



I have to tell you a wonderful story. Yesterday, Pastor's message was about Christian's befriending other people and making a real difference in their lives. He challenged us to identify people who were like that in our lives...and even the most significant in that regard. After church a young girl, Mindi, approached me. Mindi was my problem girl for two years when I mentored a group of girls going through Confirmation training. I spent a lot of time with Mindi. She came from a broken family and had a lot of issues. Since then she has turned her life around and has even been on two mission trips and people who know her are astounded. She put her arms around me and told me that I was the one who had made that difference in her life. It really brought me tears. One of my most memorable days in church. As you are moving about in the world, and keeping Christ in your heart, it is amazing the effect you can have on those you touch.

{Story from a Core mentor}



A new event for High School students is happening in Cornerstone Youth Center. WarehouseSTL is a music venue that is dedicated high school students. Our student ministry staff, in cooperation with some St.

John Church fathers, recognized a need to provide a safe, fun, and relevant place for teenagers to gather. Understanding that music is a universal passion from generation to generation, we decided to create a music venue that would showcase the top high school bands in the STL area. We believe it is important to encourage students to develop and use the talents and abilities that God has given them. Also, WarehouseSTL has been one of our biggest outreach events because it brings in teenagers from all over the city.

TWO THOUSAND AND FOURTEEN
ANNUAL REPORT



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Christmas. New Year's Eve. Birthdays.

They are all reasons to celebrate. At St. John, each year we take time to celebrate stories of LIFEjourney with you through the Annual Report. But what does LIFEjourney really mean? It's different for everyone because God created each of us to be unique. No matter what your LIFEjourney looks like, we know that it changes your life and will have a ripple effect into the lives of others. As you read through this year's Annual Report, you'll find stories of life change as people live out their LIFEjourney—which are reasons enough to celebrate!

A Ripple Effect

A letter received from a worshiper

I am 21 years old. I was born and raised Lutheran and went to church every Sunday. I went to church because I had to never because I wanted to and I would actually nod off during most sermons. My first year of college I occasionally still went to church but I never truly wanted to. I heard of St. Johns through my cousin who is a member there and decided to come and check it out. I was going through some hard times in my life and was really being tested by God and the sermon that you did and the songs that were sung (Cornerstone) really hit home in my heart and I just cried because I was overcome by God's love at St. John. Ever since that day I have been attending St. John every Sunday and during the season on Wednesday too. Sunday's have become my favorite day of the week. Because I feel alive and free at St. John and want to be more for someone else; I volunteered with helping St. John's soccer program last season and had a blast, I wish I didn't have to move back home so I could help out again this year. Before I found St. John I never wanted to go to church because I thought I knew everything the pastor was going to tell me so I never felt like giving anything my money or time. Now through St. John something came alive in me and although I am

a college student so I can't give much; I for the first time wanted to give my time to others and money. I felt it in my heart to give what I have because I know it will help even though it's not a lot. Every time I give I get a sense of peace in my heart so I know I am doing something right in my life. I love St. John and believe in the direction that it is going in reaching all ages, that I have been trying to bring others to visit with me. I have talked to my friends that don't go to church anymore because I know that they would love the type of service that it is just like I do. St. John has been a blessing in my life because every time I go to church I always hear a sermon or songs that I can relate to life. My mom says that she has seen a change in me for the better and that she is proud of me. She has always said she was happy with me and proud when I play soccer but when she said she was proud of me because she could see that I was trying to bring others to the church, I want to give my own money, and how excited I am talking about St. John and my faith THAT was the time that I took closer to heart. That was the time I found who I wanted to be as a woman. You and the whole St. John staff helped me on my journey to become that woman and helped me to truly live for HIM. I thank you a thousand times for saving my life and bringing me back to his light.

M Missions

St. John Missions connects people to life-changing experiences, transforming the servant and the served. We strive for authentic, God-centered partnerships, investing our time and effort into long-term relationship building and empowerment of people. Each year, servants like Ashley step off of our campus, to serve WITH, not TO others.

It's hard work, but it is worth it!

Is it Worth It?

Ashley Kuykendall | Wyoming Short-term Mission Trip Leader

I feel like I should warn you: this is not a post about how picturesque mission trips are. It's about the real, honest, truth-telling summation of what I've learned in these last few years while doing short term missions.

Mission trips are hard. They are messy and uncomfortable and stressful and exhausting and scary and boundary-pushing and frustrating and ever-changing and mostly just hard. They test every ounce of patience and endurance and perseverance and flexibility and optimism and faith and trust that you have left. They run you til you're ragged and they show you a new reality. They push you to your limit and they oftentimes put you in a place to push other people's too. They give you new frustrations and confirm your knowledge that the world and it's people are broken and sinful. They make you want to throw your hands up and say, "I'm done and I want to go home."

