

**Zach and Micaela's God Story:** Our God Story is currently being played out!

We had struggled with infertility for many years. In February we spontaneously went down to the Asbury revival. While there, we went to the altar to pray together. We asked God to make known to us His plans for us. Whether it was for us to have a baby or not. We asked for peace in whichever answer.

March 20th, we had an appointment to meet with an infertility clinic to discuss our options.

February 25th, 1 week after Asbury we found out we were pregnant!

This pregnancy has been extremely challenging, the first 4 months I was extremely sick, in and out of the hospital, losing 30 pounds, needing a home health nurse at one point. But through it all God has been GOOD and has been FAITHFUL!!!

We are expecting a little girl on November 7th. The day after my 29th birthday!!

We would love to share this story with the church about how God is present in every season, every detail, he is working things out for us even when we feel hopeless.

He can do immeasurably more than we can think or imagine. He is so good.

**Mary Ann's God Story:**

I accepted Jesus Christ as my personal Savior in November 1965 and received the baptism of the Holy Spirit in January 1966. At that time, I was in a traditional Pentecostal denomination which emphasized speaking in tongues as the initial evidence of being baptized in the Holy Spirit and I did experience an outflow of tongues coming from deep within my being. Over the years, I experienced many outward manifestations of the Spirit and, although I did not realize it at the time, many of the workings of the Gifts of the Spirit through the ministry of teaching.

But coming to Cornerstone Chapel, I began to have a greater understanding of the Holy Spirit and experienced a deeper relationship with God and the Spirit. Which brings me to my God Story.

In March 2021, my husband experienced a massive heart attack - one that the doctors referenced as a STEMI and which we call the "widow maker." He had been rushed to the main campus of the Cleveland Clinic and by the time my son and I arrived, they had already determined that surgery to open the blockages was not an option; his heart was functioning at only 30%. He was placed on a balloon pump to enable the heart to pump more blood. Over the next several days we waited to see what the heart would do but it became obvious that he may not recover. They were unable to wean his heart off the pump, toxins were building up in his body, and the blood oxygen levels were dropping. On day four, just as I was getting ready to leave for the night, one of the heart doctors came in [that was a miracle as it seems you never

get to see a real doctor] and I was able to have a frank discussion with him about the true status. He spoke honestly and explained that it looked like weaning him off the heart pump was not going to be successful. He proposed that we wait to see what happened overnight but if there was no change, it would be appropriate for us to meet with the palliative team in the morning to discuss allowing him to transition [a nice word doctors are trained to use]. Not what I wanted to hear but I knew in my heart he was right.

So now I leave the Clinic for home. That means traveling back down Chester Avenue and finding the turn to get to I-71; and then it is necessary to move over several lanes of traffic to go south on I-71. It felt like God was moving my car through the traffic as I finally rounded the Metro-Health curve. And all this time I'm verbally talking to God about what I should do. Now heading down I-71 with the 75-80 mph flow of traffic, I suddenly experienced the Holy Spirit take over my conversation with God - me praying and God speaking comfort in His answer. I know that all this time I traveled past the airport, past Strongsville, and then into Medina County at Brunswick, but I was in a different realm. At the end of this encounter with the Holy Spirit speaking a spiritual language beyond comprehension, I knew that I knew it was going to be okay to make the necessary medical decision.

This is not to say that it was easy to make that decision, tell the nurse it was time to stop the pump, and then watch my husband take his last breath. But I knew what God had spoke through the Spirit, and we felt the strength and comfort of the Spirit surrounding us.

And over the last couple of years when I feel a sadness in my soul, God draws me back to that picture of my I-71 encounter with the awesomeness of how the Holy Spirit ministered to me that day and I know its okay. I will forever give Him praise!

## **Brad's God Story:**

God has always been my provider, and he has an undefeated record in my life!

With that said, in my life, I've walked away from God. He always pursued me, but I ran as far as I could away from him. He has always been waiting like a good father to take care of his son exactly the way scripture says he will.

When I chose the Way of the flesh, sin bred harsh consequences.

