch disciple-makers to the nations and give them the support they need to take the gospel to the least-reached!

Go

Embark on an overseas mission and share Jesus with least-reached peoples of the world.



Pray

Intercede for our efforts in specific and timely ways by utilizing resources.



Give

Support people and projects shining God's light into the darkness with your financial gifts.



Welcome

Receive the nations by serving internationals and refugees who live in your own neighborhood.



Explore nearly 50 skills/passions & where they are needed most



Over the past **125 years** Encompass has deployed more than **600 missionaries** to over **30 countries** resulting in the formation of **thousands of churches** with whom we partner through the common mission and vision of the global Charis Alliance.

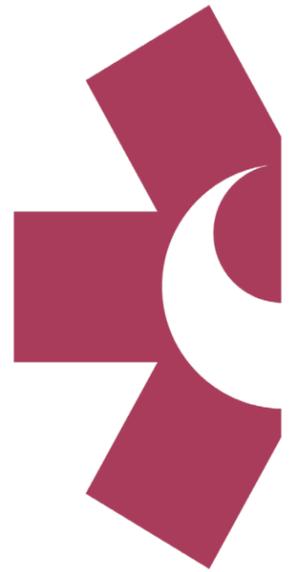
Though the world around us is always changing, our mission remains the same: **To make disciples of Jesus which lead to churches among least-reached people groups.** As the cross-cultural ministries arm of the Charis Fellowship, **Encompass World Partners** mobilizes churches in North America for lasting involvement in cross-cultural missions and pursues strategic partnership with Charis Alliance churches around the world as they pursue the same Great Commission.



Help your church navigate the journey to global missions. Visit PathSeries.com.

EncompassWorldPartners.org





CHARIS

DISASTER RESPONSE

In September 2024 Charis Disaster Response launched as a new initiative to help Charis Fellowship churches minister to people and areas affected by natural disasters in the United States.

The development of Charis Disaster Response came out of several years of discussion with leadership from Encompass World Partners and Charis Fellowship to determine the best way to facilitate important opportunities to serve and do good for the sake of the Gospel. For many decades, Encompass' response branch, known as Encompass Crisis Response, has led the Charis Fellowship in our efforts to respond and minister to those in crisis both domestically and globally. Encompass Crisis Response, under the direction of Barb Wooler and others from Encompass, will specifically direct their focus to serving internationally in areas affected by crises such as natural disasters and civil conflict.

Charis Disaster Response, led by Todd Derry and operating in conjunction with the Fellowship Council, has a focus of ministering to those in the United States who are impacted by natural disasters. In order to facilitate hands-on assistance in affected areas, Charis

Disaster Response relays information, shares stories, and provides opportunities for Charis churches to pray, give, and send teams.

Within its first few months, Charis Disaster Response was able to respond to three natural disasters across the country. The area of Indian Lake, Ohio, was impacted by a tornado in March 2024. Area churches were working to minister to the community and rebuild the home of a local family. Charis Disaster Response was able to come alongside them and partner with the response efforts to see the home rebuild completed in early 2025. In late September and early October when southeastern states were hit with back-to-back hurricanes, Charis Disaster Response teamed up with On Mission Network to set up a command center in St. Petersburg, Fla. Over the next several months teams from Charis churches in Maryland, Pennsylvania, California, Ohio, Florida, and Alaska traveled to impacted regions of Florida to assist in response efforts.

Looking forward, Charis Disaster Response is taking steps to proactively train and equip individuals and teams to respond to natural disasters.



“A focus of ministering to those in the United States who are impacted by natural disasters.”



CREATED FOR **MORE**



You've likely seen Grace College and Grace Theological Seminary's new logo and heard our new slogan, "Created for More." This phrase, taken from the book of Ephesians is lived out every day on campus. Here are three ways we've seen our core pillars expressed this year!



CREATED FOR **COMMUNITY**

Grace's Center for Literacy & Learning opened its doors last fall to establish partnerships with local schools and provide tutoring for K-5 students. Housed within the School of Education at Grace, the center exists to empower readers and leaders.



Scan QR to read more about the Center for Literacy & Learning.



CREATED FOR **KNOWLEDGE**

Noah (BS 24) and Emma (Lehman BS 23, MBA 23) Wright's Bible study, which has grown to about 70 people, challenges the notion that younger generations are anything but passionate about their faith. These Grace alumni open their home to Grace students every Tuesday night for fellowship, prayer, and time in the Word.



