

Family Meeting Recap February 2021

It was so good to get some time together to see one another's faces. It was great to celebrate even in the midst of hardship, hear from some of the people and organizations that we support, as well as get a glimpse into the next season of our Church here in Camarillo. Here is a bit of a recap of what we talked through on Sunday night.

Celebrations 2020

- All the babies that were born (11 of them!)
- Erik walked through how God has been sovereignly leading us through his word for the time that we are in. Specifically how Daniel and 1 Peter have been so poignant for us during the year.
- God bringing Erik and Karis on Staff in January 2020 has been such a blessing
- God teaching us to be resilient
- The fact that our church has not divided over COVID/Politics and other cultural pressures was a huge win.
- Restoration of broken relationships
- Community Groups and DNA groups
- Families spending more time together
- The Reconciling Christian Summer Session
- Embracing adversity, growing in contentment
- Joining Anthem!

Finances

- By God's grace we finished 2020 at 390k in giving, saving almost 70k with about 170,000 in savings.
- We saw generosity from the church, money going outside the walls of the church increased 23% from the previous year.

Highlight of our Engagement with the Nations

Hope Partners International with the Naimos

Anthony Naimo joined us on our call and shared with us what Hope Partners is and how they are making Kingdom impact around the world. This section of our family meeting was incredibly sweet as the Naimos spent about 3 years with Anthem. We are so excited to now partner

together in ministry. Hope Partners exists to rescue children and transform their lives through acts of compassion; all centered around our hope in Jesus.

Through our partnership, we will continue to come alongside Hope Partners to help establish Hope Centers around the world. Not only that, this partnership creates opportunities for us to send teams of 10-20 people (families, individuals, etc.) to Hope Centers around the globe to serve for a few weeks at a time. Our hope is that before any of our students graduate each of them would be able to be involved in at least one international trip where they are exposed to God's work around the globe.

This is just a small snapshot of Hope Partners International. Please take a moment to visit their website to learn more about the amazing work they are doing. <https://hopepartners.org/> In addition, if the idea of being a part of a team serving abroad is something that interests you, would you please reach out to kevin@anthemchurch.org as we hope to send one team to the Hope Center in Costa Rica in the next year or two.



Who we are

Hope Partners International exists to rescue children and transform their lives through acts of compassion.

What we do

We establish Centers of Hope in some of the most impoverished parts of the world to care for the most vulnerable among us.

How we do it

Each Hope Center has a dedicated team which focuses on both relief and empowerment. Relief comes in caring for the whole person, physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual. From there we seek to equip them with the tools they need to succeed and have a strong emphasis on education, mentoring, and training.

Impact

There are currently five Hope Centers located on three continents with plans to open three new centers in 2021. This past year Hope Partners was able to serve over 410,000 meals while caring for 1,834 children despite the many challenges of Covid 19. Each of the Hope Centers have an able and committed staff which is currently 137 strong between the five centers and has done an incredible job adjusting to the constant changes brought by Covid 19.

Scott and Alexis

One of the perks of doing this meeting on Zoom in the evening is that Scott and Alexis Nordquist were able to join us all the way on the other side of the globe. They have been serving in the far East among unreached people groups for many years now. They gave us insight into what God is doing in their place of ministry, and shared with us some amazing stories of God's redeeming power.

One story in particular involved a friend they met soon after arriving who gave his life to Jesus. They began reading God's word together and this man's beautiful faith was so simple, if Jesus said it we should do it. They read through the sermon on the mount, and this man's journey seemed to line up very similar to the lives of those Peter was writing to in 1 Peter. He was experiencing humiliation, loss of status, even loss of relationship with his family members once they found out he was a Christian. He was publicly mocked and shamed by his brothers. His own mom said, "why don't you just go ahead and slit my throat, because your belief in Jesus is that offensive to me." And this man just took these insults, he didn't open his mouth, he didn't lash out against them, like a lamb unto the slaughter but he opened not his mouth. What happened next no one imagined. He kept being present, he continued to grow in his faith and obedience to Jesus. Just recently in the last year, his mother gave her life to Jesus. She is the most amazing woman. She can't hear or read but she lays next to her Bible everyday just to be close to her savior. His brothers who were once hurling insults and threatening bodily harm to him are now asking him for prayer. Our God is mighty to save and he is working!

Scott and Alexis will be coming home for 6 months so if you didn't get a chance to hear from them on Sunday or if you want to hear more about what's coming up, there will be more opportunity. As they look to come home for 6 months they are looking for a place to stay, ideally in or around Camarillo starting June. If you have any questions please don't hesitate to reach out.

What's Coming Next

2020 without a shadow of a doubt has been a hard year. There isn't a single one of us who've come through this year unscathed. By God's grace he's carried us through and has been so amazing to us. As we look forward to our next season as a church, and individual members of it, we recognize that we are in a season of Rebuilding. 2020 gave us the opportunity to look and see how we've built. Have we been like the wise man who built his foundation upon the rock, or have we built upon the sand, or perhaps a bit of a combo in there? As we look at our own lives and our church, we realize this is an opportunity to ask the tough questions, why do we do things the way we do? Are our core beliefs represented in the practices and rhythms of life personally and collectively?

There is a phrase that came about during our Up In and Out series that has really stuck with us. We need to be honest, humble, and get to work. We want to see all these qualities continue to grow in us as we rebuild together after a year that has done some damage to all of us. We are excited about this season we are entering into and enter it with joyful anticipation for what the Lord is going to do in and through us.

