THE CHANGING CHURCH
How Churches are Rising to New Challenges
#1 in Arkansas
—The Wall Street Journal
2022 U.S. College Rankings

#10 in the South
—U.S. News & World Report
2022 Regional University Rankings
Dear Friends of JBU,

On March 12, 2020, we gathered in the cathedral so I could share with students that we were closing school because of the pandemic. On Aug. 24, 2021, we gathered together in the cathedral to open the fall semester with worship. It had been a long 18 months, and we were not fully back to normal. We were all wearing masks, and we had divided the students so that two-thirds of them were in the cathedral and one-third were in the Berry Performing Arts Center. Even so, it was a glorious day to hear again the voices of JBU students filling those rooms with praise to Christ. I had deeply missed our collective worship during the pandemic, and so had JBU students:

“In some ways, I got overwhelmed emotionally because I was just back here again, ... the light shining through the stained glass windows and the Christ Over All window lit up. I was just awestruck; wow, this place is beautiful ... just coming to celebrate God.”

“It was an overwhelming feeling — like this is what community is at JBU; this is what a genuine interest for the gospel and for a gospel-centered community looks like.”

“Everyone is hearing the same message. It is unifying people across the campus [because] they can talk about the same message.”

“For me, it was really emotional, and I wasn’t expecting that. For the first three chapels, I couldn’t stop crying [because] I hadn’t worshipped with people for a very long time. Kind of the restoration of our senior class [because we] had not seen people in our class for a long time.”

We seek to make clear to students that chapel is not church, that they still should be involved in a local body of Christians. However, chapel is central to our mission because it puts the worship of Christ and the exposition of scripture in the middle of the student experience. Moreover, chapel is a collective, embodied experience — something of which I am regularly reminded as I see students hugging friends before services and praying together afterward.

I am grateful that this edition of the Brown Bulletin is focused on alumni in church ministry, and I know that church ministry has been difficult over the last 18 months. People are expecting more from church leaders, congregations are more polarized and everyone has missed the grace, love and fellowship that comes from meeting together in person. However, I also know that the church remains God’s institution to carry out his work in this world, so we must continue to encourage those leading our churches.

The writer of Hebrews reminds us of the centrality of Christ and his church: “Let us hold fast the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how to stir up one another to love and good words, not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the day drawing near.”

I am deeply grateful that we at JBU are meeting again in the cathedral to worship the one who is faithful and to stir each other to good works. I hope that you too are drawn to serve in a church that is carrying out God’s mission in this world.

Godspeed,

Dr. Charles W. Pollard
President, John Brown University
Perspective of a Pastor’s Wife

Besides the roles of wife, mom and JBU chief marketing and communications officer, I also wear another hat — pastor’s wife. When Mark and I married at age 20 and 21, church ministry wasn’t even on our radar. But after serving in the Army and teaching, God led Mark into ministry at a rapidly growing church plant in Phoenix. He served there for six years before leaving to work for a Christian orphan care ministry. Since relocating to Siloam Springs, he moved back into church ministry as the associate pastor of adult ministries at Community Christian Fellowship.

There’s a lot I could say about church ministry from my perspective — the unpredictable hours, the emotional toll of ministering to hurting people and the challenges of the pandemic — but perhaps the most useful thing I can share is how much YOU are needed.

Most churches are operating on tight budgets which means pastors might also be editing video, running events and handling logistical details that leave them less time to do the core work of teaching, disciplership and ministering to their attendees.

Volunteers are critical to the ministry of every church and help lighten the load of our pastors. Whether you have specialized skills like graphic design or can lend a hand in the office answering phones and making copies, you can contribute greatly to the ministry of your church as a faithful volunteer.

Julie Gumm
Editor, Brown Bulletin

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Campus News

Senior Wins National Engineering Scholarship
Stanton Weaver, senior electrical engineering major, was recognized by the IEEE Power & Energy Society as a recipient of the PES Scholarship. The society recognized 118 students from the U.S. and Canada as promising future engineers. 01

Pollard Named to Board of Council of Independent Colleges
JBU President Chip Pollard was elected to the board of directors of the Council of Independent Colleges. The board of directors oversees the CIC, a national association of independent colleges and universities dedicated to supporting college and university leadership, advancing institutional excellence and enhancing public understanding of private higher education’s contributions to society. Pollard was one of seven newly elected board members, all presidents of member colleges and universities. 03

Professor Wins 2021 Teaching Award
Brad Gatlin, associate professor of business, was announced as the 2021 Teaching Award recipient by the Christian Business Faculty Association. The CBFA Teaching Award recognizes business faculty members who emulate the character, engagement and calling of Christ to the work and ministry of transformational education. The CBFA chooses candidates for the award based on their excellence in intellectual rigor, student engagement and exemplary faith integration in classroom teaching. 02

‘Tartuffe’ Receives Multiple Awards
JBU’s theatre production of “Tartuffe,” which ran during the 2021 Homecoming weekend, was entered into the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival and received a number of awards. The theatre professionals responding to JBU’s production honored it with the following: Meritorious Achievement in Directing, Scenic Design, Projection Design, Mastery of Language and Company Collaboration. Mary Dunston, Nathan Hahn and Jesse Nielsen were selected as Irene Ryan Nominees. 04

Fischer Promoted to Chief Human Resources Officer
In July, Amy Fisher was promoted to chief human resources officer. Fisher began her career at JBU as a student accounts representative and has served as the director of human resources, risk management and government relations since 2015. Fisher, who holds an MBA in leadership and ethics, will continue to serve as director of government relations, assisting JBU President Chip Pollard in working with Arkansas’ state and national political representatives on issues affecting Christian higher education. 05

Students Honored with National Communication Awards
Three JBU communication majors and a communication faculty member received national honors in the National Federation of Press Women annual communications contest. For the contest, a distinguished group of professional journalists, communications specialists and educators judged nearly 2,000 entries in a wide variety of categories. Seniors Maria Aguilar and Grace Lindquist and junior Orry Phillips were recognized for their writing. Phillips also placed in the Professional Division Podcast category. Debbie 05
Miller, a communication faculty member and the faculty advisor for The Threefold Advocate, received second place in the Collegiate/Education Division for faculty advisor of a student publication, station or site.

Gumm Promoted to Chief Marketing and Communications Officer
Julie Gumm was promoted to chief marketing and communications officer. JBU President Chip Pollard also announced the appointment of Gumm to the President’s Cabinet, an eight-person team that works with the president to set the strategic direction for JBU and oversee and implement planning, major initiatives and policies. Gumm oversees the university marketing and communications team and is responsible for JBU’s overall marketing strategy, internal and external communications, crisis communications and university events.

Beers Appointed CCCU Senior Fellow
Steve Beers, Ed.D., vice president for student development, accepted an invitation from the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities to become a senior fellow. The program’s goal is to contribute to the academic discourse of Christian higher education. The fellows bring thoughtful, creative and tangible ideas to challenges facing CCCU institutions. Beers will serve a two-year renewable term and will chair a committee focused on finding and disseminating best practices for student well-being.

JBU Ranked #1 School in Arkansas by Wall Street Journal
JBU is the top-ranked university in Arkansas according to “The Wall Street Journal/Times Higher Education” 2022 U.S. College Rankings list. The Wall Street Journal/Times Higher Education ranked JBU 337 out of nearly 800 institutions in the nation based on 15 performance indicators. These indicators focused primarily on student success and learning in four key areas: resources available to students, student engagement, student outcomes and learning environment.

Nursing Major Receives KASF Scholarship
James Park, junior nursing major, was selected as a recipient of the 2021 Korean American Scholarship Foundation Scholarship. Park was one of 20 students in the Southwest Region to receive the scholarship. The KASF is a nonprofit organization established to help meet the financial needs of Korean American students seeking higher education. KASF scholarships are offered to qualified Korean American students with impressive scholastic achievements and who are heavily involved in community service and extracurricular activities. Park helps serve patients at Siloam Nursing and Rehab as part of his required nursing school clinicals.

Song Named Chief Diversity Officer
Ted Song, Ph.D., has been promoted to chief diversity officer and joins the President’s Cabinet. Song joined JBU full time in 2012 as an engineering professor and has served as coordinator of diversity and innovation and chair of the faculty affairs committee. Since 2020, Song has led the Office of Diversity which seeks to help students acquire the knowledge, skills and commitments to engage people from different intellectual viewpoints, cultural backgrounds and life experience so that they are more effective in an ever-increasing global community. Song also continues to teach as an associate professor of engineering.
The COVID-19 pandemic meant fewer games, a host of practice restrictions and a shortened 2020-21 season for athletic programs across the country, but a decision by the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics has given some student-athletes a new shot at winning seasons and championship trophies.

