



# HEARTLAND HAPPENINGS

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE HEARTLAND CHURCH NETWORK

## IN THIS ISSUE

### CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE

*Mark Elliott*

### THE UNHAPPY PIG

*Aaron Householder*

### AMS SEARCH COMMITTEE & TRANSITION PROCESS

ANNUAL MEETING 2021

## CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE PART THREE, BY MARK ELLIOTT

Because the Culturally Appropriate Principle is the one we can most easily overlook, I have taken additional time and space to discuss it. In week one I pointed to several Biblical passages that describe the early church's challenges with becoming cross-cultural—reaching the Gentiles as well as the Jews. Week two I talked about missionary concepts that when applied correctly they can help us find our way either over, under, around, or through the dividing wall between our culture and others in the world (Ephesians 2:14). Today's article provides some specific examples as we attempt to live as Paul lived. "To the Jews I became as a Jew, so that I might win Jews...to those who are without the law, as without law...to the weak I became weak...I became all things to all men, so that I may by all means save some" (1 Corinthians 9:20-22).

To be clear, let me state that being culturally appropriate isn't just a topic for conversations with individuals whose native language isn't English or whose skin color is a bit

different than our own. In fact, the first major cross-cultural experience of my life happened at the age of 16 when my family moved from northeast Wyoming to northeast Oklahoma. While the climate change was huge, the cultural shift was probably even greater. And one of those BIG shifts was the way people did church. But you don't have to move 1,000 miles away to encounter cultural barriers. They can exist even in your own neighborhood.

A few days ago, I was visiting with John Mark Hansen about the Culturally Appropriate Principle. Many of you know John Mark. He and his wife, Cheryl, have worked among the Chinese in Taiwan and in Panama. The latter also required them to be able to navigate the Latino cultures of Costa Rica as well as Panama. As we discussed Barriers and Bridges, I asked him specifically about some things they encountered as they worked among the Chinese. He mentioned that a good connecting point with Chinese is that they love western wedding traditions.

*Continued on Page 7*

# SUPPORT

EXISTS TO PROVIDE QUALITY LEADERSHIP TRAINING, TECHNOLOGY ASSISTANCE, RELEVANT RESOURCES, AND COOPERATIVE PROJECTS TO SUPPORT CHURCHES.

## THE HAPPY LOBSTER & THE UNHAPPY PIG *by Aaron Householder*

Amidst the cab and bus rides around Puerto Vallarta a few years ago, our family did what we always do when we're tourists—we talked to locals. We'd ask how long they've lived there, about their work, and always about their families. We also sought their opinion of one specific question, "When you go out to eat seafood, where do you go?"

Some would say in Spanish, "La Langosta Feliz." Others would say it in English, "The Happy Lobster." Without hesitation a dozen people named this one restaurant. I'm thinking, "I wanna go there just because of the name."

Being a restaurant recommended by locals, we turn off the main tourist road into a neighborhood. The streets are narrow. There are no sidewalks. Walls and gates abound. Behind each sat a plastered home, brightly painted. We slowed atop a hill and look left and see a giant lobster hanging off a building. "La Langosta Feliz," I say pointing as our driver nodded and smiled.

Arriving at the restaurant we're greeted and seated on the shaded rooftop dining area. Service is quick and courteous. Then I hear something over the din of the crowd, "Meee. Meeeeeeeeeee. Meeeeeee." My first thought is, "Who is flying a drone around here?!" The pitch changed up and down and I recognized the noise.

Mary Elizabeth," I said to my daughter catching her glance, "Come here and look over this wall with me." The twinkle in my eye had told her this must be something fun. She joined me with a question in her own eyes. Looking over the partial wall of the roof we saw the source of the



noise in the yard below: A small, black pig; an unhappy, black pig.

Throughout our meal the pig alternated from squealing to silence. Again and again. Each time he grew quiet, the kids would go look. First, he was being fed. No time to squeal when eating. A few minutes later he was quiet while being hosed off. Then, the next few, quiet times, the owner just sat with the pig. Otherwise it was, "Meeeeeeeeeee. Meee. Meeeeeee".

