



FEARLESS UPDATE



Generosity: attitude or amount?

In 2005, the maximum penalty for an overdue or lost book at the public library in Orchard Park, NY was \$15. But when Joel Schelsinger discovered he had failed to return *The Joy of Camping* after borrowing it 24 years earlier, he wasn't comfortable sending a small settlement. So, Joel performed some calculations, drove 400 miles to his hometown and hand-delivered a check for \$2,190 to a very surprised librarian!

It's rare for someone to ask, "*What does generosity look like **for me** in this scenario?*" It's even more rare for a person to intentionally elevate generosity to ensure it's the real thing.

When generosity is defined, individual results vary widely. Why? Because generosity is not tied to a fixed number. It is tied to our spiritual progress and to our generosity potential. Change one of those factors and the definition of generosity changes with it.

Friend, thank for you asking what *generosity* ought to look like for you. I celebrate all that our collective generosity will accomplish over the coming years.

Still Fearless,

Eddie Lowen, *West Side's lead guy*



In mid-March of 2020, COVID-19 began to spread quickly throughout the United States. Illinoisans were encouraged to slow the spread of Coronavirus by staying home. Schools and churches (including ours) shifted their efforts toward an online model. People began working from home and life quickly began to look and feel different. After multiple weeks of unprecedented limitations, an official “stay-at-home” order took effect on March 21. Although we closed our building to normal activity for several months, West Side’s ministry has never “closed.” On the contrary, since Coronavirus became part of our reality...

- MORE people have accessed our Sunday worship and teaching via TryChurchOnline.com
- We have fed MORE hungry people... blessed MORE lonely people... loved MORE people on the margins
- We have gained MORE experience and GREATER insight on how to use digital tools for ministry
- Some are giving MORE of their financial resources to God’s work and to people in need
- And we are MORE convinced that we will reach 10,000 people a week over the next decade to come

CONNECTING EVERYONE TO JESUS AND HIS MISSION

The pages that follow tell the story of how God has used our collective generosity in early 2020. Using the perspective of a journal, these “entries” demonstrate the many ways Westsiders have remained on-mission during the pandemic. Thanks for living each day on-mission with us!



MARCH 18: FOOD DRIVE

Westsidiers quickly mobilized to donate and prepare over 300 boxes of food for families in our community. Every box was delivered by local educators and principals, bringing help and hope to those who needed it most during the early weeks of school shutdown.

MARCH 19: HEARTS FOR HEALTHCARE WORKERS

Healthcare workers were operating around the clock to keep our community safe while also caring for their own families. While we couldn't lessen the burden of these heroes, we joined the #heartsforhealthcareworkers movement by displaying red and pink hearts on our front doors. This simple act of kindness expressed our love, prayers, and gratitude to healthcare professionals and their families.

It was like a visual "high-five" to those in our medical community as they left for work each day.

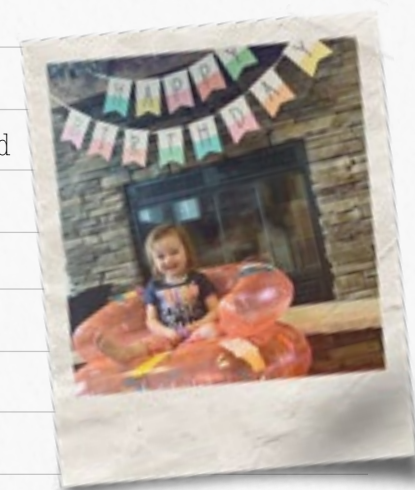


MARCH 20: ONLINE GROUPS

We quickly learned that even small groups were unable to meet during the shelter-in-place season. Many of our Rooted Groups and Small Groups soon realized they could remain connected through Zoom, FaceTime, Skype, and other digital platforms. In just a few short days, we even launched NEW small groups via Zoom!