Scan QR to find the full story in the Spring 2025 issue of the Grace Story magazine.



CREATED FOR **IMPACT**

Grace's Marketing Office recently launched Grace Solutions, a full-service marketing agency supplying small businesses with services they lack internally. 20+ Grace students work on these projects with the oversight of marketing professionals. As a result, Grace Solutions meets real business needs, gives students hands-on experience, and brings additional revenue to the school. It's what we call a win, win, win.



Scan QR to learn more or request information.

GROW

healing begins with family



- * Developing 2 new campuses
- * In Thailand and Cambodia
- * Pastor hired for campus church, the spiritual development of the children and outreach into our community with the Gospel
- * Arts therapy center constructed
- * 85 children
- * 6 university students
- * 1 seminary student
- * 1 more family turned to Christ
- * Endless smiles and lives changed



To rescue at-risk children, restore their broken lives and equip them to impact their families and communities.



Let GROW help you impact the world!

CAMP

CHALLENGE ORDINARY ARRIVE OUTSIDE MAKE CONNECTIONS PLANT ROOTS

MANTOWAGAN

Since 1977 Camp Mantowagan has sought to encourage and inspire children, teens, and adults to lead useful, Christ-centered lives by helping them mature physically, spiritually, mentally, and socially.

A Christian camping experience is powerful and formative. Two of our counselors had this to say after five weeks of summer camps:

"Camp changes lives. It changed mine. The friends, memories, and spiritual growth from camp are so special and I wouldn't trade the world for it."

"There is no place on earth like it, where you are surrounded by God, nature, and amazing people."

Chapel building project.

Construction begins this year...help make it possible!

campmantowagan.com

facebook.com/gocampm

We endeavor to provide a year-round, Christ-honoring camp and retreat facility to assist the evangelism and discipleship ministries of the West Penn District of the Charis Fellowship, as well as other evangelical churches and para-church ministries. We are located near Raystown Lake in central Pennsylvania and can host groups of up to 180 people.

OVER ONE MILLION KIDS ARE SEXUALLY EXPLOITED AND TRAFFICKED WORLDWIDE.

Scan the QR code to launch your Rescue Sunday or visit <http://destinyrescue.org/church>

When the Church rises up, kids find freedom.

Charis Fellowship churches joined the fight to rescue kids and equip them to stay free.

To date, they've raised enough to rescue 129 kids.

And they're not done. More Charis Fellowship churches continue to join this effort to rescue more kids from some of the most horrific realities on earth.

Your church can join your peers to be the difference for children awaiting rescue.

Destiny Rescue
RESCUING CHILDREN

RESCUE THE POOR AND HELPLESS; DELIVER THEM FROM THE GRASP OF EVIL PEOPLE.

PSALM 82:4

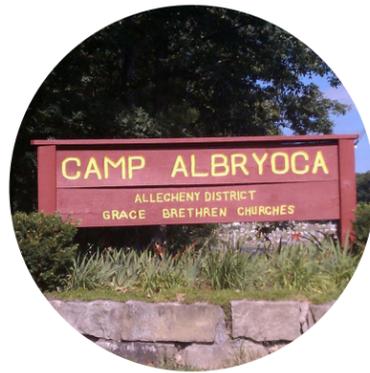
DESTINY RESCUE GLOBAL HIGHLIGHTS

<h1 style="font-size: 4em; color: #e67e22;">2024</h1> <p>4,177 people rescued</p> <p>201 raids</p> <p>288 perpetrators arrested</p>	<p>609 children enrolled in a Destiny Rescue Freedom Plan™</p> <p><i>Other survivors continued ongoing Freedom Plans, were reunited with family or entrusted to government care or another organization</i></p>	<h1 style="font-size: 4em; color: #e67e22;">2025</h1> <p>1,800+ people rescued</p> <p>55+ raids</p> <p>75+ perpetrators arrested</p>	<p>400+ children enrolled in a Destiny Rescue Freedom Plan</p>
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CAMPS & RETREAT CENTERS

OF THE CHARIS FELLOWSHIP

The Charis Fellowship has six camps or retreat centers which are sponsored, owned, or hosted by regional districts or churches. While the main goal for many is ministering to kids and teens, these facilities also provide space for Charis groups to gather. Through scheduled programming and maintaining facilities, these camps offer opportunities for evangelism, discipleship, and training.



