

From Garage to Global Harvest, Life.Church Celebrates the Faithfulness of God

When Craig and Amy Groeschel launched in a two-car garage in Edmond, Oklahoma in 1996, they could never have imagined the fullness of God's plan for their obedience and "irrational generosity."

Today, the church has 36 locations in 11 different states as well as a global digital extension, Online, which launched in 2006.

While many churches have transitioned to either complete or partial online services as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, some for the first time, it's nothing new for this ministry. Online offers the same opportunities as in-person services with more than 550 LifeGroups and 900 volunteers serving from more than 50 countries. It equates to 90 available services throughout the week on a variety of platforms, including Facebook, YouTube, Instagram and Twitch.

One pastor, Bobby Gruenewald, founder of the YouVersion Bible app, which launched two years after Online, says, "About 15 years ago, we really felt like this was a unique opportunity in history for the church to step up and missionally use technology in new ways. And that's really when it began to transform how we do ministry as a church."

Since 2008, the Bible app has exploded from offering Scripture in two languages to 1,500, with countless reading plans and devotionals at users' fingertips. As an innovative leader at , Gruenewald oversees the YouVersion, Open Network, Church Online, Information Technology, Creative Media, Spaces &

Places and Communications teams.

According to Gruenewald, the ministry cultivates an environment of creativity where every tool and talent creates new ideas. He's hopeful that such an environment centered around the mission of creating fully devoted followers of Christ will "continue to see new things birthed, new approaches to ministry and new ways to reach people" that haven't been explored yet.

"We're excited about what God's going to do in the future, just as we're so excited to celebrate what He's done in the past," he adds.

Some highlights include assembling thousands of volunteers to serve after a natural disaster, raising hundreds of thousands of dollars within mere hours for global aid, developing a Bible app (for adults and children) now used on 450 million devices and seeing foster children in one state quickly find homes. has also given away millions of free ministry resources through its Open Network to help equip church pastors and leaders worldwide.

"So as I look back," founder and senior pastor, Groeschel, says, "I'm overwhelmed at the goodness of God, of how he could use one church to make such a difference in the community and around the world."

Groeschel explains how he and his wife were compelled 25 years ago to start a church to present the gospel in a way that would interact and transform daily lives. Their approach is to reach people who might be open to the things of God but lack understanding of the things of God.

All are encouraged to join as celebrates its first 25 years of ministry this week by attending one of its campuses on Jan. 9 or 10 or via one of the many Online services.

takes great effort to provide a safe, touchless worship

experience for those who participate. You can also visit to watch a brief highlight of the past 25 years. {eo}