The NAIA announced that for fall and winter athletes, competition from May 16, 2020, — May 15, 2021, will not be charged against their eligibility. Therefore, some JBU student-athletes, who under normal circumstances would have walked out on Senior Day, can come back and play one more season as a Golden Eagle.

Six student-athletes took advantage of this and retained their 2021-22 season eligibility. These “COVID seniors” are Vanessa Reynoso, Caitlyn Logan and Anna Schuchardt of the women’s soccer team and Densier Carnes, Brenton Toussaint and Rokas Grabliauskas of the men’s basketball team.

For Reynoso, Logan and Schuchardt, getting a chance to play this fall meant having a shot at furthering the momentum of the women’s soccer program, as well as staying connected with the sport they love and the players and coaches with whom they’ve grown.

Anna Schuchardt has been a team captain over the last two years and is a key ingredient in their success on and off the field. A midfielder that has a high work rate and a willingness to get into big tackles, she leads by example.

“It has been such a blessing being here another year,” Schuchardt said. “I feel like this opportunity is so rare, and [I] have been just amazed by the gift it has been to form deeper relationships from being here one extra year.”

Playing another season for head coach Kathleen Paulsen, Ph.D., has also been a high point for Schuchardt.

“I could go on and on about how Coach Paulsen has changed my life. She has taught me the meaning of soccer and what it looks like to love the Lord in soccer and how to glorify him in every aspect,” she said. “I want to thank her and JBU for teaching me that there is a deeper meaning in life.”

A fifth season as a Golden Eagle has allowed goalkeeper Logan to enjoy every moment of her last year.

“Playing soccer and doing nursing school didn’t allow for extra time to spend just hanging out,” she said. “Part of the reason I wanted to come back was to have a season without being overly busy so that I could enjoy fun moments with my teammates. I feel I have accomplished that.”

Logan has won Sooner Athletic Conference Goalkeeper of the Year and has been a first-team All-Conference selection for three consecutive seasons (2018-2020). As of Nov. 1, Logan has only allowed five goals this fall against 30 saves. She is also at the top of the conference in goals-against average (.382), save percentage (.857) and shutouts per game (4.00), making her a favorite to win Goalkeeper of the Year and to become a first-team All-Conference selection for the fourth straight season.

While the success that Logan and the Golden Eagles have achieved is, without a doubt, important, she emphasized that team togetherness is a big reason why they’ve progressed into one of the conference’s most formidable teams.

“My class specifically was a part of a big building time for the program, so it has been so cool to watch the program grow and increase the competition each year,” Logan said. “The best part of our team is that we all play because we love the sport, and we love each other. Winning obviously is fun, but the best part is that we get to do it together.”

Meanwhile, after being a second-team All-Conference selection last season, Reynoso has picked up where she left off this fall. As of Nov. 1, Reynoso was leading the team in assists with a career-high 10. Reynoso has also contributed with four goals, including a game winner against No. 12 Columbia on Sept. 22.

Overall, this season has been a success as the Golden Eagles secured their second straight SAC regular-season title. They are the favorites to win the conference tournament for a second consecutive season, and they are looking to make another deep run in the national tournament.
Meanwhile, the JBU men’s basketball season got underway on Oct. 29 with the annual Toilet Paper Game. Players and fans were thrilled to return to the tradition after last season’s game was canceled due to the pandemic.

Toussaint entered his sixth season as a Golden Eagle. During the 2018-19 season, he shot 70.6% from the field while averaging 7.8 points per game and grabbing four rebounds a game. Unfortunately, an injury caused him to miss the 2019-20 season. During that time, Toussaint assisted head coach Jason Beschta on the sidelines and provided leadership for the other players to follow while recovering. Now, Toussaint will bring his leadership and integral scoring ability back to the court for the 2021-22 season.

Grabliauskas has been an integral part of the JBU rotation since he first stepped on campus. During the 2019-20 season, Grabliauskas finished third in scoring with 10.4 points per game and was a key component of that season’s 28-5 team. Last season was not an easy one for Grabliauskas. After missing the first four games, he struggled to regain his footing offensively, so another season allows Grabliauskas a chance to continue to develop as a player.

“My mindset [is] that I get to play another year. I take every day one at a time, and that helped me to go through this hard time,” Grabliauskas said. “In general, we are not promised tomorrow, and I am just grateful to see another day and to be able to practice and play basketball.”

Carnes enters his fifth season and has been a regular part of Beschta’s rotation since he was a freshman. The 2019-20 season effectively served as the breakout season for Carnes, as he went from playing mainly off the bench in a backup role to becoming a go-to guy on the inside.

As one of the team’s leaders, Carnes is doing what he can to help his team to another successful season while also serving as a mentor for some of the team’s younger players.

“When it comes to the guys in the locker room, we are a pretty experienced group, having seven seniors this year,” Carnes said. “My main thing is to help build confidence and give whatever tips I can to the younger guys in the locker room that would help them through the season and for years to come.”

Carnes became the 30th player in program history to eclipse the 1,000 career points mark last season. With an additional season, he has a chance to continue to move up JBU’s all-time career points ladder, but it’s not something he’s prioritizing over the team’s collective goals.

“Personally, the only milestone I’d be interested in is reaching the 1,500-point mark,” Carnes said, “but, in all honestly, I’d be willing to miss that goal for a chance at a championship this year.”

The COVID-19 pandemic brought new, unexpected challenges to everyone, and the athletics teams at JBU fought through it and grew from the experience. In JBU’s “COVID seniors,” you’ll find examples of resiliency, faith, determination and leadership. Fans and teammates alike get to enjoy and appreciate these traits for another year.
Since JBU’s founding, chapel has been core to the JBU experience. Held in the historic Cathedral of the Ozarks, the twice-weekly chapel services bring students, faculty and staff together to worship God and study his word. The services have become a sacred rhythm that reminds attendees of the truth and purpose undergirding the demands and responsibilities of their days. Until the incorporation of contemporary worship music in chapel services in the ‘90s, the JBU community was typically led by the university’s Cathedral Choir in traditional hymns.

But in 2009, when Jen Edwards ’03, Ph.D., became a faculty member, she introduced a new chapel worship model. “When I came, I decided to try and build a system that closely modeled the local church,” said Edwards, associate professor of worship arts and department head for music and theatre. “Each leader leads a band, and that band stays together the whole year. Essentially, these are the ‘volunteers’ you’re leading.”

Each year, Edwards puts together four chapel bands with one or two leaders and several musicians who also serve as extra vocalists.

Edwards encourages band leaders and members to incorporate a range of musical styles into their sets from traditional hymns to contemporary songs to leading familiar songs in different languages represented within the community. This encouragement is designed to engage and edify JBU’s interdenominational community.

Keith Jagger, Ph.D., university chaplain, emphasizes the importance of JBU chapel bands in the unifying worship experience that reminds us that God is with us. “Chapel band leaders serve as the main designers of this space,” said Jagger. “While a few of us have the privilege of guiding student leaders along in the work, there is something symbolic about peer leadership in this space. As a community of young people are establishing their own faith, being guided by fellow students who they look up to is important.”

Chloe Bishop, senior worship arts and graphic design major, joined a chapel band so she could minister to the campus community as the chapel bands minister to her. “It’s a cool way to serve the JBU community and not just serve in the church,” Bishop said. “I really love being led by my fellow students when I’m not on stage.”

However, when the COVID-19 pandemic required social distancing in the 20-21 academic year, chapel had to be reimagined. Students could no longer meet as a community in the cathedral and instead met in smaller chapel groups, where prerecorded messages were played. Chapel bands also prerecorded worship songs that were played before each message. (Scan the QR code to view “Satisfied in You”.)

Finding a way to have collective worship was still critical, so JBU held Worship on the Quad on Sunday evenings, as a chance for students, faculty and staff to come together — socially distanced — and worship outdoors and hear a short message. “Worship on the Quad was definitely a bright spot and a moment of refreshment for the student body,” Bishop said.

Aug. 24, 2021, marked the first time students met together for chapel in 18 months. The student body was visibly excited and marked the service with cheers, clapping and a very moved chapel speaker, JBU President Chip Pollard. “When all of the students were back, we all kind of felt emotional and appreciated it,” said Bishop.
In 1998, a donation made to JBU created and endowed the Center for Healthy Relationships (CHR). The center’s mission was, and still is, to encourage, educate and equip individuals, families and leaders with resources needed to have healthy and flourishing relationships.