We went to The Happy Lobster. We met the unhappy pig. Or was this pig really unhappy?

The pig was only happy and quiet not when he had his food or a shower, but when he had his owner outside. He was lonely. The unhappy pig next to The Happy Lobster was really a lonely pig.

*Continued on Page 3*

**OCTOBER  
PASTOR  
APPRECIATION  
MONTH**

## PASTOR APPRECIATION

October is Pastor Appreciation Month. This is a chance for the Church to celebrate and encourage the men who have answered God's call on their life to be shepherds. Throughout the month we will be sharing ideas on how to encourage your pastor as well as sharing insights from the Pastors in our association. We would also like to invite you to follow us on Facebook! Every morning we will share a specific way you can be praying for your pastor.

 Find us on  
**Facebook**  
**@Omaha1958**

# SUPPORT CONTINUED

## ***The Happy Lobster and The Unhappy Pig, Continued***

God created us for relationships.

October is Pastor Appreciation Month and the greatest thing your pastor may need is relationships. Being a pastor can be isolating. He may be great. He may have a happy face. He may have an amazing family. He may be there for everyone. But, he might also be lonely.

One of the greatest gifts you can give your pastor is you. A loving, supportive, relationship with your pastor is something you can give day by day year-round. Being intentional with and being prayerful for your pastor will bear great fruit for both of you. Call or text him regularly. Share meals or coffee together. Pray for him and with him. Get your families together. Nurture a relationship with him. Love one another.

Who knew the lonely pig next to The Happy Lobster could teach us about loving our pastors?



**Aaron Householder**  
**Senior Pastor**  
**Southview Baptist, Lincoln NE**

***"Therefore encourage one another and build each other up..."***

***1 Thessalonians 5:11***

# THANK YOU BETHEL!



The first Disaster Relief units that Heartland Church Network built were a shower trailer, chain saw trailer, and laundry trailer. Because of the number of chain saw units nationwide, it has been our least traveled, but it has been the most used in our immediate area. However, our original shower and laundry units have been deployed from central Wyoming to South Carolina and Wisconsin to southern Mississippi. So a rebuild on our original shower and laundry trailer was long overdue. In the last newsletter, we said "Thank You" to Potosi Baptist Church for helping with the rebuild of our original shower unit. Now, we want to say "THANK YOU" to Bethel Baptist Church members for taking the lead to rebuild our laundry unit.

Ben McElroy took the lead, and stated, "The first goal was to stop the leaks. The front top cap was severely broken and needed fiberglass patching. Some temporary patches were applied. This was done in the fall before winter set in. After the winter chill was over, Marty Verwey and I removed most of the stuff and the washers and dryers and stored them in the church. Then I took the trailer home and parked it in my driveway, so I would have better access to my tools and could work on it without traveling all the way across town."

*Continued on Page 4*

# SUPPORT CONTINUED

"I started with partial removal of the vinyl floor to inspect the wood underneath. Some wood was rotten by the steps at the side entrance and the wood at the end was somewhat damaged on the corners. Stripping off all the vinyl flooring and sanding the floor smooth generated a lot of sweat, aching knees, and back pains. Then I could replace the rotted wood around the steps and on the rear. Because the end of the base cabinets was water damaged and the floor was also damaged, I enlisted the help of my neighbor to remove the base cabinets. Unfortunately, the base units were weakened by the water damage and all the miles that they had traveled and fallen apart as we were taking them out. The one photo we took of the rebuild process shows the aftermath of the collapse just moments after they had been removed."

"The rest of the vinyl flooring was removed and the entire floor was sanded smooth. We purchased a new type of heavy-duty flooring that is used in racecar service trailers. It is a lot more durable than household vinyl flooring and does not have a paper backing. All the edges of the floor were sealed and the new floor was applied with some glue in the high traffic areas. New steel cabinets were ordered and a butcher-block style countertop was also purchased. Once the new flooring was applied, the steel cabinets were installed and the new countertop was installed and three coats of polyurethane were applied."