To some people, they say thy will be done.

And in my case, God said, have it your own way so I did

I didn't experience a physical death, but what I did go through was a spiritual death.

Loneliness lurked around me, and I filled the God shaped hole with alcohol and relationships.

All the while I was attending churches, because my heart, and the Holy Spirit knew where home was.

In November 2021 I turned my will and my life over to the care of God and Jesus.

Through a 12 step program, I begin an intimate relationship with the God my creator .

I began a journey that would carry me to new places .

God surrounded me with his kids, and they pointed the way to him every step of the way.

About a year into my sobriety, I met the absolute girl of my dreams.

We both knew we had a divine appointment with a Church Home we just didn't know where.

We tried one Church not such good results

I made the suggestion -cornerstone Chapel.

Our first time to cornerstone, we knew we had found our church home.

Finally A place where we could both grow individually and together in a house of believers.

I remember Pastor Mark giving the hard sermon on tithing.

I had tithed before, and I never had difficulties in doing so. So, I thought let's give this a shot. I began to tithe, and although I had been through a divorce, and my finances were close to nil a lot of the time.

God showed his faithfulness. Unexpected blessings started to inundate me, and this blessing continues on today.

I thank you All my brothers and sisters at Cornerstone Chapel for loving on me -for teaching me -for welcoming me. So that I may have a clear and present path to my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

## **Kristen's God Story:**

As many of us have, I have worn multiple hats throughout my life: Daughter, wife, mother, friend, co-worker. However, I always defined my identity and calling through my work as an Occupational Therapist. In fact, I vividly remember the moment that I discovered occupational therapy. At 15 years old, I came home from volunteering at MDA summer camp, and I began googling fields to "help others". I knew it was in my blood to be a helper. I came across the word occupational therapy, read the description, lit up and ran downstairs to tell my mom that I found my calling. I was going to be an OT. That was my identity- my purpose- my calling.

It wasn't until I took the Flourish class that I realized what my true calling was: to know God and to help others to know God. I now know that God has used OT as a means to an end to accomplish my true calling in life of knowing him and bringing others closer to him.

Here is my story- it's a simple story, but for me it was life changing.

Talking about God or praying with someone in the healthcare field has always been in my mind— taboo. It was risky and extremely uncomfortable for me and honestly, I avoided it at all costs. I could barely figure out how to pray myself, let alone pray with others and risk getting in trouble for mixing religion in the work force.

One day after taking the flourish class, I was praying on my way to work, to have the holy spirit work through me and use me to help bring others closer to him —a suggestion given to me. That day I walked into my patient's room to do therapy with him, and I see him crying and just filled with anxiety. I came to find out that he has just received the terrible news that his days left on this earth were numbered. He was dying and he was going to have to call his family and tell them.

As I am standing there watching this man crying and living his life in fear and desperation, I felt God move through me. The hair was standing up on the back of my neck and my hands were tingling. I remember thinking to myself "oh my gosh. This is it. This is what he is talking about. This is God right now and he is trying to work through me! This is it. Do not miss this opportunity!!"

So, I gently took my patient's hand, and I asked him if he was- for lack of a better term in the moment- religious. He told me he used to be years ago, but he had not been to church in a long time. I told him that was okay and asked him if we wanted to pray. He said yes and we held hands and prayed the Our Father, and I added my own prayers in at the end praying for understanding, peace, and comfort for him on his journey home. After that prayer he was no longer crying but had a look of complete serenity. He was so grateful for the prayers. It was in that moment that I knew God was real and I knew God used me to do my calling of knowing and loving God myself and then helping others to know God and be reminded of his unwavering love.

In disbelief that this experience had happened, I immediately went back to my desk and texted my husband and Pastor Deb about my experience. I was just in awe of the power of God that I had just witnessed and physically felt. My calling was revealed, and I am now on a mission for God.

I am here to tell you that God is good. God is real. God provides and he reveals himself to us. Sometimes we just need to turn the distractions, put away our fears and let God work through us to touch the lives of others, just as God has touched my life. He can touch yours too if you open your mind and heart to him. You can do your true calling to help bring others closer to knowing God the father, our Savior.