Early on, the CHR identified a need to help individuals in ministry through workshops, classes and coaching. Gary J. Oliver, Ph.D., executive director for CHR, developed the ChurchStrong intensives — four-day retreats at Subiaco Abbey for groups of eight to 10 people designed to help participants grow emotionally, relationally and spiritually. With a background in theology and psychology, Oliver is well-versed in the holistic needs of ministry leaders.

“Most people who go to seminary don’t have much training on how to communicate, how to manage conflict,” Oliver said. “They have virtually no training on their emotions, what emotions are or where they come from — how to manage anxiety and fear, depression and grief, and loss and insecurity.”

The intensives, rooted in Romans 8:29, “help men and women become conformed to the image of [God’s] son … and all of who he made us to be — our thinking, our feeling and our doing,” said Oliver.

To date, ChurchStrong intensives have served over 300 leaders, including Bob Ryan, who now helps facilitate follow-up groups. Ryan mentors pastors and business leaders, using the knowledge and skills gained in the intensives.

“They are learning to identify the emotions, transfer and release them to God,” Ryan said. “They are moving forward with what God has called them to do.”

Sue Addington serves as a lay pastor in women’s Bible studies, Sunday school and small groups and is using what she learned to minister to nearly 450 women.

“I have taught women for years, but in the last 10 months I have started teaching women to use the Lectio Divina model of listening to God speak,” Addington said. “I have been drawn to simplicity, introspection and listening in my journey with Jesus.”

JBU alumnus Mark Gumm ’94 participated in several of CHR’s intensives and training opportunities, which he says transformed his approach to ministry and his personal relationship with God.

“The intensives helped open my eyes to the fact that in ministry, we often are too busy as a human doing ministry and things for God instead of a human being with God in relationship,” Gumm said.

Gumm said the intensive is one of the best things he did for his Christian walk, ministry and marriage. It helped him evaluate his personal, spiritual and relational life and gave him tools and practical steps to make improvements.

“The range and scope of the leaders impacted by this unique ministry continues to surprise even us,” Oliver said. “Numerous leaders have told us that they are still in ministry due in large part to what God did in their lives through the intensive experience.”

For more information about ChurchStrong, visit www.liferelationships.com.
Keith Jagger, Ph.D., knew he was stepping into some big shoes when he was hired as the JBU chaplain and dean of Christian formation. Former chaplain Rod Reed was a cornerstone of the JBU community for 11 years before leaving to take a job as the chancellor of Indiana Wesleyan University in 2018. But due to the lengthy search process and COVID-19 complications, most current JBU students only know of Reed by reputation.

The announcement of Jagger’s hiring was met with enthusiasm by the JBU community, as it seemed, in part, to signal a return to normality.

Jagger, his wife, Eve, and their three kids moved to Siloam Springs in July to begin his position as chaplain, leaving his role as the lead pastor at Grassroots Church in Thunder Bay, Ontario, Canada.

“I loved being a local church pastor, and in some ways I wish I could have done that for 40 years,” Jagger said. “But you never know where God is leading you, and it feels like God has been preparing JBU and me for each other.”

Jagger’s faith journey started in the pews of the Catholic Church. His early years were filled with Christian teaching and time outdoors.

“I grew up in Northern Illinois, and my family is Catholic. We attended mass quite regularly, and my parents had me in all of the Catholic Christian education opportunities for young people,” Jagger said. “I like to say I was formed deeply by the Roman liturgy and playing in the woods on the bluffs of the Mississippi River.”

Jagger says his Catholic upbringing was extremely positive, giving him a solid foundation on which to build his Christian faith.

“Some people who are in my shoes really resent their upbringing, like ‘they didn’t tell me the truth.’” Jagger said. “But for me, a lot of the seeds of my devotion to Jesus were planted there in the mass.”

It was Jagger’s experience at an evangelical Christian youth summer camp with Young Life that led him to a personal relationship with Christ.

“When I was 14, the summer before my freshman year, I heard the Protestants articulate the gospel in a way that totally made sense to me,” Jagger said. “Someone getting up and talking about Jesus’s sacrifice — a free sacrifice — that brings us peace and takes away the sins of the world, it made me go, ‘Oh, I can make this my own.’”

After his high school experience, which Jagger described as “positive but really messy,” he found his vocational calling. During his senior year of high school, Jagger attended a Christian youth rally in his hometown.

“I can’t even tell you to this day what the message was about,” Jagger said. “But I just knew that God was calling me to ministry at that point.”

Jagger’s first step was undergrad at Augustana College in Illinois, where he received a bachelor’s degree in religion, classics and music, and then Asbury Theological Seminary in Kentucky where he earned a master’s in New Testament.

While at Asbury, Jagger filled a variety of roles that allowed him to minister to university students, including acting as the spiritual director of Equipping Lydia, through which he led accountability and spiritual formation groups for men. He was also the director for global community development, where he helped over 300 international students transition to life at Asbury and guided the community in intercultural initiatives, including local mission partnerships.

But Jagger’s biggest challenge was waiting for him in Scotland at the University of St. Andrews, where he earned a doctorate in early Christianity, defending his doctoral thesis with the support of renowned New Testament scholar N.T. Wright.

“I try not to put people in the hero category, but he was as close as you could get for me,” Jagger said about his former doctoral supervisor. “I got the golden ticket to go study with him. A lot of people better than me could have received that, but for whatever reason, the Lord saw fit for that to work out.”

Jagger was unfamiliar with the role of chaplain until a few years before accepting the position at JBU, when colleagues brought the idea to his attention. It was the perfect combination of Jagger’s pastoral calling and his love for learning.

“I love learning, and I love honoring God with my mind. But I can’t deny that part of my calling is pastoral and leading people in mission,” Jagger said. “I found that this role is really a beautiful combination of intellectual scholarship and pastoral ministry.”

Leaving Grassroots Church wasn’t easy, but Jagger and his family have experienced many transitions.

“There’s a desire for people to be gracious with each other and help each other grow.”
“All transitions are hard, and all are painful,” Jagger said. “We’ve been through enough to know what to expect of the bumps and bruises of a big move and to know that every new place will have lots of treasures and gifts from the Lord. Coming to a new place and moving across the world — we’ve felt the pain and joy of that before.”

The JBU community was one of the factors that drew Jagger to the chaplain position. With some faculty and staff working at the university for 20-plus years, Jagger was intrigued.

“They’ve found a way to be colleagues together for 25 years. That’s a long time, as human beings, to work together,” Jagger said. “I got the impression really quickly that while we are after excellence here, there is that undergirding value of community.”

That same community has made the hard transition for Jagger and his family much easier. The Jaggers quickly felt embraced by their colleagues.

“There’s a desire for people to be gracious with each other and help each other grow,” Jagger said. “It’s amazing to see the quality of relationships which exist, and that’s really not something to take lightly.”

Jagger’s first item of business at JBU was asking for advice from Reed.

“He’s been really gracious. I’ve been able to talk to him a number of times, and he’s given me a lot of advice,” Jagger said. “For the first six weeks here, I’ve basically asked the question, ‘What did Rod do well?’ He is well remembered.”

But Jagger is already making his own impression on students. Junior Madi Buldra met Jagger the busy first week of school but notes he always greets her by name whenever he sees her on campus. Jagger was also particularly supportive of Buldra through a recent emotionally difficult time.

“Keith’s heart for the Lord and heart for people is incredibly evident in all that he does, and I can say that because I have experienced it firsthand,” said Buldra.

Senior Chloe Bishop, a member of one of JBU’s chapel bands, echoed Buldra’s observations of Jagger’s intentionality in getting to know students.

“In meetings and on teams, he has been present, attuned to the spiritual and emotional landscape of our groups and has led with boldness and humility,” added Bishop.

Buldra and Bishop both say they appreciate Jagger’s intellectually and spiritually Christ-centered teachings and agree that he is a great fit for JBU.

With the first few months under his belt, Jagger’s tenure at JBU is only just beginning.

“I spent four weeks here prepping for students to come. I got to witness orientation and the First Friday Futból, which were both amazing,” Jagger said. “I just feel amazed and exhausted all at the same time. I’ve had a lot of fun, and I can’t wait to get to be a part of that more.”
Tylar Lee is technically classified as a traditional undergraduate student, but there is little about his journey to JBU or his time as a student, which could be labeled “traditional.” He balances a full class load, extracurricular commitments and his burgeoning career in ministry all while leading a young family. He and his wife, Sarah, have a two-year-old daughter and another baby on the way.

Although he never expected to attend a Christian college, much less prepare for a future in full-time ministry, scholarships helped open the door for Lee to attend JBU.

