



LifeSpring
NETWORK

the NETWORK NEWS

November 2023

There's nothing like the change of seasons to remind us of the cycles of life. There's something divine about full-circle moments. Please read our story!

When Life Spring Network was launched in 2006, Stanwich Church commissioned us to take its intensive discipleship training to churches across the country. At that time, half a dozen churches in the Northeast were fully implementing its disciple-making strategy. After another six churches and para-church organizations became interested in Chicagoland, we moved there to engage LSN across the Midwest. From there, other churches and organizations across the country started to engage the Omega Experience. When God sent us into the inner city of Chicago, we were blessed to have the people impacted by the Omega Experience from all over the country support our disciple-making initiatives.



After engaging a season of reflection, the lessons we have learned over the course of the last 17 years and how it all comes full-circle will inform our moving forward.

In the early years of LSN, we began to see that discipleship is only successful if the senior pastor and senior leadership team are willing to personally engage in it. Alternately, LSN has been part of churches that, when the senior pastor leaves/retires, discontinue the discipleship process in order to make way for the vision of the next pastor whose passion and experience didn't include disciple-making. Unfortunately, it is the rare pastor these days who actually understands the nature of holistic discipleship-making. We've recognized over the years, and research will backup, that pastors are predominantly trained and gifted in Pastoring and Teaching in seminary. The other three roles in the five-fold ministry in Ephesians 4 of Apostle, Prophet and Evangelist are neglected or downplayed. As pastors lead, they prioritize

their training and gifting, leading from their strengths. Many do not know how to embrace or think about holistic reproductive disciple-making, much less have a strategy for it within their congregations. Disciple-making, like everything else in life, is both taught and caught. We have come alongside pastors and teams that have wanted to grow these spiritual muscles. We've noticed without the constant presence of the encouragement of a ministry like LSN, church leaders who aren't trained in discipleship return to what they know and short circuit the disciple-making process.

LSN has been a constant drumbeat for thinking strategically about the Church and re-envisioning the Church for this day and age, including a deep dive into the how's and why's of the Great Commission, which was Jesus' last command to us, to go and make disciples. While Jason has enjoyed mentoring pastors and church leaders through our seminars, courses and strategic thinking, the role of consultant only allows for so much fruit, so God guided us to start Chicago Hope Church in an attempt to start a disciple-making church from the ground up. Covid, a bad ministry partnership and the environment prevented this from coming to fruition; but we are convinced that the ministry of LSN needs to be imbedded in a church out of which its principles are lived. Along the way Jason has also learned that God uses him as more of a Petrine apostle (like Peter who was sent into existing communities of faith to bring them more alive) than a Pauline apostle (starting new churches among the lost). God has always used Jason best when he is sent to come alongside existing churches, whether they be hundreds of years old or new church plants, and help take them to a new disciple-making level.

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This is where the full-circle moment begins. We were recently approached by three churches who are sold-out in their desire to build and grow real discipleship in their churches. One stood out to us though. It is back where LSN started and where the ideas first took hold. The fact that several discipleship groups that Jason and LSN helped begin still exist in the Northeast after 17 years suggests that New England has the environment where people are excited about the intensity of strategic thinking and real discipleship.

Please support us as we pray for God's discernment in this process. It really seems like things are falling into place for God to bring us back to New England to implement strategic discipleship. As you may know, the inner-city ministry house, after being on the market twice, has now recently been sold. We will now begin the legal transition of the active ministries from Chicago Hope Church to LSN. Jen will continue leading the Hope House ministry efforts and administrate LSN tasks while Jason proceeds with full-time discipleship training through LSN as he also chisels away at his dissertation. Meanwhile, our family continues to heal and is beginning to feel hopeful for the plans God would have us pursue next. Please continue to pray for us as we discern where God can use us to help implement strategic discipleship and utilize the LSN best. Thank you for your faithful prayers and support! Praise Be To God!

Hope House Student Update



We got to visit Sereana over a weekend and introduced her to a church plant in New Haven run by Jeff and Troy Hutchinson. Sereana is healing nicely from the tear of her ACL and LCL while she was playing rugby against Canada this summer. She has been diligently rehabbing at PT at the University of New Haven and is now off her crutches and out of her brace! Praise God!

It's fun to anticipate seeing our old students from Chicago Hope Church's Youth Group at Jaden's football games. Stephen and Jayden, pictured here with our Jaden, both play for Olivet Nazarene and are also continuing to grow. It's good to see the seeds we planted blooming.

During a college visit to Taylor University with Josie, we connected with Roneisha, another student from Chicago Hope Church Youth Group. She's a senior at Taylor now and majoring in Theater. She is growing in her faith and has come leaps and bounds! She is learning to embrace life from a Christian worldview and preparing for her calling as a theater teacher wherever God would send her.

Treville, a student who lived with us for two years, is in his senior year at the University of Chicago. Jason continues to mentor him via Zoom regularly. Recently, we were privileged to give him a computer. We are proud that he is fighting the good fight of the faith. He has recently connected with a Christian organization on campus as well. Please pray for him as he moves through this vital year and looks for employment.

Will, a student who lived with us for a year and a bit, continues his studies at Maranatha Baptist University, where he also is preparing for the basketball season. He's healing from an injured hip that he had surgery on last year. He is in his sophomore year and is growing in his faith. God is really moving in his life and "Everything is starting to click now." Maranatha actually means, "Our Lord has come." What a miracle!

Creative Arts Update



Julia continues to write and produce songs, but dance has taken priority as she prepares for her college showcase which has selected five of her dances, including one which she has choreographed called "Maranatha". We look forward to sharing the impact of this experience in the next newsletter.

