

# Soteria Church

2024/25 Ministry Report



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## God Did That!

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### A Note From Pastor Mike

Church family:

This has been a year of God's unmistakable work among us. We broke ground on a new sanctuary, a visible reminder that God is building His church, and by next year we will step into that space together with hearts full of gratitude and anticipation. But the most exciting part of this year has not been bricks or beams—it has been people. "Building Beyond Walls" is more than a title; it's something we've lived. We've seen a surge of new members join our church family. We've witnessed many come to know Christ personally and boldly declare their faith through baptism. We've watched love in action as brothers and sisters cared for one another, and as many reached out with compassion and courage to friends and neighbors who don't yet know Jesus.

This momentum is not ours to keep; it is God's to multiply. When we stand and look back at this year, we can confidently say, "God did that!" As we look ahead to the year to come and gathering in the new auditorium, our prayer is that every seat will be filled—not for our comfort or our credit, but for the glory of God and the fame of the name of Jesus. The story of this year points to Him, and the story of next year belongs to Him. Let us keep pressing forward together, with faith and with vision, into all that he plans to do through us.

*Pastor Mike*

MIKE AUGSBURGER / LEAD PASTOR

# The Mission of Soteria Church

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Soteria Church exists to make more and better disciples of Jesus Christ.

Everything we do—from worship gatherings to community groups to outreach—is centered on helping people know Christ personally and grow in their relationship with Him. We believe discipleship is a lifelong journey of learning, transformation, and obedience to God's Word, and we're committed to equipping believers to live out their faith and share the hope of the gospel in everyday life.

# The Pillars of Soteria Church

Our pillars are our core convictions, giving shape and substance to everything we do in working toward our mission. The pillars define both who we are and what we're striving to develop in our affections for God.



## **LOVE GOD'S WORD**

*Learn how to apply and engage with God's Word in relation to our lives today.*



## **LOVE GOD'S PEOPLE**

*Grow together as a family and in community with other Christ followers.*



## **LOVE GOD'S PRESENCE**

*Encounter God through worship, prayer and spiritual disciplines.*



## **LOVE GOD'S MISSION**

*Share the hope of the gospel with those in our local community and BEYOND.*

# The Year in Numbers

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47

baptisms

6078

connect cards filled out

1313

average attendance

129

new memberships

2504

prayer requests

1699

attendance on Easter

140

starting point attendees

28

serve teams

19%

growth in new members

117

discover soteria attendees

560

lbs of coffee served

10%

growth in volunteers

153

lbs of goldfish served

22k

donuts served

6k+

donut holes served

# Serve Team Spotlight

## Greeting Team

Our Greeting and Connect Team is the friendly first face of Soteria! Whether welcoming guests at the doors, helping someone find their way, or answering questions at the Welcome Desk, this team makes sure everyone feels seen, valued, and at home. Their goal is simple—to help every person who walks through our doors take their next step toward community and Christ.

83 members on  
greeting team

21 members on  
welcome desk team

Serving slots filled for all services this year!

2160

Each week we need

30 door greeters



6 welcome desk volunteers

*Join a serve team today!*

*It has been a huge blessing to see kiddos start serving with their parents as they have come to know the Lord. And it's not just on a single Sunday, they have asked for their own name tag to serve each week!*

**- Ashley Murphy**



Photographer: Kyle Phillips



## Soteria Kids

Our children are growing strong roots as they learn to know and love God's word.

It's amazing to witness the growth of our Soteria Kids as they learn each week about who God is! Every Sunday and Wednesday, these children are not just attending class; they're building a firm foundation by learning essential truths about God's character and the stories of the Bible.

Through our Soteria Kids classes and Kids4Truth programs, they are gaining a deeper understanding of His love, power, and faithfulness, shaping their hearts and minds to know and follow Him more closely.



### SPOTLIGHT

*I started serving in the Soteria Kids Ministry on Sunday mornings about 5 years ago, first as a helper and now as a teacher in the 4/5s. I love being a part of planting seeds of truth in the hearts of these young children that I pray will blossom into a relationship with Jesus. They are so full of energy, curiosity and even very thoughtful questions. Keeps me on my toes. It is a joy and privilege to serve them each week.*

**- Cheryl Stenzel**

600  
VBS crafts made

20  
Bibles handed out to first time guests

1.4k  
Money given by kids to buy Bibles

45  
volunteers needed each week

20  
years of longest serving volunteers



Dave & Carolyn Crigger!