I'm glad that's not the end of the story. Mission trips are also beautiful and fun and fulfilling and awe-inspiring and thought-provoking and compassion-inducing. They stretch your heart to new limits and let your eyes see the world through a revised and realistic perspective. They keep you attune to the needs of the world and remind you that life is not about you or your plans or your expectations. They provide inspiration to keep helping, keep trying to make a difference, and continue loving others wholeheartedly. They expand our definition of "neighbor" by reminding us that

the world is big, but our experiences are so similar and that people from all walks of life experience the same hardships; that sometimes "hard" is just hard, despite the details.

This is my 6th year on this particular mission trip and despite an amazing history with this place and these people, things are still tough. The harsh realities facing the kids I love still cut deeply and remind me that the world is broken. The desolate, isolated condition of the pastor's family on the reservation doesn't get any easier to comprehend. The changing political and social landscape of the reservation doesn't start to make any more sense within my own frame of mind. But luckily, the laughter of kids playing on the swings doesn't lose its charm. The emphatic answers of preschoolers to questions about Bible stories don't get any less heart-warming. The moments when I can see the expression on a kid's face saying, "I know you; thanks for coming back" do not become any less reassuring that what I am doing is making a difference. And luckily, God doesn't stop either. He sees the hurt, He sees the struggle, and He sees the despair. He also sees the laughter and the learning and the love that takes place when people come together to uplift one another. Today, I am thankful for the opportunity to remind myself that even when things are hard and they don't go the way I expect that I can trust that God is working in the details and that he is better suited for the role of "decision maker" than I will ever be. I'm glad that in places like this, I can feel the compassion and mercy and gratitude from those around me. We truly do wreck ourselves before we can begin to heal and what better place to do it than here? What better time than now?

So, are mission trips hard? Absolutely. Are they worth it? Without a doubt.



2014 Vacation Bible School



1,000 Participants
550 Volunteers

In VBS this year, one of the Bible points was, "Even when we don't understand...Jesus loves you!" As we were sitting in a circle and wrapping up our day, I was sharing a time when I did not understand. I proceeded to share that not only was my dad in the hospital but he needed a really big heart surgery. I still can see their faces staring at me. I explained that I, too have questions and sometimes don't understand. This little boy, Zachary, got up and came over to where I was sitting and put his arm around my neck and said, "I think we need to stop right now and pray for your dad." Of course, the flood gates of tears overflowed. Another boy offered to pray. It was the sweetest little God moment I have ever experienced. As each child was picked up, they immediately shared this with their parent and now they are praying!

Friday Frenzie



50-60
Kids attend each event

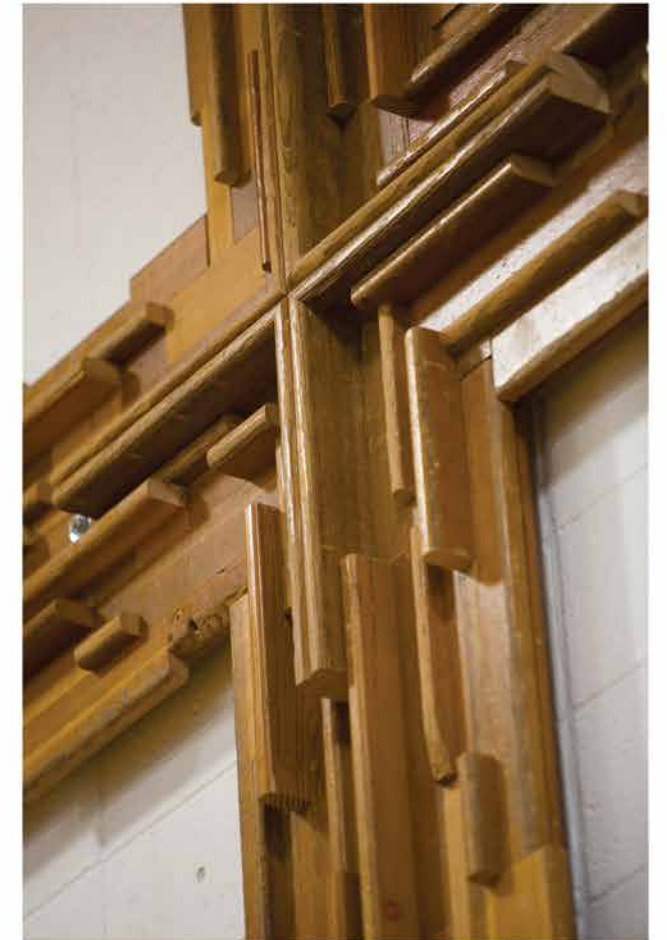
4th and 5th grade students, or tweens, are one of our most uniquely positioned age groups. They are starting to feel too old for "Sunday School" but too young to go into Student Ministry. This is why we pay special attention to making their environment and their programming more appealing to them. The goal of Friday Frenzie is to give them a unique once a month evening to come together and have high energy fun. It also provides an easy invite event so they can bring friends from the neighborhood. We play high energy games, eat pizza and kids hear a brief message of salvation appropriate for kids who hear it for the first time and easy enough for them to take back to share in their community.