Lenten Season

Although we are not a high church as far as our ecclesiological structure goes there are some incredibly valuable rhythms that exist in the traditional church calendar that we like to participate in. We've found that Advent and Lent are great opportunities for growth and intentionality in our relationship with Jesus. So we have 3 ways for you to join us in preparing for the death and resurrection of Jesus.

1. **Prayer** - Tuesdays, at 6:45 in-person at the Jones home and 12:00pm on Zoom, we will be taking 45 min to an hour each Tuesday to grow in our relationship with God through prayer as we pray through the Psalms together.
2. **Fasting**
 - a. In March we are going to fast 1x a week as a church. We will be putting out a guide each week to help you through each fast. But we are inviting everyone who calls Anthem home to fast, if they are able from food, the night before their community group starts and break it together with your community group the next night.
 - b. What are we fasting from? The basic concept of a fast is that we would starve our flesh and feast on God. That we would for a selected amount of time cease to eat food and instead direct our affections on God. So we are going to ask that you do the same. The only thing we may add is within the idea of starving the flesh, it would probably be a good idea to pause personal electronic consumption (news, netflix, facebook other social media.)
 - c. We understand that not everyone is in a community group, this is a great time to jump into a group, and if you are unable to we still invite you to participate in the weekly fast.
3. **"The Chosen" Movie Nights** Fridays in March starting at 6:30. 10187 Churchman Ln Camarillo Ca 93012
 - a. We want to start creating more spaces for people to be around one another in safe environments. Watching The Chosen outdoors and under the stars together seemed like a great opportunity. We will be distanced, ask that everyone bring their own chairs and blankets and snacks if they want, and mask when coming, going, and mingling. Come bundled as it will probably get a little chilly.
 - b. This is also a great opportunity to invite friends and or neighbors who've expressed curiosity about Jesus.

Good Friday/Easter

We plan on being in person for both Good Friday and Easter this year with more details to follow.

Elder Development Couples

On Sunday we introduced our families in Elder Development... Bob and Lori Ameche and Erik and Karis Anderson. We have been in Elder Development since June and it has been an amazing journey walking through development with each of these incredible people. We will give more opportunity to hear from our Elder Couples soon, but we welcome your prayers as we move toward Elder Installation in May/June.

In April, our couples will enter into a season of examination from you the church body, where we give you a few months to get time with them, so that in May/June when they go forward toward installation you are confident and willing to join us in acknowledging them and installing them as elders at Anthem Camarillo.

Anthem Students/Anthem Kids

Anthem Students

One of the great joys of 2019/2020 has been having Austin Borders as our Anthem Students Intern and then Anthem Students Lead. One of the other joys of 2020 is that Austin is getting married. The bummer side is that he and his soon to be wife, Lauren, will be moving back to his hometown in Washington mid march. We are so sad to see Austin go but we are very grateful for him and his service to our students. This does of course leave a bit of a void and question mark of what we will do with our students. Our elders are getting together with the parents of students on the 27th at the Bowcocks home to discuss in further detail about our students. We know our students are in such an important stage of their lives and if we are going to continue growing as a church we need to see our students flourish in discipling relationships unto Jesus.

Anthem Kids

We love our Anthem Kids, and we know that this has been a challenging season for our kids, and let's be honest for our parents too. However, it has been such a highlight to see our kids engage and be present with parents at our outdoor gatherings at the Bowcocks. Watching them worship and learn with us has been so amazing, and even though I know they miss learning about Jesus with their friends, they are seeing Mom and Dad and other adults worship Jesus and learn from God's Word! The kids and parents have done amazing!

As you've already seen, we have introduced kids corner each week as an opportunity for our kids to have a space in our main gathering where they are directly and intentionally engaged with on their level. We will continue Kids Corner for the foreseeable future. We want to continue to come alongside you parents and help you in your role of primary disciplers in your children's lives. If you have any questions or if there are any ways in which we can help you, please reach out to nicole.raden@anthemchurch.org

Gathering Space

Bowcock/Rutledge Backyard

We are so thankful to the Rutledge/Bowcock household for opening up their home thus far as a place for us to gather together in a way that is honoring to the Lord and to our community at large and city/state leaders. It has been such a blessing!!! As of now we are going to continue meeting there as we have been, with the exception of extreme weather (rain and especially wind) and the last Sunday of the month where we will continue to have our worship prayer and testimony nights on the lawn at the Baptist Church.

We do know that this is a temporary solution and not a permanent one. We are confident that the Lord will provide a place for us to be more firmly established this year.

Boys and Girls Club

Many of you may be wondering when we are going to get back to the Boys and Girls Club. We still have an amazing relationship with them and Kevin has been in regular contact with Roberto, the president of the BGCC. Since it is not our building we would make sure that we abide by their guidelines. As of right now, the guidelines and stipulations would be higher than we are comfortable with to return. However, the door is open as vaccinations and herd immunity draws near.. It is hard to estimate when we would potentially be able to return if we choose to. It could be as early as mid to late spring, or it could be summer, the truth is we are not sure.

Other Potential Options

As an elder team we realize that having a stable place to call home is incredibly important and could be a great asset not only to our church but to our city as well. Our elders are prayerfully considering what it might look like and require of us to be in a facility 24/7 either as owners or through a lease.

We are turning 10 as a church this April and as we have sought counsel from mentors and fellow church leaders, there seems to be an affirmation in pursuing the option of a building as long as it makes sense with who we are and what we are hoping to accomplish as a church. In our case, will it aid us in our desire to exalt and make much of Jesus as we continue to grow in our Up, In and Out as a church?

There are options in front of us and we would love your prayers. We will definitely be talking more together if anything moves from an option to a good possibility. We want to make sure we are following God's leading and not just looking at facilities because we know we can't be at the Bowcocks forever.