

# H2O

## CHURCH

## A NEW CHAPTER

By Jon Shah

As we head into the Fall, this is without a doubt a year of change and growth within H2O Church! We value faith-filled prayer, believing that God faithfully answers us with power and love, and over the course of the past 8 years, we have been praying for God to provide a building near campus to accommodate our growth as a church and help us to grow in the ways that we minister to college students and the greater Columbus community.

And, as many of you know, God answered our prayer! Another local church here in Columbus, Neil Avenue Baptist Church, decided to close its doors after 60 years of Kingdom work near the Ohio State campus. As we have gotten to know each other, they chose to invest their facilities into the work that we are doing here in Columbus beginning in mid-August! Not only is this a surprising and generous gift, it comes at a critical time for our church. This fall we will be engaging in some new steps of faith! We are praying that this new sanctuary and "annex" will be getting extensive use in the months to come, and that the facilities will be a catalyst for a greater Gospel impact in our city as we seek to be a community that is sent.



Additionally, we are excited to see our work on campus forge ahead as usual! We welcome back our 100+ participants from Leadership Training this summer, and together we hope to influence the next generation of students here at The Ohio State University for Jesus Christ. This fall, thanks to our large number of student leaders, we hope to see even more Gospel

proclamation and deep discipleship than ever before! Although we will continue to have our campus worship service ON campus at Hitchcock Hall, the new facilities will aid the campus work in many ways: It will be a home for some off-campus H2O teams, office space for the staff and leaders, and a meeting space for larger retreats and events. Hopefully this all equates to even more Gospel influence on our campus. ***Please join us in prayer that God would use this generation of student leaders to lead more of their classmates to Christ this fall than we've ever seen before!***

In addition to this campus work, we are excited to launch a new congregation within H2O Church. This fall, "H2O City", will launch a separate worship service at our new facility. This congregation, comprised of many of our young professionals, recent graduates and graduate students, hopes to have a Gospel impact in the city of Columbus and help our saints continue to live out our core values of faith and being sent in this new season of life! We dream...

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### IN THIS EDITION:



H2O CITY (PG.2)



SUMMER TEAM (PG.2)



COLUMBUS LT (PG.3)



WINTER PARK LT (PG.3)



SLICE OF LIFE (PG.4)

(continued from page 1) ...of these two congregations (H2O Campus & H2O City) ministering to each other as one church, creating a synergy that will bless both groups tremendously! ***Please join us in prayer that God would "plant" this new congregation in Columbus this fall, and make us healthy and fruitful!***

Hopefully, this Gospel expansion will not end here. As another school year rolls around, we continue to pray and step towards taking the Good News to other campuses around Columbus and sending church plant teams to other campuses throughout the US. ***Please join us in prayer for God to build a church plant team that we could send to another campus in the next 2 years!***



## H2O City

By Dave Orweller

H2O launched its first service in Hagerty Hall in the Fall of 2008 with a passion for seeing the next generation of OSU students encounter Jesus Christ. Since then, we have seen God grow the church in amazing ways. And over that time, we've seen a growing group of recent grads and young families emerge... still excited about the Lord and living on mission for Him, but in a new phase of life.

Along with numerical growth, we felt that God was leading us to grow our vision for H2O to include graduates, young professionals and families in Columbus. The vision was that we'd be one church body with two congregations... H2O Campus and H2O City.

Over the past couple of years, we've worked to build and grow a core team and a small group ministry with H2O City. Then Neil Avenue Baptist Church generously began to let us use their space to host a Sunday service for our core team. Their willingness to sacrifice their space has been such a blessing, but recently they've decided to go one step further and invest all their assets in the H2O City Plant! This means we'll have a building and a long term home by the end of the summer and that we'll be ready to launch a public worship service this fall!

While it means and has meant a lot of work for us, it's been clear to us that God has been faithful to prepare the way forward for H2O City. Psalm 127:1-2 it says *"Unless the Lord builds the house, those who build it labor in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city, the watchman stays awake in vain."*

It's been an honor to see God work in and through H2O City, and we can't wait to see what he does this fall!

## H2O Summer Team

By Stephanie Hoagland and Lisa Scott

Since our first meeting in mid-May, we have seen God bring together a unique group of people who have decided to stick around during the summer to pursue Him through rest as we explore Psalm 46 together. We've witnessed growth and transformation in the lives of the 40-45 regularly participating students, both in those who are new to the faith and H2O, as well as those who have been around H2O for a while and are more mature in their faith. We meet every Thursday night when we dig further into Psalm 46 and discuss topics like how God is our refuge and strength and how He is our helper. We also had an overnight retreat in early June where we played games, worshipped together and heard more about God's rest and how that applies to our lives as Christians.