During the rebuild process, we discovered that the exhaust vent for the hot water heater leaked severely when it rained. So the vent was removed and the hole was patched. Then a new sidewall vent was installed. The rooftop vent at the rear was replaced and a new cover was installed over the center fan. Then Vicki (my wife) helped clean up some of the aluminum trim so we could use it again. The final step was to install a

Once that was completed, the trailer was taken back to the church and Marty Verwey with an assist from his son-in-law Nick Brauer, his wife Wanita, and fellow church member Mike Riley reinstalled the washers, dryers, and sink. Marty made a new base for the tall cabinet, and he installed it and the gas line from the tanks as well as installing and putting a finish on the board above the folding table. Marty then took the trailer to Friend where four new tires were installed. After that, he returned it to Bethel for a brief stay. He then brought it back to the HCN building in Omaha after it had experienced an "extreme makeover."

A huge "Thank You" to Ben and Vicki McElroy, Marty and Wanita Verwey, Mike Riley, and Nick Brauer. We appreciate Bethel taking ownership of this unit and would encourage other churches to prayerfully consider adopting one of our many Disaster Relief Units to assist with ongoing maintenance and the occasional repairs and eventual renovations that keep the equipment ready for deployment. If you are interested, you can contact Terry or Sherry Lust at [sherry.lust@gmail.com](mailto:sherry.lust@gmail.com).



**New cabinets and counter top!!**



**Old Countertops**

# CONNECT

EXISTS TO STRENGTHEN COMMUNICATIONS, CONNECT MINISTRY LEADERS BETWEEN CHURCHES, AND TO ASSIST CHURCHES TO MORE EFFECTIVELY CONNECT WITH THEIR COMMUNITY

## HCN WELCOMES PASTOR GREG CRAWFORD

### LIVING WATER CHURCH, PLATTSMOUTH



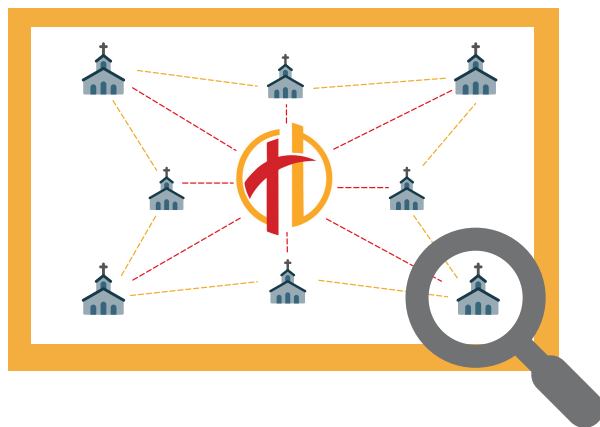
Living Water Church is blessed to announce Greg Crawford as Pastor of Living Water Church. Pastor Greg is moving here from Soldotna, Alaska where he served for 10 years as the Pastor of Education and Worship at College Heights Baptist Church. He has been in Pastoral ministry for 19 years at four locations. He and his wife Katie home school their three children -- Macey (10), Isaac (7), and Jackson (5 months).

Pastor Greg was licensed as a minister in 2002 and ordained as a Southern Baptist Pastor in 2007. He has a Master of Divinity from Southern Baptist Theological Seminary and a Theological Masters from Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, where he is currently completing his Doctor of Philosophy (Ph. D.) program.

Welcome, Pastor Greg and his family!

## PRAY FOR THE AMS SEARCH TEAM & THE TRANSITION PROCESS

Please continue to pray for the AMS search team. Pray for God's clear direction as resumes are collected, examined, and interviews conducted. Ask God to bring the right person to the attention of the team. Pray for the search team to have God's wisdom as they conduct interviews. Pray for the association to maintain strong consistency and focus in the present ministry. Pray for Mark as he leads through the transition. Pray that we will patiently await God's timing and trust the Spirit's leading through the process. Finally, praise God for His faithfulness and leading during this time!



The full job description and application are on our website: [www.heartlandchurchnetwork.com](http://www.heartlandchurchnetwork.com)

# CONNECT CONTINUED

## NATIONAL DAY OF VOLUNTEER YOUTH MINISTRY TRAINING



On Saturday, September 18, HCN hosted the National Day of Volunteer Youth Ministry Training, and eight people from two churches participated. The two and a half hour video-driven training was hosted at hundreds of locations across the country. Through the six different sessions, youth workers were challenged to stay encouraged to be able to minister to youth with joy.

