



**Beverly Heights
Presbyterian
Church**

scattered seeds.

THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER

October 2019



Our podcast taping session with guest Mike Pierson, whose episode airs this coming Monday.

When Tom first suggested The Scattered Seeds Podcast, I thought it was a good idea. I was enthusiastic, in fact, but I admit I was not fully aware of what I was agreeing to.

At the time I couldn't imagine how we would accomplish any of this; from the technical aspects, to the guestlist, to scheduling the interviews. Tom, however, is a visionary, a consummate interviewer, a gifted editor and a master of managing logistics. Kate is a seasoned podcaster, a talented producer and very technically savvy. Tom and Kate make the work of podcasting easy, and the show would not be possible without them.

We all agree, however, that the show enjoys whatever success it does because of our guests. They have been outstanding. I could not have imagined the kinds of stories we would be privileged to hear through this podcast. Not only the stories themselves, but the way the stories unfold as we're talking and recording.

Recording these podcasts is an adventure in learning how to receive the unscripted yet glorious revelation of one's life. Recently I told Tom, "When we're recording it's a little like riding a rollercoaster in the dark, you're not always sure where things are going until you get there."

The uncertainty is due, in part, to my

preparation for the interviews, which is to say my lack of preparation. As I've already indicated, Tom is an accomplished professional who takes his job very seriously. He always asks the guests to provide a brief bio and some background information, which he gathers, reads, inwardly digests and then emails off to me to do the same. I always politely ignore the emails.

EVERY LIFE HAS A STORY

PASTOR NATE'S
REFLECTIONS ON
OUR PODCAST

This is in part a pragmatic decision, due to the many other responsibilities I must give attention to throughout the week, but it is also strategic.

I go into the interview wanting to know little about the stories our guests will share because it keeps me curious and allows me to react in the moment to what they say. When they say something surprising, I want to be surprised. When it's funny, I want to laugh. When it's heartbreaking, I want to cry. When something precious is said, I want to respond with authentic gratitude and awe.

I put myself in this position, not necessarily for the thrill of the ride, but because I want to represent you the listener, who I suspect will also be in awe of what is said.

I do enjoy the thrill of our guests' stories as they are revealed, but it's a thrill of a particular stripe. Truth be told, I dislike rollercoasters, and a rollercoaster in the dark sounds to me like something reserved for only the chief of sinners. The thrill of these interviews derives from something I consider holy.

C.S. Lewis, in his sermon, "The Weight of Glory," reflects on the significance of being made in the image of God and the profound weight of glory that is placed upon a person because of that image, a glory made even more profound in a redeemed Christian life.

