

PARISH HOUSE

Newmarket Church of Christ



WHAT'S INSIDE:

Throwing Seed - 1

Fundraising Goal - 2

The Neighbourhood - 2

Meal Packing Event - 4

THROWING SEED

Nathan Pickard

When I was probably ten or eleven years old, I took over the neighbourhood paper route from Chad. I followed Chad for several days delivering papers, learning the route and learning specific instructions. “*Mr. Cramp likes his paper at the side door.*” “*Mrs. Dennison likes her paper inside the front porch on the chair.*” “*The cranky old guy on the corner will yell and scream if you ride your bike across his lawn.*” Chad taught me about each customer who we delivered papers too.

To receive a subscription for the local paper, one had to sign up. Not only did one have to sign-up, one paid for

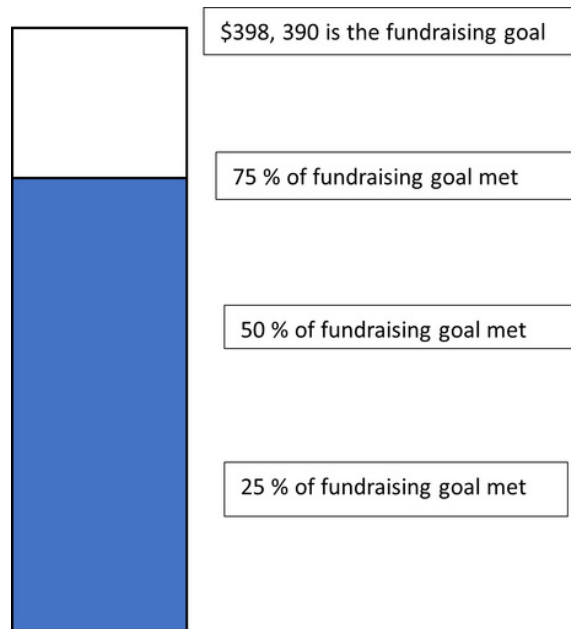
continue reading, pg. 3

Parish House Financial Update

After years of planning and having COVID slow the speed of implementing the Parish House vision, we've now reach the point where we are actively raising funds for this vision. Our goal is to raise three years of financial support before we call a Parish House minister. To date, between members of the Newmarket Church of Christ and those who are early adopters of the Parish house vision, we have reached 75% of our fundraising target.

All Canadian donors will receive a tax receipt. We are currently working towards seeking a partnership so that all individual American donors will also receive a tax receipt.

If you know of congregations that are looking to financially support mission work, please let us know. We will either travel to meet with the respective congregations, or, if desirable, invite respective congregations to visit with us and to see the mission work we are doing. For all interested individual, congregational or foundations, we are able to set up a zoom meeting to discuss.



The Neighbourhood

Continuing what we started in volume 5.1, we'll paint a picture of the neighbourhood that the Parish House will focus on. The neighbourhood covers 500+ homes and 8 high rise condominiums and apartment buildings in roughly a three square mile radius.



Located directly east of the church sits two high rise condominiums. Residents enjoy the use of a community garden and the church driveway as a basketball court. Outside of 250 Davis is a gathering spot residents often sit. The Parish House minister will find these benches to be a place of welcome and where friendships can be formed.

Throwing Seed, Cont'd

for their subscription by leaving money in an envelop, usually taped to the front door. It was my job, not just to deliver the papers, but to collect payment for the subscription and ensure the newspaper received their share. Thus, part of my responsibility was sitting down at the kitchen table, counting coins and bills, and writing a cheque to the newspaper company. There were many a nights one of my parents were sitting down helping me count the coins.