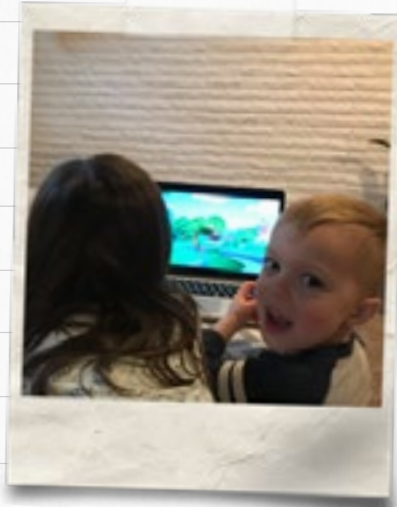
MARCH 21: TAYTUM'S BIRTHDAY

Taytum is a Westsider who just celebrated her 2nd birthday! Due to Coronavirus, her parents were unable to host a birthday party for her. That's when their Rooted group stepped in to bring hope and joy! Throughout the day, the doorbell would ring. Each time the family peeked out the window, they'd see someone from their Rooted group running back to their car after dropping a gift on the porch. Taytum received donuts, her favorite candy, balloons, toys, and a blow-up chair throughout the day!



MARCH 26: KIDS & STUDENTS WORSHIP ONLINE

Parents took the lead on providing kids church at home using resources provided by West Side's kids and student staff. Even while apart, West-siders have participated in age-specific worship activities designed to bring us together.



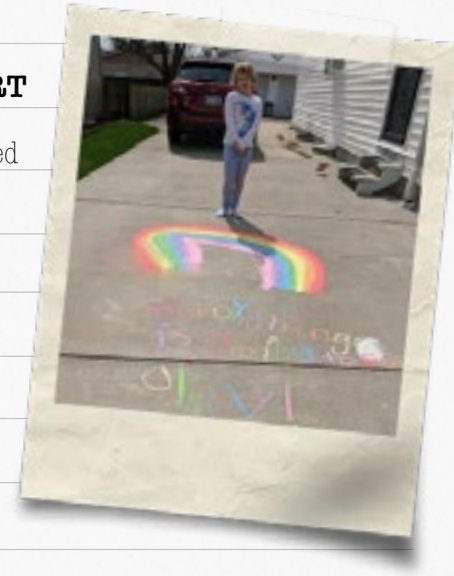
MARCH 27: ROOTED

Last January, nearly a hundred Westsiders committed to growing in their connection to God, the church, and their purpose through the Rooted experience. Groups shared their stories, stepped out of their comfort zones, and experienced new growth in their spiritual lives. Before Coronavirus came on the scene, our Winter Rooted groups spent time serving alongside many of our community partners as part of their Rooted journey. They served meals at Inner City Mission, played games with residents at Mary Bryant Home, spent time with young men at The Outlet, visited with folks at local nursing facilities, served meals to those experiencing homelessness, and helped with an event for Refuge Ranch. While Rooted graduation was postponed, we celebrate God's remarkable work through Rooted.



APRIL 2:: LAYLA'S SIDEWALK ART

Layla is an eight-year-old Westsider who decided to bring good news and encouragement to her community through chalk art. She was even featured on the local news!



APRIL 3: CONNECTION CARD GIFTS

We recently began making additional financial donations to our mission partners for each person who completed a Connection Card for the first time on Sunday mornings. This effort has provided special gifts to Inner City Mission, Missions of Hope International, and Contact Ministries.

APRIL 6: HELPING HANDS

Helping Hands, a homeless shelter and one of West Side's mission partners, became a 24-hour "shelter in place" facility for 45 local men. A Meal Train was created to provide meals and West Side families quickly stepped up to feed this crew in need of God's tangible love. Additionally, a West Side family raised \$1000 in a single day for Helping Hands!



APRIL 8: DONUT DAY!

Over 400 DOZEN donuts were delivered throughout Springfield and surrounding areas, along with an invitation to Easter at West Side. What a fun way to invite others to Easter even when we were unable to meet in person!