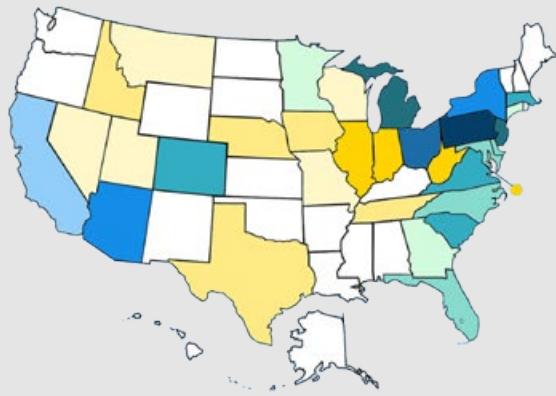
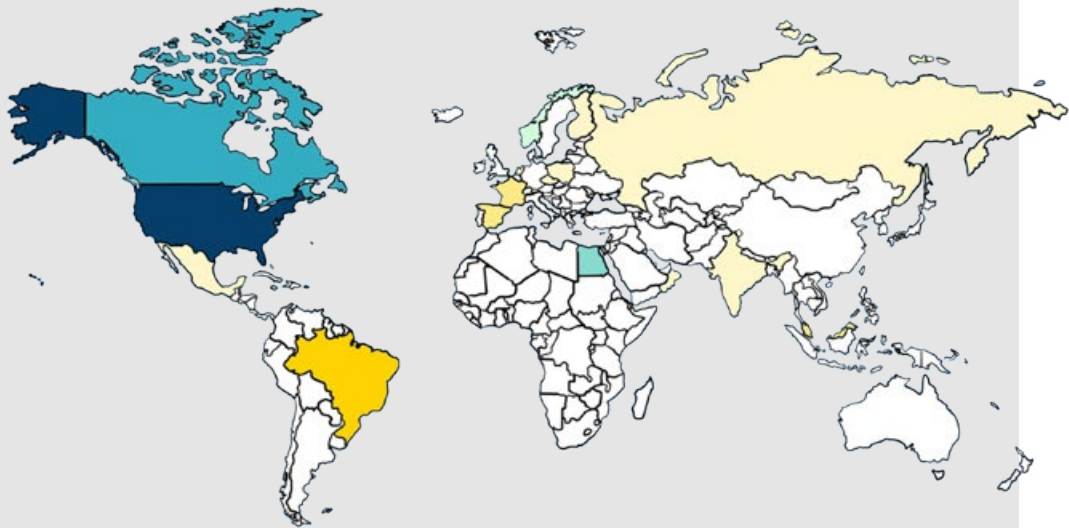


Listeners Around the World

Since its debut, The Scattered Seeds Podcast has been heard in 19 countries, 31 states and Washington DC.

Overall, the 11 episodes have been listened to over 2,400 times.

And when you factor for repeat listeners and regulars, we have had over 2,000 people listen to our show in the last 7 months.



States

- | | |
|--------------------|-------------------|
| 1. Pennsylvania | 17. Minnesota |
| 2. Ohio | 18. Georgia |
| 3. Arizona | 19. Illinois |
| 4. New York | 20. Indiana |
| 5. California | 21. West Virginia |
| 6. New Jersey | 22. Iowa |
| 7. Michigan | 23. Idaho |
| 8. Colorado | 24. Nebraska |
| 9. Virginia | 25. Tennessee |
| 10. Massachusetts | 26. Texas |
| 11. South Carolina | 27. Missouri |
| 12. Delaware | 28. Montana |
| 13. Maryland | 29. Nevada |
| 14. Florida | 30. Utah |
| 15. North Carolina | 31. Wisconsin |
| 16. Connecticut | 32. Washington DC |

Countries

- | |
|--------------------|
| 1. USA |
| 2. Canada |
| 3. Cyprus |
| 4. Egypt |
| 5. Norway |
| 6. United Kingdom |
| 7. Brazil |
| 8. France |
| 9. Spain |
| 10. Netherlands |
| 11. Malaysia |
| 12. India |
| 13. Singapore |
| 14. Poland |
| 15. Finland |
| 16. Czech Republic |
| 17. Oman |
| 18. Mexico |
| 19. Russia |

Data as of September 30, 2019

Lewis warns us not to be flippant or presumptive when talking with others for,

There are no ordinary people. You have never talked to a mere mortal... it is immortals whom we joke with, work with, marry, snub, and exploit – immortal horrors or everlasting splendors. Next to the Blessed Sacrament itself, your neighbor is the holiest object presented to your senses. If he is your Christian neighbor, he is holy in almost the same way, for in him also Christ [really hiding] – the glorifier and the glorified, Glory Himself, is truly hidden.

The Scattered Seeds Podcast is predicated upon the firm belief that every life has a story. It is a life and a story made profound by the life of Christ, hidden but made present as our guests share what Christ has done in them and through them. Thrill is not quite the right word. The word is “holy.”

As we hear our guests’ stories, the curtain of heaven is pulled back slightly and we are invited to see holiness and stand in the presence of the glory of God. I count it a supreme privilege to receive these stories and through them to receive Christ. We hope that you come to feel the same way, too.