Participants received instruction in lovingly correcting students, getting students serving in the community, building deeper community in our ministries, discussing race with students, and what it looks like to disciple teenagers. Rather than being overwhelmed with a ton of information, volunteers were encouraged to simply put one thing into practice in their ministry context. Mark your calendar now for next year.

The National Day of Volunteer Youth Ministry Training will be held on September 24, 2022.

## Christmas Fellowship

The 2022 Ministers and Staff Christmas Fellowship will be held on January 8 at Millard Social Hall from 11:30-2pm. This is designed to be time fellowship and encouragement for pastors, staff (or volunteers in small churches), and their spouses.



# CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE

## CONTINUED

But John Mark quickly switched the conversation to say that we needed to learn how to be cross-cultural in our own neighborhood. He then described two specific neighbors:

- His next-door neighbor uses an old-fashioned push mower (one without a motor), they hang their clothes on a line outside to dry them, they are meticulous recyclers, and they have a compost pile in their back yard.
- One of the neighbors across the street flies an American flag for every holiday, keeps his lawn and home in immaculate condition, and they go to church every Sunday.

**“Stop and think for just a minute how differently you would start a conversation with these two very different neighbors, let alone begin a spiritual conversation.”**

He said, “Stop and think for just a minute how differently you would start a conversation with these two very different neighbors, let alone begin a spiritual conversation.”

To expand on that reality, let me say that sometimes we have cross-cultural encounters within our own home. Advances in technology and huge shifts in cultural mores are forcing parents to have conversations with their children that they wish they didn't have. And I'm not just talking about asking my grandkids how to use my cell phone. Day-to-day life can become very complex for those of us who grew up in the US.

When we are seeking to engage immigrant families, we need to understand they are living in that complexity as well. PLUS they are trying to figure out how to live in a world that's vastly different from where they were raised. A conversation I often have with language pastors relates to the reality that their children cannot be raised as their parents raised them. That opportunity was lost when they immigrated to the U.S. Many immigrant parents struggle to make a living, and often both have to work to make ends meet.

That means their children are often latch key kids. I've known immigrant parents who have been arrested for child neglect or even abuse because they were raising their

children as they were raised. Sometimes an older child becomes the translator in day-to-day business transactions because their English skills are better than their parents. Stop to think about the role reversal that is taking place in such situations and the impact that has on a parent-child relationship. The pastor and leaders of a language church also have to figure out how they are going to minister to children and youth who are more comfortable in English than they are in their parents' heart language. And they have to do it while they are figuring out how to survive themselves.

Paul's philosophy for dealing with a complex, multi-cultural world in which he ministered (and first-century Corinth definitely fell into that category) was this: “For though I am free from all men, I have made myself a servant to all, that I might win the more” (I Corinthians 9:19). A servant is called to be obedient to his master. As servants of God, we are called to “make disciples of all ethnic groups” (Matthew 28:18-20). Within the geographical boundaries of the Heartland Church Network, we have hundreds of different cultures represented. Are you willing to take the time and effort to reach across those cultural divides for the sake of the Gospel?

John Mark and Cheryl Hansen are! As I was finishing this article, they stopped by the office to run off some sermon outlines as he will be a supply preacher at Harrison Street Baptist Church this next Sunday. With them was a lady from Iran (from the Persian culture) who just arrived in the US with her husband and two children. She has a psychology degree and her husband is enrolled at UNO, and he is pursuing post-doctoral work in bio-metrics. The Hansens have connected with this family to help them navigate their new world and to building relational bridges over which they pray God will open avenues for them to share the Gospel. Pray for them and for your own opportunities to build relational bridges.