CAMP ALBRYOCA

Allegheny District
Meyersdale, Pa.

Camp Albryoca has been hosting campers for more than 50 years. It offers athletic fields, an indoor heated swimming pool, fire pit, chapel, dining hall, shower houses, and cabins. Three weeks of the summer the Allegheny District churches utilize the facilities, otherwise they are available to be rented by church groups, organizations, and families.



CAMP CONQUEST

Northern Atlantic District
Denver, Pa.

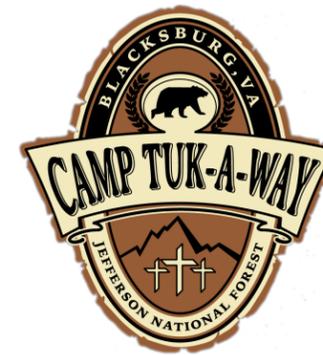
Located in Lancaster County, Pa., Camp Conquest serves the Northern Atlantic District. The camp offers horseback riding, target sports, swimming, hiking, and campfires. Camp Conquest offers week-long day and overnight camps for children and youth 7–15 as well as weekend retreats. The facilities are available to rent the entire year.



CAMP MANTOWAGAN

Western Pennsylvania District
Saxton, Pa.

Camp Mantowagan is owned and operated by churches in the West Penn District. Canoes, kayaks, mountain bikes, low-ropes course, target range, sporting fields and courts, indoor games, hiking and biking trails, and a climbing wall are a few of the features available to campers.



CAMP TUK-A-WAY

Blue Ridge District
Blacksburg, Va.

Camp Tuk-a-Way began in the mid 1960s on a piece of donated land. The camp runs two week-long camps, where campers participate in Bible training and discussions, craft time, swimming, archery, and group games. The remainder of the summer, the facilities are utilized by other groups who plan and operate their own teachings and activities.



CLEAR LAKE GRACE BRETHREN CAMP

Pacific Northwest District
White Pass, Wash.

Clear Lake Grace Brethren Camp held its first camp in 1941. The camp offers field sports, snow tubing, boating, a climbing wall, and nearby skiing and backpacking trails. Two weeks of the summer the Pacific Northwest District Grace Brethren Youth Council runs camps. The camp is available to be rented by groups of 35 or more throughout the year.



THE LODGE

Grace Community Church
Syracuse, Ind.

The Lodge was purchased in 2016 by Grace Community Church in Goshen, Ind., to serve the northern Indiana area. It has 52 acres of outdoor activities like professional disc golf, kayaks, canoes, trails, basketball courts, gaga pit, tether ball, and three fire pits. When the Lodge is not hosting private events, the grounds are open to the public.





Our national Charis Fellowship partners with our broader global family through a collaborative initiative known as the Charis Alliance.

This multinational network is made up of groups of churches from various regions of the world. Global ministry initiatives since 1909 have resulted in more than 70 Charis Alliance churches in South America, more than 70 in the Caribbean, 12 in Europe, 10 in Asia, and more than 3,500 in Africa. While individual churches and groups of churches maintain their autonomy, the Charis Alliance provides a platform for these churches to pursue matters of common benefit and purpose.

CharisAlliance.org



CHARIS SYMPOSIUM

A gracious place for thoughtful, theological dialogue

Whether providing footnotes for future Position Statements, articles for a forthcoming journal, or practical advice on complex issues, the Symposium will guide us toward a Platinum Age of Theology.

The Charis Fellowship Historical Society is a recent initiative to gather, preserve, digitize, and provide easy access to the vast number of publications, articles, documents, photographs, and biographies that tell the story of our incredible 300+ year heritage. To learn more or to hear about opportunities to participate in this initiative, scan the QR code.



CHARISFELLOWSHIP.COM/HISTORY

CREATED FOR MORE

At Grace Theological Seminary, we have been teaching, training, and transforming individuals for Christ and His Church since 1937. Through a wide variety of delivery methods, our Biblically conservative scholar-practitioners will guide you as you learn how to faithfully interpret the Word of God, put your knowledge of Scripture into action in the local church, and allow your studies to transform your own heart and life.

Choose the delivery method right for you!