A sample of listener comments on our podcast

A message from our No. 1 fan, Marcia Swanson

Dear Tom, Nate and Kate,

In the spirit of full disclosure, I have reached my mid 80’s and had never heard a “podcast.”

The three of you are amazing! When you started this project you mentioned the providence of God. I can’t believe you ever envisioned the profound gift you have given to so many. What a treasure you three have given our church family, to people across the country and even abroad. I look forward to hearing each episode!

It is lovely to sit and quietly listen to how God has guided the lives of your special guests. Some of whom are sitting in the pews beside us.

As an added bonus, my children and grandchildren are surprisingly pleased that Grams has discovered the world of podcasts.

With love and thanks,
Marcia Swanson

I really enjoy these podcasts! Thanks so much for all of your hard work!

Really enjoyed Paul Kengor. It was nice to finally hear about a Catholic who came back to Catholicism after finding the roots of Christianity in a Protestant tradition. I found his reasons for re-embracing Catholicism similar to my own, though he seems like a much more traditional Catholic than me (with his eight kids, etc.). I admired the fact you encouraged him to talk about Catholicism on a show with a baseline in Presbyterianism. It gave the conversation a perspective of comparative religion which I liked immensely. I believe that the more we talk about our differences, the better we understand each other.

I really liked [the Karyn Kail] episode! What a refreshing and confident perspective on motherhood.

I listened to Jill [Whitecap’s] podcast last night. I loved the conversation. Just wanted to say thank you again for these stories!

Episode Breakdown

Jeff Nine #1
May 6
445 Listens

Jeff Nine #2
May 20
218 Listens

Karyn Kail #3
June 3
301 Listens

Don Collett #4
June 17
151 Listens

Dhiraj Sonbare #5
July 1
191 Listens

Brandon Kail #6
July 15
230 Listens

Chris Wu #7
July 29
158 Listens

Steve Fleck #8
August 12
137 Listens

Paul Kengor #9
August 26
130 Listens

Jill Whitecap #10
September 9
105 Listens

Dick Staaf #11
September 23
91 Listens



A MESSAGE FROM LAURITA KUZKO, KATE'S MOM:

"Kate prays so much for each program, and she works so hard, unto God, because she believes this is a calling. When it comes time for her to record the intro and closing segments, she always waits upon the Lord to give her the words. I have listened to each program, and more than a few times have come to tears when I hear the anointing the Lord has given to her. Kate has never been happier. She is blessed to be able to work using her gifts doing something she loves."

LEARNING TO LISTEN TO GUESTS AND TO THE LORD

BY KATE KUZKO

As the producer for The Scattered Seeds Podcast, it's my job to take the two or so hours of raw conversation from each guest and refine it down to 55 minutes of pure story. If you listen to the show then my voice is the one you hear setting the stage at the beginning of each episode as well as at the end.

Narrowing down what I've learned while working on this podcast wasn't easy. Each guest we interview has taught me something that I found impacting my own walk with the Lord. Those lessons build

and grow over the days of editing until they culminate in the closing statements for the show.

Ultimately, I know the Lord is the one that writes them because they only coalesce after a lot of prayer and just before the episode is finished for release.

The first lesson I've learned from the show is to listen. I've always been a quick thinker who would jump from questions to answers oftentimes without pausing to ask the Lord what His thoughts were.

It was a kind of arrogant impatience that I was exhibiting without actively meaning to. But the Lord made it clear that my role in the interview is to listen. That clarity came from a few things, not least of which was the fact that any time I tried to mic up the fourth microphone, it stopped working. I got the hint.

At first, having to sit and listen to an interview without jumping in was almost excruciating for me and I didn't always succeed. As the interviews came and went, I have found myself talking less at God →

THE 'DP' WHEN YOU ARE ALL IN

BY TOM O'BOYLE

If someone had told me just one year ago that I'd be writing this story today, as the communications person employed by this church recalling the birth of The Scattered Seeds Podcast, I would have told you, "You're crazy."

