
WORDS FROM THE WILDERNESS

Establishing a Prayer Team To Share God's Heart to Reach the Lost

Our God is a God of New Beginnings!

My friends, when I consider the character of the God that has saved us and called us His own, one thing that stands out to me is that He is a God for whom nothing is ever wasted. He is a God of redemption, and restoration, and new hope. And, in His love and His sovereignty, He is a God for whom even nothing in our past is without purpose or use in His plan. These days, as I prepare for this upcoming new season in Ocean Springs, I look back on twenty+ years of pastoral ministry — and I see how God was working toward this call all along. From the blue-haired, tattooed kids I was drawn to in youth ministry, to broken families I got to interact with while working crimes against children with the sheriff's office in Tennessee, to people I have had the privilege to walk alongside in their brokenness and, as their pastor, see them restored to hope in the gospel. Even in the brokenness and pain I carry from my past and to a broken relationship with my dad, and that I hope to take to people on the coast who also carry brokenness and fatherlessness.... I look back now and can see "fingerprints of the divine," using everything, preparing everything, and now, Lord willing bringing it all together in this call to build something new in the gospel in Ocean Springs.

I even see it in what God began there before

The call to church planting in Ocean Springs was actually first answered by an amazing couple, Philip and Lori Sealy. They moved to the coast and began the work of building a core group toward reaching the lost in Ocean Springs. However, in the Lord's plan, Philip came down with cancer and passed away a little over two years ago. I never met Philip, and while I have talked with Lori, we have not yet met in person. However, as the Lord began to place within Stephanie and me the heart for evangelism, discipleship, and church planting — Everywhere we go, people who knew the Sealy's testify and affirm that the vision God has given us for Ocean Springs, a vision of a gospel community built from the beginning with the DNA of existing to speak the gospel to each other so that we can share it with the lost, is very much a continuation of the heart and the vision that the Sealy's were starting in Ocean Springs. Check out this video made about Philip and Lori, where they discuss the groundbreaking in Ocean Springs, even while he had cancer, and you'll hear echoes and connections all throughout of what God has been doing to call us to this work (click the picture):



That gives me such great hope and excitement: As we head into a new season and call in ministry, as we start something new, as we work to build a church around discipling people to fulfill the Great Commission and reach the lost.... To know that we have the privilege of being part of something, of continuing a path and a plan that God began laying the groundwork and planting the seeds for decades ago for something He is bringing together now.... Well, that gives us great joy indeed!

And it gives us hope for what is happening next

As we have been visiting churches and sharing the vision for Ocean Springs, the first and biggest question we get from everyone is, "When are you moving?" Our heart would be to answer that with, "As soon as possible" and "We are ready to come today." However, there are two more things we need God to bring together before:

The first is that we need to sell our house. With the holidays done, we are shifting hard and fast into "sell a house" mode. The boxes are coming out, and the repairs are going in. In fact, if you visit us in January, either bring a box or a hammer, because Stephanie will put you to work! We are hoping to have the house on the market by the end of January or early February. This seems to be a good market for selling a house, so we hope that, once we put it on the market, things will proceed quickly. Please pray with us toward that!

And the other path we need to see come together is our support raising. We have received such a wonderful welcome into the churches we have visited, and several of them have joined our team as contributing supporters. And now I am starting to meet with individuals to invite them onto our giving team. The Lord has been incredibly faithful, and as of Christmas, we were a little less than 1/2 of our needed monthly support. Now, as we ramp the visits and meetings with churches and people back up, we are praying for the needed support to come in by the end of February so that, if the house sells in February, we can move to Ocean Springs in early March.

Will you pray and work with us toward that?

We are so ready and so excited to move to Ocean Springs and start our life and ministry there. We look forward to connecting with Christians to whom God is going to give the vision for a "Church with the DNA of a gospel community," and we look forward to starting to build relationships with lost and broken people in Ocean Springs — people with whom we will have the privilege of sharing the HOPE of the gospel and seeing God bring them to salvation in Jesus Christ!



Will you join us in prayer for what God is already doing. And will you join us in giving toward that work?

- To give, use the QR code to the right, or visit <http://give.pcamna.org/to/1749>
- Checks can also be sent payable to "Mission to North America"
PO Box 890233
Charlotte, NC, 28289-02333.
Please write "Mark Horn, Ocean Springs Church Plant" on the memo line.
- And finally, more information for all of this and for our Ocean Springs journey can be found at our website: www.PlantHopeOS.org!



Thank you for being our friends and our partners in this journey!

Stephanie and I truly do thank God for each one of you, whether you are friends we have known and loved for years, or whether you are brothers and sisters in Christ we have only recently had the privilege to meet and start a friendship with. For each one of you, we are thankful for your willingness to be part of the thread and the story, the theme and the glory, that God is weaving and merging together for what He wants to do to build a church, to reach the lost, to complete His Kingdom in Ocean Springs. You matter to us. You matter to this story that God is bringing together. And we thank God for you!



A closing encouragement:

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"The greatest encouragement through the Bible is the story of God's love for His lost race and the willingness of Christ, His eternal Son, to show forth that love in God's plan of redemption. The love of Jesus is so vast that it knows no boundaries. At the point where we stop caring and loving, Jesus is still there, loving and caring." – A.W. Tozer