

Narrator: A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead, they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house in the same way.

Let your light shine before others that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.

Pastor Mandy Barkhaus: Without the generosity of people's time, gifts, service, and money. Our whole mission and values process that we just did would be valueless. Before we get into that, the Horizons mission, I want to talk quickly about the difference between the Big C church and the Little C church.

Now, the big C church is the church. All Christians everywhere in the Apostles Creed, we say the Holy Catholic Church, Catholic with a small C, meaning universal. So we have the big C church, meaning universal, and then the smallest C church. It means the local church, like Horizons. We could argue that the universal church has no mission because it's part of God's mission.

I would say that God has a church for God's mission, and our local church's mission is to simply support what God is doing now. The mission of all local churches should be pretty similar. We are our expressions, but we all point to Jesus. We are all in ministry and fellowship with Christians all over the world.

So then you might ask, is Horizon's church the church building or the people? Of course, Horizons is the people like we make the church. But this place, this building, is where we gather as the church. Now, sometimes you'll hear people argue that church buildings get in the way of the work we're called to do.

Sometimes, people will say that the church building is irrelevant. And sometimes that is true. Sometimes, we let the church building get in the way of what we're called to do. But if we think about the early church and we think about the apostle Paul, the apostle Paul doesn't say to Christians, stop going to church and be the church.

Instead, the Apostle Paul tells them that as they are gathering together like they are being the church and how they act when they are together, they should be the church together. Then Paul emphasized the joy of all these little C churches with all their failures, with all their faults coming together at a certain time, at a specific place, in a specific time when the church connected the apostle Paul had a specific role in the church, as do as we and I have been amazed since I have been here at Horizons a little over a year at the leadership in this church.

You have David O'Neill, who was just on stage and helped with our stewardship campaign and our values and mission process. All shout out again. Rachel pays our Snelling, who helped with that process, too. We have TJ Schirmer, our steering chair. We have Morgan Rose, our SPC chair, and Stef Bohm, our PMT chair. We have people behind the scenes working like Don Wade and Jason Kennedy, not our former pastor Jason, but a different Jason Kennedy who helps oversee our finances.

And then you have people like Lisa Butler, Amy Perdue Smith, and Monica Steffens, who lead our Justice in Action initiative, which connects us to the larger church. And I could go on for all the rest of my time listing people, leaders in this church who have stepped up to do the work. But I see this church, I see horizons carrying out what Jesus started it, and that is the point of the church to continue God's mission here on Earth.

Now, Horizons' mission statement is this: Horizons is a community where we mature as disciples and lead all to Jesus for the transformation of the world from one generation to the next. Now, this newly

revised mission statement and our newly reinforced values statements are masterpieces. And as David said, it's not because they are perfect statements that they are well-written, that they'll never, ever change again.

But they're masterpieces because, in the process, it allows space for the Holy Spirit to move. It allowed it to bring to life the connection of the Big Sea Church. It incorporated our past missions and our past strategies while also recognizing who we are at the present. So not only am I thankful for current leaders for making all of this happen, but I'm thankful for the leadership of the past, both late leaders and former pastors.

You have Pastor Jason Kennedy, who was here ten years before I came. You have Pastor Brian Coats, who was here a couple of years, and Pastor Steve Todd, who founded this church. And every single one of them brought their unique gifts to the church. So the mission statement we have, those words, have slightly changed, but the idea is still the same.

Now, you can't really talk about mission without talking about generosity, without people giving their time and money and sharing their talents. We can't transform the world. We can't make a difference to the next generation without many of us contributing our part. Exodus Chapter 36 is a passage about generosity and people using the gifts they receive from God leading up to Exodus 36.

God is telling them these instructions reported by Moses, and some of these instructions included the Commandments, the importance of the Sabbath, and instructions on building the Tabernacle. Now, Tabernacle means meeting place. It's where God met the people, and there were very, very detailed instructions on what this Tabernacle looks like. So God commanded the people to build this tent-like building structure so that he could meet there.