Yet that is exactly what has happened. I left a 40-year career in the news media and began working at this church. We also started a podcast, of all things, which is now sponsored by Grove City College. About 2,000 people in 31 U.S. states and 18 countries beyond the USA have listened to the first 11 episodes.

What have I learned in the process? To trust more fully in the DP. To embrace it with total

confidence and abandon. And to fully cede control to the Lord.

Listeners to our podcast will recall that the DP to which I refer was the acronym President Ronald Reagan and his trusted adviser Bill Clark used for the "divine plan."

We learned this in episode No. 9 from Reagan scholar Dr. Paul Kengor of Grove City College, our collaborative partner now on the podcast.

"Bill Clark and Reagan used that phrase, the DP, the divine plan. They spoke of it so often it was an acronym between them, the DP," Paul told our listeners.

As one of Grove City College's most media savvy professors, Paul Kengor is a frequent guest on television, radio and podcasting, as well as one of the country's foremost Reagan scholars. Upon listening to his episode, Paul wrote us the following:

"I had planned to simply listen for a few minutes to get a feel for it, but I ended up getting pulled in. I was impressed at how you folks edited it down, scrambled in the music, etc. You have a very good voice and skill for this."



There have been a lot of great moments in the episodes released so far – Chris Wu playing "Amazing Grace" on his violin, Brandon Kail's unflinching faith amid a brain tumor, Jill Whitecap hearing and heeding the Lord's instruction to "go to Uganda" – but Paul's recollection of Reagan's shorthand abbreviation for trusting in the sovereignty of God was one of the best.

As believers, we are all called to surrender ourselves to God, but I'll confess that such surrender isn't easy for me. I like to be the driver behind the wheel (that's true even when I drive a vehicle, as Louise will gladly tell you!).

On this project, however, I decided to go all in. Too many circumstances had aligned perfectly for me not to be all in. The message had come through loud and clear: I had to place my full, unequivocal and unwavering trust in the Lord's hands, and in His DP.

When we started the podcast last May, the analogy I used to describe my stance then to co-workers here was that of a gambler. →

PHOTOS BY JOHN SCHISLER

→ LEARNING TO LISTEN

and listening more to Him. And that’s where the closing statements come from, a place of quieting assumptions about what should be said, and waiting for God to solidify what He wants to have said.

Here’s the second lesson I have learned. When I started working on the show I had quite a few things that I prayed about, but one thing that God put on my heart was the desire to learn to give Him the glory, and the credit, for whatever happens with the show.

It wasn’t something that came easily to me. I knew that every talent I have, and every opportunity to hone my abilities or even to use them, was a gift from God. But my own need to be heard and acknowledged often stood in the way of truly giving Him the glory He deserves. So that was my prayer, that He would teach me to give Him the credit due at every turn.

And while that was difficult for me just six months ago, I now find myself able to shift the credit gladly and in more facets of my life than just the show.

I don’t know why God chose to put the technical side of the podcast in my hands, but I know that the show is His, just as I am His. And whatever He chooses to do with it is up to His sovereign grace. If I can trust Him with the results, then I can give Him the credit for them, too.

That leads to the third lesson: to trust Him more. The areas where I struggle in my faith often come back to trust. Trusting that His love for me isn’t based on how much I know, or how well I can answer questions or solve problems. Trust ties into how I joined the show.

→ THE ‘DP’ WHEN YOU ARE ALL IN

“I’ve pushed all of my chips into the middle of the table,” I said at the Wednesday staff meeting on May 8, two days after the first episode debuted, pushing my hands away for effect.

It was a strange metaphor for me to use because I am NOT a gambler, but I felt the Lord was speaking directly to me with the devotional I had read earlier that morning. I shared it with the group at the meeting. Lest I not forget, I highlighted it in my copy of “My Utmost for His Highest,” and reread it while writing this.