CHAIRS FILLED EACH WEEK ON SUNDAY

194

AVERAGE ATTENDANCE AT KIDS4TRUTH

115 (160 registered)

AVERAGE ATTENDANCE AT VBS

211 (241 registered)



Photographer: Rachel Nerison



Photographer: Leah Ried

*Our family is incredibly blessed by the children's ministry at Soteria Church. Though we certainly discuss God at home, we're limited in capacity to teach what feels like enough. Soteria equips our daughter with foundational truths we can take even further at home. Moreover, we appreciate how the Kids4Truth series focuses on rich doctrines that equip children to know and use scripture effectively, going beyond traditional curriculums that simply teach stories and verses without connecting them to bigger pictures.*

*Our 5 year old is always excited to attend Sunday school or Wednesday night classes! She loves learning about God in the presence of loving and fun teachers and peers. From crafts that demonstrate biblical stories, to small gifts that show how loved she is, to memories that keep her coming back, she always feels at home.*

***- Chris and Carly Hansen***

**DIE** *to* **LIVE**



Photographer: Kylie Graham

## Soteria Student Ministry

Excited about living for Christ!

Dear Students, Parents, and Leaders,

In Galatians 2, Paul confronts the churches of Galatia regarding their understanding of the importance of the pure gospel, which is that justification (being declared righteous) is not a process that begins or ends with us. On the contrary, Paul states in Galatians 2:20, "I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body I live by faith in the Son of God, who loves me and gave himself for me."

Our theme this year was "Die to Live," coming from Gal. 2:20. To the world, the idea of death bringing new life seems counterintuitive or often an unworthy sacrifice. What, honestly, could require so much sacrifice?

Yet, in light of Christ's sacrifice and our baptism into His death and resurrection, we are reminded that we were given a purpose that is outside of ourselves. We have died to our sin, and are now raised to new life in Christ. Not a new life to live how we see fit with the "get-out-of-jail-free card," but a life where Christ lives through us, shines through us, impacts through us, and loves through us. Christ's sacrifice and new life can empower even the lives of our students.

We saw this in the overall growth of students attending youth group and inviting their friends. Students from all different schools, family situations, interests, aspirations, and areas of personal growth were coming together on a weekly basis to impact each other in their gospel growth. We have already seen this momentum carry over into the following year, with simply the number of new faces Colby and I are getting to meet and teach.

Not only did more start attending, but we saw them jumping in to live out Christ. Serve Sundays were awesome opportunities for our students to impact their own church body by helping teach or lead classes, care for kids in the nursery, greet attendees, and serve some great coffee and donuts. This led to students serving on Sundays outside of our Serve Sundays as well, including many new students lending their talents to the Student Worship Team.

This excitement for living for Christ carried into small groups, where students were impacted to recognize next steps. The baptism wall in the youth room is quickly filling up with students who are proclaiming their faith in Christ. For many, living for Christ meant asking good and poignant questions in our Q/A Nights when Colby and I were able to guide them in how Scripture applies to all areas of life.



28  
Leaders

130  
Students

14  
Small Groups

### **SPOTLIGHT!**

Our student leadership team served their peers this past year in incredible ways! From the worship team to the welcome team to the events team, our students stepped into servant roles in order to provide a great youth group experience and share the love of Christ at Soteria. One highlight was the last night of youth group which was a student-led worship night. Students shared how God worked in their lives during their high school years, read scripture together, and praised God through leading their peers in worship. I am excited to see how God continues to use the investment of student leaders at Soteria for the Gospel!

Fun truly is a gift from God, and we were able to make great use of it in activities like Midnight Madness, Lazer Tag, 5th Quarter, and The Christmas Party. We also got away for winter retreat weekends (Subzero/ Frostbite) and enjoyed intentional times of fellowship, games, preaching, and discipleship.

As summer came, our students learned about God's grace in creation on our Ark and Creation Museum Trip. Finally, the year would not be complete without some amazing weeks of camp. We attended different weeks of Jr. High and Sr. High at IRBC and Lake Ann Camp, and saw awesome steps taken, decisions made, friendships formed or strengthened, and memories forever made.

I personally and beyond thankful for all those who sacrificed in various ways to make this last year of ministry happen. Thank you to my fellow leaders who sacrificed each week, and even entire weekends, because they saw the importance of leading and impacting the next generation. Thank you, parents, who continue to faithfully disciple your students and allow us in the Student Ministry to come alongside you in this process. Finally, thank you, students, for coming to some wacky nights, jumping in where we asked, inviting others, and stepping up. I am so excited to see how God uses all of this last year of ministry in the years to come.



Caleb Love / Middle School Lead



*This summer I got the opportunity to attend Lake Ann camp in Michigan. Through the chapel messages and devotionals, I learned so much about trusting in God and His plan for my life.*

*- Ellie S.*



Photographer: Kylie Graham





Photographer: Leah Ried

# Soteria University

“Theology classes at your church? That’s awesome!”