Pastor Deb said once at our small group that she wants to “crave God” and that really stuck with me. I encourage everyone to continue to crave God and do what we can to help others to crave to know God, to know his love for us and his wonderful power he has in our lives. It’s our most important mission- our true calling.

God is so good. Amen.

### **Josh’s God Story:**

Hey there, Pastor Mark! I just wanted to say thank you for today! At the end when you were talking about feeling the holy spirit and not always feeling the holy spirit. It's always there. When we were all praying at the end, I was praying but my mind always tends to wander a lot. But I got the feeling coming straight from the center of my body, radiating/flowing from the center to my arms, my legs, my back, just literally felt like it was circling my body. Idk. But for a split second I was like what is that?! And I stopped questioning it. I knew, I KNEW, it was the holy spirit! And just let it happen without reason. My eyes began to flow two streams of tears but there was no reason to feel sad at that moment. It was wild! Also, I made sure to sign up from Growth Trac 😊

### **Jinny’s God Story:**

On April 18, 2023, I was driving home on Pearl Rd. in Medina Township, when I started to have problems with my vision! I began having colors in front of my eyes! At this point, I should have pulled off the road, but I didn't! Instead, I fainted, and hit a telephone pole! My air bag never deployed during this accident! The next thing I remember, I was being put into an ambulance, and taken to the Medina ER. Because the Medina ER is not a trauma unit, they couldn't keep me, so I was then whisked off to the Akron General ER!

The hospital decided to have me admitted overnight for observation! While in the ER, I was experiencing vomiting and diarrhea! I had come from a restaurant, so I wondered if I had encountered food poisoning! That was never verified! They did a thorough evaluation: an EKG, a CT scan of my chest, pelvis, abdomen, an Echocardiogram, and was sent home with a heart monitor for two weeks. All these tests were negative! The only pain I encountered through this whole ordeal was a sore chest and back from hitting the steering wheel!

My Big God protected me Big Time! I didn't even break my glasses!

Then came the issue of my car which had been totaled in the accident! It was a 2002 Toyota Camry that was still in good shape! I had recently put \$2,000.00 into it to keep it going, but that had depleted my bank account! Let's just say, I was not in a position to buy another car! Then my brother, Dan, called and offered to give me \$5,000.00 toward another car. That was Miracle #2!

Miracle #3 I was talking to my son, Chris, about this situation, and he reminded me that his daughter, Melanie, had taken a job across the ocean in the Czech Republic, and was selling her 2017 Honda Fit!! I immediately called my granddaughter, Melanie, and asked her about buying her car! I explained about the money I had received from my brother, and she said that she wanted me to have her car and would sell it to me for \$7,000.00!! I checked online, and it was worth at least twice that amount!

I received her car on May 18, exactly one month to the day of my accident I totaled a 2002 Toyota and was blessed with a 2017 Honda! Is God good or what? God has been so faithful to me my whole life! And that is my God Story!!

## **Bethany's God Story:**

I was blessed to be born into a family of God loving parents. Growing up, my family went to church twice a week, led music worship at church, went to church camp every summer - and led music worship there, too. My dad was a deacon and worship music was always playing in the car and at home. When I was 12, my parents divorced, we moved around often, and we stopped going to church entirely. Our lives did change and the next 25 years of my life didn't involve a daily conversation or close relationship with God as it used to.

Long story short, I do not recommend this approach. I suffered not being close to Him and that is an understatement.

But God never left me. He never stopped blessing me. He never abandoned his plans for my life even though I took my own will back and chose a detour. My loving Father was immensely patient and loved me unconditionally.

In August of 2012 I met my soulmate, James. He was my best friend and life was a journey filled with laughter. We were engaged 4 months later. In 2015 we welcomed a beautiful baby girl, Isa, who surpassed any hopes a parent could ever have for a child. James and I spent 8 years together and we all spent 4 years together as a family before he suddenly and very unexpectedly died at 39 years old. Our daughter was asleep in her bedroom throughout the entire ordeal - when I found him, when I called 911 and tried to resuscitate him, when the paramedics came and told me there was nothing they could do and he was gone, when I screamed, when the police came, when we were left alone waiting for the funeral home to come for him sitting on the floor together.