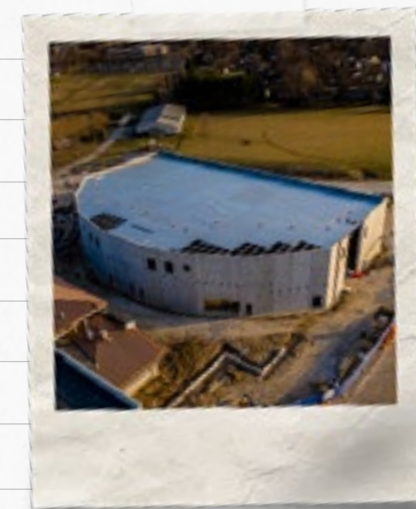
APRIL 9: GOOD FRIDAY

Today we were able to participate in a special time of prayer and reflection to remember the final day of Jesus' life. This drive-thru experience focused our attention back to God through prayer and reflection.



APRIL 10: NEW WORSHIP CENTER

Last February, walls of our new Worship Center were erected in a week's time. While construction slowed during the shutdown, the roof was completed in May. We're confident God will use this space in incredible ways in the years to come.



APRIL 12: CARE PACKAGES

On Easter morning, West Side's Senior Adult Ministry delivered breakfast bags to the doorsteps of those who have lost a spouse or live alone. Westsiders have delivered gift bags to senior adults each month during the pandemic, spreading joy to every generation.





APRIL 13: EASTER ATTENDANCE

11,023 DEVICES tuned in to West Side's online worship gatherings over Easter weekend!

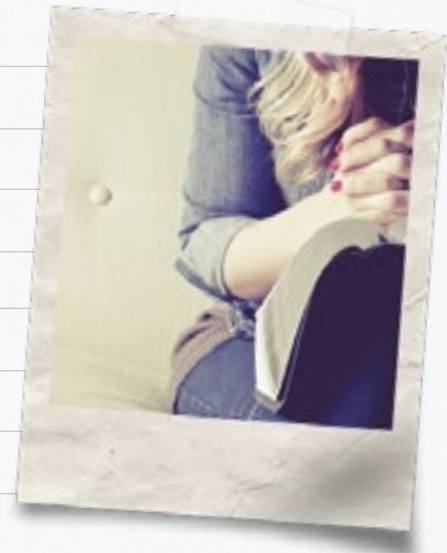
APRIL 15:: HSM on ZOOM & INSTAGRAM

Over a hundred high school students and their leaders joined together on Zoom for "HSM Online." During the pandemic, these students also shared inspiration through daily devotions on Instagram. In a season where it could be easy for high school students to retreat to the negative nature of social media, West Side students used their online influence for GOOD!



APRIL 16: PRAYER NIGHTS

Weekly prayer nights kicked off on April 16 via Zoom. Staying grounded in God's love and turning our attention to Him through prayer remained a priority for many during the shut down.



APRIL 17: ILLINOIS NATIONAL GUARD

Westsiders Shane Watkins and Jon Kent, as well as other troops from the Illinois National Guard, were deployed to Chicago to temporarily convert the McCormick Place Convention Center into an alternate care facility for COVID-19 patients. These selfless men and women brought light into the darkness in a tangible way.

APRIL 22: MISSION CALL WITH THE STEWARTS

We hosted a Zoom call with West Side missionaries, Tim and Alicia Stewart, who serve as ministry leaders with our Kenyan mission partners at Missions of Hope International. The Stewarts shared how God is moving in Kenya, even amidst the Coronavirus pandemic and guided us in prayer for our Kenyan friends.



APRIL 25: BAKING FOR GOOD!

When Westsider, Connie Palmer and her granddaughter Gracie learned of the great need for food among local families during the Coronavirus Pandemic, they quickly moved to action doing what they do best- BAKING! Every day, Connie and Gracie baked pies and other goodies in exchange for gift cards to local grocery stores. These gift cards were then given

to the Care Team at West Side, who distributed them to families in need.



APRIL 26: FOOD DRIVE #2

Many students in our community depend on the breakfast and lunch they receive at school. More than six weeks into the shutdown, the need for food persisted, so we hosted a porch pick up food drive to help feed those who could use a hand up. Together, alongside our school partners from District #186, we delivered food boxes to more than 300 families throughout our city!



APRIL 27: BEDS FOR WASHINGTON STREET MISSION

Springfield's homeless communities were hit hard by the pandemic. When we learned Washington Street Mission's Transitional House was in need of beds, we couldn't let the need go unmet. Purchasing and delivering mattresses during the pandemic wasn't easy, but strategic phone calls, community partnerships and West Side's generosity made a way.