When I share details about Soteria University with friends around the country, they often respond with a little jealousy. Contrary to the pragmatic “wisdom” of the day, people are truly hungry to learn God’s word. I’m thankful our church continues to value adult education. In 2025, Soteria U offered ten unique 6-12 week classes, covering topics like marriage, parenting, a theology of heaven, personal counseling, and more. Over 100 people gathered weekly to take classes.

2025 also brought sad news as Lorne Scharnberg, a longtime Soteria U teacher, died in the fall. Lorne obsessively studied the Bible and gathered his research in literally hundreds of pages of published class notes. Lorne told me often that his greatest joy was teaching. Lorne’s final class was “Finally Home: A Study About Heaven. He was preparing to teach his final two lessons about Revelation 22 only days before he graduated to heaven.

Our goals for 2026 are to equip students to track their progress through Soteria U and to raise up more teachers both for our church and future ministries.



Zach Dietrich / Theology & Education Pastor



**SOTERIA UNIVERSITY**

**Six-Week Classes**

**ROOM 101**

**Women's Study: Body & Soul**  
A Biblical Look at the Whole Person God Created You to Be  
Taught by Liz Augsburg

Explore what Scripture reveals about the body and grow in your understanding of your true identity as a whole person, wonderfully made in the image of God.  
Book for study is \$20. Only One Session: Sep. 10–Oct. 15

**ROOM 108**

**Starting Point**  
Taught by Steve Cox

If you are new to Christianity or Soteria, this is the class for you. Starting Point both introduces you to the story of the Bible and membership at Soteria.  
Session 1: Sep 10–Oct 15  
Session 2 (same class): Oct. 22–Dec. 10  
No class Nov. 19 or the 26

**Other Long Classes**  
Meet each Wednesday from Sep. 10–Dec. 10  
Nov. 19 or 26.

**the Heart of Parenting**  
by Mike and Pastor Zach

... of biblical parenting is not just to obedient kids, or successful kids. Offered Soteria U class is based on Tripp.

**— Ephesians**

...g the Bible? It was meant to be gh and lived out. In this class for real transformation.

**Soul, Part 2**

...riculum by Jim Berg, will guilt, anxiety, anger, and or our souls in Christ.

**Other believers.**  
...mple of the church  
y.

**Today!**  
...soteria.church/soteria-university

Soteria University is our adult education program that explores the Bible & Christianity.

Floor Plan: 101, 102, MOVERS 103, INFANTS 104, 105, 106, AUDITORIUM, NURSERY (UP TO AGE 2), GYM, 108 (UPSTAIRS), 107

# Growth Groups “Growing Together”

At Soteria, Growth Groups complement our Sunday worship service and provide a space for you to deepen your love for God and grow alongside fellow believers.

## TRANSFORMATION

This past year, one member of the South Side Millennials Growth Group committed to pray regularly for his One Disciple—one specific person he longed to see come to know Christ. Week after week, he lifted that person's name before the Lord, asking for open doors and a softened heart. But he didn't stop at prayer—he also invested in the relationship, intentionally showing Christ's love and sharing the gospel whenever he could. After a full year of faithful prayer and pursuit, his One Disciple came to faith in Jesus! What a powerful reminder that God hears our prayers, honors our faithfulness, and is still drawing people to Himself through the witness of His people.

## GROUP HIGHLIGHTS



When Cindy Taylor's Growth Group volunteered to participate in one of our church giving drives, she went above and beyond to make a difference. Without a Sam's Club membership of her own, Cindy got one just so she could buy diapers in bulk for the cause. Her eagerness to contribute not only multiplied her group's generosity but also set an example of joyful sacrifice and teamwork. It's a beautiful picture of how Growth Groups serve together—meeting practical needs while sharing Christ's love in tangible ways.

There's something really special about watching Growth Groups serve together - especially at Trunk or Treat each fall. It's more than decorating cars or handing out candy; it's families and friends working together to welcome our community to this event with joy. You see people laughing, working side-by-side, and using their gifts. By the end of the night, everyone walks away tired, happy, and reminded that serving together is one of the sweetest parts of being the church!

36  
groups in the  
metro area

424  
members  
of groups

20  
groups  
decorated trunks



Photographer: Londa Crigger

*We love coming together to serve our community at the trunk or treat. It's wonderful to see families that we serve at the FAM closet, families in our church, and families from all around Des Moines. Sharing candy and smiles with all the kids brings so much joy to our group.*

**-Kelly Kimball**

# Women's Ministry

As I look back on 2024/2025, my heart is full of gratitude for all that God has done in and through the women of Soteria. Together, we've pursued our purpose: to make more and better disciples of Jesus Christ. By God's grace, we've seen women learning through His Word, growing through biblical fellowship, and serving faithfully in their families, neighborhoods, and workplaces.