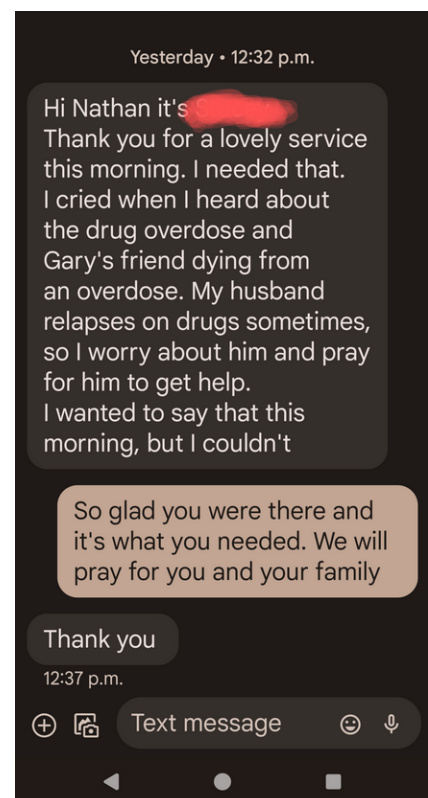
My parents used this moment to teach me the responsibility of “saving.” I was never allowed to spend the money I was making. Sure I could take some coins and go down to the variety store and buy myself a treat, but my parents ensured that I “saved” my money. My parents said something similar to the following, *“What you do today with your money will determine what money is available tomorrow.”* Of course, when you’re ten years old, saving money seems like the dumbest idea!

Recently, while sitting in the dressing room of the hockey arena, one of the coaches was speaking to the kids about the importance of “play-making.” The coach said, *“A goal is scored because 3-4 plays earlier, we did a set play to set up the goal.”* As the coach gave some concrete examples of this, I started wondering about the church’s life. What we see and experience in our life with God may just be on account of the work that has taken place several years prior.

We had an experience in our worship service. A young lady showed up in our worship service for the first time. She came in quietly, sat towards the front, participated and talked with various individuals, then quietly left. About an hour after our worship, I received a text message from her saying that it was a lovely service and how she needed this kind of worship service. There was a moment she cried in the service. There was a moment she wanted to offer a prayer request, but just couldn’t.

There is, of course, a backstory. This young lady didn’t just “show up” in our worship service. In fact, we’ve been developing a relationship with her for over a decade. The first time we met her was at the Summer Camp we host for children in the neighbourhood. Her oldest daughter participated in our Summer Camp and neighbourhood meals. Through Summer Camp and shared meals, we were able to build enough trust with her so that when

there came a time of recognition she needed God and God to be at work in her life, she knew had a Christian faith community she could turn to. Those tiring weeks of having fifty children scream with excitement eventually led a young woman into a worship service.



In Matthew 13, Jesus tells a parable of a reckless farmer who throws seed out. Some of the seed falls along the path, among the rocks, and some of the seed gets eaten up by the birds of the air. Some of the seed thrown out by the farmer germinates and begins to grow, but unfortunately, for a number of reasons, quickly dies. Fortunately there is some seed that falls onto healthy soil, takes root, and begins to grow, producing an abundant crop.

I keep thinking how the church is throwing out the seeds of the kingdom. Many times we see nothing happening. Other times we see the seeds of the kingdom germinate but fail to see anything happen. Then there are those moments we discover the seeds of the kingdom we have thrown out, germinate and produce an abundance crop.

Like the hockey coach telling the kids it matters how you play the game of hockey because goals are “set up” 3-4 players earlier. Like my parents who taught me at a young age about financial literacy and that my financial abilities tomorrow are in some way determined by what I do today. How our churches live into God’s unfolding mission today will have an impact on what happens down the road.

As we look towards what it means to call a Parish House minister, I wonder what seeds of the kingdom will be scattered and I wonder how long it take for some of these seeds to take root, to grow and to produce an abundant harvest. I can’t help but wonder what seeds we will see start to germinate ten years from now on account of the Parish House scattering seeds of the kingdom.

We must wait and see.

On Sunday October 15th, we’re hosting a meal packing event with Lifeline Christian Ministries. Our goal is to pack 4,000 meals that will be sent to some of the most vulnerable people around the world. It’s an exciting, interactive and fun experience for us. It’s one way we’re throwing out the seeds of the kingdom.



picture of our meal packing event from 2021

"To be most effective in bringing about change in a community or a neighborhood, it helps if you live there."

Larry James, *The Wealth of the poor*

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