APRIL 29: JHM IMPACT

West Side's students made an impact during the stay-at-home order! In a season where teens could easily justify boredom and discontent, these students decided to flip the script and bring hope and joy to those around them by accepting the challenge to serve their families and neighborhoods.



MAY 1: MAY DAY

It's May Day! To celebrate, Westsiders delivered 350 bouquets and invites to TryChurchOnline.com and 250 care packages for senior adults throughout the Springfield area! These flowers acted as a reminder that there is still GOOD NEWS, even in uncertain times. In addition, we were also able to provide flowers to EVERY resident at Lewis Memorial Village, a care facility near West Side.



MAY 6: MISSION CALL WITH THE BEEMANS

We participated in a Zoom call with West Side missionaries, Jay and Diane Beeman, who serve with our partners at Pioneer Bible Translators in Tanzania. They shared how God is working in Tanzania during the Coronavirus pandemic and offered practical ways to help. After the call, we discovered West Side kids, Logan and Macy, pooled their piggy banks and purchased 18 Bibles to give to the Beemans for use in Tanzania. Way to be on mission, Logan and Macy!



MAY 6: JHM PIZZA PARTY AND HSM CUPCAKES

Junior high and high school small group leaders rock! While staying connected to students during the stay-at-home order was a challenge, these caring adult leaders went the extra mile for months. To conclude the school year, both JHM and HSM volunteers enjoyed year-end celebrations with door-to-door deliveries and Zoom parties. JHM leaders delivered a pizza to EVERY STUDENT before Zoom groups, while HSM leaders were surprised with cupcakes prior to their final team Zoom huddle.





MAY 8: BAPTISMS

Coronavirus has not stopped God from changing lives! In fact, many are still placing their trust in him through baptism during these uncertain times.

MAY 12:

SNACKS FOR POSTAL WORKERS

Not a day has passed during the Coronavirus Pandemic when mail has gone undelivered. Even Sunday deliveries became a reality for many.

This week, Westsiders stepped up to share hope and good news to postal workers by providing treats and notes of gratitude.



MAY 14:

CARDS FOR CARE FACILITIES

1580 cards were dropped off at local care facilities this week! Residents at facilities have been unable to visit their friends and loved ones for weeks.

These notes brought a fresh wave of hope to EVERYONE who lives in all 22 facilities.



MAY 22:

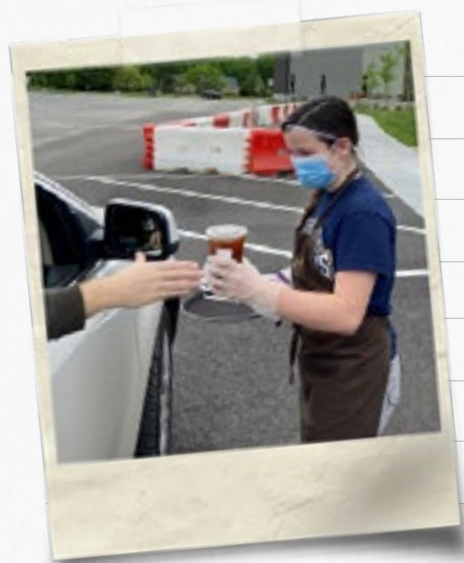
ENCOURAGEMENT PARADE

We participated in a themed parade for our local mission partners and friends with special needs. Since the shutdown began, we've been unable to serve our friends in typical ways, but that can't stop us from creatively expressing our love!

MAY 24: MISSION PARTNERS

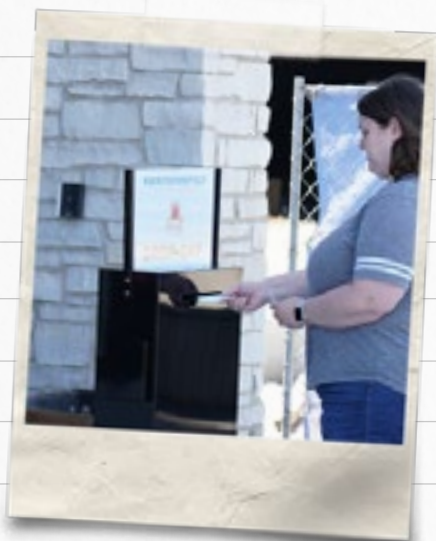
Because of the collective generosity of Westsiders in this season, we released additional gifts to Missions of Hope International (Kenya), My Hope Christian Mission (Myanmar), and Central India Christian Mission. Combined with the efforts of other partner churches, we were able to help provide a month's worth of food and supplies to the families of the 15,000 children supported by MOHI, food boxes with fresh fruits and vegetables in Myanmar, and two month's worth of food and supplies to our friends in India!





