

CONNECTED

YOUTH FOR CHRIST of Northern Ohio - Newsletter

Connecting Teens To Jesus Christ And His Church

March 2026



Investing | Steve Pausch

Have you heard the talk recently on the radio about how well the stock market is doing and that everyone's investments are way up? In the same breath, investors talk about dividends and gains and then the risk and how things can change tomorrow. You have chosen to make an investment in this ministry and in the lives of the young people we serve. We are here to report that your investment is paying off in BIG ways and not just in the present time but for all of eternity.

Daily, we are allotted the privilege of sitting with teens and talking about their lives, their struggles, their highs and lows and about their plan for eternity. It's amazing that when we take the time to ask and listen, we are let into the lives of kids. We often forget the way things have changed and are reminded of the pressures and conflicts facing today's teens. The internet has provided this generation with instant access to knowledge far surpassing any previous, and things like encyclopedias have become relics of history. This access to knowledge has also brought a dark side with it that we are fighting each day.

Google has replaced the Bible as a source of wisdom and most of the young people we see whole heartedly believe what they read on their screen as truth. The truth has changed though...it is no longer "This is true" but there is an individual truth in each circumstance. The term "My Truth" has replaced Biblical Truth and the truth a young person believes changes frequently. This leads to many conversations and clarifications about what a teen believes "today" and how that is different than what they believed last week often about the same subject. But all is not lost. We are seeing God speak His Truth into the lives of these kids. I have been involved in ministry to middle and high school students since 1984 and even though some aspects of ministry are more difficult, we are seeing an openness to the Gospel message and the Truth of Scripture that seems to be pointing to God dramatically changing many

hearts. Seeing lives change takes longer, the discussions are deeper, and questions are more profound. The internet tries to undo our discussions when a kid gets home, but the power of meeting regularly and often allows us to answer the internet.

You are a part of something BIG happening in the lives of the young people we serve, whether in a middle school, detention facility, high school, whether athletes or gaming kids you make it possible for us to be involved in sharing the message of Jesus to the next generation. Thank you for supporting us in prayer and with financial resources... Your investment is paying off!

Celebrations and A Return Home | Matt Mountjoy

There has been a lot of really cool things going on with The Garage, and I'm excited to be able to share them with you!

The first is an overall update with the Wednesday night group. This group has continued to be a blessing and encouragement. It is evident that there is growth in their lives and in their faith. It is also exciting to see them continue to want it to be a priority in their lives. Many of them, over the past year, have found home churches and gotten involved on a deeper level. This week, exciting news came as our third student from the Wednesday night group was baptized this year at the church they have been attending!

With the Thursday group, we have been meeting after school at the YMCA and that has also been a continued blessing! We get to see and meet so many students. Now that we have an established weekly presence, we started this week with our once-a-month return to The Garage property with that group. This gives us opportunities to play games that are a little messy (this week was one of my favorites of a gummy bear eating contest where they have to eat them from a pie pan filled with syrup without using their hands) and have lessons that might be a little more sensitive (this week was our annual "sex talk") As we expected, we did have a smaller group that made the trip down, but it was a really cool day, and they were super excited to see The Garage. This group is primarily middle school kids. Middle school kids are notorious for having a hard time being mature during a conversation about sex and God's design for it and why it matters so much. However, it was super cool that this group probably handled it as maturely as any group I've had over the years.

Please continue to pray for these ministries that the fire for The Lord that seems to be burning with the kids on Wednesday night continues to grow, and that we continue to see growth with the new kids we are working with on Thursdays.

Unfinished Project | Laurie Beal



Tom Shurance was a vital part of our team at The Garage for over a decade when he sadly lost his battle with COVID, several years ago. Tom's name still comes up often during ministry, and his adventurous spirit and wisdom still has an impact. He is missed much! Our mentors will often share a story about Tom or use one of his famous illustrations in our lessons.

Tonight was a night we really could have used Tom's insight and wisdom.

To explain...

Tom's dear wife, Lilly, called me after his passing to let me know the project he had been working on wasn't complete in the way he wanted it to be, but was still something we would maybe want. I asked what the project was and she said she thought that I knew about it. Lilly went on to explain that Tom had been working on a stained glass project for some time. He had wanted to make a large light fixture for above the pool table, but he had only completed one side. I told her that absolutely we would want it and that I was excited to see it. She had the piece secured in a metal frame so that it could be hung and, as of this week, it is now hanging in our window at The Garage.



Thus the reason I really could have used Tom's insight during our lesson tonight. I was sharing the Truth that Tom had so artistically and strategically placed all throughout the art piece. At first glance, the glass artwork is a mosaic of color and a pool table, sporting an active game at play. But the lesson beyond a glance is simply stunning.

I told the teens about Tom and the story of hearing about his artwork ...and how,

now, the task before me was to try and do justice to explaining Tom's masterpiece. Before I began, I asked the teens and leaders to examine the stained glass and share what they saw and what THEY thought. The teens were intrigued and observant, noticing a couple things that I hadn't. The leaders offered great insight, too. I, then, pieced together all the clues we had collectively come up with and wove the lesson I think Tom was trying to show us....

The pool table represents our life on earth. The pool stick, with a snake in the pattern is the enemy/sin...always interested in smashing into our plans and creating havoc and things flying off in different directions. The cracked pieces at the impact of the stick represent the brokenness that results from sin. The eight ball heading toward the corner pocket represents the message the enemy wants us to think— "game over."

But God.

Now we glance at the triangle, the Trinity...the Father (star/ God's divine protection), Son (cross=sacrifice) and Holy Spirit (dove) that offers another chance, a better direction, a new game. The " triangle ' offers order, boundaries to erase chaos and protection. We just have to accept and have faith and start racking up.

That's what we came up with in the group. Since I started writing this, I've seen two more things that I'm sure were part of Tom's metaphorical pool table (the background color under the triangle returning to the green as it should be and the wayward direction of the cue ball.)

I'm sure there are lots more. I told the kids I'll be asking Tom when I get to Heaven for ALL the insight! The lesson of the mosaic is subtle, yet bold. Just like Tom.

Ephesians 2:8 "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith- and this is not from yourselves it is the gift of God."

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