This past year has been rich with opportunities to gather, encourage one another, and be rooted in Christ. We kicked off the fall with our Ladies' Fall Kickoff around tables of soup, sides, and s'mores, hearing from Debbie Haug. We celebrated the joy of Christ's birth together at our Ladies' Christmas Dinner, led by Kambi Mattke and highlighted by Alne Hartog's message. In the spring, we welcomed women from Soteria and beyond to our Ladies' Conference, where Dr. Venessa Williams called us to Flourish Together.

Our Bible studies have continued to be a vital place of growth: Deb Smith faithfully led a multi-generational Tuesday Morning Bible Study; young moms gathered for book studies and Bible study; and our Wednesday night Soteria U class studied Colossians with Sherry Fiscella. These times have anchored us in truth and strengthened our fellowship.

Beyond our studies and events, discipleship has been flourishing. Judy Billings has led our Soteria Ladies' Discipleship ministry, pairing women together in Titus 2 relationships. We also gathered for Beauty From Ashes, where women shared testimonies of God's grace in seasons of suffering. And month by month, Soteria Ladies' Connect has provided a table for connection, prayer, and stories of God's work among us.

Even in the lighter moments—Summer Ladies' Connect groups, bingo nights, pickleball games, and Shine fitness classes—we've experienced the joy of fellowship that points us to Christ.



Photographer: Leah Ried

Through it all, our 2024/2025 theme from Psalm 1 has been our guide: to delight in the law of the Lord and meditate on it day and night, becoming like trees planted by streams of water, bearing fruit in season. My prayer is that as we step into the coming year, we will continue to be women who Learn, Grow, and Serve—anchored in Scripture, strengthened by biblical fellowship, and sent out to love and serve those around us.

Thank you for being part of what God is doing here at Soteria. I am deeply grateful for each of you and cannot wait to see how the Lord continues to build His church through faithful women who love Him.

With Joy in Christ,  
*Liz Augsburg*

Liz Augsburg / Women's Ministry Director



### **VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT**

Deb Smith has faithfully led the Tuesday Morning Ladies' Bible Study since 2021. She and her husband, Lolane, began attending Soteria in 2015 and became members the following year.

Each Tuesday, 25–30 women gather for this multi-generational study, where Deb's teaching and care have been a great blessing to our Ladies' Ministry. In addition to leading Bible study, Deb has served on the leadership team for Grief Share, counseled women at Soteria, and invested in the next generation through Kids4Truth and VBS.

We are deeply thankful for Deb's faithful service and the way she uses her gifts to encourage and equip others.



Photographer: Leah Ried

# Local & Global Missions

Jesus' Great Commission calls us to go into all the world, and this year our church family did just that through prayer, giving, and going. From local outreach events to supporting missionaries around the globe, we've seen God move powerfully in lives both near and far.



**REGULAR BAPTIST MINISTRIES**



**ALPHA WOMEN'S CENTER**



**IOWA REGULAR BAPTIST CAMP**



**IARBC**



**LOVE INC.**



**SHEPHERDS FOUNDATION**



**TOGETHER FOR GOOD**



**CHURCH AMBASSADOR NETWORK**



**TRAINING LEADERS INTERNATIONAL**



**NIC & CAROL BAL**  
Iowa



**ERIN HIATT-JOHNSON**  
Iowa



**STEVE & KAREN BORDERS**  
Vacaville, California



**COLE & DEBBIE ALBRIGHT**  
Iowa



**JIM & JULIE LEONARD**  
Crato, Ceara, Brazil



**STEVE & KELLEY FRERICHS**  
Lima, Peru



**RAY & KAY BAKER**  
Sweden



**TYLER & KATHERINE BETZ**  
La Rochelle, France



**FRANK & HOPE LOVERA**  
Poland



**MARK & DENISE NELSEN**  
La Rochelle, France



**SAMI & FIRIAL BARHAM**  
Middle East



**BILL & BECKY PETITE**  
Kagoshima Prefecture, Japan



**DANIEL & CHRISTINE GRINGS**  
Democratic Republic of Congo



**WESLEY & SONIA CHATLA**  
India

Want to join a short-term  
trip in Spring 2026?  
Scan here to learn more!



