I'd be curious to hear, for you personally, what's been a spiritually significant moment in the life of Sherwood Oaks here? I was baptized at Sherwood Oaks in the old building many, many years ago, and then all 3 of my children have been baptized here. And so for us as a family, just to know that this was our foundation, this is where we started, there's so many people here that we know and love and that know and love us. When we moved to Bloomington, I've shared our story before, moving into my in-laws' basement, kind of at probably one of the lowest points in my life spiritually, emotionally, and just how God used Sherwood Oaks to reengage me. And when the opportunity came to lead the Bedford campus, and this was a church that in a lot of ways, like, our stories mirrored each other.

And I think that was just like a really healing season for both of us, for all of us together, that now, I mean, you look at it, almost 10 years later, what God continues to do at our Bedford campus and how, you know, I'm just so grateful for the way that he has restored me back into ministry and brought emotional and spiritual health in a way that in that moment I, I didn't know if that was even possible again. Maggie, you've been a part of the church, you said, a little over 40 years. What are some of the ways that you have seen God move through his church in that time? My answer to this question is probably going to be different than what you expect here, because you think of how- the question is, how has God moved? And I would actually say that God has been the only constant and unchanging thing in the 40 years.

Because I think about all the iterations of the church, and we followed along a lot of the very traditional, like, North American church. We went through the phase of being a very attractional church, right, where we're bringing people in as much as we can. It was great. That's not a wrong thing. And now I'm, like, moving more towards a missional church.

We want to be a place where people can come and feel equipped and empowered, but to go back out, right? It's not about the church building. Like, so many things have changed, you know, so much has changed. Leaders have changed, people who attend have changed, mission ministries, you know, things like that. The language has changed.

Yeah, in the midst of all of that change, like, the Lord has been consistent. Yes. So part of being a leader and being in leadership is developing the spirit of discernment and listening to the Holy Spirit and trying to follow in step as best as we possibly can. And so kind of in your words right now, where do you sense the Holy Spirit is leading our church next? Man, yeah, I love that question.

I go back first and foremost to our vision to be a church that is unleashed with the love of Jesus to make an eternal difference in the lives of at-risk people. And so for us to be a church that, that is not again saying, hey, come to us and we'll show you how to be healed,

but not like taking Jesus to them. You know, like I said, that incarnational ministry of Christ in our community. It is a church that, that I just see gathering up on Sundays so that we can go and scatter out into our community and around the world. I think the same vision of just being a place of equipping and empowering and sending people back out.

And I think the 2 things that come to mind with that is just being a church that has a sense of urgency about this a little bit more than what maybe we've grown accustomed to. There's people all around us every day that don't know Jesus, and we could be the one to influence that, right? And be the only bit of Jesus that they see in their everyday walk. And so carrying with that every single day in our conversations, in our workplaces, like you said, the day-to-day ministry that we have. So just being a church that is equipped and empowered and then sent out with that sense of urgency, and then sent out reminded that we carry the Holy Spirit within us.

Good morning, everybody. It was a lot of fun recording that with Maggie and Quentin last week, and we've got the full unedited version of it on our podcast channel, our YouTube page. So go and check that out. We talk a lot about some things from the past of Sherwood Oaks and some things currently that we're doing, but then also we get into some of the nuts and bolts about what is ahead. And so, yeah, go if you're interested in some of that, go and check out that episode.

So I enjoy hiking and I always enjoy whenever I'm out on a trail coming across what is called a cairn. Familiar with these? Now, I'm not saying Karen with like a Kentucky accent. Cairn over there. No, that's not what I'm saying.

I lived in Kentucky for 9 years. I think I can joke about Kentuckians, and I still got that drawl that does come out just a little bit. But no, a cairn is a stack of rocks that hikers will use along a trail, and they have a couple of different purposes. And, and so maybe someone came up to a part of the trail that it's a little confusing which way you're supposed to go, and so what they'll do is they will build a cairn, a stack of rocks, that kind of indicate wayfinding. This is the way that you want to go.

This is the trail that you want to take. And so cairns can be useful for making sure that you don't get lost, that you don't get off course. Cairns are also used that maybe you're on a hike and something happens in a moment and you just want to remember that spot. You want to remember the thing that happened in that place. And so somebody might go down and gather a couple of rocks that are around them and build a cairn.

Or maybe I've heard a story one time about a guy that was on a hike with his girlfriend and he'd had a ring in his pocket for a while just

waiting for the right time. And as they were out on the trail that day, it's like the skies parted and God was like, now. And so he got down on one knee and he proposed his girlfriend and they wanted to create a cairn to remember that moment, to remember where that happened. And the neat thing about cairns when you come across them is you know that somebody started it, but they're also continued. A lot of times hikers when they see a cairn will find another rock and they will try to place it on there in a way that it doesn't fall over and so that hikers who come behind them might be able to continue to stack rocks too.

