

FAITH MATTERS QUIZ

Fill in the missing words from these famous passages of the Bible about things that God determined needed to be done...

- 1 "In the time of my favor I heard you, and in the day of salvation I helped you." I tell you, _____ is the time of God's favor, _____ is the day of salvation." *2 Corinthians 6:2*
- 2 "And this _____ of the kingdom will be _____ in the whole world as a testimony to all nations, and then the end will come."
Matthew 24:14
- 3 "David also said to Solomon his son, "Be _____ and _____, and do the work. Do not be afraid or discouraged, for the Lord God, my God, is with you. He will not fail you or forsake you until all the work for the service of the temple of the Lord is _____." *1 Chronicles 28:20*
- 4 Jesus said, "Go and make disciples of all nations, _____ them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and _____ them to obey everything I have commanded you." *Matthew 28:19,20*
- 5 When the Magi had gone, an angel of the Lord appeared to Joseph in a dream. "Get up," he said, "take the child and his mother and _____ to _____. Stay there until I tell you, for Herod is going to search for the child to kill him." *Matthew 2:13*
- 6 On that day the prophet Gad went to David and said to him, "Go up and _____ an _____ to the Lord on the threshing floor of Araunah the Jebusite." *2 Samuel 24:18*
- 7 "Whoever sows _____ will also reap _____, and whoever sows _____ will also reap _____. Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a _____ giver." *2 Corinthians 9:6,7*
- 8 "Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after _____ and _____ in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the _____." *James 1:27*
- 9 "Preach the word; be prepared in season and out of season; _____, _____ and _____ — with great patience and careful instruction."
2 Timothy 4:2
- 10 "I remind you to _____ into _____ the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us _____, _____ and _____ - _____." *2 Timothy 1:6*



LIFE is a Journey

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NEXT LIFE is a Journey

By Dion Garrett | Senior Pastor

Being a Christian isn't a simple "yes or no" proposition...it's not a question of being in or out. Being a Christ-follower is being on a journey. We call it your *LIFE* journey.

**Life is a journey,
God is with us and loves us through the journey,
In this journey, we are moving through LIFE together, discovering God and his plans for us.**

The LIFE journey is all about taking steps. Holding your ground is nothing to celebrate. Any step you take, no matter how small, is a step toward wholeness and LIFE and Jesus. This is a fundamental difference between us and so many other churches. We welcome people *wherever* they are on their journey and we celebrate any and all steps people take that move them closer to wholeness (LIFE) in Jesus.

But I'm learning this isn't only important for us to understand about our personal journey, this is important for me to understand about where we're going together as a church!

A little over six months ago, we embarked onto a two-year journey called NEXT. Over the next two years we will:

**Pursue People like Never Before
Mobilize the Next Generation of World Changers
Take Our Campus to the Next Level**

It's a focus that encompasses all we will do over the next two years and will leave us a stronger, more life-giving church for our community. When it's over, we'll be left with:

- A network of "house churches" all over our city and country of people who might never find their way into an "institutional church."
- A more up-to-date, inviting, yet sacred environment in our Sanctuary for our newcomers and guests.
- A more robust and secure experience for our littlest kids, who we know are the world's future hope.
- Better, more visible, more inviting space for connecting with one another before and after services.
- Stronger curb appeal with better landscaping, wayfinding, and a "sense of arrival" for our guests.
- **Hundreds (if not thousands) more people on this journey with us.**

I can't wait! No really, I can't! As a guy who suffers from chronic impatience, I want it all to happen **now!** And so I'm reminded that just like LIFE, **NEXT is also a journey.** And although you can't see a lot of it yet, we've been taking some very important steps to get us to our ultimate goal.