So, the people who have their mission from God are ready to start the building project. So Exodus 36, starting at verse one, Let Bezalel, Oholiab, and every other skilled worker whom the Lord has given skill, ability, and knowledge for the work of building the sanctuary, do all that the Lord has commanded Moses then called together Bezalel, Oholiab, and every other skilled person whom the Lord has given skill and who was eager to come and do the work.

I love this because God has named the leaders. He is named the leader. He is named Moses to do the work. He is named these other two, and I'm not going to repeat the names because it was already hard the first two times. Right? God has named these people and given them the skills to do the work he commanded.

So, in verse three, Moses gave them all the gifts and offerings that the Israelites had contributed to the work on the sanctuary. They kept bringing him spontaneous gifts morning after morning. So here we have the leaders of the church, the ones who are skilled. They are doing the work they were made to do because of the offerings of the Israelites because all of the people were doing what they were called to do.

In that moment, there is this Peanuts cartoon, Snoopy, where Lucy demands that her brother Linus change the TV channel. And Linus is like, Like, what makes you think that? You can just walk in it in here and take over? And Lucy says this. These five fingers said Lucy, individually, they are nothing. But when I curl them together like this into a single unit, they form a weapon that is terrible to behold.

Of course, we want to come together, not as a weapon to change the TV channel, but as a weapon for the good of God. Verse four Finally, all the skilled workers building the sanctuary left their work not finished their work, but they left their work that they were doing one by one to come, and they went to Moses. Now, if you don't know this story, I want you to think about what these skilled workers will say to Moses. I mean, if you think back, right, They've complained about not having water, not having food, having too much manna, and they wanted something different.

Right. A lot of complaints have come from the Israelite people, but here, they're not complaining in the way that you may think. So here is what they say. The people are contributing way too much material to do the work that the Lord has commanded us to do. So Moses issued a command that was proclaimed throughout the camp.

Every man and woman should stop making gift offerings for the Sanctuary project. So, the people stopped bringing anything more because what they had already brought was more than enough to do all of the work. Show of hands. How many of you have ever been to a church and the pastor? The leader stands up here and says, Thank you so much for your generosity, but you can stop giving.

Now, we have more than enough to fulfill what God has called us to do. Anybody know? Probably not. But this is the best story of stewardship when so many people gave to the mission that they had to say, Stop, we have enough. And to be honest, I love this idea. I love imagining a place where everyone gives what they can, recognizing that there are times in our lives when we can give more of our time and when we can give less of our time.

There are times in our lives when we can give more money, and there are times in our lives when we can give less. But everyone in this passage, everyone was doing their part. Now let's look again at our Horizons Mission statement. Horizons is a community where we mature as disciples and lead all to Jesus for the transformation of the world from one generation to the next.

Do we still have work to do? Of course, we do. We are growing and maturing together. We are sharing the gospel. We are transforming the world. But we're not done yet. The next generation, we have to think, is the next generation set up to be leaders of the church to take over the mission that has been started.

And we have some really incredible youth leaders in our congregation, but we're not quite there yet. So if we want to be a part of God transforming the world, if we want to be a place where, where, where we live, in a world where everyone loves God and loves one another, a place of peace and unity, we have to come together.

We need everyone to do their part. We are guided by these values. What you're going to be hearing more about. But these values have to be fueled by generosity. Now, one way for us to grow and mature as disciples is to take time to understand our relationship with money and giving. The Bible has a lot to say about our money.

Jesus talks a lot about our earthly possessions. The Bible talks about giving our first fruits and tithing or giving 10% of our income as an offering. And then the Bible says Giving talks about giving beyond 10% in our abundance. Now, money can have different meanings to different people based on people's personalities, based on people's life experiences. For some, money brings this sense of security.

For others, it's a way to express love to feel successful or in control. Now, last month, as part of my ordination process, I go to this. What's called residency? And last month at residency, I was encouraged to write down my theology of money. Now, theology, this is kind of my definition. Theology is a way of seeing the world through our belief about the character of God.