Until that point, I only prayed two kinds of prayers. One of them was "Now I lay me down to sleep, I pray the Lord my soul to keep..." The other one went like this: "Dear God, if you get me out of this mess, I will never do it again."

But that night, with the desperation of a drowning man, I prayed to my old friend, who I hadn't had a close relationship with in a long time. I prayed for Him to please please not let Isa wake up to see her dad like that. And He answered that prayer.

I didn't thank God for that answered prayer. I didn't worship, I didn't sing songs of praise and gratitude. I didn't turn to my faith. I turned to alcohol instead. And I stayed there - drinking to avoid reality - for the next year.

It's a good thing that God has a master blueprint and he doesn't show us the plans. Because if I would have known at THAT time that I was going to move from a prestigious event planning job in Washington DC to Northeast Ohio (where I knew one person), join the fellowship of Alcoholics Anonymous, never drink again, be a single mom with 2 cats and plan weddings for happy couples in love who had their whole lives ahead of them....well, I would have thought that sounded like life just kept getting worse.

But Jeremiah 29:11 says, " 'For I have plans for you', declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you. Plans to give you hope and a future.' "

See, God can see the entire immense plan of his kingdom and creation and in any present moment I can only see with my limited human sight the temporary conditions of the present moment. What I learned was that if it's not "good" he's not done working.

To work the 12 recovery steps of AA a person MUST have a higher power to turn their will and their life over to. I now believe that any addiction is a spiritual malady, a sickness developed from being separated from God. My alcoholism was just a symptom of that apartness. I had a "God sized hole" that only God could fill. I didn't know that at the time, so I tried to fill it with alcohol. Here's the thing, though...you can only fix a spiritual sickness with a spiritual solution. No human act could have relieved me from suffering.

And so my relationship with Jesus began again. I now know that if "you don't feel close to God - who moved?" His love, His faith and faithfulness are unwavering. I remembered a Bible verse from my childhood that "if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there' and it will move and nothing will be impossible unto you." (Matthew 17:20-21) Any my faith felt the size of a mustard seed. So that's where we started.

My entire experience of life slowly began to change. God took me by the hand and began to sculpt out a new view, a new life with a new goal. The daily questions in my world became twofold. (1) Asking only for knowledge of God's will for me and the power to carry it out. And (2) Asking "How can I be of maximum service to God and my fellows?"

When James died I thought that at the age of 38 I had already lived the best years of my life and now I had to struggle to get to the end of it knowing that the best years were behind me. When I started this journey, my only hope was to stop suffering. Before, morning was the worst part of my day because I had to live out the rest of it. I woke up every morning feeling like I was sentenced to another day.

But soon I found Ephesians 3:20 which explains what happened next. "Now all glory to God, who is able, through his mighty power at work within us, to accomplish infinitely more than we might ask or think." NLT

Next month will mark 2 years of sobriety, 2 years of learning to lean again on the Everlasting Arms, 2 years of peace and joy and freedom. I met a wonderful man who has a similar strength in his relationship with Christ, he and Isa truly love and enjoy each other. We heard God leading us to find a church home and we did here at Cornerstone where we grow both individually and together in our relationship with Christ. We got engaged. I have no words to explain how different life is, but it's better than good.

Mornings are now my favorite part of the day. I wake up when it's dark and quiet and I look forward to my time in prayer and worship, I wake up with a list of things I am thankful for...things that I don't deserve but he keeps on giving them to me anyway.

Ephesians 3:20 is a place I return to offer to give thanks and testimony of its truth and power in my life. My favorite is The Passion translation of that verse; "Never doubt God's mighty power to work in you and accomplish all this. He will achieve infinitely more than your greatest request, your most unbelievable dream, and exceed your wildest imagination! He will outdo them all, for his miraculous power constantly energizes you."