WHAT WE'VE ALREADY ACCOMPLISHED

While we don't see changes to our campus yet, we have been busy fulfilling the promises of NEXT over the last six months. Here's what we can already celebrate:

- The calling of a new Pastor, Doug Mauss, to lead our groups, care, and our **house church initiative.** This is a key component of how we will "Pursue People" in NEXT.
- **Establishing teams** of STJ people in highly specific expert areas, who will help create plans for each phase of campus improvements.
- **Site visits** to several church and business locations to research ideas and concepts for our improvements.
- **5 listening groups** with the congregation to gain specific input on our Sanctuary improvements.
- Commitments and giving of **\$10,843,606** projected over the next two years (our goal is still \$11 million)!
- **Baptisms of 18 kids and 7 adults & teens already in 2017!** Which shows that together, we're making a difference in our community!
- And that's all in addition to the **weekly, life-giving ministry** that happens here.

WHAT'S COMING UP?

While it's dangerous to presume on the future, here's what we hope to see happen in the next 6-7 months ahead as we move into an action phase of NEXT.

Improvements will begin in the Sanctuary (July-August)

Our teams of STJ professionals and experts advised us to begin improvements inside and not outside (apparently, you don't want to track construction crews through nice, new outdoor spaces). By summer, we should have enough money raised so that we can fill our room with clear, clean sound from a new sound system and make significant changes to the front platform/stage area of our Sanctuary.

Planning will continue for the Commons/Children's Ministry Phase and the Outdoor Phase (Now-December)

Some of our plans may involve extensive permitting and surveying work. We intend to keep the planning moving, even on the later phases, to make sure that as soon as we raise the funds, we can get to work.

House church groundwork will be laid and piloted (Now-December)

One of Pastor Doug Mauss's major responsibilities will be to begin giving structure to our House Church initiative. Pastor Doug will be having conversations with prospective leaders, piloting house church worship experiences, and much, much more.

Improvements will begin in the Commons/Children's Ministry (January 2018)

Depending on the generosity of our church family, we hope to begin work on the major renovations to our Commons and Children's Ministry areas right after the New Year. This will leave us with irresistible gathering spaces for connecting with one another over food and drink, a clearer, exciting, and engaging entry to Children's Ministry, and greater security for our little ones and peace of mind for their parents.

Do you see why I can't wait? NEXT is a significant leap forward for us! Our guest experience will be off the charts, which will translate to more people knowing that they are loved by us and ultimately God himself.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

Keep Praying!

- Pastor Doug needs prayer as he gets started here and pioneers our House Church movement.
- Pray that God moves mountains with contractors and local government so our work is unimpeded.
- Pray for our leaders to be both wise, courageous, and resourceful in our planning.
- Pray for our staff and volunteers who are pursuing people every week in our ministry environments.
- Pray for your neighbors and our community, that they might be open to the love of God.

INVEST AND INVITE!

- Show love to your neighbors and coworkers, they are our mission! Share messages with them that you think will have an impact based on what they're going through in life. Serve them when they are in need!
- Challenge yourself to begin inviting others to join you on a weekend (or point them to our livestream). Most people in our community have no idea of who we are, how *different* we are! We have a big campus but we're hidden, *unless YOU invite!* Begin a personal inviting campaign by sharing St. John with others.

BE GENEROUS!

- The timeline of our capital improvements depends on having the money on hand to fund the work, so your generosity is directly related to our ability to make progress on these important goals.
- We'd love to see 100% of the people who call St. John, "home," be committed. There is not a song that will be sung, a message that will be preached, a children's or student ministry experience that will be conducted, or an event that will be held for our community that will not be funded through your generosity to NEXT. If you have not yet committed yourself formally to our next two years, please go to stjstl.net/next and fill out your commitment now!

Step by step God is taking us someplace great! And step by step we will continue our mission to bring LIFE and wholeness to our community; I can't wait!

Constantly Growing

By **Scott Osbourn** | *St. John School Principal*

As St. John School closes out the 2017-2018 school year, it is encouraging to consider the countless ways we have experienced God's blessings throughout the year. Our continued focus on providing an environment that promotes Spiritual Development within an excellent academic program and caring community sets St. John apart.

