



CELEBRATING | 2016

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Hope for
- EVERYONE -

wherever you are *hope is here*

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WEST|SIDE

WEST SIDE CHRISTIAN CHURCH | 2850 CIDER MILL LN | SPRINGFIELD, IL 62702 | INFO@WSCURCH.ORG | WSCURCH.ORG

UNPREDICTABLE JESUS

People were often surprised by Jesus because his words and actions were difficult to compartmentalize:

He defended outsiders. When one of Jesus' followers heard about a stranger driving out demons, he assumed Jesus would disapprove. But Jesus said, *"Don't stop him... whoever is not against us is for us."*

He challenged insiders. When Jesus predicted his execution, Peter vowed he wouldn't let it happen. Rather than saying, "Thanks, pal," Jesus replied, *"Get behind me, Satan!"*



When the religious elites questioned his legitimacy, rather than trying to win their favor, Jesus said, *"The tax collectors and the prostitutes are entering the kingdom of God ahead of you."*

In a polarized culture where cut-throat religion and politics were not metaphors, Jesus said, *"You've been told to love your neighbor and hate your enemy. I tell you to love your enemies. Do good to those who hate you."*

As followers of Jesus, I hope everyone connected to West Side will be an extension of the sometimes enigmatic nature of Jesus. May we be... filled with grace and filled with truth, like Jesus... friends with the godly and friends with sinners, like Jesus... devoted to our church and engaged with our community, **like Jesus.**

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As you read through the stories of transformation in the coming pages, don't miss the connection between the inviting, volunteering and giving you do – and the impact West Side makes!

It's impossible for me to thank God for what he's done through West Side during 2016 without thanking him for our staff team. Daily, they lead initiatives, equip volunteers, pastor our flock and teach God's word. Some serve by supporting us administratively or operationally. Thank you for making this gifted and productive team possible. Pray that we'll do our best work yet in 2017!

- Eddie Lowen

Lead Guy



FINDING HOPE AS A BLENDED FAMILY

Spencer and Jessica's Story

HOPE IN BROKENNESS

Spencer and Jessica Phillips were invited to West Side by a friend in early 2016. When they walked through the doors, Jessica shared that they immediately felt at home. The Phillips were married last May and have been passionately pursuing God as a blended family ever since.

"Having a blended family comes with specific challenges," Spencer and Jessica remarked. "We've always hoped that God would blend our families together and help us feel like one family."

"When I first started coming to church," Spencer explained, "I was struggling with depression and a lot of anger. I felt like life was just beating me up. West Side has given me hope and helped me turn my life around."

I've found a new passion for both God and family. On Sundays when I go to church and on Wednesdays when we connect with our groups, I feel like I'm part of something bigger again."

Jessica's life has also changed in a significant way. "Before coming to West Side, I was lost. I was sad and an emotional rollercoaster. Coming to West Side has helped me turn around, emotionally. My faith has given me hope that there are better days ahead. Give God everything you have and he'll take care of you."



"GOD WAS TRYING TO TEACH US THAT WE CAN TRUST IN HIM. HE'S OUR PROVIDER."

HOPE IN FRESH STARTS

Spencer and Jessica have gone "all-in" at West Side. They have invited friends to church, become increasingly connected through groups and believe their decision to give financially to West Side was a turning point in their spiritual journey. "God was trying to teach us that we can trust in him. He's our provider," Spencer explained. "When we heard Eddie talk about tithing, we knew it was something we needed to do. We started tithing and one thing after another started turning around in our lives."

The Phillips were baptized in October and Spencer had the honor of baptizing his daughter, Bralynn, a few weeks later. Spencer reflects, "The thought of being able to get rid of my past, start fresh and do the things God wants us to do is awesome! I can tell God is not only working in us, but in our kids' lives as well."

HOPE IN FREEDOM

"A year ago, I did not believe in God, at all. Many circumstances in my life led me to this conclusion. But then I volunteered at Sharefest last summer and began to realize Jesus-followers were much different than I imagined. I accepted an invitation to West Side and was quickly loved and accepted just as I was. Soon, I made it a priority to come to worship every week. I began reading the Bible for myself and volunteering. And, my new friends from West Side's young adult ministry walked alongside me through this journey. On Baptism Day, I was baptized into a new life with Jesus. For a long time, I've wanted to be free from my past and from my pattern of self-destruction. On Baptism Day, I chose freedom in Jesus!"