So, a theory of money is how one views money in connection to one's faith in God. So, I started thinking about this, and I think my theology of money started a long time ago. I grew up with parents who generously gave to the church. Now, we didn't. We did not have an abundance. Growing up, I did not grow up wealthy, but my parents were consistently giving to the church.

And it was a formative experience for me to witness. My parents write a check every single Sunday and put it on the offering plate. And then, on those rare occasions when I got to put the check in that shiny gold offering plate that passed by, I felt like I was doing something really special. And then, when I moved out right after high school, I immediately found a new church where I had moved, and I started writing checks of my own.

And it wasn't for it wasn't much at first. But I always kept up the act of giving. Now, times have changed, and a lot of churches, including ours, don't pass an offering plate. Now we have to search for those little boxes in the back of the room, or we do our online giving, or we set up recurring giving.

And I wonder if Tom and I made a mistake when raising our sons. Now, as a side note, we made a lot of mistakes. I know this, but I think about how many years went by without our kids seeing us put a check into the offering plate because automatic giving was so much easier and it gave a guarantee that our money would go through.

Before Tom and I had automated giving, we would wait until the last of the month, and we would give whatever was left over. And it was never what we had intended at the first of the month. So, for us, automated giving was giving our first fruits to God. Tom grew up in a similar way with parents who were generous to the church, and we have given consistently throughout our entire marriage, and it wasn't much at first.

Part of it was we made less money. But beyond that, it didn't really stretch us very much. We didn't really sacrifice much, but it was pretty consistent throughout our whole marriage. And it was several years into our marriage when we really started to increase our giving. And some of it, again, was our increase in our income.

But for the most part, it was a feeling of gratefulness to God for who God is. It was our maturing in our faith and our understanding of the power and the good news of Jesus. We increased our giving because we grew to understand the importance of this kind of spiritual act. There is this deep-rooted spiritual meaning behind giving.

Now, it's easy for us to pick up the Bible and say, Well, you know, I give a grain offering, but I don't have any land or I give off my first fruits. But, you know, I don't have any fruit trees. And, of course, we know that giving is so much more than that. Recently, Tom and I did a spending fast and we told this to our life group a few weeks ago and that's when some wise guy in our group said, Oh, I can spend my money fast too.

Ha ha ha. You know, fast is one of those words that has several meanings. It can mean to move quickly or to hold tightly, to fasten or to abstain from usually. We talked about food, but Tom and I started this spending fast, and some days were more successful than other days. But it has been a really effective challenge for us to think about where our money goes.

Tom and I have a personal plan for our money. I hope that you do as well. But the reason that I am bringing up this is because I want to tell you that Horizons has a plan that the leaders of this church take it very seriously. The money that is given and what we are going to use that money for, you'll be getting a letter with a little bit more information on this later in the week.

If you don't get the letter, let us know. So here's after thinking about my money, money, thinking about money and my relationship to God. Here's what I can conclude about my theology of money. My relationship with money indicates who I think God is and what God calls me to be and do as a follower of Jesus. And at the very core, faithful stewardship recognizes that God is generous.

Therefore, I must also be generous. Now, this is my theology of money, and I would encourage you to think about your theology of money because it's probably going to be a little bit different than mine. And that's okay. Second Corinthians 9:7 says everyone should give whatever they have decided in their heart. They shouldn't give without hesitation or because of pressure.

God loves a cheerful giver. I think it was Derek Stein, AKA our director of Family Ministries. I think he heard this and brought it to my attention. But you know that saying that you're, you know, you'll probably hear some churches say this, right? You should give till it hurts. What if we, instead of giving till it hurts? What if we gave until it felt good?

Until it felt right? God wants us to be cheerful and happy about giving. Matthew 5:16 says this in the same way. Let your light shine before people so that they can see the good things you do. And praise your Father who is in heaven, shining the light. That is what generosity is about. Someday I will tell you the whole story about Tom and his late-night bike ride adventure that, included book Lights and a Skunk, where one light was good.

Two lights would have been better, but a multitude of lights could have been really helpful. But for now, I want you to imagine the path to God. And it's dark because there is darkness and evil in this world, and the path is not an easy path. It's a winding, dark path. And imagine if you had that lantern to carry.