## Tyler's God Story:

My name is Tyler Cribbs, and I'm a boxer/mma fighter, I served two years in prison for a crime I did not commit. I spent a lot of time on the inside taking boxing and jiu jitsu lessons, I got out of the penitentiary not knowing what I was going to do with my life, I then caught another case that they tried to send me back to prison for and I beat the case. After that I started up martial arts again in a style I've trained in on and off since I was 5 years old, I am currently a second degree brown belt in that style and continue to prosper in the art, I was fighting in competitions before I had my knee surgery, I fought on a torn meniscus and partially torn acl in the same knee for a year, I lost my final match at nationals for a tittle, my body just gave out because I was fighting that injured for a very long time and I went home from Baltimore Maryland disappointed and broken but somehow I was able to fight that hurt for a long time and by the time I had my knee surgery my acl was fully healed and all that needed surgery was the meniscus. I then came back to fight in competition and broke my spine and fought on that and did not get sidelined, it was a miracle my back healed on its own and I continued to fight. I am now training to make my amateur boxing debut with my back healed and my knee stronger than ever and the more I read the Bible and read how Jesus made the blind man see and the crippled man walk, the more I believe he healed me and made a crippled man fight because when I broke my spine I should have been paralyzed and that is my story and I feel like I have to share this and win my amateur boxing debut to complete the epic comeback story of 2023 in the year of the underdogs and inspire our youth and the next generation of athletes and a nobody who needs some inspiration. I hope this story touches every souls that reads it and i would like to thank my lord and savior Jesus Christ for the opportunity to share this story, may the lord be with you all, god bless!

Sandra Porter:

It wasn't until your God Story sermon last Sunday, I felt a God nudge to give praise by sharing my story. In many ways, I am very private when it comes to sharing hardships or difficult family stories! And though I'm not fully healed at this time, this is what I felt compelled to share on my FB (for just 24 hours) last Sunday evening. (8/27)

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Following up on an awesome Sunday sermon from church this weekend, my pastor quoted these parts of scripture.

Romans. 10:15 NIV

How beautiful are the feet of those who bring good news.

Psalms 107:2 NIV

Let the redeemed of the Lord tell their story...

We heard 4 God stories in person. Some letters and emails as well. God is busy at Cornerstone Chapel this year!!!

THIS IS MY STORY.

July 24th was a normal Monday morning for me, Chuck went to work, I got ready to open my laptop. But at the last minute I decided to take the grandson's booster seat down to our basement before I began. WELL, It's been 35 days since I have been able to walk on 2 feet. That morning I was a bit careless semi-running down the steps and fell on the last carpeted step. My right foot landed. My left foot decided to stay. I sat on my ankle then fell to the floor. After the sharp pain taking my breath away and many tears, I tried to stand. Realizing then I did something awful. I somehow hobbled to the top of the steps. Crawled to my phone. Called my daughter to ask her to take me to urgent care for x-rays. I then calmly called my husband to tell him I twisted my ankle and was going to get x-rays. He said I'll be right home. He just left for work some 2 hours earlier. I felt awful.

Hence began the whirlwind of emotions I was soon to undergo these last 35+ days. My final diagnosis with x-rays. Oblique fracture of the distal fibula which was also displaced. As a result, I had to have surgery 3 days later to reset my bone. 1-week soft cast. 2 weeks hard cast. The worst 3 weeks. I was miserable. I have prided myself on my strong faith. It was at this point I was definitely being tested just how much faith I really had. The enemy hit hard and fast. It's no lie how quickly he moves in. I had to dig deeper than ever with my faith prayers and family to help dig myself out of that awful pit. Over time I soon realized how much worse things could have been. How many people around me have things even worse than me at this time in their lives. We are not alone. Note: the power of positivity is huge in our lives to getting better.

I reached out to my good friend Joan. She sent me strong healing prayers in my email and text. I read them every day before surgery. And every week afterward.