**\$382k**  
given to missions



Photographer: Leah Ried

### **UPDATE FROM CARLISLE BAPTIST CHURCH**

We praise God for how he is working at Carlisle Baptist Church! From increased community connections, to salvations and baptisms, to unity in calling our first lay pastor, we are seeing God's hand every step of the way. We appreciate Soteria's partnership with us and investing in a new audio and video system for our auditorium . Thank you to Soteria Church for your faithful prayer and encouragement as we seek to make more and better disciples together.



Photographer: Josh Byers

### **UPDATE FROM PARK CHURCH**

God continues to bless us! We have seen steady growth this fall on Sundays and in our youth group as well as men's and women's Bible studies. We have another baptism Sunday in a few weeks. God continues to build his church and is using the faithful people of Park to do it. Thank you for your support and gospel partnership!



# Foster & Adopt Ministry (FAM)

It's been five years since we launched our Foster and Adopt Ministry at Soteria. The FAM Closet continues to bless foster and adoptive families in our community, many of whom return regularly for needed items.

Each new visitor receives a gift card, and repeat visitors are also helped when specific needs arise that the closet cannot meet. In total, several hundred dollars in gift cards have been provided to families for groceries and other essentials.

Because of the FAM Fund, we've also been able to purchase and ship larger items directly to families' homes—including cribs, shoes, diapers, baby swings, and car seats.

In 2025, we were able to support the You Matter event for the first time. Several volunteers made over 600 brownies and cookies to share with foster and adoptive families who attended. The event welcomed around 120 families, totaling nearly 500 attendees.

We, as the FAM leadership team, are deeply thankful for the generosity of our church family. Through your giving, our closet has been a blessing to many families in our area—supplying basic necessities that often add up quickly for first-time placements and ongoing care.

Over the past year, we've been able to provide car seats, cribs, high chairs, strollers, diapers, wipes, clothing, and gift cards, among many other items.

We also saw tremendous generosity from small groups who donated coolers and blankets to foster families during the month of May.

In May, we also participated in our first outside-the-building outreach through the You Matter event—an incredible day that blessed foster and adoptive families with professional photos, games, free books, food, and more. Volunteers baked over 600 brownies and cookies to share with the families in attendance.

Photographer: Leah Ried



## LOOKING AHEAD TO 2026

Our team is excited to expand our ministry to foster and adoptive families both inside and outside our church walls in the coming year.

Planned initiatives include:

- Launching Care Teams: Groups of 4-5 families who will partner with one foster family to provide prayer, meals, and ongoing support throughout the year.
- Supporting the You Matter Event again in May with desserts or other needs.
- Promoting Awareness Months: Foster Care Awareness (May) and Adoption Awareness (November).
- Hosting a Back-to-School Shopping Event in early August, offering families a chance to shop the closet, enjoy games, and participate in fun activities for kids.
- Promoting the HOPE Conference in November, held annually in the Des Moines area.
- Restarting FAM Meet-Ups: Quarterly gatherings for foster and adoptive families within our church to share breakfast, fellowship, and encouragement.

We praise God for how He continues to use this ministry to serve families, meet needs, and show the love of Christ in tangible ways.

FOR I AM HIS, AND HE IS MINE  
BOUGHT WITH THE, PRECIOUS BLOOD OF CH



Photographer: Leah Ried

# Worship Arts

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## Leading People in Praise

At Soteria, one of our pillars is Love God's Presence: Encountering God through worship, prayer, and spiritual disciplines. In our Worship & Production Ministries, we take this calling seriously, following the encouragement of Colossians 3:16: "Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs in your hearts to God."

In response to this, we seek to embody Soteria Worship's 4 C's in each of our services:

### **CENTERED**

We seek to create worship services that are always centered on Christ. Every song, prayer, and element is designed to point people to the truth of the gospel and the beauty of Jesus. Worship is not just music or emotion, but a response to who God is and what He has done.

### **CREATIVE**

We value being creative, reflecting the artistry of our Creator. Through thoughtful arrangements, quality production, and beauty in both simple and complex expressions, we seek to reflect God's glory and invite people into worship.

### **COMPELLING**

Our worship should also be compelling, drawing people into genuine encounters with God. We aim to meet people where they are, guiding them with truth and creating gatherings that inspire lives of praise and obedience to Christ.

### **CONSISTENT**

Finally, we strive to be consistent, offering our gifts with excellence and faithfulness week after week. From preparation to execution, we aim for services that are clear, engaging, and distraction-free so people can fully encounter God's presence.