If you had a lantern, if you had the light of Jesus in you, that's going to be really helpful for you to walk along that path and imagine someone walking on that path without the light; your lights going to be helpful for them. They're going to be able to walk beside you and find their way down that path.

And imagine a few more people showed up. Now, my light was for the 10th person behind me, or the 20th person behind me isn't going to be very helpful for that person. But imagine, like in the passage of Exodus 36, everyone doing their part and every single one of us carrying the light of Jesus. If we were able to light that pathway to Jesus, we all stood in a row all along this winding path, and anybody who wasn't carrying the life light could see the way.

And eventually, those people without light would see the love and the generosity and the light radiating from the church being the church on that path. And then, eventually, maybe they would start carrying

that light with them, too. And then they would just add to the path, and it would continue on. So what we're doing with our mission and our values is really exciting.

And I want you to be a part of what we have going on. But I also want to say this. This is not something brand new. This is something that Horizons has been doing for years. We're just ready to turn it up a little bit brighter. I want you to take a look at how Horizons was part of Heidi's life.

Heidi McInerney: Hi, I'm Heidi McInerney. When we first started at Horizons 19 years ago, my husband really wanted a church for our family to go to. He grew up during church stuff, and I did not. So, for me, it really wasn't that big of a deal. We'd been at Horizons for a few years, hadn't done anything with VBS, and of my three kids, I think my youngest was just a baby.

So, I was at home with him while my husband and the two older kids were at VBS. The first year, I think it was the first or second year of Bob and Carl. They would come home every night and tell me how amazing it was. It was. I had no idea why it was such a big deal. But they my husband, Chris, just kept saying, Oh, it's amazing.

It's amazing. And so I decided to go on the last night and he said, You got to come. The music is amazing. I love the music. That's what drew me first to Horizons, love the music. And so I was like, okay, fine, I'll come. And so the last night came, and closing came, and I was there. And I just remember looking around and seeing kids singing, dancing.

I saw adults standing, laughing, dancing, singing. And I felt this feeling inside of me that I couldn't put words to. It was then that I realized I was feeling God's presence in that room, and it was something I'd never felt before in my life. And I knew that I wanted that feeling inside of me. And all I could think to myself was, How is this a church?

This isn't this isn't what church is supposed to be. It's not what I knew growing up. It seemed normal. It seemed fun. And I think the thing that sticks out the most to me is that I just remember thinking, I have to be a part of that. I want to be a part of that. So, the next year, for VBS, I did volunteer.

AM I wonder, my honor just kept growing here with these two young guys, Bob and Carl, wearing bath towels. How could they play the music they played? How could they get kids so fired up for God? You know? And I was still in this unchurched phase in my unchurched mind. That wasn't supposed to happen. Not in church. Church was boring.

Church was long, it was dull. And it really definitely wasn't fun. But Bob and Carl knew how to make it fun. They knew what kids needed to get fired up for God, and they turned my unchurched self into a person who wanted to be a part of something because the kids and the adults were so on fire for Jesus.

So this year, at the end of VBS, I took a minute to reflect. Mandy's sermon came back to me about being an unchurched person and turning them into a person on fire for God. And that is exactly what Horizons has done for me. And so I just want to say to Bob and Carl, to everybody I've known at Horizons, thank you, Horizons, for setting an unchurched person on fire for Jesus.

I know that God put our family at Horizons for this exact reason, and I will always be forever grateful. Horizons is a place where we are watching future generations start to lead, and it's such an amazing, amazing thing. So thank you, Horizons, for continuing to set me, this now church person, on fire for Jesus, leading my family to Jesus, and watching as this next generation starts to do the same.

Pastor Mandy Barkhaus: Would you pray with me? Gracious God, thank you so much for what you have done in this church, what you've done in the past, what you are doing in the present, and what you will do in the future. Help us to be the church that you have called us to be. Help us to light the way for others so that they can know you, too.

We say this in Jesus' name, Amen.