We're excited to see how the Lord will use the rest of the summer as we continue to build community and learn how to place our rest in the Lord!





# Columbus Leadership Training

By Whitney Varnau

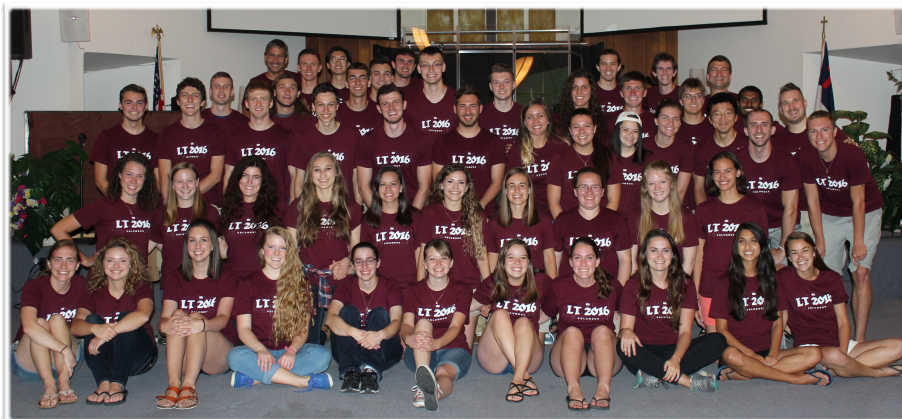
Leadership Training (LT) is a lot of things. It's late nights and long days. It's fifty people showing up early to dinner on hot summer evenings. It's treks across campus while memorizing Scripture. It's Gospel conversations and new friendships. LT is seeing God move in new ways.

We're wrapping up week 7 here in Columbus and our summer has been nothing short of a

whirlwind. We can't believe 7 weeks marched past. LT feels normal, it feels like home. We've seen students step out in faith and share the Gospel with strangers. We've seen students invest in memorizing our theme passage, Romans 8. We've had phenomenal speakers and stretching challenges nearly every day.

We are so impressed with our students--how invested they are in Leadership Training. We're never sure what to expect when we enter new seasons in ministry, but the students this summer have shown dedication, excitement, and faith.

God can do and has done so much over the past two months, and we can't wait to see how He surprises us as we wrap up our summer of learning more about our King and how to be His Conquerors.



# Winter Park Leadership Training

By Diane Gress

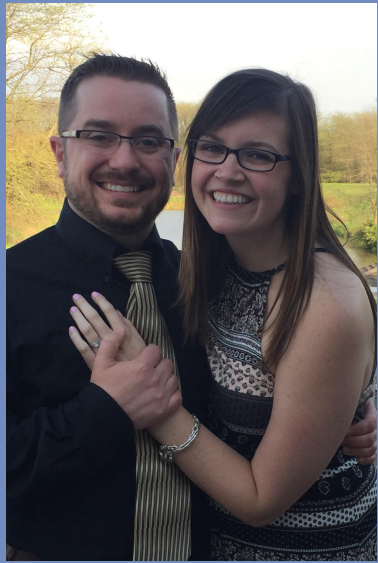
Just eight weeks ago, 50 Ohio State students, staff and interns arrived at the YMCA of the Rockies Snow Mountain Ranch in Colorado to begin the first-ever Winter Park Leadership Training (LT). In those eight weeks, we've seen God move in huge ways in the lives of the students (not to mention the staff and interns) who sacrificed their summer to attend the program.

The theme of the summer is Romans 8. Each week, a new speaker arrives to teach on a few verses of one of the most impactful passages in the whole Bible. The message of Romans 8 is a beautiful one: in Christ Jesus, we have no condemnation for our sins (v1), we are free from the power of sin and shame (v2), the Holy Spirit lives in each of us and works to make us more like Christ, we are adopted children of God (v15), we will share in the future glory to come as we follow Christ (v18), and, because we love God, He will work all things for our good (v.28).

As the summer draws nearer to the close, we've seen how God has been raising up leaders for his kingdom this summer. Men and women are catching a vision for the Gospel and sharing it with others, seeing their gifts and callings from the Lord, growing in vulnerability and openness and experiencing life as a devoted follower of Jesus and child of God. It's been an incredible summer, and though we're sad to leave, the LTers are getting excited to arrive back on campus and use the many ways God has changed their lives this summer impact others for the Gospel.