Inspiring Churches



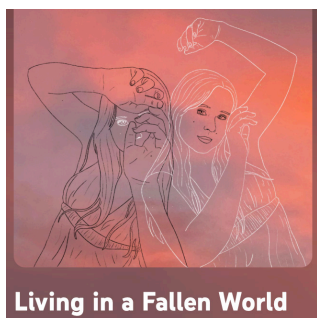
Jason has preached in several churches around Chicago, the most recent being one in Big Rock, IL a few Sundays ago for a pastor from one of his pastor groups. He had a warm welcome

from the sweet farming community, and then we were all invited to the farm for homemade elk soup! We loved being with the goats, chickens, dogs, bees, and of course, with them! God is good.



Living In A Fallen World

About the album from Jules



Living in a Fallen World is my journey through grief and asking “Why does a good God allow so much hurt in the world?” The beginning tells of my journey through losing friendships and struggling with chronic headaches. I felt God holding my head one afternoon and it changed everything. He gently showed me that we live in a fallen world, meaning that this world and the bad things that happen to people is NOT what He wants or created it to be. Because the enemy is the ruler of this world, pain exists. If God’s kingdom fully came, the earth would be the complete opposite! And it will one day! There is no pain and no grief in Heaven, and God is constantly pulling us back to Heaven, back to the garden. I experienced and watched God heal me from a year of severe headaches and loneliness.

Two years ago, while I was writing, rehearsing, and recording the HERE album with Made To Be, I was in a season of deep pain. I would nap for over three hours a day because that was the only thing that would tame my headaches. I could not look at screens without intense pounding. Every time I would drive, go to school, and see people, the pain would increase to an unbearable level. I would hide my crying in school the entire time I was there. I went to the doctor once a week to cope with the pain. Any scent would make my headaches worse, so I even had to use unscented hair and makeup products. I was so delicate, frustrated, and could not understand what was happening to me.

My freshman year in college, I went to church. During worship I started crying, and I felt JESUS heal me! I knew Jesus could heal, but honestly did not believe it. Thank God for my mentor, Trish, for raising my belief in the supernatural. I now fully believe Jesus heals and WANTS to heal all those who ask. My album concludes with a call to Christians to receive their full inheritance and partner with the Holy Spirit to bring Heaven to Earth! THE HEALER- JESUS CHRIST- is living inside of us! The same Spirit that raised Christ from the dead. Literally from the dead. HE lives in YOU and calls you to do the same things Jesus did and GREATER things in His Spirit. Because He is in us, we truly, truly should look so vastly different from the world.

Do you treat people how worldly people treat people? What is the benefit of His Gift if we do not actually look different than those who are under the power of sin? My headaches were from being treated at school like I was invisible - emotional stress, tension headaches. People were treating me like trash, not the treasure I am, nor with the value with which I was born. If we love like Jesus, walk into the gifts He has given, and look different than the world, there would be less hurt in the world. We must fight in the battle to bring Heaven to Earth because that garden is where we all were meant to be and bring others to. Listen to my new album and be comforted. God does not want you to suffer, and the Healer lives in you.

Listen to my album “Living in a Fallen World” on Spotify, Youtube or Apple Music. I suggest listening to the full album from start to finish with headphones and be taken on the healing journey. So much love and peace, JULES.

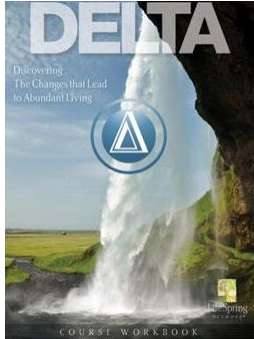
Family Update

Our family is doing well. Jarod continues his journey in Mississippi at the Columbus Air Force Base. His wife, Curi, is finishing her Master’s degree in International Affairs with a focus in International Development and Environmental Policy at Texas A&M and will join him when she graduates in December. Jaden is in the throes of football season at Wheaton College, excited about his junior year studies in Business Economics. Julia is having the time of her life as a sophomore at Grand Canyon University, writing and producing music and dancing. Josie is enjoying her senior year of high school, competing on Varsity Swim, dropping time, and trying to figure out where she’ll go to college next year. She’s looking into Wheaton, GCU, Taylor University, Gordon College, Messiah University and Liberty University. Any advice is welcome!



Ministry House Update

Praise God. After the first offer fell through, God brought a new buyer for our Ministry House in the city! And we couldn't be more thrilled! She is an Air Force veteran, a retired surgeon, who has started a healing ministry for populations in recovery, reentry, homeless and at-risk. This particular house will provide homeless vets with transitional housing while they are receiving trauma care.



Discipleship Groups

Jason continues to expand his disciple-making ministry, with more participating in his Zoom groups, specifically with other pastors. He is now leading six groups, trying to make disciples across the country, from Colorado to Florida to Connecticut to Massachusetts and of course locally in Chicago. Additionally, he has begun one-on-one mentoring with a few others. Contact us if you'd like to join him on Zoom.



Can you introduce us to churches and organizations that want to grow disciple-making communities?



With your financial support, we touch lives through the work of our ministry. We appreciate the generous support we receive from our donors. We recognize that all of our time, talents and our resources are gifts from God. Please prayerfully consider giving to our ministry.

**To donate on-line please visit
lifespringnetwork.org/support-us**



*Life Spring Network is a 501(C)3 not-for-profit organization, which enables us to provide tax deductible receipts for gifts given.
All donations are tax deductible.*

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