We are called to be a blessing to others. Together we celebrate as we reflect on the past school year in the ways we have made a positive difference in our community and beyond. Throughout the year, we have supported Circle of Concern, partnered with "His Little Ones", supported soldiers, supplied books for "Little Bits Foundation" and Dream Center St. Louis, collected Shoes for "Shoes and Hope" and more. While students receive an outstanding biblical foundation everyday throughout the school year, they are also making a positive difference around the world through identified giving and service. St. John prioritizes opportunities for students to participate in mission and service projects to support this value of Spiritual Development.

In addition, St. John remains focused on an excellent academic program. As a result, students continue to participate under a highly recognized accredited program that strives to provide instruction that is engaging and innovative. As an example, St. John has implemented two hydroponic gardens in classrooms this year with plans for another in the fall. St. John is also moving forward with new hands on Science programming and VR (Virtual Reality) headsets to increase student engagement while meeting and exceeding basic curriculum standards. It is exciting to provide outstanding curriculum and instruction experiences for students at St. John.

Our school is also committed to building strong community within our students and families. It is important that students receive an education in an environment that values each person and their individual gifts. Focusing on student social/emotional development is an important aspect of any academic program. While this is an important element of St. John, we have also spent time this year considering classroom practices that celebrate each student and the different gifts God has granted each of them. Engaging in professional development, as well as implementing practices in the classroom continue to further our value of building a strong, caring community.

It has been an exciting year at St. John School. We have grown through professional education experiences, implementing new programs, building relationships, and continuing to provide families with an outstanding experience that values Spiritual Development, Academic Excellence, and a strong Community. We remain excited by our programs and values that foster success. It has been a great year and we are excited to continue serving families in the next school year. If you are interested in learning more about St. John School, we are still accepting applications for enrollment for the 2017-2018 school year. We encourage you to schedule a tour and learn more about the benefits of a Christian Education at St. John.



Ready, Set, Go

By **Jeff Cook** | *CFO/Director of Operations*

If you have been at St. John for any length of time you probably have seen how much planning goes into everything that happens here. From weekend services to mission trips to community gatherings like the 4th of July, planning is key to having innovative and effective services and events. Planning goes a long way in our own lives as well. However, all the planning in the world will not make an impact if the plan is never executed. Execution is the part where we get to see our hard work pay off. It can be closing a business deal, making a great presentation or hosting a successful event. We can also see the results in more personal ways like sticking to a weight loss plan, making changes that reduce the amount of stress we experience or making an intentional effort to spend more quality time with family and friends.

Planning and execution not only make things go smoother, they help us accomplish our goals in life. A wise friend has told me many times, "It is a shame how many people let life happen to them instead of them happening to life." Admittedly, life happens to me more than I want it to. I fail to accomplish my goals at times because I fail to execute my plan. However, I have found that if I take advantage of resources that are already in place it is much easier to be successful. It may be using a workout plan someone else has created, a YouTube video of someone else doing a home improvement project I am planning to tackle or talking with someone who has already vacationed in an area I want to go.

Today I want to encourage you to take advantage of a resource we offer to help you with an area of our lives where we sometimes struggle with execution. God designed us to be generous with one another. I believe we all want to live a generous life and make a difference in things that matter. Though we plan to be generous, sometimes life happens to us.

Automating the Important is a simple and secure resource that will help you execute your generosity plan. Simply go to www.stjstl.net/give and create or sign in to your SecureGive account. Once there you have the option of when, how and what dollar amount to give. As we approach summer, the time has never been better for you to execute your plan to live generously by Automating the Important. I promise you will be glad you did.



Get to Know Doug Mauss.

St. John's New Associate Pastor

By **Chris Toomey** | LIFEjourney Director

Chris | First of all, welcome! St. John Church is both excited and blessed to have you join our ministry team. And, we are honored to have your wife (Mia) and three children (Fable, Cypher, and Ember) be a part of our community. Can you give us a snapshot of your journey to St. John (where you are from, your work background, etc.)?