Ben Knudson / Worship Arts Director



## **VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT**

*I never thought I'd be part of the A/V production crew. It was an area that I didn't come to appreciate until I started attending Soteria. The teaching on Sundays is so valuable to me, yet my job requires me to work on some Sundays. The recordings allow me to watch later in the week or stream live as I work.*

*I hope that others have been as blessed as I've been by the sermon recordings. Serving on the team is not only the least I can do as someone who has benefited so much from this ministry, but it's been a blast working with the team to produce such a valuable resource. Also, we're always looking for new volunteers—and you don't need any experience!*

**-Simon Carl**



Photographer: Leah Ried



Photographer: Leah Ried

# Church Life Ministries

Living the Gospel through Connection and Care



Photographer: Leah Ried



Photographer: Leah Ried

What a year 2025 has been! God has blessed us with incredible moments of connection, celebration, and service as we live out our mission to make more and better disciples.

Our church life has been abundant and full. The All-Church Lunch after the Annual Meeting gave us a chance to celebrate all that God has done at Soteria and dream together for the future. Our Fall Kick-Off was full of lunch, games, fellowship, and inflatables for the kids. We reached out to our neighborhood sharing hope and fun at Trunk or Treat and at the Easter Extravaganza. We enjoyed a Flapjack Fellowship, sharing pancakes

and laughter across generations and celebrated our students' milestones at the Graduation Cake Reception. We worshiped together and shared testimonies of God's goodness at Pie and Praise.

Beyond events, our church family has been living out the gospel through service and care. Whether participating in Grief Share, volunteering as Soul Care counselors, joining serve teams, preparing meals for those in need, or Blessing the Builders with weekly treats, every act of service matters. Serving together connects us to the incredible gospel mission of Soteria Church, and every area of service plays a vital role in advancing God's kingdom.

We also invested in families through our Parenting Conference, equipping parents to raise children who know and love the Lord. Every opportunity to serve, encourage, and equip others points back to our mission: making disciples who make disciples.

I can't wait for another year of ministry together, worshiping, serving, and loving our community. Thank you for your heart for church life! 2026 is going to be amazing!

ONE Passion - GOD!

Monty Kaufman / Church Life Pastor

# Learn, Grow, Serve

Stories of transformation and how God is working through His people here at Soteria

## LEARN

Story by Jim Chamberlain

I grew up in the Catholic Church. I prayed to God often, but I never read the Bible. I only listened to the words provided to me at Mass. My parents were wonderful examples to me of being servants to the church and the community.

As a person who abused alcohol in the past, God protected me and others who came in my path. After my divorce, he brought me to the love of my life, Alicia, in his perfect time. Even with this divine intervention and my long-term sobriety, I struggled with sin and shame in my life. Now I realize that I was never obedient to God.

An invite to Christmas Eve Mass by my sister and brother-in-law brought me to Soteria Church. Immediately, I felt a connection that I was longing for in my faith journey. Regular attendance brought me to Starting Point, taught by Steve Cox. This course gave me the foundation and themes of the Bible, but it also gave me a person in Steve who walked a path that I now desired. In class, we read "The Stranger on the Road to Emmaus". It is a great foundation for me to better understand the messages in the Bible and the significance of Jesus' sacrifice on the cross for all our sins. All I had to do was accept him as my personal

savior, which I had done at the end of the Starting Point Class.

It was a process for me to understand not only that Jesus forgave my sins, but also that He gave me His righteousness, and that I needed both of those things, and it was only because of Jesus that was possible. It had nothing to do with my efforts (which I was taught in the Catholic Church), but it was all because of what Jesus did in dying on the cross, and also being raised from the dead.

Now I have a desire to be baptized to show the people of Soteria that I believe this about Jesus, and I have made these truths my own. I did have a worry in my heart that I would disappoint my parents and discount my baptism in the Catholic Church. I am very grateful to the pastors of this church who have helped me through this process. I am also very fortunate that I have loving parents who understand my faith journey and my desire to be baptized.

While I am not there yet, I have a desire to be the spiritual leader of my family. A key part of that is joining this church. I am grateful that Soteria holds membership at a high level, and I desire to be a part of this church family.



Photographer: Alyssa Wiedemeier

## GROW

Story by Audrey Scott

As a new Christian and the only one in my family of 6, I was recently baptized and just had my 4th child. I was ready to do it right this time around and bring my family up around church. I did not want to go to church by myself anymore; I wanted my family to join me.

Though there is a goal to “do it right” this time around, you don’t know what you don’t know. I needed tools, help, and people to help me successfully dive into the faith and bring my family with me. So how do I do this? How do I tell my family about Christ? “Listen up, everyone, we’re going to start following Christ!” ....I highly doubted that would be successful. Yes, we were “catholic”, but my family knew nothing about what that word meant. The idea of praying, having a personal relationship with Christ, reading the Bible, and having deep faith are things that have never been uttered or implemented in our house. Having a husband who is a non-believer, how do I put my family on the right path? I knew what my husband would say: “Hell no, I’m not going to church.” And to my surprise, that’s exactly what he said. My 15-year-old and 7-year-old weren’t far behind their dad in having anger and frustration in attending church.