- **Residential** - Get to know our Biblically conservative faculty in one-on-one and small group settings as they guide you to faithfully interpret the Word of God.
- **Online** - Get a theological education through high-definition instructional videos from scholar-practitioners, virtual access to our faculty, and a cohort of passionate classmates serving Christ around the globe.
- **On Site** - This mentor-based program allows you to earn credentials while continuing to serve your local church body.
- **Residential Blended - Accelerated Program** - This program allows you to earn your undergraduate and seminary degrees concurrently to accelerate the pace of your education.
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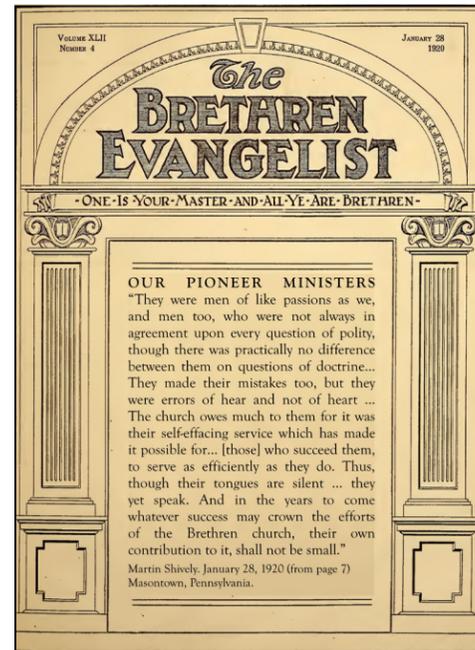


It was the year 1920. Thirty-eight years had passed since the forefathers of the Charis Fellowship were ousted from the historic church they loved (1882) primarily because of their passion for the Gospel, their commitment to the Great Commission, their disdain for legalism, and their embrace of innovative ministry methods to reach more people for Jesus. As editor of the weekly publication 'Brethren Evangelist' in 1920, George S. Baer penned the following stirring tribute:

January 28, 1920. There are certain men who stand out above the rest in the mind of the church as deserving of honor. They are the men who blazed the way for the Brethren church [Charis Fellowship] as a separate and distinct denomination. They are the pioneer ministers of the church, the men who wended their way alone over the mountains, through the woods and across the prairies to preach the simple Gospel of Jesus Christ without addition or subtraction and to build up

little groups of worshipping saints in every community they might enter. They are the men who fathered the denomination, which stands not for the promotion of a new "ism" or creed, but for the restoration and propagation of the primitive Gospel and the practices of the primitive church. They were noble men, God-fearing men, who opposed the requirements and prohibitions of men as much as they loved the laws of God. They were such men as God gives to be the pioneers of a great movement; men in whom certain challenging virtues stand out in bold relief.

These men were men of conviction. They believed strongly in the Word of God and its sufficiency for man's salvation and growth in grace. They would allow nothing to be either added or subtracted from the Book of Life. It was their rule of faith and practice, and Christ the Head of the Church was their great exemplar. What He taught by precept or example it was theirs to obey. They believed so strongly in this course that they would die rather than



give it up. They were men of courage. They would neither shrink before ridicule nor falter before bitter denunciations or condemnations. When a course was clearly right to them they would undertake it though excommunication would be their reward. Their courage consisted not of reckless daring or a hazarding without fear, but of a firm resoluteness in a just cause. Their sense of duty held them steady in the course they had chosen and would not permit them to turn back.

Here conviction and courage went hand in hand. Conviction gave the reason and courage supplied the determination. When once they had taken their stand according to their conviction, they would "stand fast" and would not be moved. They might be persecuted for it, nevertheless they would "stand like a beaten anvil." They were men in whose lives sacrifice was a large and essential part. Their very calling required it. No one ever pioneered a great cause, especially such as the purification and restoration of primitive Christianity, without experiencing sacrifice in a large way.

And these pioneer preachers knew what sacrifice meant. They considered not the goods of this world, as things to be prized, which many might have had in generous portions, in order that they might preach the Gospel and turn men from ignorance and sin unto light and salvation. They gave their time freely, not even claiming the hire concerning which the Scriptures says they were worthy, that the kingdom might be preached and the church might be established in needy places... These pioneer Brethren did not seek to avoid sacrifice; they made it cheerfully; it was to them the measure of their devotion.

They were lovers of freedom. They loved so much "the freedom wherewith Christ hath made us free" that they refused to be "entangled again in any yoke of bondage." To avoid it they would make any sacrifice. When the undivided Israel began to add mandatory decrees to mandatory decrees so that their liberty of

conscience was taken away, they parted company with their comrades in Christ. Many friendships were broken, many lives were disappointed, and many futures were clouded because of the rent in the brotherhood brought about by the Gospel to deprive men of their religious freedom.