- Mattie Watson

FINDING HOPE THROUGH BAPTISM

BAPTISM DAY | AUGUST 28, 2016



Jesus changes everything.

84 baptisms

ON BAPTISM DAY!



**"FOR A LONG TIME,
I'VE WANTED TO
BE FREE FROM MY
PAST AND FROM
MY PATTERN OF
SELF-DESTRUCTION.
ON BAPTISM DAY, I
CHOSE FREEDOM IN
JESUS!"**

FINDING HOPE THROUGH 401 DAYS IN THE HOSPITAL

The Gemberling's Story

HOPE IN THE UNKNOWN

In 2015, Jaxon Gemberling was born with significant health complications.

During the first 15 months of his life, he spent 401 days in the hospital. His parents, Ann and Jason, took turns nurturing Jaxon while caring for their other children at home and maintaining their jobs.

Yet, as Jaxon fought for his life, the Gemberling family found hope.



HOPE IN COMMUNITY

"We've been blessed with friends and family who have helped us. People from West Side would come to see Jaxon every single day. To see the outpouring of love and support, even from complete strangers, helped us get through each day. It gave us hope to have an army behind us, to know we have prayer warriors who will pray every day for our son."

—Ann Gemberling, Jaxon's Mom

**"TO SEE THE
OUTPOURING OF LOVE
AND SUPPORT, EVEN
FROM COMPLETE
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EACH DAY."**



HOPE FOR TODAY

Jaxon is a fighter and his battle for long-term health continues. Through it all, the Gemberlings have discovered that wherever you are, **Hope is Here.**



FINDING HOPE THROUGH GIVING IT AWAY



Rick's Story

"Life without hope is like being enslaved. I was once a slave to everything: my anger, fears, frustrations, self-pity and self-seeking—everything incarcerated me. Everything. Once I turned my thoughts and actions over to God, that act of surrender gave me the victory I had always been looking for. Through surrender, I found victory.

HOPE IS A RESPONSIBILITY.

It's a great paradox I learned at West Side. I now get to enjoy hope as a gift, but also understand the great responsibility I have to share that same hope with others. What was freely given to me, I must give away in order to keep it."

