

# SeedStories

from the Christian Evangelistic Assn  
December 2020

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## Planting in a Pandemic

The list of changes faced by the average church over the last eight months is long and growing longer every week. Some predict as many as 40% of established churches will close as attendance and giving continue to decline.

That fact alone is sobering since many of those churches are vital partners in our work. They provide substantial support for starting and sustaining each church we plant and it is difficult to imagine our work without any of them.

Even more concerning is the reality that new churches, especially those less than five years old, are more vulnerable than the “average” church. So, correspondingly, the challenges new churches face in this pandemic are substantially more difficult by a factor of at least 2x.

For example, most of our church plants meet in public schools for their first few years. With the closure of those facilities, many were displaced and had to locate alternative venues. Amazingly, in every case where an alternate site was needed, God provided a better space, often at a better price!

Church planting is challenging under normal circumstances but, as you see from my description, its especially challenging in this current season. That’s the unvarnished truth to which every planter in our network will say “amen!”

They will also tell you there isn’t anywhere they’d rather be than planting a church to reach those far from God here in the NW. Despite the daily struggles we face to give a winsome witness in a warring world, we’re unanimous in the conviction that our best days lay just ahead.

We’re thankful for your prayers and support and hope you enjoy some highlights of our work so far this year in this issue of *Seedstories*.

Your grateful partner in the Harvest,  
George Johnson

# Meals on Wheels in Portland



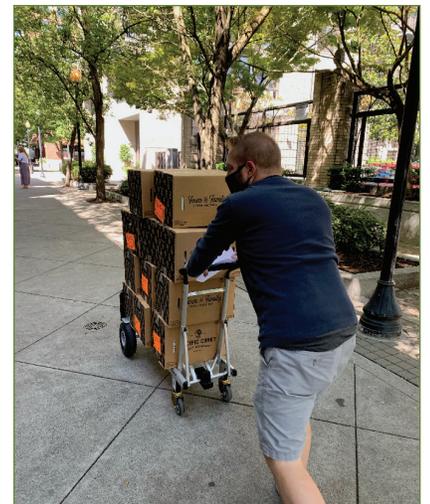
*Claudette* is no stranger to hard work. You're likely to see her bustling around Portland hauling boxes of groceries to some of the thousands of residents living in her downtown neighborhood. She stops weekly at 22 low-income buildings. Though *Claudette* isn't pretty, her friends at Church of the City (CotC) say she's "beautiful" in their eyes. *Claudette* isn't a member of the church. In fact, she's not actually a person at all—*Claudette* is a refrigerated box truck!

When the pandemic struck in March the economic strain was immediately obvious, particularly among those living at

the margins. Like the boy with 5 loaves and 2 fish, Church of the City offered what they had to help their hungry neighbors and keep them housed.

In an initial effort, a team of volunteers collected food and delivered it to 40 neighborhood families each week. To date the church has collected and given away more than \$20,000 to provide food and rental assistance to downtown Portland residents. In June, relationships with social workers, building managers and community leaders led to an opportunity for the church and its partners to deliver 300 fresh food boxes every week. A small-but-mighty young church, CotC was willing to do its part, but needed a vehicle to increase their delivery capacity. That's when *Claudette*, a burly refrigerated box truck, rolled in to help.

Gazing fondly at *Claudette*, Russell Clum, teaching pastor of CotC, says she is "a beautiful symbol of Good News in the city". And she is. She represents a tangible expression of the love of Christ through the ministry of His people who, after 8 months, still leave work early, sacrifice days off, freely give their time and work beyond exhaustion to serve their neighbors each week. And their efforts are not in vain. People are finding Christ. Volunteers are deepening their faith. Neighbors are seeing the goodness of God in their refrigerators. Partnerships are being forged. Some might say that this looks an awful lot like the Kingdom of God coming to life on earth.



## 5 Churches Launching in 2021



Erik & Laura  
Neilson

Twin Falls  
Idaho



Gabe & Gina  
Piechowicz

Eugene  
Oregon



Jake & Madison  
Nagy

Portland  
Oregon



Dave & Brenda  
Atkin

Kent/Auburn  
Washington



Josh & Rachel  
White

Portland  
Oregon

# Creating Community in Vancouver WA

When Kyle & Ruth Davies launched Generations Church in October 2019 they had no idea the challenges facing them in the coming year would include navigating a global pandemic! No manual exists for planting a church when public gatherings are restricted and social-distancing is the new normal. How do you create community when the usual circles of work, school, sports, family and social gatherings are completely disrupted?

Despite the obstacles, Kyle and the GenChurch team resolved to widen their personal connections in Salmon Creek. They are making an increasing impact by their support of 7 local restaurants. Also, Kyle is using social media to share videotaped interviews of 20 business owners.

At Easter, 600 baskets were delivered to more than 1,200 people who requested them. In October, 25 volunteer teams delivered 600 “Boo-Buckets” to local families, of which nearly half were new, first-time connections.

In compliance with state-issued restrictions, a 2nd service was added in October to accommodate 120 who attended GenChurch’s 1st birthday celebration. In November they celebrated several baby dedications and 4 baptisms. Praise the Lord for this flourishing new church!



## Alpha for EveryOne!

What does a mid-life, second-career church planter, a group of twenty-something tech-industry gig-workers and a global pandemic have in common? Alpha!

When traditional church planting venues like bustling coffee shops, community events, neighborhood barbecues and rented school gyms were displaced by Covid-19 quarantine restrictions, a new approach to outreach became critical. Lead Planter, Gabe Piechowicz (EveryOne Church, Eugene, OR) says, “after a good cry”, he decided to do some market research.

Interested in the perspective of non-Christian millennials on faith, spirituality, and the Church, Gabe reached out to some contacts that fit the description. After a couple of Zoom sessions Gabe knew he had lightning in a bottle. This eccentric and eager group were hungry for spiritual truth without the four walls, pulpit and moral policing of the traditional church. Enter Alpha! The open, investigative format of Alpha allows these young leaders to approach Jesus without the fear of judgement and encounter Him on their own terms among their own peers.

While the world waits for a vaccine to cure Covid-19, something very subtle, yet quite remarkable, is happening in the unassuming city of Eugene, OR. That’s where a mid-life, second-career church planter and a feisty group of twenty-something tech workers are discovering that the Gospel is the ultimate cure and they’re growing a church right in the midst of a global pandemic.



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## Help Us Launch a New Church in 2021

Your gift will enable us to reach new people in new places across the NW with the Gospel of Christ through a brand new church! If you're not a regular CEA supporter, become one today! If you already support our work, consider giving a sacrificial year-end gift.

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