The Gospel is the fundamental principle of the Brethren church. Recent conversation with some who went through that most unfortunate experience in the history of the Brethren fraternity have elicited this unanimous statement, namely, "The liberty for each individual to read and interpret the New Testament scriptures under the guidance of the Holy Spirit was the issue at stake." They loved the freedom which Christ gave. To have it they were willing to sacrifice all that an otherwise desirable fellowship would mean to them, for they knew that if Christ should make them free, they should be free indeed.

"Here conviction and courage went hand in hand. Conviction gave the reason and courage supplied the determination."

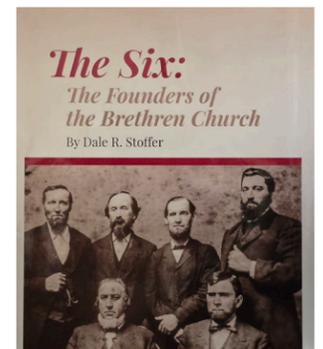
Though they were men of great conviction and courage and though they were strong enough to make any sacrifice and loved freedom passionately, yet they were men of charity and consideration. They had their differences as we today have ours, but they exercised charity one with another. They had not failed to receive instruction from the Apostle Paul who wrote to the Corinthians that however great their devotion and sacrifice might be, it was all for naught if they had not love. That great apostle himself was as strong and unflinching for the right as the rock ribbed hills about him when he wrote, but the granite of his nature was covered with flowers. He was stern in morality, Cromwellian in courage, but Christlike in tenderness and sympathy. The strongest are always the tenderest.

And we see in the strongest of these pioneer men of the church a charity maturing with the growing strength of their trying years. Out of their trials they learned forbearance... These men were not gods, but human beings, with our common weaknesses and possibilities, temptations and aspirations, but in the trials of their faith they found their strength in Him whom all the powers of darkness were impotent to overcome. The testings of those pioneer days of the church made them strong and noble and the message of their peerless lives will not pass with the number of their years. Such are the men whom the church delights to honor.

This editorial article was written by George S. Baer and was originally published in the January 28, 1920, edition of The Brethren Evangelist, Volume XLII, Number 4, Page 2. The Brethren Evangelist was the newspaper magazine of the Charis Fellowship from 1883 until 1940 when the Brethren Missionary Herald magazine was established. Researched and edited by Tim Hodge, Charis Fellowship Coordinator, 2025.



For a deeper look at these key leaders, see The Six: The Founders of the Brethren Church by Dale R. Stoffer. Available only from Brethren Press.



THE MEN WHOM THE CHURCH DELIGHTS TO HONOR

A Historical Reprint from the Brethren Evangelist by Tim Hodge



Ministers present at the 1883 Dayton Convention



MOMENTUM

MINISTRY PARTNERS

HIS KINGDOM COME, HIS WILL BE DONE.

MATTHEW 6:10



MOMENTUM YOUTH CONFERENCE

Every summer, students from across the country come together to encounter Jesus, be equipped to live on mission, and return home with a renewed passion for their faith. The summer of 2024 was nothing short of historic. A total of 2,300 participants gathered for powerful worship, Biblical teaching, and life-changing moments. Under the theme “INVITED,” 60 students made first-time decisions to follow Jesus, while hundreds more recommitted their lives to Him. The impact of the 2024 **Momentum Youth Conference** extended far beyond these emotional moments—students were trained in evangelism, served in local communities, and left empowered to live for Jesus. Momentum Ministry Partners remains committed to raising up leaders who will carry out the Great Commission—and 2024 proved once again that this movement is more than an event; it’s a catalyst for revival.

This year, more than 50 senior pastors and student ministry leaders gathered in small, purpose-driven cohorts with a shared goal: maintaining health and sustainability in their ministry contexts. These cohorts were thoughtfully designed to equip leaders with valuable resources, offer practical solutions to real ministry challenges, and foster collaboration and encouragement in a highly relational setting. Through shared experiences and mutual support, leaders were able to navigate challenges with greater confidence and clarity. The need for such support has never been greater—Barna has reported that in 2024, 50% of pastors in America seriously considered leaving ministry due to burnout and loneliness. Additionally, within the next decade, 85% of pastors will reach retirement age, under-scoring the urgency of raising up the next generation of ministry leaders. **Momentum PRO** remains committed to strategically supporting pastors’ well-being while equipping and empowering future leaders for sustainable ministry.