I've been on some trails in the White Mountains in New England where I've seen cairns that are just incredible, looking at how in the world are those things still standing. Cairns are memorials. They are ways that that makes sure that we are moving in the right direction. And they may have started with somebody and they may have continued with somebody, but when we come along and we put our rock on there, we wanna do so in a way that honors the work that was done before us, doesn't knock it over, but that also allows people who come behind us to continue to build upon it. In a lot of ways, I think that's what life is like.

You know, every single one of us, we are building our lives on the foundation that somebody else put for us. Maybe parents, grandparents, friends who, who, who took us in and treated us like family, gave us opportunities that we would not have had otherwise. We are building something with our lives on top of what was already built before us. And so the decisions that we make, our investment of time, the relationships that we're building, our careers, raising families, whether we realize it or not, we are both building on what was built before us, but we are also creating that next layer that the generation coming behind us is going to build upon too. And we build our lives on the sacrifices of people who came before us, our families, our friends, the people who held our job before we did.

I tell Tom as often as I can that, Tom, I am drinking from wells that I did not dig. In this role that I get to serve at Sherwood Oaks Christian Church, Tom and his hard work and his faithfulness and the team and the elders and the church that came before us, man, they dug the wells and we are drinking the water of their hard work. But we want to be faithful and continue it so that generations after us can continue to be blessed by this ministry. All of us in one way or another, we eat fruit from trees that we did not plant in our lives. And this week, especially as we celebrate Veterans Day, it's a reminder that the privileges and rights and freedoms that we have and sometimes take for granted is because people have come alongside and faithfully stacked rocks that we've been able to build upon.

And so just right here in our service, if you served in the military, would you please stand so that we can recognize and honor you?

This morning.

Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Thank you. So much that we are building on as a nation, so much that we are building on as people, are because of those who sacrificially served But it's also because of those who came before us. And in the same way, we want to faithfully put the next stone on top that can continue to be built upon for generations to come. And I think the same thing is true, and not just for people, not just for families, not just for nations.

It is true for churches as well. If you have your Bible or Bible app, turn with me to the passage of scripture that Maggie read. We're in 1 Peter, chapter 2 this morning. 1 Peter chapter 2. And we're gonna get to our passage in just a little bit.

But one of the things that before we really start diving into it, I wanna make sure that we lock into our minds is that when Peter is talking about Jesus, he refers to him as the cornerstone, the chief cornerstone, the primary stone that is in place that everything else is built upon. He is that first stone. Stone that was laid and that everything else is stacked upon. And when you think about the history of the church, when you think about the history of faithful followers of Jesus through the centuries, and you think about the church that is still to be built coming up behind us, we did not lay the first stones, and by the grace of God, we will not lay the last stone, but we have a responsibility to be faithful with what God has entrusted to us and to build in a way that ensures that the generation coming up next will continue to find and follow Jesus, to faithfully do our part in a way that honors those who came before us and sets up those who come after us. This is the way that Jesus builds his church.

And we see it in some of the construction language that Peter borrows from in our passage today. Look again at verse 4.

He says, as you come to him, the living stone, rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him, you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house. To be a holy priesthood offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. These verses, they tell us some important things about Jesus and about us. The first thing about Jesus, Peter wants us to know that we don't follow some good moral teacher who lived and died and now we continue on with his teaching. No, no, we are following a living Messiah, the living stone.

Jesus is alive. He is not just some historical figure that we try to emulate now to make the world a better place. No, Jesus is the resurrected living Savior who continues to build his church today.

And even though He is the chosen precious stone of God.

Peter reminds us that this stone was rejected. He was cast aside, but God made Him the chief cornerstone. He made Him the primary, supreme, above all things. He is the foundation and the reference point on which everything else that God is building. And the generations change, challenges come, tsunamis of all kind come and go, and yet the cornerstone remains.

And we talked about it in this series, but if we try to remove Jesus as that cornerstone, it all falls apart. And the church throughout history all the way up to today is constantly being tempted and oftentimes does remove Jesus from his chief place and they try to put someone else in. We try to put a place, a ministry, a program, a politician. We try to put that as the cornerstone and when we do, it all falls apart. Our lives and our church are built on Jesus, the, the one who is the same yesterday, today, and forever.

And so everything in our lives and in our church fits together and works best when it is built and aligned on him and him alone.

But these verses don't just tell us something important about Jesus, they tell us something pretty remarkable about us. Yes, as we come to Jesus, who is the living stone, he turns us into living stones being built with one another, stacked on top of one another. We become a part of what he is doing. And so the church is not a room or a campus or a ministry or a program or an event. The church is the people Jesus is building together.