Yours in Christ,  
Mark Elliott

## MARK'S INSIGHTS

*Please visit [www.heartlandchurchnetwork.org](http://www.heartlandchurchnetwork.org) or call the office, 402-551-0608, to subscribe to Mark's weekly articles. You can also find previous articles on our website.*

# LOOKING BACK

## PIVOT 2021

EQUIP ENGAGE ENCOURAGE

"Where do we go from here?" was the theme of this year's PIVOT conference based on Joshua 3:4. Our keynote speaker was Dr. Leo Endel, the State Executive for the Minnesota-Wisconsin State Convention. Dr. Endel used the book of Nehemiah to exhort churches to be strategic in their planning and encourage them to pray throughout the process.

We were able to offer eight breakout sessions again this year and are grateful to each one who took time from their schedules to plan and lead a session.

Dr. Endel led the session "Strategic Planning for the Smaller Church" and participants learned about the "arrow method" and had the opportunity to ask questions about Dr. Endel's own experiences in leading a small church.

Whitney Julian, from CityLight Omaha, led a session on Discipling Children. Those who attended this session came away with new ideas and possibilities when teaching children and ministering to the entire family.

John Mark Hansen, from Renewed Hope, led the "Crossing Cultures Across the Street" session. Participants were challenged to begin with an understanding of their own worldview so they would be able to start conversations with their neighbors about Christ.

Ryan Johnston, NAMB Lead CPC, facilitated a session on "Simple Framework for Kingdom Innovation" showing that you don't need a complicated or complex plan for church planting.

Chaplain Ron Elliott, from LifeSpring Church had a question and answer session to help people learn what to say or do during difficult situations. Ron used his own experiences as a hospital chaplain during COVID to help those who attended this session.

Debbie Elliott (LifeSpring) and Melanie Householder (Southview) co-led the session for pastors wives and discussed how to capture your negative thoughts and to instead focus on God's Truth.

John Shields used his experience as a pastor of a disciple-making church to facilitate the session "Discipleship that Thrives in Life's Storms." Those who attended were encouraged to release their members into the world and let them make disciples and that disciples align with God.

Dr. Ralph Lassister, senior pastor of Mt. Moriah, taught on Servant Leadership and the importance of being aware of your own strengths and weaknesses and developing your own leadership skills so that you can then lead others.

Mark your calendars for next year's PIVOT Conference August 28, 2022.







# LOOKING AHEAD

## 2021 ANNUAL MEETING THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 4

Sower Church, Lincoln NE

6:00 PM Dinner 7:00 PM Meeting

### *Each One, Reach One*

Save the date! Thursday, November 4 we will gather at Sower Church in Lincoln for the Heartland Church Network's Annual Meeting. We will celebrate all God has done for and through our association and our churches during this past year, as we look forward to what lies ahead!



### LEADING CHURCHES IN THE MIDWEST IS CHALLENGING.

Do not miss the upcoming Midwest Leadership Summit! Over three days, you will receive dynamic insight from leaders and pastors who are making Southern Baptist Ministry work in the Midwest. The culture here makes our work challenging- and all the more important. This event for church leaders is presented by your state convention in partnership with Baptist conventions in the Midwest and national SBC entities. Contact the HCN office to register.

### *Minister & Spouse Retreat*

The 2022 Minister and Spouse Retreat will be held April 29 and 30 at Lied Lodge in Nebraska City, NE. This is a short time of restoration for ministers and their spouses and a chance to connect on a deeper level with other ministers in the network.



SAVE THE DATE

### PIVOT 2022

EQUIP ENGAGE ENCOURAGE

Sunday, Aug 28, 2022

### PIVOT 2022

Quotes from two 2021 attendees of how they would describe this conference:

*"A great opportunity to be challenged as a leader in God's church and connect with other church leaders."*

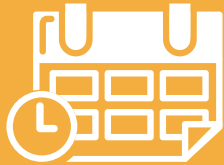
*"Practical + Biblical = Very Helpful"*



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## UPCOMING EVENTS

### October

- 11-12 KNCSB Annual Meeting
- 19 Northeast Pastor Fellowship

### November

- 4 HCN Annual Meeting @  
Sower Church - Lincoln
- 9 Northeast Pastor Fellowship

### January

- 8 Christmas Fellowship
- 18-22 Midwest Leadership  
Conference - Springfield, IL

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