I sat down with my husband and we had a very deep and serious conversation about my faith, what Christ meant to me, and what I wanted for our kids. He agreed it would be good to get them to go to a church for “basic morals.” I took his willingness, even in those words, as a win. So Sunday church was the beginning of our journey.

I reached out to the Soteria website for help because learning about Christ comes from living it out daily in my own life and marriage and in teaching my kids at home. When you are a new Christian trying to lead a family of 5 to a new concept, you worry you’re not doing it right, and so many questions arise. Scrolling the website, I saw “Ladies Discipleship.” After a quick



Photographer: Leah Ried

Google search to try to understand what the term “discipleship” meant, it sounded exactly like what I needed. Judy Billings contacted me shortly after I emailed for interest. She was already discipling one other person, but said she could take on one more and asked if I’d like to meet with her.

After meeting with Judy a few times during our Bible study, I would get ideas and words of inspiration that helped me stay on track in working to get my family rooted in Christ. She had such good ideas for baby steps leading them into the Christian life. She listened to me. She loved on me and hugged me, and I needed her so badly during this time. I needed her to pray with me. I needed her guidance and her wisdom.

I specifically remember it was at the 3-month mark when I wanted to break down and cry. It had been three months of going to church every Sunday, dealing with the silent treatment, tantrums, screaming, yelling, and anger all the way from waking up to walking into church. The insults I would get the rest of the day were so hurtful. “Well, if we didn’t have to go to church....we could’ve....”.

Judy was my refuge during this time: navigating being the wife to an unbelieving husband, yet teaching me how to respect him at the same time. She would look at me, and she would tell me that getting my family just to be present to hear the Word is the most important thing I can do. The Sunday banter of my family became less hurtful, just expected. I felt I had the support and outlet for my frustrations and someone to tell me, “You got this, keep going, be strong for your family.”

There was a morning in July when I woke up late on a Sunday, frustrated by forgetting to set my alarm, and I popped up to wake my kids. To my surprise, they were already up, getting their church clothes on. I walked downstairs,

and in khaki shorts and a polo, my 15-year-old sat at the table eating breakfast. My husband had just gotten out of the shower and was doing his hair. I remember walking into the bathroom and just crying tears of joy with the biggest smile on my face.

Judy has given me so much more than just some inspiration. She’s helped me navigate things that were difficult and so confusing—using Biblical Scripture to back her advice and my response to actions and words. It’s one thing to go to a church that preaches on the things we should be doing. But to have resources to actively implement those truths in daily life is imperative. Judy made that mission of mine possible.

## SERVE

Story by Trish Burgin

In March of 2023, my husband, Wally, of 36 years, lost a courageous 2-year battle with brain cancer. I remembered a friend telling me about GriefShare when she had lost her brother in a car accident. I found a GriefShare program and signed up about 3 months after Wally died. I was especially drawn to this program because it was Christ-centered grief counseling. Even though I had peace from God when Wally died, I knew that I needed to seek grief counseling.

At the first meeting, our group consisted of a variety of people who had suffered significant losses: a husband, a father, a brother, a mother, and a son. I instantly realized that I was not the only person in the world who was dealing with grief or loss. I loved that the program dealt with so many aspects of grief, some that I never experienced or even thought about, and some that I knew I might. It was reassuring to know that these feelings were perfectly normal and part of the grief journey. I had scripture to turn to for encouragement and comfort. What better place than the Bible to get guidance about suffering and loss than from our Lord and Savior, who was well acquainted with grief and sorrow. I soon found that I could have joy after suffering. In September of 2024, after my daughter Grace passed, I was able to revert back to my earlier Griefshare counseling. I could draw from the counseling and scriptures again to help in my continued grieving. I knew that Wally and Grace had both made professions of faith in Jesus and had accepted him as their Savior, so I have joy knowing that I will see them again someday. Of course, I still have my moments of sadness because we are separated, but I still have that hope and joy because of Jesus, my Lord and Savior.