Together. We are the living stones that point people in the direction that they should go. We are the living stones calling each other to repent from turning our way and moving towards Jesus' way. We are the living stones who are the monuments of God's glory and his goodness, proclaiming his work so that the generations who come behind us will worship and follow him too. We are the living stones that Jesus is using to build his church.

I love that image on a day like today when parents in both services— I mean, great to see all of them stretched out across the stage. We had even, even more last service just to see, like, man, our church is faithfully living out that command of God to be fruitful and multiply. Amen. And it's great to see, but to see parents committing that they are going to raise their children to know, love, and follow Jesus, to put down their stone so that another one can be stacked on top of it. But not only that, as a church, we committed.

Let's not move past that. We committed as a church to do whatever we can do to come alongside of these parents, to take the stone that we've been entrusted with, to lay it down so that those babies that

they were holding will be followers of his too.

And some of those children that were being held on this stage today will learn about the Bible because one of you taught them how to read it. You read it to them as you were rocking them in the nursery. You taught it to them as you were trying to herd cats in the Sunday school room to get them to just kind of pay attention. Some of these babies that were being held up on this stage this morning will learn how to pray because they watched one of you pray. Because when they got into middle school and high school ministry, an adult leader took them underneath their wing and discipled them.

One of those babies that were being held are gonna learn how to love Scripture and the joy that it brings in our life because you taught them how to read it and spend time in it.

One of those children, they are going to see what faithfulness looks like because of their first boss who is a follower of Jesus and she just lives out her faith in everything that she does. Someone will experience God's grace because of an adult other than their parent who just refuses to give up on them.

Stones continuing to be stacked. And I thought about this just actually in the 11 o'clock service as with our high school ministry that is here, that the beauty of a cairn is not just in its, like, this is not the final shape of this. Something is gonna come along and be added to it, maybe not this one, but others, and it makes it look even more complete and beautiful. And so to have our high school ministry, right, like leading us from the pews in worship this morning as they sang and danced and clapped, like, man, it is the church, the beautiful multigenerational church coming together, teaching each other how to worship, how to pray, how to follow Jesus. And some of us are here today because someone did that for us.

Someone taught us to pray. Someone read scripture to us. Someone was a faithful example of what it looks like to follow Jesus.

Yesterday, I got to see this quite a bit throughout the morning at CareFest, but in particular where I was at that morning serving at Wheeler Mission, And it's so much fun just to be able to go. It actually brought me back to one of the very first things that I ever did in my life as an act of service. I had to do it for a school project back in the 1900s, mid-1990s. And my best friend's parents, who were followers of Jesus, talked about them, Bill and Linda, most like the spiritual influence in my life. They laid the stone that I was able to kind of build off of.

They encouraged us to go to downtown Indianapolis and to serve at Wheeler Mission. And it was the first time that I had been introduced to this ministry and to this population. I remember just being so

struck by it. And so I've been trying to get more involved. I love Wheeler and Bloomington, everything that they're doing, getting to know Dana, the guys.

It's just been a real blessing. And so we went out there yesterday morning and we raked up and we cleaned up some flower beds and And we laid some mulch just to make that campus look beautiful for the guys. And the guys that I got to serve with, there were 5 of us that just kind of took an island on the parking lot and we're like, that's going to be our project. And so we went there with rakes and shovels and we just started cleaning up and laying mulch. And so there's multiple generations between the 5 of us, but I love that the Lang twins were a part of this group.

They were just jumping in, working, getting dirty, picking up rakes and shovels, and really so helpful that morning. But my favorite part of the morning was when I looked over and I saw Jackson working hard, and I had to stop and take a picture of this because this is like the most Gen Alpha picture that I have ever seen in my life. So when Jackson got up that morning knowing that he was coming to mulch at Wheeler Mission, he's like, you know what? This is what my work outfit is going to be. Let's zoom in a little bit.

Candy cane pajama pants. You know, you gotta have those. But then go down a little bit further. White socks with Birks. That's awesome.

And then look at the tools that he chose to use for his job. 2 little hand rakes. And he was down there just like, I mean, multiplying everywhere. But bro was crushing it. Like, I would dump a thing, a wheelbarrow full of mulch, and I would come back and it was like all spread and he was like huffing and puffing, but it was beautiful.

And what I love about this is, yeah, the outfit, but I think even more is that Jackson was out there serving on a Saturday morning. Now, his mom, from the looks of it, may have literally drug him out of bed and said, we're going to do this. But he was there. And he was learning what surrendered living looks like. He was learning it from Greg Butler, who's been a faithful servant of Jesus, our country, our community, the conversations that they had.

Greg was out there working. He was showing us what it looks like. It's living stones stacked upon living stones, all pointing to Jesus. And there's a purpose in what Jesus is building, and it is greater than any single one of us. Look at verse 9.