MOMENTUM PRO

For churches seeking to equip and inspire their people with the confidence and tools necessary to reprioritize their lives and reach the unchurched in their local communities, **Momentum Urban Centers** offer the ideal environment to make that happen. Our two locations—Los Angeles and Philadelphia—serve as training hubs, providing participants with practical instruction and hands-on ministry experiences that empower them to share the Gospel when they return home. In 2024 alone, Momentum Urban Centers hosted a total of 413 participants across 20 teams, engaging students and leaders in immersive urban ministry. Since 1988, Momentum Urban Centers have partnered with churches nationwide, helping thousands of individuals and groups make a lasting, relationship-driven impact with the Gospel every day of the year. These experiences not only equip participants to reach others, but also inspire them to return home with a renewed passion to live life missionally in their own communities.



MOMENTUM URBAN CENTERS



MOMENTUM MARKETPLACE

Momentum Marketplace continues to grow equipping young leaders and connecting churches, businesses, and mentors. The program has engaged over 90 new students with guidance from more than 30 mentors. To expand our impact, we have launched Marketplace for Young Professionals to equip interns entering the workforce. Marketplace has also recently launched a Spanish version of the program’s curriculum, which we are offering for free to support under-resourced churches. The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, with facilitators feeling well-equipped. The program has also gained visibility by being featured on the Carey Nieuwhof Podcast and the Christianity Today Podcast, helping us reach more leaders and organizations who are committed to the next generation.

The **Grace College Akron** Program is a site campus dedicated to equipping students for vocational ministry through focused academic programs and immersive, hands-on experience. In 2024, the program celebrated its 10th year, with 63 students actively pursuing degrees in full-time ministry. This year marked a milestone for the seminary. Four years after its launch, we celebrated the graduation of the first cohort who earned a masters of arts degree in Christian Ministry. With a strong foundation in proven academics, practical ministry training, and intentional mentoring, Grace College Akron prepares students to thrive as leaders in local churches—today and for generations to come.



GRACE COLLEGE AKRON

AROUND THE FELLOWSHIP

2024 | 2025

JULY

Charis Fellowship Conference 2024 was held at Grace Polaris Church in Westerville, Ohio, on July 9–11.

Momentum Youth Conference was held at Indiana Wesleyan University in Marion, Ind., on July 16–21.

AUGUST

Tim Sprankle began serving as the Charis Fellowship Executive Director.

SEPTEMBER

Charis Disaster Response was launched to help Charis Fellowship churches minister to people and areas affected by natural disasters in the United States.

OCTOBER

Central Focus Retreat was held at Maumee Bay Lodge & Conference Center in Oregon, Ohio, on October 7–9.

East Focus Retreat was held in Ocean City, Md., on October 21–23.

NOVEMBER

Charis Women hosted a regional conference in Winona Lake, Ind., on November 15–16.

Fellowship Council, the leadership team for the Charis Fellowship, held their fall meeting on November 13.

DECEMBER

Charis Fellowship Executive Team (Tim Sprankle, Tim Hodge, Andrew Saunders) met individually with each Executive Director of our eight National Ministry partners for annual collaboration conversations.

JANUARY

Southwest Focus Retreat was held in Calabasas, Calif., on January 27–29.

FEBRUARY

Charis Alliance facilitated the annual Global Charis Council meeting (February 1, online) with representatives from over a dozen countries where Charis Alliance churches are located.

Fellowship Council members gathered in Austin, Texas., for a multi-day meeting on February 5–8.

MARCH

Charis Women hosted regional conferences in Gulfview, Fla., on March 7–8 and in Soldotna, Alaska, on March 22.

Alaska Focus Retreat was held in Soldotna, Alaska, on March 17–19.

APRIL

Fellowship Council held their Spring meeting on April 9.

South Focus Retreat was held in Melbourne, Fla., on April 28–30.

MAY

Charis Women hosted a regional conference in Leamersville, Pa., on May 16–17.

JUNE

Charis Disaster Response held their first Regional Training Event (partnering with On Mission Network) in Pataskala, Ohio, on June 28.

Year in Review fourth edition was published in preparation for Charis Fellowship Conference 2025.