- Rick Brown

FINDING HOPE THROUGH MY LIMITATIONS

Ben's Story

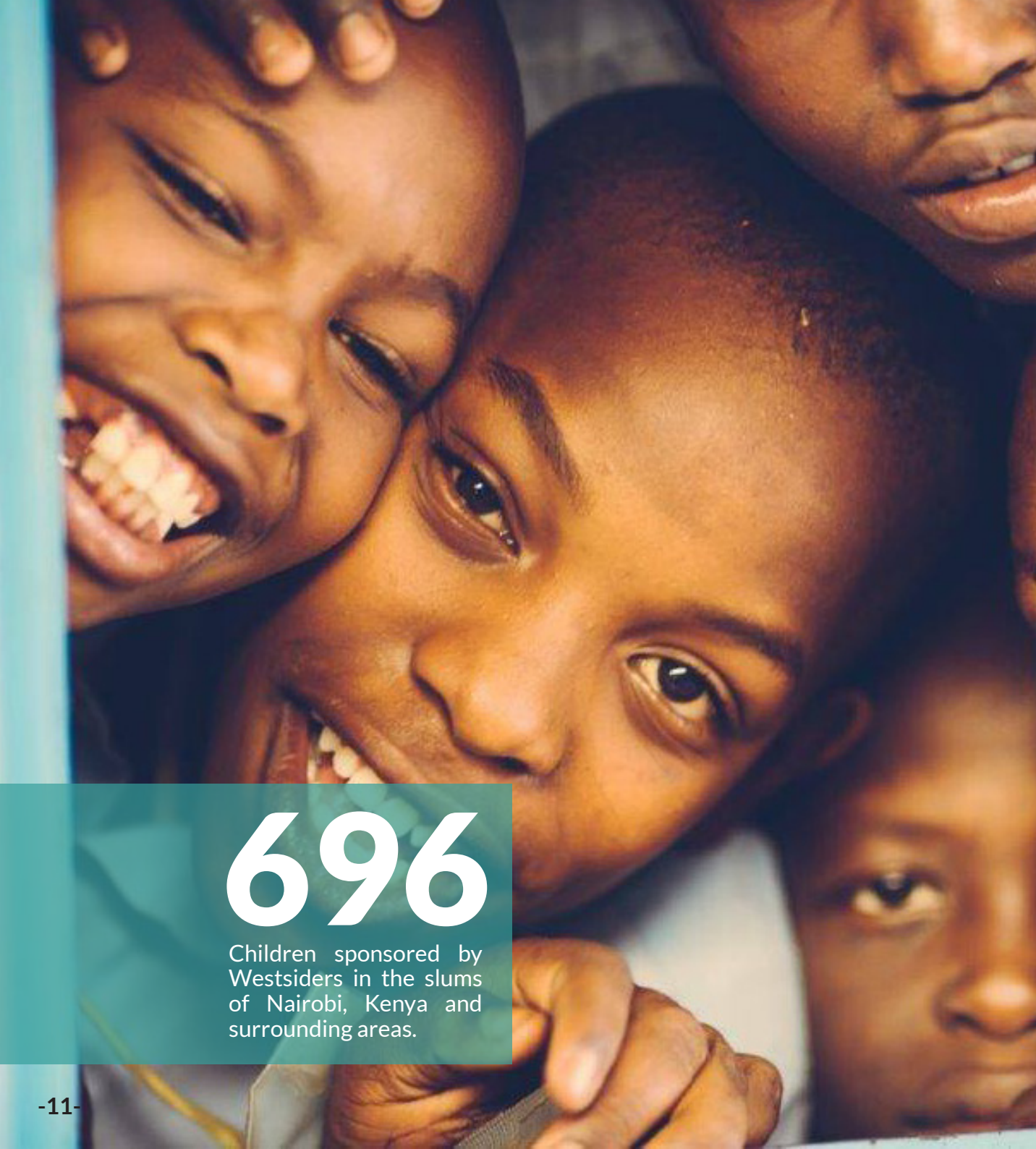
"Not long ago, I found myself in a lonely place. My heart was looking for something more. On Easter Sunday, a friend at work invited me to "come and see" what West Side was all about. I must admit, I was a little apprehensive. However, when I walked through the doors, I knew there was the love of the Lord in those walls and I knew it was something I needed. When I started coming to West Side every Sunday, my relationship with God totally exploded!

I've got Tourette's Syndrome and also a speech impediment, which sometimes makes it a little difficult to interact socially. I knew I wanted to get more involved but wasn't sure how to do so with my circumstances. I met with a West Side Kids staff leader to talk about volunteering and she informed me that my limitations weren't necessarily a barrier, but something God could use for good. Those are words I had not heard before in my life! It was then that I realized that West Side truly was a church for everyone.

I now serve as part of the Kids Ministry Team. I really love teaching God's word and seeing kids experience an "aha" moment about Jesus. It brings me a lot of joy."



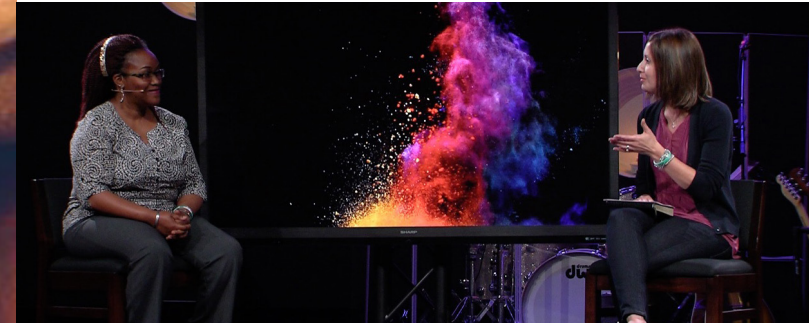
"I'VE LEARNED THERE ARE THINGS IN LIFE THAT OFTEN HOLD US BACK, BUT THOSE ARE THE VERY THINGS GOD WANTS TO USE FOR HIS GLORY." - Ben Dickinson



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Children sponsored by Westsiders in the slums of Nairobi, Kenya and surrounding areas.

FINDING HOPE IN KENYA



Mary Kamau's visit to West Side on Sunday, September 4 was a 2016 highlight!