Heidi Hays | St. John School Principal

One of my first realizations upon familiarizing myself with the campus when I arrived summer of 2012 was that the wooden bleachers would need to go. They were not only a splintered safety hazard; they did not meet the Americans with Disabilities Access standards required by law. When bids for new bleachers came in at close to \$30K, I found myself on my knees asking God for provision and guidance so we could find funding for this project that had been put off due to budgetary constraints. As I prayed, I clearly saw a vision of an exquisitely rustic yet modern cross fashioned out of planks from the existing bleachers—a piece of art that would serve as a constant reminder to put Him first in all things. As God would have it, there was even a wood-working artist in our midst. The husband of our kindergarten teacher, Rachelle Nummela, agreed to transform my vision into reality. St. John Alums and current families stepped up to contribute... and soon the new bleachers were fully funded.

I share the bleacher story as I tour prospective families through the gymnasium on our school campus. Here's what one young mother considering us for her daughter's leap into the world of school as a kindergartner emailed me this morning:

"I've been praying to God asking for his guidance and trusting in him that Kennedy will end up where she's supposed to be. I find your story of the bleachers being turned into a cross so inspirational...a reminder that I need not worry and have faith during this process."



Cross made from old bleachers in the Gym

Our God is an AWESOME God.
Let us always, in all things, put Him first.



- Spiritual Growth** fostered by Christian role models.
- Relevant and Rigorous Academics** delivered in an atmosphere of excellence.
- Leadership Development** equips children to be courageous servants.
- Quality Learning Environment** integrates 21st century skills & digital citizenship.



Biblically Sound, Culturally Relevant, Outwardly Focused.

This combination of phrases sums up every aspect of LIFEjourney at St. John. This past year, Worship has exemplified all three of these values.

Biblically Sound

In addition to celebrating the highlights of Jesus' Incarnation at Christmas and His Death and Resurrection at Holy Week and Easter, we had a year packed full of rich, life changing, biblical content.

- In November we examined the New Testament for models of how to share your faith in the series "DIY."
- In January we rested together in the Biblical concept of Sabbath in "Room to Breathe."
- In March and then in May, through two different series, we dealt with the toughest, most confusing things Jesus said and also the most confusing parts of Christianity in our series "Fighting Words" and "Out of Context."
- Last year we tackled issues like spiritual warfare, miracles, and angels in "Paranormal" and the things that get in the way to our freedom in "Freeway." We shared the Bible's take on "Winning," taught on sacrifice in "Ripple Effect" and the power of relationships in "Be Someone"
- In the middle of summer we took some time to talk about how God wants families to treat each other in the series, "Ideal Family." Recently one of our pastors met with a man who said "that series was the most important teaching that I have ever been a part of here." Funny, each and every series, people echo the same sentiment.
- We know God's Word has incredible power and when it's taught clearly and applied to real life, it's a strong recipe for life change.

Culturally Relevant

We're constantly on the lookout for ways to bring the Gospel alive in new ways to reach people who need to start on their LIFEjourney. Silhouettes of Christmas was brought back for its second year with just as strong of a response as the first year as more of you reached out to your friends to share the beauty of Christ's birth through this production. Our partnership with Dance, Inc. has allowed this group to not only present the story of Christmas but we've seen life change in the lives of the dancers, too. Here are a few comments we gathered from them "behind the screen."

- Despite a huge St. Louis dance competition the week of Silhouettes, every one of the 18 girls in Silhouettes wanted to dance here with us instead of at the competition.
- Delaney Glazer, the lead dancer, "I had to do this. Dancing here is the most holy I have ever felt in my life."
- While this isn't a comment, it does show the power of social media in the life of the dancers. After a short preview video of Silhouettes of Christmas was posted, over 2,000 of their friends and their friends' friends had watched the video. The power of social media keeps St. John culturally relevant and outwardly focused.