Lee’s early experiences with faith were not easy — he battled deep depression as a teenager after the loss of a loved one, admitting that he wanted nothing to do with God during that time. After “hitting rock bottom,” he began to realize the need for Christ in his life and started to rebuild his faith foundation. He felt a call to ministry not long after. Today, he uses his life experiences to connect with those who are struggling and encourages people with a simple but powerful message: “hold on to your hope in Jesus.”

With goals of becoming a youth minister, college professor and ordained minister, Lee enrolled at JBU in 2019 to study Christian ministry and formation. A year later, he preached for the first time at First Church Siloam Springs, sharing a sermon titled “Hope and Suffering,” which he originally prepared for his preaching and teaching class at JBU.

Lee has developed a passion for the Old Testament and plans to write his senior capstone project about a topic from the division. He also hopes to pursue the same field of study in seminary.

This summer, Lee served as the youth ministry intern for First Church Siloam Springs, which fulfilled the internship requirement for his degree.

“It was such a blessing to our church family to have Tylar complete his internship here. He had such a great attitude — willing to serve wherever he could,” said Manny Anchondo, minister to families with children at First Church. “Once we gave him an opportunity to lead in ministry, you could really see his growth in leadership and sharpened ministry skills that he had attained since attending JBU. I’m excited to see where God will place him in the future, and I am confident that wherever it is, he will be well-equipped.”

In February, Lee was approved as a candidate for ministry through the Arkansas Conference of the United Methodist Church and has had the opportunity to preach in several Northwest Arkansas churches this fall.

Lee’s time at JBU is almost over, and he is grateful for his experience.

“The education I have received at JBU will always be with me, and I will be sad when that time is over,” Lee said.

Lee is a shining example of what students can accomplish when their financial status doesn’t dictate their educational opportunities. Scholarships benefit hundreds of students every single year and provide a way for young men and women like Lee to follow God’s plan for their lives.
Record Year of Donor Giving

Despite the financial turmoil of the pandemic and no major capital campaign, JBU ended the 2020-21 fiscal year with a record-breaking giving total — $28,733,567. We are deeply grateful for every special gift that made this possible.

Two large gifts — an $8 million gift from the Walton Charitable Support Foundation toward the university’s data analytics and computer science programs and a $6 million estate gift — helped the university reach a new giving milestone.

These two gifts, along with 23,559 gifts from 4,289 donors that brought in over $14.7 million, are a powerful testament to the generosity of our alumni, parents and friends.

“Every gift helps JBU fulfill its mission of helping students thrive spiritually while they gain the education and experience to help them be successful in their chosen field,” said Jim Krall, vice president for university advancement. “We’re thankful for each donor who supports that work.”

The fact that nearly half of the gifts — $13.6 million — benefit student scholarships demonstrates the commitment of our donors to helping students with financial need to be able to attend JBU.

During the year, 22 new endowed scholarships were established, creating a total of 310 gifts to establish those scholarships, plus additions to existing endowed scholarships, totaled $9.4 million.

The JBU Scholarship Fund, an annual fund that is spent each year on direct student aid, slightly exceeded its $825,000 goal (by $361) thanks to the generosity of 1,205 donors.

For information on how you can give to JBU, visit www.jbu.edu/give.

Pray for JBU

One of the ways you can support JBU is through prayer. Here are some specific requests:

**Students** — We’re nearing the time of final exams and projects. Pray for perseverance as students finish the semester and return home for the Christmas break. Also, pray for new students who will start their JBU journeys in January. It is often hard to come to a new place midyear.

**December Graduates** — Pray for wisdom as our graduating seniors bring their JBU time to a close and move out into the world as God leads. Pray also for our adult students completing their bachelor’s and master’s degrees — that God would guide their next steps.

**Faculty & Staff Searches** — JBU has searches open for several faculty positions as well as for a dean of the College of Education and Social & Behavioral Sciences. The nationwide labor shortages are also affecting JBU, particularly in our facilities services, dining services and information technology teams. Pray that God leads the right people to JBU and wisdom for the search committees and hiring supervisors.

**President Pollard and Cabinet** — Keep our campus administration in your prayers as they move into budget season and seek to honor God and serve students throughout the process.

**Admissions Staff** — Pray for our admissions counselors as they work with students and families considering JBU for the 2022-23 school year. We have many visitors coming to campus each week to experience JBU. Pray also for our online and graduate admissions counselors in their busy season of enrolling students for the start of programs in January.

**Financial Aid Office** — It’s FAFSA season! Pray for the team as they work with new and returning students to help them with the financial responsibilities of attending JBU.

**University Advancement Staff** — Pray for our fundraising staff as they begin to resume travel to visit donors. Pray for God to provide the money for the JBU Scholarship Fund that helps nearly 700 students each year. Pray also for the Alumni & Parent Engagement office as they plan events throughout the year.

**COVID-19** — We are grateful for low case numbers this fall. Please continue to pray for the physical and emotional health of our community.
Jen Edwards ’03, Ph.D., department head for music & theatre and associate professor of worship arts, joined the JBU faculty in 2009. Her fervor for excellent music in the church and her interest in the intersection of art, people and theology helped drive her decision to pursue a career in educating students in music. Edwards, who recently completed her doctorate in higher education, finds it rewarding to watch others recognize the greatness she sees in her worship arts students.
WHAT DO YOU FIND MOST REWARDING ABOUT TEACHING WORSHIP ARTS?

I find it rewarding to teach in an academic discipline that allows me to create alongside students. In every class and every rehearsal, we are making beautiful things — discussions, prayers, songs, questions — and something new always transpires because of the unique people in the room. Creativity and curiosity make for such holy spaces. It’s rewarding to share those spaces with students.

HOW DOES IT FEEL TO SEE STUDENTS IN YOUR DEPARTMENT BECOME SUCCESSFUL IN THEIR RESPECTIVE FIELDS?

It’s always incredible to see others recognize the greatness you see in your students. It evokes a sense of pride in me and serves as a big source of encouragement to continue the work.

AS DEPARTMENT CHAIR FOR MUSIC AND THEATRE, WHAT EXCITING NEW PLANS ARE THERE FOR THE DEPARTMENT’S FUTURE?

As a department, we embrace the unique opportunities that come with being a part of a small, Christian, liberal arts university. In our setting, our majors can explore several aspects of music and theatre instead of choosing just one. So, we are excited about opportunities to combine composition with theatre and jazz band with commercial voice. We are also excited about our integrated music studies major that is designed to combine music with any other academic discipline. Also, our recently expanded theatre and music theatre courses allow students to experience all of the facets of theatre. It’s exciting that all of these opportunities and experiences are open to nonmajors as well, creating a very eclectic and unique community of artists.

DO YOU SEE A DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WORSHIPPING WITH LIVE MUSIC AS A COMMUNITY COMPARED TO THE PREVIOUS YEAR’S SMALLER CHAPEL GROUPS?

Definitely — both can be valuable, and both are certainly worship. However, there is something almost creedal about corporate worship. It’s this beautiful moment where a bunch of people decide to show up to the same place and practice the rhythms of faith together. Corporate singing has this mysterious ability to remind individuals that they aren’t alone in the journey. If one person is tired and doesn’t feel like singing, in a way, their neighbor sings for them in corporate worship. Having to social distance and not hear our neighbors singing — reminding us of what and why we believe — was hard on a community that is used to having those reminders and encouragements regularly.

HOW HAS THE MUSIC AND THEATRE DEPARTMENT CHANGED SINCE YOUR TIME AS A STUDENT AT JBU?

Technology is an easy answer: new software, more efficient tools, new facilities. But I would also say the department has grown significantly in the variety of experiences offered to students and in our collaboration with other departments on campus. Putting students in every part of the stage production process, encouraging students to explore various commercial voice genres or new concerts that feature student compositions are examples of expanded opportunities. Offering work-study positions in graphic design, construction, audio and visual technology, textiles and management allows us to connect with several other departments on campus and offers unique application environments to reinforce their major program.

WHAT WERE THE MOST SIGNIFICANT INFLUENCES BEHIND BRINGING YOU BACK TO JBU AS A FACULTY MEMBER?

In a lot of ways, research supports the notion that the undergraduate years are where you really grow up or are formed. This was certainly true for me. Because of this, returning to the place that poured into me, in a role where I could then pour into others, seemed like an incredible opportunity. I was young and inexperienced, but in a lot of ways I knew I could “grow up” even more here if I returned. As a faculty member, I still trust JBU to continue to form me.

DO YOU HAVE ANY ADVICE FOR STUDENTS WANTING TO PURSUE A CAREER IN MUSIC OR THEATRE?