“CHILD SPONSORSHIP IN THE LIFE OF A CHILD MEANS CHANGING THEIR DESTINY. THEY ARE GIVEN HOPE. CHILDREN BEGIN TO REALIZE HOW MUCH GOD HAS THEM ON HIS HEART, HOW HE CARES ABOUT THEM, HOW HE LOVES THEM. THEY ARE NOT FORGOTTEN, BY GOD OR BY US.”

- Mary Kamau, Director of Missions of Hope International

Hope for **- EVERYONE -** IN 2017

If God has blessed you in 2016, would you consider expressing your gratitude to him through a year-end gift to West Side? Strong year-end giving will help jump start several important efforts in 2017!



NIGHT TO SHINE: A PROM NIGHT EXPERIENCE FOR THOSE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS | Spring 2017

Night to Shine is an unforgettable prom night experience, centered on God's love, for people with special needs, ages 14 and older. Let's share what we have to bring help and hope to Springfield's special-needs community and their caregivers.

PLAYGROUNDS IN KENYA | Summer 2017

In June 2017, West Side hopes to send a crew of 100 to serve in the slums of Nairobi, Kenya. One of the trip's major projects will be the construction of the first playground many kids from these slums will ever see. Help us bring joy to our littlest friends in Kenya!

EXTERIOR IMPROVEMENTS ON WEST SIDE'S CAMPUS | Spring 2017

A new church sign on Veterans Parkway, navigational signs in our parking lot, a paved walking path around our campus and a scenic prayer trail are part of the exterior improvement plan West Side's leaders hope to implement, as funding allows. Together, we can make our campus an even more hospitable environment for EVERYONE.

wherever you are *hope is here.*

WEST SIDE CHRISTIAN CHURCH

2017 MINISTRY FINANCING PLAN

DECEMBER GIVING

Your generous giving in the month of December will help fuel several 2017 projects designed to bring the hope and compassion of Jesus to those who need it. Thanks for helping West Side finish the year strong through your generosity!

HOW WE INVEST OUR RESOURCES

KIDS + STUDENTS
\$135,700
WORSHIP + TECH ARTS
\$152,226
CARE + COMPASSION
\$103,200
ADULTS
\$65,600
OTHER MINISTRIES
\$76,251
PERSONNEL
\$3,375,000
FINANCE + FACILITIES
\$1,778,023
IT + OFFICE
\$189,000
MISSIONS
\$675,000
SPFLD CHRISTIAN SCHOOL
\$200,000
DEFERRED CONTINGENCY
\$250,000

Questions may be directed to Director of Operations, Dave Miller, 217.793.2800. The 2017 Ministry Financing Plan will be affirmed on January 1, 2017.

TOTAL 2017 MINISTRY FINANCING PLAN : \$7,000,000

Give thanks to God

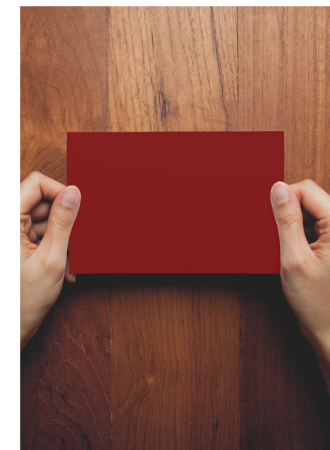
for all he's done
for you and through our
church in 2016!

2 WAYS TO GIVE



TEXT TO GIVE

TEXT THE WORD
"GIVE" TO
217.718.2043.
YOU'LL RECEIVE
A LINK TO
SECURELY MAKE
YOUR GIFT.



ENCLOSED ENVELOPE

PLACE YOUR GIFT
IN THE ENCLOSED
ENVELOPE. THEN,
PLACE IN THE
MAIL OR IN THE
OFFERING BUCKETS
DURING WORSHIP.

**YOUR GIFTS IN THE MONTH OF DECEMBER
WILL HELP FUEL SEVERAL 2017 PROJECTS
DESIGNED TO BRING THE HOPE AND
COMPASSION OF JESUS TO THOSE WHO NEED IT.**

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HOPE THROUGH CELEBRATION

To view our 2016 Celebration Videos, visit:
wschurch.org/2016