At Easter, we intentionally created an experience that took us from the The Last Supper to placing the body of Christ in the tomb. Many of us know this as Holy Week. Our goal during The Holy Week is to create an experience that tells the story of Christ's last day on Earth. But, we want people to know the whole story—not just The Last Supper—Not just the Crucifixion. Manifestations of the Cross did just that and set the stage for the celebration of Easter just 24 hours later.

Outwardly Focused

Speaking of that, our Live Stream numbers have grown and remain steady at just around 200 unique IP addresses each week. We know from social media that more and more of you are watching our live stream, whether you are out of town, cooped up at home, or just discovering St. John for the first time. How do we know that? *Because you tell us!*

"I have never liked the idea of giving something up for Lent so instead I try to do something. This year I decided I was going to try and go to church more. I started by attending Ash Wednesday mass at a Catholic Church which was okay. I then attended a second mass and left almost in tears. I was so disappointed that I got nothing out of the mass. Our neighbor attends your church and has told us how great it is so I thought I'd check it out. The first sermon I listened to online was the story of Adam and Eve. I had just heard the same reading at mass and had been thinking it sounded so phony. I loved that you, Pastor Dion, recognized this and were able to explain what this piece of "poetry" really meant. It was such a refreshing feeling to have someone take the time to explain a Bible story in a way that I could relate.

Though I have not yet made it to church, I have watched and listened to several of your messages online. We have two little ones and being a stickler about schedules, I have not been able to make it work with our Sunday schedule. That will be our next step which we will hopefully accomplish soon.

It's a little strange choosing to leave the Catholic Church, but unfortunately they seem to spend more time on the "fluff" and less time on the "core" messages, which I just can't relate to. I look forward to taking this new journey and working to become closer to God and Jesus. I know I have a long way to go, but I am happy to have already started to grow.

Thank you so much for the messages you have shared and for understanding that many of us are still trying to understand our faith. I look forward to seeing you both live one of these days and being able to thank you in person."

A letter received by Pastor Dion Garrett

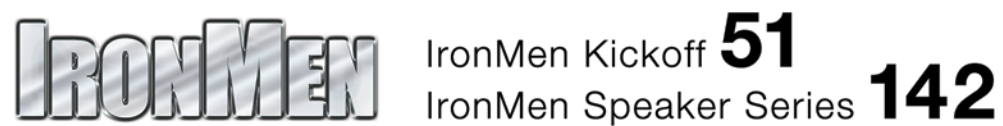
C Care Ministries

Supporting one another on our LIFEjourney.

The figures below represent the number of individuals that participated in various Care Ministries at St. John.



SG Small Groups



Small Group Networking Night on October 5 was a blast! 37 people showed up, and over 20 of those were young adults. At the end of the night, the young adults had so much fun connecting that they decided they wanted to remain in a large group together. They created a Facebook group for themselves and are meeting on Sunday evenings. The Networking Night was also helpful for a variety of other ages as well. Two recently widowed individuals were able to connect and find a group together where they felt supported. Another group of six women (some single, some married but little to no faith connection with their husbands) started a group together. The group is looking into planning quarterly events where they will invite their spouses and hope God stirs up faith through these gatherings.

CE Community Engagement

The Commons is a Hit!

The popularity of the Coffee House and tables to the lobby where you can enjoy a cup of coffee and conversation became even more evident as we unified services across our campus in 2014. More and more of you were hanging out after services and enjoying simply being with one another. Still yet another reason to celebrate!

But, it got us to thinking. What if a new environment was created that allowed for more space for this to happen in on a weekly basis? What if we made it homey with comfortable chairs? What if we made it the focal point for entry from the west side of our campus?

And so, The Commons West became a reality. Demolition took place over the summer behind blocked off window. Painting, wiring, flooring and lighting were accomplished. Window skins that echo the St. John logo added a final pop of color to draw attention to this new space. Finally, the furniture arrived and by early October, The Commons West opened.

So, the vision became a reality. And, you've embraced it! Conversations happen. You're inviting and meeting people in this space. Families linger and relationships strengthen. That's what being on a LIFEjourney is all about.



SM Student Ministries

Student Ministry is growing stronger each and every day. With the addition of Chris Toomey as our Next Generation Director and Pua Coffman, the Associate Director of Student Ministry, we already have more middle school and high school students attending programs and events on our campus. From a brand new youth focused mission trip to Strong Tower Ranch, a revamped CORE and Confirmation program and fun events like the Crazy Costume Party, New Year's Eve, Extreme VBS and WarehouseSTL, there are plenty of reasons to celebrate the LIFEjourney of Student Ministry.