Doug | I met and married Mia in Colorado, which is where all of our kids were born. I was working in Christian publishing, and Mia worked in communications for several Christian non-profit organizations (such as Young Life, the Navigators, and Outreach, Inc.). One day, our church in Colorado Springs asked me if I would be interested in becoming their new Associate Pastor through a new program in our denomination. It's called the Specific Ministry Pastor (SMP) program. I served as a pastor at that church for four years, and it confirmed that God really had called me to be a full-time pastor. So, my family and I came out here so I could get my Masters of Divinity from the seminary in St. Louis. When we were looking for a new church, we discovered St. John. We were so happy to become members here, and I'm even more excited to become one of the pastors here!

C Tell us how you and Mia met? What makes Mia special or unique?

D Mia and I actually met when I was a youth group mentor, and she was a student in the youth group. But don't worry, we didn't start dating until years later when we both ended up at the same college! Even as a student, everyone could tell that Mia was something special. She's wise and charismatic, and helps encourage people to become the best version of themselves. And she's certainly done this for me in the ten years we've been married!

C I am excited for people to know your children. They are smart, articulate, and so much fun to talk to. Tell us anything you would like to help us get to know your children.

D All of our kids were named intentionally, based on something that we prayed over them. We named Fable because of our love of stories, and we hoped to pass that on to her. The verse we pray over her is 2 Corinthians 4:3-6, about helping people see the light of God's truth in the world. She loves to talk and share with anyone, as I'm sure her Sunday school teachers can confirm! We prayed that Cypher would be able to understand difficult things and reveal the truth of God's mysteries (1 Corinthians 2:7-10). He loves learning, and is working hard at reading and math these days. And Ember is our little spitfire, who we pray will fan into flame the spiritual gifts that God has given her (2 Timothy 1:6-7). Her name is definitely proving to be apt!

C What would you say is the best part of raising children?

D We were totally unprepared for how exhilarating and mind-numbing being a parent can be! It's been a six-year-long journey of being woken up throughout the night and changing diapers. But everybody is finally potty trained and mostly sleeping through the night! But they've also shown me that I have to be intentional about the daily moments in life. Having kids gave Mia and me the chance to change our family's story. To learn from our parents' mistakes but also to carry on the best parts of our parents' legacies. It's taught us how to wrangle joy by force.

C Do you know the meaning and/or stories about the origin of your family name?

D Well, it's always been interesting having a confusingly spelled name that, depending on how you pronounce it, is either an animal or a plant! We believe that my family was originally from Prussia, and they probably pronounced our name like the animal. However, Doug "Mouse" probably wouldn't be the most inspiring leader name, so I'm content with the Americanized version! However, my wife wishes we still had the original pronunciation, because she thinks Mia Mouse sounds like an awesome Disney character!

C What's the last thing you watched on TV and why did you choose to watch it?

D Right now we and the kids are working through the classic Dick Van Dyke show on Netflix. We like it because the humor holds up even 50 years later, and the plots are enjoyable by both the adults and the kids. (I love Daniel Tiger, but there's only so much of it I can sit through!)

C What are your hobbies or special interests?

D I love movies, novels, and playing sports. I haven't had much time for any of those things, being in graduate school. But, I'm excited to get back out and exercise and catch up on some of the TV and movies I've missed over the last two years! Apparently they've made some more Fast and Furious movies?

C How would you spend a Saturday that you had all to yourself?

D Two words: MOVIE MARATHON! I'd work through a theme, maybe several Jackie Chan movies, or Sergio Leone's "Dollars" trilogy of Westerns, or the indie-romance Before Sunrise series. And I'd get some authentic Chicago deep dish pizza, the best style of pizza there is! ;-)

C What's your favorite book and why?