But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. And listen to this language. Once you were not a people, but now you are a people of God. Once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.

Peter changes his language from construction to identity.

This is who we are, not just what we are being built into. We are God's holy people, his holy nation. Jesus is building a people who belong to God. We are his and he is ours. We are no longer strangers or orphans or enemies of God.

He has adopted us into our family. He has given us a new name. He has given us a new purpose, a new standing.

We are a part not just of his family, but we are a part of his plan. To change the world.

And there's an unassuming word that I want to go back to that's right there in the middle of verse 9, and it's the word that.

We don't often pay attention to words like that in Scripture, but I'm telling you, I think that everything in this verse hinges on that word, and I think everything in this series that we've been in over the last 9 weeks hinges on this word right here, that. Why is Jesus building his church? Why is he doing all of these things that we talked about in this series? Like, why is the church built different? Why is the church filled by the Holy Spirit?

Why is the church being built together, being built for one another with purpose and love? Why is the church being built to go? And to last? It is so that. Why is God calling us His holy nation, turning us into a royal priesthood?

Why has He called us His chosen people? It is so that you may declare the praises of Him who called you out of darkness and into His wonderful light. Jesus is building His church to worship God and be a witness to the world.

9 weeks ago, we stood at Caesarea Philippi with the disciples, and we heard Jesus say, I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. We've talked about the kind of church that Jesus is building, and today Peter tells us why. It is so that people who are living in the darkness of this world can see the light of Christ in us. It is so that they can be drawn to him through our worship and our works because we are living stones that he is building, honoring the past and pointing to what is next. That's why next Sunday it really matters.

Down, if you're on the edges of the aisles, look down and there might be like a little basket of some some cards, pick one of those up and just pass the rest of them down. And we want you here this night. We're gonna be talking about where we believe God is leading Sherwood Oaks next and what it looks like for us to be faithful with the stone and responsibility he has given to stack it so that the generations

who come behind us can continue to follow him. And if Sherwood Oaks is not— is your church home, if you call this your church family, Man, I want you to be there next week. And if you're here just kind of exploring faith or exploring Sherwood Oaks, like wondering what are we about, man, I want you here as well because we're going to talk about where we feel like the Lord is leading us and why he is leading us there.

So Vision Night isn't about a building. It's not just about a budget. It is about the kind of people that Jesus is building us to be as he is preparing our hearts and our church home for what is next, to continue to stack living stones who are worshiping and witnessing to our community and the world. As we close today, I just want to remind us that this is who we are. Living stones built together, standing generation after generation, declaring, look at what the Lord has done.

Look at how he moved. Look at how he showed up.

When people see us, may they be drawn heavenward to God and praise him. But it's also he is building us, his church, to be people who stand at the crossroads and point in the direction that we should go, to point in the direction of life. Of freedom for the generations that are coming up behind us.

Jesus is building his church to worship our good and gracious Heavenly Father. He is building us to be a witness to his goodness to the world around us, and he is building us for what is next.

If you're here today and and you have been wandering on your own. You have reached maybe the end of, of the, the path, and it has left you wanting more, has left you feeling lonely, has left you feeling empty.

I just want to let you know that the same invitation of God that has brought us and made us a part of his family, that invitation is shared with you too. And it doesn't matter where you have been or what you have done, there is grace available to you in Jesus. He wants to transform your life to make you part of his church, the living stones of his goodness and his grace. We'd love to talk to you more about just surrendering your life to him, about repenting and turning from the path that you are on and following the path of life that leads to him. We'll have people around the room with lanyards that would be honored to pray with you and lead you in your next step.

Whatever it might be. We're also going to come to a time of communion during this moment. We've got stations in the front and in the back, and this is a time for, for us to do work with God and maybe God to do work with us, to just open up and be like, God, what, what is it that you want to stir in my heart for you? Maybe giving me a greater sense of urgency that Maggie was talking about, or, or maybe just reminding

me that I am loved and forgiven not because of what I've done, but because of what Jesus did for me. Communion in a way is kind of like its own carn.

It is a way for us to remember something that is worth remembering, that Jesus gave himself to the cross, allowed his body to be pierced, his blood to be shed so that we could be in right relationship with God. And by his resurrection, we can have new life. But communion also points to others and says that we believe our only hope is in him. So as we come to this moment, let me close us with a word of prayer. God, thank you for your grace.

Thank you for the people who have come before us and laid a foundation on which we could come to know you, follow you, be curious in you.

And Lord, I pray for those of us who have come to you and are, are being built together like living stones, that we will faithfully lay the foundation for the next generation coming behind us, that they will continue to be called out of darkness and into your marvelous light, out of death and into life. Lord, thank you for your church.

May You continue to build it in us and through us. In Jesus' name, amen.