But, before we share a story or two with you, we want you to meet Pua Coffman.

Tell us anything you would like us to know about your family.

My family is incredibly supportive and encouraging. My mom and dad live in Knoxville, Tennessee. My older sister also lives there with her husband and 2 kids. My older brother lives in Washington DC with his wife and 2 kids. I love being an aunt!

Where does your name come from and what does it mean?

My dad was in the Air Force, and I was born while he was stationed in Hawaii. My parents decided to give me a Hawaiian

middle name, so my full name is Virginia Lee PuaNani Coffman. PuaNani means "flower from heaven" or "beautiful flower." My family have always called me Pua.

Where did you grow up? Which of those places brings back the fondest memories?

Because Dad was in the military, we moved around every few years. After leaving Hawaii, we lived in North Carolina, Washington DC, Japan, Colorado, and Tennessee. Each place has really fun memories and really great friends. Moving every few years taught me how to be friends with everyone and appreciate different cultures.

Give us a glimpse of East Tennessee...what would you be doing on an ideal Saturday?

East Tennessee is the closest place to a "home" I've ever known. The smoky mountains, local eateries, windy roads, and four beautiful seasons summarize life in that area. Depending on the season, a typical Saturday could involve inviting friends over for hot cocoa and a s'mores by the fireplace, hiking in the mountains, swimming in a lake, or watching a Tennessee VOLS football game #GoBigOrange

What university did you attend? Tell me a little about your college experience.

I attended King University in Bristol, Tennessee. I studied Youth Ministry and played on the women's soccer team. Smaller classroom sizes and amazing professors allowed me to have an intimate and challenging academic experience. Being a student athlete proved challenging, but I wouldn't trade my experience for anything. It was at King that I discovered my love for studying the Bible and discipling younger women.

Who has been your biggest mentor in life? Can you tell me a little about him/her.

I have been outrageously blessed with outstanding mentors in my life. Damon and Lea Kelly, a married couple from Knoxville, Tennessee, have probably had the most impact on me. Damon was my high school pastor. I saw in him a passion to know Jesus more and to make Jesus known to the next generation. While in college, I became close with his wife, Lea. I see the way she fights for her family, her friends, and the next generation. Before I worked at St. John, I had the opportunity to complete a 2 year internship at my home church. Damon was my boss. It was an incredible gift from the Lord to work alongside a Shepherd who had so faithfully cared for and discipled me for 10 years. Every time I visit the Kelly's house, my love for Jesus is deepened.

What things in life bring you the most joy?

My job. Dancing. Hosting theme parties with my best friend Cassie. Worship. Dark Chocolate. Mountains. Travel. Getting to know high school and middle school students. My family—especially my nieces and nephew. Thrift Shopping.

When did you first recognize your passion for student ministry?

I went into college wanting to be a missionary, but King University did not have a Mission Major. I began pursuing a Youth Ministry major because I thought it would be sufficient preparation for the mission field. One of the requirements was to acquire 400 hours of practical ministry experience. I did a summer youth ministry internship with a local church after my junior year. I was unprepared for how quickly I loved the students. The tears, the late nights, the worship, the movie premieres, the soccer games—I was impacted and amazed by middle school and high school students. I knew that indeed I was going to be a missionary; I was simply going to be one in the US.

What has been the best part of working at St. John over your first three months?

Two things really stand out about my first three months here. I am encouraged and impressed by how hard the staff works. The staff loves the people and community of St. John, and they give their energy, passion, and time to serve this community relentlessly. It's an honor to be part of such an incredible team. Secondly, we recently had our middle school Fall Retreat. I had an amazing cabin of girls, and getting to watch God impact their hearts and lives over the weekend was a highlight of my time here.

For anyone who hasn't met you, what would you most like them to know about you?

Well, if we haven't met, we should meet! I'd love to get to know you. And pray with you. And learn more about Jesus with you and from you.



Pua Coffman
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Student Ministries*
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Strong Tower Ranch

This summer, a mission team of high school students served at a week-long camp for at-risk kids at Strong Tower Ranch in Wright City, MO. They were challenged to share the love of Jesus with the kids at the camp each day. Students played with kids who were HIV positive, students worked one-on-one memorizing scripture with kids who struggle with learning disabilities, and one of our students even shared with a pair of twins who were recently adopted that he was too was adopted. Connections were made, love was felt, Jesus was shared and lives were transformed.