If you love it, you should do it. There are so many discussions right now about returns on investment and being practical. But I really can’t think of anything more impractical that getting a degree in something you don’t love and believe in. If you can’t wait to get to the choir, if the stage is where you feel at home, if your most true self is most present when you’re performing or writing, just say yes. You’ll be glad you did.

Read the expanded Faculty Spotlight at jbu.edu/news/articles.
FALL FEST: Students decorate their pumpkins during JBU’s Fall Festival. The event kicked off the season with crafts, food, games and live music from the student band Maple Street.
The challenges facing church leaders certainly shift over time but many of the themes remain the same: reaching younger audiences, declining evangelism, needing more volunteers, addressing cultural issues with biblical truth and more.
Pastors balance a multitude of responsibilities and priorities. While keeping up with technology, developing a web presence and maintaining robust social media pages are important parts of the job, these tasks have never topped the list of pastors’ concerns, according to Barna, a research organization focused on the intersection of faith and culture.

Then came the pandemic. An online presence became crucial to maintaining an authentic connection with congregants. Church leaders now face unexpected challenges and shifting focuses as the coronavirus shines a spotlight on already existing issues.

While the pandemic seems to be nearing an end, its effects on churches may never entirely be reversed.

Before March 11, 2020, churches across the U.S. varied in their adaption of social media and online video, but the abrupt spread of the pandemic and ensuing quarantine and distancing guidelines caught many congregations across the U.S. flat-footed, facing the looming question of how to move forward as a community when they couldn’t meet.

Josh Kruntorad, a 2017 graduate who serves as the assistant youth director at Faith Presbyterian Church in Birmingham, Alabama, recalls this moment vividly.

“When we were told we couldn’t meet in person, we had to start streaming our Sunday services,” said Kruntorad. “We didn’t have any online presence before last year. We had to set up a website and figure out how to stream our services on the fly, and that was a challenge.”

For some churches, the work to create a virtual experience was entirely unfamiliar; others identified a need to improve their digital presence if that was the only way their congregants would be experiencing Sunday services.

Before the pandemic, Community Christian Fellowship (CCF) in Siloam Springs, Arkansas, had typically posted a single-shot video recording of the Sunday service to their website and Facebook page early the next week. Throughout the pandemic, instead of holding a livestreamed service from an empty church, CCF prerecorded the various service segments — announcements, worship, communion and
sermon — during the week, edited them together and then premiered them on multiple platforms including Facebook, YouTube and Church Online on Sunday at the normal service time.

In the end, an hour-long worship service took many hours to prepare, record and edit. But Mark Gumm ’94, who serves as associate pastor, said the staff felt the payoff was worth the work it took to create a quality online experience that most closely reflected the experience of being in CCF’s worship center.

One silver lining to streaming Sunday services was that it provided an opportunity for many churches to expand their reach.

“Our pastoral staff would always be online during the streaming services, and it was a great way to stay connected with our church family in Siloam Springs, with old friends of CCF — people who had moved away — and new friends who had never attended in person before,” said Gumm. “It was also great to see some of our missionaries be able to participate in online services.”

Now that in-person services have resumed, Gumm said he sometimes meets new families that watched an online service before attending on a Sunday morning.

As churches have begun to return to in-person services, many Sunday mornings still look different. Some hold outdoor services; others have returned to indoor services with a variety of safety measures. Kruntorad’s church works to make services available for all.

“It’s been a challenge to accommodate all members of our church, but we’ve managed to do it,” Kruntorad said. “We have a room during the service that’s mask only, and then our sanctuary is mask optional in order to serve all members of our congregation.”

But a big challenge still lingers for many: getting everyone back in the seats.

Trey Hammond ’98 is the lead pastor at Crossroads of Life Church in Byram, Mississippi and has been working to fight the decline in church membership since the pandemic.

“I’d say we have about 50% in service, 20% watching online and around 30% not doing anything but receiving text messages from our prayer ministry,” Hammond said. “We’re really just trying to keep people connected.”

This tracks with research published by Barna in late May 2020 that showed that one third of “practicing Christians” stopped streaming church during the early months of the pandemic. For millennials (ages 26-41) that number rose to 50%.

Now with most churches back to in-person worship, research shows that church attendance is down anywhere from 30-60%.

Church leaders are starting to make decisions about what is best for their church when it comes to maintaining the online platforms that served their communities during the pandemic. For some, it is difficult to determine if the resources they’ve devoted to video production and streaming are still worth the investment.

“Obviously we want our congregation back in the building, so we have to decide if streaming is the best thing to do,” said Steve Genheimer ’76, administrative pastor at Community Covenant Church in Yukon, Oklahoma. “For some people, the streaming option is a great alternative for health and safety reasons, but I think some people have simply gotten comfortable streaming at home and don’t recognize the importance of community within the church.”

“It was slow going, as far as a community response at first ... But now we are providing counseling to not only our church, but we’ve got an influx of community members and pastors.”

Perhaps unsurprisingly, research indicates that younger Christians are still more inclined to log in rather than sit in. According to a Barna/Stadia survey done in late 2020, 71% of baby boomers (born 1946-1964) wanted to return to primarily in-person gatherings. But for Gen Z (born 1997-2012), that number drops to 41%.

While reaching younger Christians in a postmodern society has been a primary concern for pastors across America, COVID-19 has added layers of complexity that have proven difficult to navigate.

“Not just our church, but our whole community has experienced surreal lack of student participation,” Hammond said. “I think the pandemic has them in a place where they don’t really see the necessity of the
church community. Whether that’s because of their parents not emphasizing it or them making that decision on their own, it’s been really hard.”

Genheimer attests that Community Covenant Church had to work hard to engage younger generations even before COVID-19 disbanded in-person meetings.

“Absolutely it’s a problem, but it’s not something new,” said Genheimer. “It’s always been difficult to get youth involved, but we are always trying new ways to bring students and their families into the church.”

Still, other churches like Kruntorad’s have seen growth in the past year and a half. Faith Presbyterian hired Kruntorad in response to the growth their youth group was seeing.

“We have seen a growth in our youth group and our millennial population, and I think it really comes down to our mission, which is be kind to people,” said Kruntorad. “When students feel comfortable bringing their friends who don’t feel like they belong in certain churches, and we are able to make them feel welcome, that has contributed significantly to our growth.”

“It’s definitely been a blessing to be a part of,” Kruntorad said. “God has allowed us to grow and love our community, and we’ve really seen God work this past year and a half.”

While the need existed long before COVID-19, pastors are also recognizing an increased demand for counseling services for their congregants.

Barna research performed before the pandemic shows that half of U.S. 18-35-year-olds “expressed anxiety over important decisions and were afraid to fail,” nearly 40% often felt sad or depressed and 34% felt lonely or isolated from others.

“We were already working on getting a counseling service in place for our church [before the pandemic],” Hammond said. “Seeing increased suicide rates, family struggles, high anxiety, etc., we saw it as an area where we could really serve our community.”

Hammond, along with colleague and associate pastor Lydia Decker, launched Wise Counsel Services in September 2020 with one goal in mind: to serve their church and community.

“It was slow going, as far as a community response at first,” Hammond said. “But now we are providing counseling to not only our church, but we’ve got an influx of community members and pastors. We’re still only in infancy, and it has already been so powerful.”

Like so many other companies and businesses, the church has continued to meet the challenges brought up by the pandemic with creativity, maintaining their diligence in answering the call of the scriptures to evangelize and disciple believers.
church on Instagram? Spending time and resources to optimize an online presence may seem preposterous to a lot of ministry organizations. Why spend time online when that energy could be going to the people who are physically present?

Two years ago, I would have been hard-pressed to find a well-curated social media presence for a local church. But when COVID-19 disrupted the traditional routine, an online presence became a dire necessity to stream services and maximize connectivity within social media. Part of my role as the social media coordinator at First Baptist Rogers [Rogers, Arkansas] is to figure out how we, as a church, can use social media for marketing and take our online presence to the next level.

My workweek starts on Sunday. Armed with a Sony camera and a large zoom lens, I spend the day capturing ordinary moments in an extraordinary way. Sunday is chaotic. Kids scream worship songs at the top of their lungs. Family and friends sit in the front rows, happy tears shimmering as they watch a loved one declare their dedication to the Lord through baptism. Groups of ladies gather to catch up after a week apart. My desire is to capture these moments. In this way, I get to directly utilize my photography degree from JBU.

If I am not taking pictures or printing Sunday bulletins, I am strategizing when, where and what to post online. I work with a team to plan out a month of content and put the necessary pieces together to accomplish those ideas. This can be a simple, one-off post on current events — for example, a post promoting Nov. 17 as Take a Hike Day. Posts can also cover an entire series based on our Sunday sermons.