MAY 28: FIRESIDE IS OPEN!

Fireside Cafe re-opened! Several weeks of behind-the-scenes work on a new app, safety protocols, and helpful processes allowed us to launch curbside pickup!

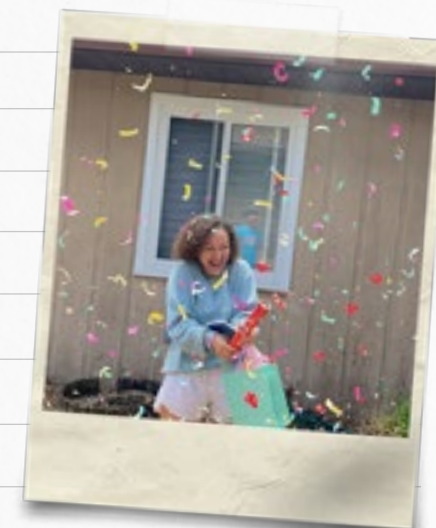
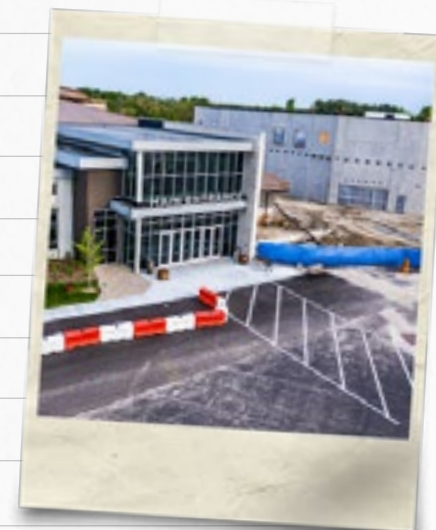


MAY 29: TEACHER CELEBRATIONS

Teachers are amazing, right?! We knew this months ago, but the Coronavirus Pandemic reminded us all the more. The flexibility, tenacity, and resourcefulness of educators during the shift to online learning was proven day after day and week after week. In addition, we've been inspired to see the love and compassion of our teachers. To honor these amazing heroes, Westsiders dropped off over 350 gift cards for local educators – our way of saying “Thank you!” for loving kids well.

JUNE 1: THE CONNECTOR

Thanks to the continued generosity of Westsiders, construction on the exterior portion of the final segment of our new building just began. We nicknamed this section “the connector” because it will tie the new worship structure to our existing space. By late summer or early fall, the connector will be complete!



MAY 30: HSM CELEBRATES SENIORS

West Side's High School Ministry staff and volunteers hit the road to visit the home of EVERY high school senior from HSM. At each stop, seniors were serenaded with pomp and circumstance on electric guitar, celebrated with a confetti cannon, and honored with a book filled with encouraging notes from family, teachers, and coaches.

E-GIVING

Hundreds of Westsiders have found recurring e-giving to be a helpful tool in their generosity journey. Ready to create a more regular giving pattern? It takes less than 5 minutes and you can start and stop at any time.

To set up a recurring gift to help fulfill your FEARLESS commitment, visit **wschurch.org/enroll**.

GIVING UPDATE

\$29,065,548
COMMITTED

\$18,119,087
TOTAL GIVEN

December 1, 2018 - May 31, 2020

If you have questions regarding your giving record, contact West Side's Director of Finance, Brenda Lavin at:

BrendaL@wschurch.org or 217.793.2800

Set up a consistent weekly or monthly giving schedule at **wschurch.org/Give**

THANKS FOR YOUR GENEROSITY!