## INTERESTED IN LEARNING MORE?

Visit our website at [www.oh2o.org](http://www.oh2o.org), or email us at [info@mail.h2osu.org](mailto:info@mail.h2osu.org) for more information regarding H2O.



## ABOUT ME

Name: Matthew Lodge

Age: 33

H2O City Life Group: Sunday

Home State: Ohio

Occupation: Senior Risk Analyst for JP Morgan Chase

Favorite Color: Blue

Favorite Book: Lost World by Michael Crichton

# SLICE OF LIFE

I grew up in a household where belief in God was implied, but not openly practiced or discussed. Emphasis was put on behavior rather than faith. I was to behave, treat people kindly, and have good manners. Church was something that was done with my grandparents; I was baptized, but never knew or understood what that meant. Boring hymns, unintelligible sermons, and the lack of my parents made church feel like a punishment, and the second I was given a choice, I stopped going. I thought I was living a life that would make God happy, though. I got good grades and treated everyone fairly. I was very well behaved and I honored my parents. I didn't know then what it meant to live for God, and I didn't have an eye to see all the wonderful things he was doing in my life.

The first time I remember "needing" God began in middle school. My best friend decided that we were no longer friends and used his popularity to persuade others to follow suit. I was heavily bullied and I turned to God. I started reading the Bible and praying for the unkindness to stop. I read and prayed every night to no avail. Luckily for me, one boy needed some help with math, which I was good with. Against a lot of peer pressure, he befriended me, and became a lifelong friend. I told myself that I had solved my own problem, that my head for numbers and ability to teach had earned me this friend. I never realized that God had answered my prayers in His own way and I was no longer interested in reading the Bible and praying.

I made it through the rest of school that way. High school was easy for me; I made good grades with minimal effort and made a lot of friends again. I played sports, was cast as the lead in school plays, and was voted Sweethearts King at our winter formal. College was fun. My older brother was there, so I was able to fit right in. I made new friends, played video games, skipped class, you know, the normal stuff. Throughout all of this, I held firm to my parent's guidance of being kind, treating people fairly, and overall living a good life. But God was absent from my thoughts.

A year after college, I got a phone call from my mom that changed my life. My brother had been at a lake with friends, on a small boat that had flipped, and he was missing. That week was the hardest week of my life. The reality of knowing the worst had happened without actually knowing was excruciating. About a week later we received the news that his body had been recovered. My brother was gone. The man who had become my best friend after years of childhood fighting was gone. I had struggled for a long time to believe in God's goodness and with the death of my brother, I decided that I no longer believed in God.

The next seven years were a blur of depression. I no longer cared if I was living a good life. I no longer cared if I was treating people kindly. I had no desire for relationships and I didn't try to make new friends. I turned to alcohol to help dull the pain and only existed for my family. I very slowly climbed out of that dark place, but I refused to see God's grace in allowing me to accept the loss of my brother. I returned to a life of always trying to be kind and treating people fairly.

Last February, I met a girl at work (my eventual fiancée, Shannon). We grew close immediately, and had a LOT in common. We started getting lunch together, and she talked about God almost non-stop. Soon it became clear that we both were developing

feelings for each other and she invited me to attend her church. Knowing my story, she urged me to just attend, listen, be present, and most of all, to open my heart to the possibility that God loved me, and because I desired a more intimate relationship with her, I decided to attend an H2O service. There was live music, people sharing their stories, sermons full of real life examples; this was not church as I remembered it. I started going more and more often, and somewhere along the way I realized I was there because I wanted to be, not out of a desire for a relationship with Shannon, but for one with Jesus. I was finally realizing all the amazing things God had done in my life: blessing me with a supportive family, sending me a friend when I needed one the most, and allowing me to climb out of depression to name a few.

Last July, I placed my faith in Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior and made the decision to take communion to signify that choice. I truly believe that God sent Shannon to lead me back to Him, to show me that He has been here all along, and to open my eyes to all of His glorious work, both in my life and in the world. Since placing my faith in Jesus, I am so excited every day to see what He has in store for me next. I witness Him in everyday life and am able to see God's grace so much more easily. I have realized that for the first time since I was a child, I am truly happy, and I knowingly attribute that to my relationship with Jesus.