Right now, I am learning Instagram Reels, which have an unparalleled reach because reels are most widely viewed by people who are not actively following our church account. This gives us a foot in the door to the surrounding community. Each week, I get to dive deeper into the data analytics collected from our social media, and I search for trends within those analytics in hopes of maximizing our online reach.

The questions remain: why is it important to utilize social media? Why is it important to present compelling photographs and content of Sunday happenings? Because times have changed and are still changing, and we live in an online world.

When someone searches for First Baptist Rogers on Instagram, I hope they see an accurate representation of who we are. I want them to see a fun, thoughtful collection of pictures, graphics and media that tells the viewer the story of our church. I hope they see the love of Christ shining through and feel like they could belong here with us.
Most Christians walking into churches around the world don’t spend a lot of time thinking about how those churches came to exist.

But for JBU alumni who have dedicated their lives to launching, tending and growing communities of believers, church planting occupies their hearts and minds every single day. They are giving their lives to building the Church, sharing the Gospel, discipling believers and meeting the needs of their communities.

For Corbin Hobbs ’11, planting the Heights Church in Denver, Colorado, has been a “scary leap of faith.” After graduating from JBU with a degree in biblical and theological studies, Hobbs and his wife, Allie (Olinger) ’12, moved to Louisville, Kentucky, where Hobbs attended Southern Seminary. It was there that Hobbs met Aaron Harvie, a seminary professor who would become his mentor. Together, Hobbs and Harvie studied the Great Commission and then the “how-to” of the Great Commission described in the book of Acts.

“I realized that the history of Christianity is really the history of people [following the Acts model] over and over,” Hobbs said.

Corbin and Allie began to pray about planting a church. They learned that the first three steps to planting a church were to choose a place, gather people (build a team) and develop financial partners.

“I remember Allie and I would lay in bed and pray for those three things every night. And that’s exactly what God did,” Hobbs said.

The Hobbs family moved to Denver in 2015, where Corbin joined the staff of Summit Church and completed a residency in church planting through Summit Church in Raleigh, North Carolina. In August 2016, after a year on staff at Summit, Hobbs launched the Heights Church with about 20 people meeting in a coffee shop.

“Those early gatherings were really simple. I would teach the Bible, and then we would eat tacos together,” Hobbs said. “The story of those first six months is the story of Jesus building his Church on the Bible and tacos.”

Eventually, the Heights began meeting in a local elementary school and grew to about 175 people. In June 2019, God provided a permanent building for the church on the east side of downtown Denver.

“It’s a wild story of God’s grace,” said Hobbs. “But in every season, God has given us the grace and faith we needed, and then he sustained us. The Lord has been really kind to us. A big part of that has been the coaching we received about the financial realities of church planting and also having the team of people we did it with.”

That team included several other JBU alumni as well. Hobbs’ younger sister, Kearsten Hobbs ’15, moved to Denver to work on her master’s degree at Denver Seminary. She helped launch the Heights from the earliest days of the church and also started her own counseling practice that is based out of the church. JBU alumni Dan and Heather (Wadsworth) McCullough ’05 also attend the Heights and serve as community group leaders.

Hobbs said that his years at JBU played a significant role in preparing him for church planting, and that he especially appreciated the interdenominational, broadly evangelical experience at JBU.

“JBU gave me a foundation to understand both the Bible and culture better,” he said. “My education was really rigorous, and I’m thankful for it. JBU taught me how to really study the Bible and then bring it to bear in our culture.”

Today, the Heights is thriving and growing, and Corbin
and Allie are raising their two daughters, Merit (4) and Tyler (2). Hobbs said a favorite memory in his church planting adventure was the day JBU President Chip Pollard showed up at the Heights.

“I got up to teach the Bible, looked out and saw Chip Pollard just sitting out there,” he said. “It was such a surprise, and after the service he was so encouraging to me.”

Not every moment in church planting is filled with encouragement and success. When Brit Windel ’08 and his wife, Stacie, moved to Kenosha, Wisconsin, in 2013 to plant DayBreak Church, the path was full of unexpected challenges and trials.

“We can’t sugarcoat it,” Windel said. “It was hard from day one.”

Even though Windel and his wife both have master’s degrees, they struggled to find jobs in Kenosha. Month after month they waited for the home they still owned in Colorado to sell. They were living on a mattress on the floor in Stacie’s sister’s home. The Friday before the church was supposed to launch, their car exploded.

“In our training, church planting was made to sound sexy — ‘God’s going to be in it; He’s going to bless everything your hand touches’ — but everything was hard, and we questioned everything,” Windel said. “It was taxing: emotionally, physically and spiritually. But we realized that the suffering was helping us to minister to those God wanted us to reach. If everything had been sexy and easy and fun, we wouldn’t be reaching the people we are reaching.”

About six years after planting DayBreak, the church was navigating the COVID-19 pandemic when tragedy struck Kenosha. People all over the world watched the aftermath of the shooting of Jacob Blake in Kenosha and the intense riots and protests that followed. DayBreak was in the middle of all of it.

“Our building had damage from the riots; we were at the epicenter,” Windel said. “At DayBreak, we have a deep vision of Jeremiah 29:7: When your city thrives, you thrive. We took this as an opportunity to put that vision on display for our city. We are not a wealthy church, but we were able to be generous. Even in the midst of the crazy, we had insane favor for our church. Now Kenosha business owners who were not believers are here with us.”

Although the struggles of the early days at DayBreak are still fresh in his memory, Windel is now celebrating what God has done in and through the church. DayBreak just celebrated its seventh anniversary and now has about 170 people who attend. Their vision continues: to love their city well and tell the story of Jesus to whoever will listen.

For Greg McKinney ’14, church planting was not even on his radar when he was studying youth ministry at JBU. After he graduated and had been serving as the youth pastor at Community Christian Fellowship (CCF) in Siloam Springs for several years, he was given the opportunity to
occasionally preach during the main service. That season sparked McKinney’s love for teaching, speaking and leading adult leaders. It was also the time that the idea of church planting started as a seed in the McKinney home.

At the time, McKinney and his wife, Kate, had four young children. As they were raising their family and serving at CCF, they began to dream and pray together about their vision for a multigenerational, multiethnic church. But they had one huge unanswered question: Where?

McKinney said his JBU professor and mentor, Jason Lanker, helped him answer that question.

“He said, ‘I think you’re making this way too complicated. Go home and talk with Kate. Decide on a place and go pray there.’ And that’s what we did. We drove to Kansas City,” McKinney said.

A few months later, Greg and Kate McKinney were moving their family of six to a home a few blocks from Troost Avenue, a street charged with the energy of being a historical crossroads of Kansas City. Their goal was to start with loving their own neighbors, and they didn’t have to wait long to find the opportunity to do just that.

“Shortly after we moved, there was a homicide next door, and I got to love on that neighbor,” McKinney said. “Our neighbors don’t step foot in churches, but they call me their pastor.”

In October 2019, Glory Church had its first in-home, vision-casting meeting with about 24 people. By February 2020, Glory Church was ready to launch, and the launch team included a small army of Greg and Kate’s fellow JBU alumni: Jess Turner ’17, Brandon ’14 and Olivia (Rollene) Blackman ’15, Ben ’19 and Emma (Pitts) Smith ’19, Noah and Katie (Rowe) Brown ’19, Abby Acker ’19 and Caleb Gaikema ’19. This group of JBU alumni jumped in to serve Glory Church in a tour de force of leadership, including leading small groups, hospitality and greeting teams, playing in the worship band, taking photographs, leading the setup/teardown team, teaching kids and helping manage finances.

Glory Church launched Feb. 9, 2020, with about 120 people in the room. When the McKinneys looked out over the church on launch day, they saw their vision and dream for Glory Church coming to fruition: a multigenerational, multiethnic, multisocioeconomic group gathered to worship together in Kansas City. In the first few weeks, they celebrated 13 salvations and six baptisms.

Seven weeks later, the pandemic hit the United States and brought with it many challenges for the fledgling Glory Church.

“We had to figure out how to maintain community when we didn’t even have a strong community built yet,” McKinney said. “We got really creative; some things worked, and some did not. We did fitness Zooms; we did a lot of service projects; we did a lot outside. We decided early on that we would keep our values at the forefront as we serve our city. We did worship nights outside in the park. Somehow, we were able to grow during that time.”

Today, at just under two years old, Glory Church continues to make a mark on Kansas City as a growing group of believers committed to serving their city. They host a weekly food pantry that feeds about 250 people with nonperishable foods as well as fresh fruits and vegetables. They offer a clothing closet and serve free hot meals every Wednesday, cooked by church members.