D Fiction: The Princess Bride by William Goldman. Because I've never seen a funnier use of parentheses. Non-fiction: Walking on Water by Madeleine L'Engle. She reflects on how faith and creativity should co-exist.

C What inspires you?

D Stories of redemption. Anytime someone is put down, belittled, or dismissed by the world but is ultimately able to find out and live up to God's image of them.

C Share about a major turning point in your life.

D Probably the biggest turning point in my life was the year 2007. And my life has never been the same since. That was the year that the iPhone was released! Oh, also, I got married that year.

C What would you like your children, grandchildren, and friends to remember about you?

D I hope my grandkids would say that grandpa's tattoos are awesome! And also that I helped people grow in knowing God better and just how much He loves them. I enjoy finding out about new things and then helping others discover and understand them, too.

Field of Dreams

By David Jameson | Community Engagement Director

I'd like for you to picture in your mind a field. A vast field stretching as far as your eyes can see. A field that was once brilliant with color, dancing with life from the trees and all sorts of animals, and lauding the creator with its orchestra of rushing streams, exuberant birds, and playful crickets. Unfortunately, this is all in the past. Imagine this field having a wildfire ravage its way through 40 years ago, killing all of the trees and plants, and forcing the animals to flee and find a safer place to live. All this leaves is a black, barren wasteland.

Now, 40 years later, what you see is much different. You can see the beginnings of life returning to the field. Trees are a few feet tall, the underbrush is starting to grow back, but the filth and the wreckage left by the fire is still there. Everything seems pale, almost like the field has lost all hope of ever returning to its former glory. Now your eyes notice something. In the distance, far off to the left, you can see color. This color is coming from a tree that is at least twice the size of any other tree. As you make your way toward the tree, you begin to notice squirrels and birds have taken up residence there, and the ground around it has lush, vibrant green grass indicative of healthy soil. The tree seems to have a glow that is permeating into the gray, pale surroundings, and only one word comes to mind. Hope.

This is an accurate depiction of my reflections from the trip to Cambodia this past February. And in truth, the field above could be Cambodia, as 40 years ago they were in the middle of a massive genocide, which resulted in the killing of about 2.2 million Cambodians. As we rode through Phnom Penh, the capital of Cambodia, and through the rural communities, several things became clear to me. While the country was exciting and new for someone like me, and the people were some of the friendliest and most joyous people I've ever met, most of Cambodia was dirty, depressing, and downtrodden. A reflection of the tragedy they are still recovering from. Trash lines the shoulders of every main road, the majority

of housing consists of a 10'x10' tin and wooden box with dirt flooring where disease and sickness are constantly knocking, and the state of neglect that many children find themselves in hurts my soul. Don't get me wrong, things are improving for the Cambodians. They simply have a long way to go, and it almost makes you feel hopeless.

Now, after seeing all of this, I cannot even begin to tell you what happened within me when our group walked into Stronghold Cambodia for the first time. This may sound weird or outlandish, but as we walked onto the Stronghold Cambodia campus, I could literally feel the presence of the Holy Spirit around me. He was in the air, in the walls, in each classroom, in the lunch area, and all throughout the playground. It was something I've never experienced before!

The Holy Spirit is working, and we could feel the intensity of that through the constant, overwhelming joy of the kids and through the pure, powerful love and commitment that the staff have for those kids. Stronghold has become a haven of peace and shelter for the surrounding community, and the community knows that Stronghold is fighting for them and their families. This is all a part of the incredible work that God is doing in Cambodia, and it was incredible to witness it firsthand.

Above all, I can say with 100% certainty that God is using Stronghold Cambodia as an agent of positive change for the kids that attend, for their families, and for the community as a whole. I am so proud that our church partners with Stronghold so that they can be God's hands and feet in Cambodia, and I believe that the future is very bright for Stronghold Cambodia. They are bringing hope to a downtrodden country, and their reach will only continue to grow.

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