In the last year, I have felt the Lord leading me to help others. I know that through Christ, I can help others on their grief Journey. *I signed up to be a Griefshare facilitator because I want people to know that you can still have joy after loss—a joy only Jesus can provide.*



Photographer: Londa Crigger



Photographer: Leah Ried

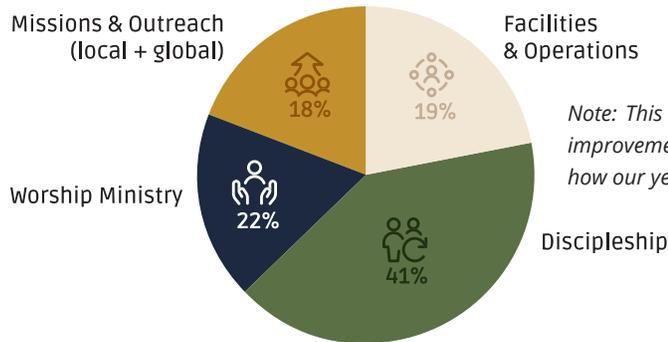
# Financial Overview

## Stewarding God's Resources Faithfully

At Soteria, generosity is ministry. Every dollar given is a tool God uses to make more and better disciples, both here and around the world. We're committed to stewarding His resources with excellence and transparency so that lives are changed and the gospel continues to advance. Each year, I am blessed to watch our dollars at work. I have the unique privilege to help direct our funds to fuel ministry. When we cut checks and pay for different expenses I often pray specifically for those ministries. It is overwhelming to watch God at work. Thank you for giving faithfully and partnering with us in God's mission.



Pastor Cody



Note: This breakdown does not include our capital improvements. The pie graph is designed to share how our yearly budget operates.

\$15,770  
adoption fund  
distribution

\$20,369  
HOPE funds distributed  
(Helping our People Endure)

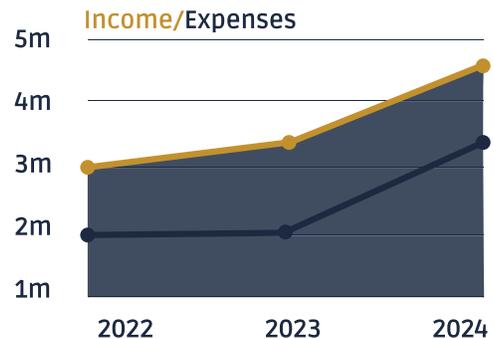
For more than five years, your generosity has exceeded expenses allowing us to plan for our new auditorium, help plant and strengthen other churches, launch a church leadership network, and continue seeing God work in our people as more come to know Christ.

\$4,560,636  
giving

\$3,374,569  
expenses

\$2,123,239  
operating  
budget spent

\$1,251,330  
restricted/building project  
& designated funds spent



Every dollar  
tells a story of  
life change.

Thank you  
for giving  
generously!

# Looking Ahead

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We are deeply encouraged by God's continued faithfulness and the generosity of our church family. As we near the end of 2025, we're celebrating significant progress toward our campaign goal. Every gift represents not just dollars, but hearts invested in the mission of making more and better disciples.

We've seen incredible commitment from families who have faithfully fulfilled or are well on their way to completing their pledges. Others are prayerfully re-engaging, and new families are joining in as momentum builds for the coming year.

As we look toward 2026, we're filled with gratitude for what God has done through this campaign and even more excited for what's ahead. Every dollar given is helping Soteria grow our reach, strengthen discipleship, and expand our capacity to serve our community and the world for Christ.

Together, we are building beyond walls!



\$3,897,430 pledged

\$1,377,850 received

\$2,699,720 remaining

We're grateful for every gift and every giver. If you'd like to join in supporting the Building Beyond Walls campaign, visit: <https://soteria.church/building-beyond-walls/>

There's still time to get involved!





BUILDING BEYOND WALLS	
PLEDGE TOTALS	
Early Commitments	\$2,509,930
Additional Pledges	\$1,810,220
Campaign Total	\$4,320,150
Money from Savings	\$3,000,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$7,320,150</b>

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Photographer: Leah Ried



Photographer: Londa Crigger



Photographer: Londa Crigger



Photographer: Rachel Nerison



Photographer: Leah Ried



Photographer: Leah Ried

# Get Involved

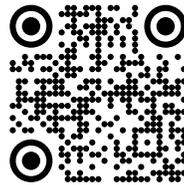
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The mission of Soteria Church is to make more and better disciples. One of the best ways to live out that mission is by getting connected by building relationships, serving others, and growing together in Christ.

If you haven't yet taken that next step, now is a great time to get involved! Whether it's becoming a member, joining a serve team, or plugging into a Growth Group, there's a place for you to belong and grow at Soteria. Each connection helps strengthen our church family and furthers our mission of making more and better disciples.



Connect



Give



Serve

<https://soteria.church>



@soteria\_church



@soteriachurch



@soteriachurch

To Him be the glory, in the church and in  
Christ Jesus, throughout all generations.

EPHESIANS. 3:21