“We have some awesome women in our Black community, and they get loud,” McKinney said. “One calls herself Mama T; she always calls out: ‘COME AND GET MY FOOD!’ It’s amazing.”

“My whole vision for Glory Church since day one has been a little bigger than even what it is right now,” McKinney said. “There are a lot of different ways that you can church plant, but I’m very entrepreneurial-minded. We are hoping to eventually end up in an urban building that can double as a community events space where we can partner with local nonprofits who need consistent building space. That vision is slowly coming to fruition.”

From Glory Church in Kansas City, to DayBreak in Kenosha, to the Heights in Denver, to the many other churches planted by JBU alumni across the nation and world, they all have one thing in common: God-sized dreams.

“My hope is that the Heights becomes a church-planting hub. We hope that those interested in church planting will reach out to us — I’d love to help you do that.”

From the days of Acts 2 to 2021, the history of Christianity marches on with every new church planted. And amidst the march, our JBU alumni are planting, watering and watching God bring the growth of his Kingdom on Earth.
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John Brown University
jbu.edu/mba
In what felt like a small return to normal after a year without homecoming on campus and the Centennial celebration homecoming in 2019, this year’s homecoming, Oct. 1-2, was a breath of fresh air.

Traditional staples like chapel, the Heritage Society induction, the Scholarship Dinner and varsity soccer games highlighted the weekend’s events.

Two classes (1970 and 1971) were inducted into the Heritage Society, which recognizes alumni who graduated 50 years ago or more. Their reunions were filled with stories, laughter and gratitude for God’s faithfulness through the years.

Other more recent homecoming traditions like the Alumni Breakfast with President Pollard on Saturday morning and the 5K Glow Run, benefitting the JBU Scholarship Fund, were also well attended and enjoyed by the participants.

The men’s rugby club celebrated its 40th anniversary and battled heavy rains on Saturday morning with an alumni win over the current rugby team.

The festivities concluded with the Alumni Awards Dinner and the fall play “Tartuffe,” presented by the department of music and theatre.

Don’t miss out! Join us Oct. 7-8 for Homecoming 2022.
Homecoming Queen Francell Palma and King Chapman Campbell
Save the Date
FAMILY WEEKEND
February 18-19
Class of 1970 Reunion
Volleyball Game
Alumni Rugby Game
Honors Reunion
Men's Ultimate Frisbee Game
Women's Soccer Game

Volleyball Game
Women's Soccer Game
Alumni Rugby Game
Save the Date
FAMILY WEEKEND
February 18-19
Kristin (Wood) Woolley ’06 never expected to attend college in Arkansas. Living in Colorado, the daughter of two accountants ended up at John Brown University after the Cathedral Choir sang at her high school.

“They sounded beautiful,” she recalled, and it was enough to inspire a visit.

Between the lovely campus and the kindness of former music professors Terri and Jan Wubbena, Woolley landed in Siloam Springs to start college.

“They were so kind and just made me feel wanted,” Woolley said.

Her goal was to study voice, but her parents suggested music education might be more practical.

A game-changing moment for her life came when Woolley had an opportunity to start leading worship in JBU’s chapel services.

“I was so green,” she said. “There was a legacy of people at JBU who had led worship really well, and I’d watched them do a great job. But then they all graduated and left an empty spot.”

Woolley and another student picked up the mantle and “just started figuring out what to do.”

PIVOTAL PREPARATION

One day in a chapel service, Woolley was unexpectedly asked to do a song.

“Tracy Balzer [director of the Office of Christian Formation] looked at me and said, ‘You can do it,’” Woolley said. “I think that belief in me, as a musician, as a worshiper, as a child of God, really gave me this security, and I thought, ‘I can lead these people.’ I remember in that moment just stepping out into this water, having no idea what’s going to happen or what I’m doing … not prepared, not qualified.”

The moment provided pivotal preparation.

“I think that has carried me for the past 13 years of ministry,” Woolley reflected. “It’s okay that you’re not prepared or not qualified in moments because God goes before you, behind you and around you. And he leads the way if you’re willing to be open-handed to what he has for his church.”

As much as Woolley loved leading worship, her career preparation qualified her to be a K–12 music teacher; and after graduation she got a job in Lincoln, Arkansas, where she taught elementary music. She quickly realized, however, that teaching was not for her, and Woolley hoped there was something else for her to pursue. She left teaching after a year and a half and felt like God was allowing her to let it go and trust him for whatever came next.

Woolley returned to Colorado and humbly moved into her parents’ basement, ready to see where God would lead. The first place he led her was the church that would eventually become a cornerstone in her life and career.
**SENSE OF HOME**

Jessica (Naramore) McDonald, a 2005 JBU alumna who also lived in Colorado, invited Woolley to Woodmen Valley Chapel in Colorado Springs.

“I had grown up at a different church,” Woolley said, “but needed to figure out who I was as a believer, independent from my parents. Jessica invited me one weekend, and I walked in and just had this overwhelming sense of home.”

At Woodmen, Woolley found freedom and the ability to be herself in the Lord’s presence. She started volunteering to help with the worship team and had an experience similar to her season at JBU.

“They just slowly began trusting me with more and more,” Woolley recalled, “and gave me the chance to rise to my potential.”

After a few years as a volunteer and part-time staff member, Woolley began full-time work in the worship department in 2010. She continued to feel the freedom to bring her whole, authentic self to worship at Woodmen, which played a role in the next stage of her life.

**SHOWING UP AS YOU ARE**

“One weekend, I was playing the accordion on stage — because I think one of the most important parts of worship is just enjoying who God has made you to be — and having some fun in front of the church, nothing fancy or perfect,” said Woolley.

According to Kristin, Tyler Woolley, who was on the student ministry staff, knew Kristin loved God and was a capable musician. He saw her playing the accordion that morning and thought, “Oh, she’s weird, too.” It was that “weirdness” that drew him in and sparked a relationship. Tyler and Kristin married in 2013, had a daughter in 2014, a son in 2017 and in November 2020, they welcomed twins — a boy and a girl.

After leading worship at JBU when she was so “green,” Woolley became a leader who knew what she was doing and how to prepare. She knows, however, that what happens during worship has everything to do with God and “very, very, very little to do with Kristin.”

“I have this deep awareness of how to plan something where someone could connect with God, and in a moment, be able to get out of the way, allowing the Holy Spirit to work,” she said.

Her days of leading worship “super prepared” seem far behind her, but her added roles of wife and mother have taught Woolley some of her greatest lessons as a worship leader.

“At this point, I am just showing up,” She said, “I haven’t showered. I probably haven’t really practiced and am leaning on my experience. I’m not completely prepared. I’m tired and stretched so thin, but it doesn’t stop my ability to go before Jesus, saying, ‘This is all I am; this is all I’ve got.’”

**MINISTRY IS EVERYWHERE**

Although Woolley and her husband are both in church ministry positions, they believe their ministry is everywhere — at church, at home and in their neighborhood.

“We are trying really hard to love whoever God puts in our path,” she said, “and that is worship, too.”

Her longevity at her church has given Woolley a deep love for God’s people. “The beautiful thing of leading for 12 years is that I know people’s stories,” she said. “I watch them worship, and there’s a depth there. I see people dealing with chronic illness, marriage challenges or struggles with their kids raising their hands as if to say, ‘I trust you, Jesus, you are faithful.’ I watch them choose to follow Jesus, and that helps me choose to follow Jesus in the good and bad parts of my own journey.”

Jen Edwards, Ph.D., JBU associate professor of worship arts and department head for music and theatre, sees great value in Woolley’s work.

“Kristin is doing typical work,” Edwards said, “but she is extremely gifted, musically and a natural pastor — this makes her work ‘atypical.’ She’s been in ministry at the same place for a long time. In a culture that almost promotes transience and ‘short stops,’ this longevity is admirable. It’s also allowed her to build more and more confidence and competence in several areas of music and ministry. In my opinion, she’s hit her stride and is a great example of a woman thriving in a pastoral role.”

Woolley looks back on her experiences at JBU as foundational for her life and ministry. “I became a great musician because of my professors at JBU,” she reflected. “Paul Smith [faculty emeriti and professor of music from 1987-2017] and the Wubbenas gave me such a gift in musicianship that has served me well. The gift of education has carried me a lot.”

PHOTO CREDIT: CORRIE SMITH
Alumni Awards

Stanton Weaver '22 — Outstanding Senior Award
As an electrical engineering major and leader on the Student Ministry Leadership Team, Stanton Weaver is an exceptional representative of the student body. Weaver has shown excellence in her academics, winning numerous awards and scholarships, including the IEEE PES Scholarship. She is also involved in several organizations on campus, including SMLT, club volleyball, the Engineering Student Council and serves as president of the Society of Women Engineers.