I was blessed to be able to work from home. I did take a few days off for rest. Since we had to cancel our Florida trip. Many God winks along the way however. We got a full refund on our airfare and no I didn't purchase insurance. I've missed half of summer but I'm alive. My boss has been so great and accommodating. But most especially my wonderful husband. Cooking. Doing dishes. Shopping. Taking me to all the surgeon appointments that followed. Washing my hair. PT. Including the dentist when I developed a toothache the day of surgery. Needing a root canal just 3 days after surgery. My daughter, who has been coming over weekly to clean my house and just spend time. My son who came home from Florida at just the exact time I needed help. All God winks.

Spent much alone time. But listening to sermons. Worship music. And 105.7. Some positive things to lift me out of a downward spiral. 2 of my good friends came to visit me that 1st weekend after surgery, bringing me flowers & dinner! While my other son & daughter in law in Florida sent our FAV dinner@ Italian village.

It was during these 1st couple weeks I realized, being there for someone is going the extra mile! Don't just text people on social media. Yes, prayers are awesome!!!! For me I didn't tell too many people. Just fam & my closest friends. But I realized thru this time, to go the extra mile for someone if we can. Text or call often if you live out of town! Send a meal. Bring them a GB beverage? Send a card or gift card with an encouraging word. Pick up the phone and call. Visit!!! Make a difference! Go out of your way. Don't make excuses. Make time!!

Thank you to those that did and even those that didn't! I can't be hurt if someone didn't respond the way I might. Everyone has their own life. Sometimes people have no idea what to do to help, perhaps!!

I have a great surgeon from SWGH! And beginning PT! I know I will walk again very soon! Thank you so much to my family (&friends) in my life who have helped me through one of my most difficult journeys! My God story is not over???

### **Dave's God Story:**

This is my life story about personal growth and healing.

When I was a kid growing up as a young adult I was always depressed, I was always getting bullied, I would get the crap kicked out of me, punched, and beaten. I always had a kind heart and helped people out even in my youth group days, but as I was growing up, I got colder because I made myself the black sheep for how I was treated in the past and keep it that way. My dad was never in my life and when he was, he was an abusive angry drunk only towards me, and for some reason I wanted a dad, so I kept going back to try and build a relationship with him, I hated him so much I never wanted to be him. And the thought of me ever becoming like him in any way, made me want to kill myself and I tried more thing once. I hated myself even though people loved me so much I couldn't love myself, I didn't care what happened to me. So, I tried to help people out, I made a group with my buddy max when I was 18 called the movement and no matter what the cost was, we helped everyone out, with depression, suicidal thoughts or attempts, rebuild a dude's house that blew my car up. But none of that made me feel happens or love, I was a youth leader ran a cell group, I helped so many kids out with what they were going through, I had so many amazing leaders in my life that helped me out or tried to and make me the man that God wanted me to. But I was so broken I didn't care, I couldn't feel it, because my heart spiritually was infected, and I didn't see it. And I destroyed relationships because of that, with friends, family, and loved ones and most importantly with God. I lost that spark and lost that flame, because I hide from God because I knew I was t good enough that with all my sins I wasn't good enough.

My dad passed away last year in October 10/2022, and I didn't care, he asked for me to go by his hospital bed and I didn't go, I thought if he wanted to say something to me or be there for me, he had all the time in the world. I didn't go, when he died that night, I was so broken because I couldn't forgive myself for not being there for him in his dying moments, I drove to a lake a screamed and cried my eyes out, yelling he's dead and finally gone so why am I broken still, the pain was so bad it felt like I was having a heart attack. Finally, I thought I got over it and forgave myself, God gave me a new start or was it a test, he gave me what I really wanted in my heart, a beautiful woman and a kid that could be my son. But because of reason, with two broken people that are not even yoked together it feel a part and more pain on top of pain that was buried came back up. And I still feel nothing, but in everything through the years and the pain God changed my heart especially from last year, he made me stronger, wiser, and I can start to hear the Holy Spirit again. I've been lost for years broken, but God shaped me in so many ways I was to blind to see at the time, to deaf to hear, because I didn't want to because I was trapped in my own darkness and pain. But thanks to God, I can see and hear and feel again with a heart that is healing spiritually.