“Faith is the supreme effort of your life – throwing yourself with abandon and total confidence upon God,” Oswald Chambers advises. “God ventured His all in Jesus Christ to save us, and now He wants us to venture our all with total abandoned confidence in Him.”

Being all in meant trusting not just the Lord but also my two colleagues in this new endeavor, pastor Nate and producer Kate Kuzko. I have known Nate for a long time and he’s my pastor and dear friend, so if I couldn’t trust him, who could I trust? But Kate? The “in control” Tom wasn’t too comfortable doing that.

I will admit there have been moments when I wondered privately if I had crawled out on a limb that was about to be sawed off, the Kengor episode being perhaps the most vivid example.

We discovered Paul’s lapel microphone had malfunctioned once the interview ended. His remarks then had to be recovered from the two

I had been volunteering at Wednesday Night Heights and caught up with Louise O’Boyle after nearly two decades of being out of touch. About a week later I got an email from Tom concerning an opportunity to work with him on a few projects for the church.

Now, I am the kind of person who tends towards anxiety in the face of the unknown. It’s the same anxiety that so strongly underpinned the need to be heard in situations rather than listening, and the need to be acknowledged rather than ceding credit to the Creator.

In this instance I had a sense that God was presenting me with an opportunity. And when that initial anxiety started to rise in me, I ran to prayer, and I very clearly heard Him say: “Trust Me.”

That’s ultimately the lesson the show has taught. To trust that I’ll learn more by listening than I could ever do talking. To trust that He’ll provide the words I need to finish every show. To trust that sponsors, listeners, and even guests come from His hand. And that if I trust Him through every step, every cut, every release, then the results are His.

So to God be the glory for this chance to serve Him and His Church by doing something I love. And I thank Him for bringing our team together, and bringing us our guests, and sponsors, and most importantly our listeners.

Thank you all for joining us for every episode of The Scattered Seeds Podcast, where every life has a story.

other mics on Nate and me that had recorded properly. And that meant poor Kate had a tortured recovery process in front of her, which wasn’t entirely done on the day of release.

Listening to an early version, my nerves got the best of me.

“Please don’t release this until I hear a revised version,” I wrote her in a text about five hours before our usual 5 p.m. release time. “It’s not ready for public consumption as it stands right now.”

In the end, Kate stitched and pulled it together beautifully, but not before I was driven to my knees (literally) in prayer. If I had remembered more clearly the beautiful testimonies of our guests when they had been tested, I would have returned to the May 8 entry. I forgot to do that amid the hubbub of the day, but I did while writing this and Oswald Chambers’ words certainly applied.

“God is disciplining us to get us into this central place of power,” he writes. “If we will take this view, life will become one great romance – a glorious opportunity of seeing wonderful things all the time.”

Amen to that.

I thank you, the members of Beverly Heights as well as Kate, Nate and above all the Lord, for helping me to see such wonderful things. And to better understand the awesome power of the DP when you are all in.

JEFF NINE’S
JOURNEY
TO ARIZONA

BY TOM O’BOYLE



The person who was a catalyst for creation of The Scattered Seeds Podcast, as well as our guest for the first two episodes, pathologist Jeff Nine, has left Pittsburgh since the episodes aired.

In August, Jeff accepted a new position as the chief medical examiner in sunny Prescott, Arizona.

If you heard Jeff’s episodes, you may recall he was seeking ministerial ordination from the Evangelical Presbyterian Church while continuing his work as the top pathologist for the UPMC health system here. In fact, it was while Nate and I listened to his testimony at the Presbytery meeting our church hosted on March 2 of this year, which caused us to embark on our podcasting journey.

In July, after Jeff’s podcasts aired in May, he informed us via email that the podcast had greatly influenced his decision to take the new job. Curious, we got in touch with him to hear the rest of the story. Here’s what he had to say.

Prescott has a celebrated place in Western folklore. It’s the town where lawmen Wyatt and Virgil Earp lived before they teamed up with Doc Holliday in Tombstone to win the most famous gun battle in the history of the American West, the shootout at the O.K. Corral.