Krista Gay '16 — Young Eagle Award
A first-generation college student, Krista Gay excelled inside and outside of the classroom. Gay’s desire to fight injustice led her to start the student club Students Against Sex Slavery. After graduating from JBU, Gay was accepted into Brooklyn Law School, where she served as the executive editor of the Brooklyn Journal. She currently serves as a law clerk to a federal judge in the Eastern District of New York. Once her clerkship ends, she will begin as an associate at Kasowitz, Benson and Torres, a top-ranked national law firm.

Dr. James Barnes ‘05, — Career Achievement Award
James Barnes initially earned degrees in broadcasting and business administration at JBU and then returned to JBU to pursue post baccalaureate studies to satisfy entrance requirements for medical school. Barnes went on to earn his Doctorate of Medicine at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences. After graduating, he did a five-year orthopedic surgery residency at the University of Missouri, Kansas City, where he was elected to the house staff council and served as president of the council for two consecutive terms. Following his time in Kansas City, Barnes transitioned into military active duty life where he served as the medical director of surgical services and the chief of orthopedic surgery for the 56th medical group. During his service, he attained the rank of major, with multiple recognitions including the Air Force Commendation Medal, Meritorious Service Medal and NATO Service Medal for Operation Resolute Support. He now serves as a sports medicine fellow at UCLA, caring for Olympians and college athletes as he oversees the medical care of several UCLA athletic teams.

Nicole Iman '09 and Scott Key '09 — Christian Ministry Award
Nicole Iman graduated with a degree in intercultural studies and has worked overseas in a variety of capacities, including with Adult Speech and Language Therapy (SALT) international teams in both Iraq and Afghanistan. Scott Key graduated with a degree in construction management before completing a master’s degree in architecture from Rice University. In 2018, Nicole and Scott joined forces to found Every Shelter to relieve suffering and grow resiliency for those displaced by war, persecution and disaster through the design, creation and delivery of shelter products. Their work has impacted the lives of thousands of people around the world.

Kim Hadley — Christian Service Award
Kim Hadley, Ph.D., began her career with JBU teaching as an adjunct in the adult degree completion program in Fort Smith, Arkansas. After more than a decade of teaching, she was asked to consider the role of chief financial officer for the university in 2009. Her work as CFO has included establishing a foreign charitable entity called JBU Northern Ireland, which supports our international programs. She is a nationally recognized leader with the National Association of College and University Business Officers, the Southern Association of College and University Business Officers and the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities CFO commission.

Paul Zheng ’86 — Outstanding Alumnus
Paul Zheng came to JBU because he dreamed of studying the Bible, as well as science, in America. After graduating from JBU with a degree in electrical engineering, he worked for five years as an engineer for American Date System Incorporated. In 1993, he founded PDK Worldwide Enterprise Incorporated, a home textiles business. He and his wife, Katherine, managed the company for 25 years until they sold it to another corporation. Over the span of his career, PDK sold over 10 million items of home textiles and generated over $100 million in revenue. Aside from founding PDK Inc., Zheng has been attending and serving at Chinese Christian Church in Pawtucket, Rhode Island, since 1994. He has served as the deacon of the governing board, the chair of the mission committee and the advisor of the fellowship department.
Alumni Updates

Julie Eddy ’18 has been named chief of staff to the president at Greenville Technical College. She was also recognized in the GSA Business Report’s Forty Under 40. 07

Madison (Humphrey) Grove ’19 received the 2021 Grant for Innovative Teaching for her proposal to self-publish a collection of coming-of-age vignettes by her eighth-grade class based on the novel “The House on Mango Street.” The collection will be titled “The School on Walmsley Ave.”

Beth (Brankle) Holt ’18 was one of 24 students accepted into the Missouri State University School of Anesthesia. She will graduate in May 2024 with her doctorate in nurse anesthesia practice. She will begin practicing as a CRNA after graduation. 14

Clarence Hulse ’92 received the honor of Fellow Member status by the International Economic Development Council. The status is given to IEDC members who have displayed unusual stature in the field of economic development or related disciplines. 15

Bill Kitchen ’78 retired this year after 40 years as a commercial banker. He and his brothers were chosen to participate in the biennial Motorcycle Cannonball, a selective endurance race. 03

Luke Macfarlan ’17 completed his doctorate in chemical engineering from the University of Texas in August. He and his wife, Emilee (Garrison) Macfarlan ’15, are expecting their first child. 13

Amy Orlovich ’94 published her first book in the “Wilson the Wombat” children’s series. The book incorporates nighttime worries and a darling wombat family into a delightful training tool for parents and caregivers to help kids with anxiety. 11

Sydney Scott ’16 was named Teacher of the Year for Allen Elementary School in Siloam Springs, Arkansas. 09

Jane Becker Weathers ’64 recently published the book “Chronological Bible Reading Guide,” featuring daily readings for a year’s time that incorporates literature with history. 12
In Memoriam

Letha M. Albritton ’58, age 84, died May 7. (Home Economics) 01
Kathryn M. Anderson ’13, age 32, died June 13. (Psychology) 02
Frances “Jewel” (Stephens) Billington ’57, age 83, died Feb. 25, 2020. (Office Administration)
Alma Louise (Otto) Brown ’82, age 62, died Sept. 2. (Broadcasting) 03
Helen Church ’51, age 93, died Oct. 19. (Home Economics)
Kathy Cole ’78, age 65, died June 6. (Music)
Glenda (Henry) Doering ’74, age 69, died May 22. (Physical Education & Health) 04
Beverly Ferguson ’53, age 90, died Sept. 15. (Home Economics) 05
David Geraldson ’70, age 72, died Nov. 8, 2020. (Social Studies) 06
Ryan Griffis ’06, age 43, died Sept. 17. (Organizational Management) 07
Barbara Hall ’60, age 81, died July 4. (Office Administration)
Lee Harris ’76, age 67, died July 14. (Building Construction & Design) 08
Robert Johns ’98, age 74, died April 15. (Organizational Management)
Janice Johnson ’09, age 61, died June 7. (Organizational Management)
Tim Kidd, age 63, died June 7. (Former Faculty) 09
Ruth P. Kittle ’43, age 99, died June 27. (Bible and Home Economics) 10
Jennifer Laing ’06, age 39, died July 13. (Youth Ministry) 11
Janet Lancaster Goring ’52, age 91, died June 21. (Radio Production; Former Faculty) 12
Wade Lawrence ’50, age 93, died Sept. 8. (Broadcasting)
Loretta Lee ’59, age 85, died May 3. (Social Studies Education)
Laura Lewis ’69, age 73, died July 16. (Biblical Studies)
Mary Mallett ’03, age 68, died Aug. 14. (Organizational Management) 13
Nancy McLennan ’81, age 62, died Oct. 12. (Office Administration)
Orenne Niven ’57, age 86, died May 24. (Education) 14
Jackie Don Pace ’59, age 84, died June 14. (Engineering, Mechanical Concentration)
Fletcher Pennebaker ’54, age 87, died June 27. (Social Studies)
Roger Pickard ’69, age 74, died Oct. 8. (English, History, Social Studies) 15
Carolyn Pollan ’59, age 84, died Oct. 23. (Communication) 16
Larry K. Roberts ’70, age 72, died Feb. 20. (Music Education)
Donald Vaughn ’65, age 80, died April 24. (Biblical Studies) 17
Deborah Campbell Walker ’71, age 73, died Oct. 27, 2020. (Elementary Education)
Donald Williams ’57, age 86, died July 20. (Business Administration)
Jerry Winters ’89, age 54, died July 1. (Psychology) 18

To read online obituaries, go to jbu.edu/bulletin/obits.
Plan for Your Future

It is a great time to think about the things you need to prepare for the new year. A little organization can go a long way in giving you peace of mind about the future.

JBU has partnered with PhilanthroCorp to offer estate planning services to our alumni and friends at no cost or obligation. They do not sell financial products or manage money.

PhilanthroCorp has helped hundreds of people, including many in the JBU family, accomplish their goals through proper estate planning. Talk with an Estate Specialist to review your existing plan or get help setting up a new estate plan.

Visit www.philanthrocorp.com or call 800-876-7958 to get started today.

Upcoming Opportunity!

JBU/PhilanthroCorp Zoom Event
Theme: Planning for the New Year
Tuesday, Dec. 7, 2021
12-1 p.m. CST

Email plannedgiving@jbu.edu if you would like to register!