Today, while Prescott is a law-abiding place, it still has its share of crime and unexplained death. As the chief medical examiner for Yavapai (pronounced yah-vah-pie) County, where Prescott is located 90 miles north of Phoenix, Jeff and seven deputies investigate about 2,500 deaths which occur in the county each year and conduct about 500 autopsies.

As Jeff revealed in the podcast episodes, he was struggling then with several issues. One was his ordination process and being officially sanctioned as a preaching minister in the EPC. A second issue was the persistent health problems of his wife, Tina.

Jeff said the podcast interview provided newfound clarity in terms of his “call” as a minister of the gospel, though not necessarily from the pulpit.

“Nate really helped clarify that for me,” Jeff said, “when he was talking about how I could reach people through my vocation that you couldn’t reach in the pulpit and through church. It was really powerful to me. It meant a lot and so I thank you guys and the spirit for helping me discern that.”

Shortly afterward, that same message was reinforced when Jeff attended an “autopsy society meeting” with other pathologists and medical examiners during which he shared his faith more openly.

Jeff then got a “random” text from the county health director in Prescott. “Are you interested in the job here as chief medical examiner?” the text asked.

“Tina and I looked at each other and said, ‘Yeah,’ ” Jeff recalls.

They moved to Prescott in August, when Jeff started his new position. They have joined a Calvary church about a mile from their house near downtown Prescott, and the change in climate and scenery has greatly revived Tina’s health and spirit.

“Tina has not stopped smiling since we’ve been here,” Jeff said. “She loves the church community, the environment, the atmosphere, the sunshine.” The lower humidity and improved climate have been “an amazing balm to heal her wounds.”

“It is wonderful how the Lord works to encourage us along the path He has set before us,” Jeff says. “I can already see much fruit being born in the work I am doing. Just this morning one of my colleagues asked if it was okay if she played her Christian music playlist while we were working on an autopsy together. Of course I said yes! So we all got to feel the encouragement of the Lord while caring for the recently deceased as well as one another. You can’t make up those kinds of stories.”



LIVING STONES

IS GROWING

The GROW Living Stones ministry commenced July 1, with the commissioning of Julie Livingston as our first missionary to the Dormont corridor and as the new organization's executive director.

On Sunday afternoon, Sept. 22, about 150 folks, most from Beverly Heights, gathered in Beechview at St. Catherine of Siena Roman Catholic Church for a typical GROW Living Stones meal. Past Living Stones volunteers were present along with other folks seeking to learn more about the ministry and the meals it provides.

Starting in October, St. Catherine's (now part of the newly formed St. Teresa of Kolkata Parish) will become a new location in the rotation of three South Hills churches from

which GROW Living Stones serves its guests. The meal ministry gathers and repurposes unused food, feeding hundreds of hungry folks each month.

But as Senior Pastor Nate Devlin made clear in his remarks, meals are a starting point.

"Our desire as a ministry is to take them from this food table where we enjoy fellowship with one another to the communion table where we enjoy fellowship with the Jesus Christ," Nate said.

While we are a church located in Mt. Lebanon, he explained that seeing boarded up and vacated churches along the corridor from Dormont to the Liberty Tunnels caused him to consider our responsibilities

to the people living in that area.

"We have a responsibility to love the Lord and to love our neighbors," Nate said. "I'm so glad that the Lord raised up Julie so we can partner with her."

Julie, Nate and Lynn Bell, along with new board members Shirley McElhattan, Steve Stombaugh and Tom O'Boyle, were introduced.

The group will seek to discern what other services besides meals are needed most by folks living in the area.

Your prayers are most valued and appreciated as GROW Living Stones begins taking root.



Living Stones volunteers assemble for this group shot above, taken at St. Catherine's Roman Catholic Church, which begins serving meals to the needy in October. Julie Livingston talks to Bill and Carol Shields at the event.