

**BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS**

During the pandemic Cultivate New England (the partnership of our three New England churches) was able to move ahead with vetting a church planter—including assessment, candidating with supporting churches, and finally extending a call. Pastor Kristian Anderson and his wife Mary have accepted this call to plant a church in Boston. They’ll begin in early February by moving to Connecticut. They’ll serve in a pre-launch residency at Bethany Lutheran Brethren Church in East Hartland with plans to move to the Boston area in mid-2022.

Boston: Preparing to Plant

KRISTIAN ANDERSON

There are many enjoyable things that we are called to do as Christians, but one thing that can be difficult for believers is what Jesus called us to do with his final words before his ascension: “Go and make disciples of all nations.” This can be scary... Where might he call us to go? What if the “nations” don’t accept us, or they’re difficult to love? It seems easier to just keep making disciples of our own children, rather than reach out to the nations God has brought to our doorstep.

Yet, we are called to make disciples. This isn’t just a suggestion to do if we have time. It is a mandate given by Jesus. It is integral to the mission of every Christian.

I have a personal connection to that mission because I did not grow up in a family where I was disciplined. For much of my life, I did not know where I could find hope. It wasn’t until I was in my early twenties that I found the hope of the gospel. Finally, my life and the world around me made sense. Soon I felt a strong desire to share what I had come to understand—to pour out the love that Jesus had given me.

The first time I saw someone I disciplined give their life to Christ, it turned my world upside-down. I was kneeling on the floor at

Cont. on P.2

**SPOTLIGHT
CHURCH PLANTING:**

“Planting churches is an essential part of our call to make disciples.”

“We must rediscover ourselves, our voice, and our grace-founded habit of being a people of intentional witness. If we do not do this, we will neither accomplish our mission nor really anything at all.”



Rev. Paul Larson
President of the CLB



CHURCH-PLANTING:
www.CLBA.org/Boston

Epiphany... Re-imagined

RYAN NILSEN

Epiphany Lutheran Church has faced a number of challenges common to city ministry, but COVID impacted this New York church significantly. We've seen the impact of thousands upon thousands moving out of the City, and part of that is the closing of church plants throughout the area. This November, Epiphany held its final public worship for the time being and said farewell to its founding pastor, Erick Sorensen.



Despite this unplanned ending to a season of church-planting ministry, something new began. Though many had left, core members of one of Epiphany's community groups remained. As North American Mission's Associate Director, I was privileged to meet with this group of leaders, and together they decided to launch a new form of the church—sometimes called a missional community or micro church. As the pandemic continues, more and more church bodies have been engaging in these forms of church planting. It provides a flexible, affordable, safer way to be the church.

Our new Manhattan church is meeting in the apartment of the group leaders. They gather for discipleship, worship, fellowship, and will intentionally work together to reach their local mission field. CLB Pastor Andy Olsen meets with the leaders to provide spiritual oversight for the group, and I will continue to support with coaching and resourcing.

In Matthew 16, in a conversation with his disciples, Jesus told Peter, "On this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it." We have confidence that God, the builder of the Church, promises us that his Church will continue and prevail. Even when the Church takes on new forms, his Church continues to bring the gospel and join God in his redemptive work throughout the world.

At the final worship service for Epiphany, a new work began: Viet, Johannes, and Hannah—the three leaders of this new group—were commissioned to lead this next chapter of ministry! They have started meeting together. Even as the pandemic surges, this group is able to continue as a new expression of the Church. Pray for this new church as they continue the ministry of Epiphany during the challenges COVID presents in the City.

Dr. Ryan Nilsen serves the Church of the Lutheran Brethren as Associate Director of North American Mission.



Kristian and Mary Anderson

Boston: Preparing to Plant

Cont. from P.1

Tuscarora Inn & Conference Center with a young man when the scales of sin fell from his eyes. He confessed his need for a Savior and accepted Christ as his Lord. It was one of the most amazing sights I had ever seen. From that moment on, I wanted to dedicate my life to helping people come to know Jesus. Although I didn't know it at the time, God was preparing me for church planting.

I remember the day I first asked myself if God was leading me in that direction. I was at a pastors' gathering in Briarcliff Manor, New York. That month we were talking about the need for planting churches. As I heard the statistics, I asked myself, could this be me? Should this be me? That day, God planted in my heart the seeds of church planting. It's taken over a decade to come to fruition, but God has been preparing me all along.

Sometimes people question the need for church planting. Why plant new churches? Aren't there enough existing churches? These are important questions, especially when committing to something as costly as church planting. Researchers have pored over these questions, and statistics show that younger people are more apt to go to a newer church than an established one, as are immigrants and new residents to a neighborhood. Studies have also concluded that new churches primarily grow from people who were not attending a church (60-80%), while churches over 10 years old grow through church attendees transferring their membership (80-90%).

As I move into the process of church planting in New England, I'm aware of the awesome responsibility it is to step into this role. But I trust that, as God has led me to each place I've ministered, he also goes before me here. As we look around North America and see the nations that God has brought here, I pray God would renew the fire and passion for us to reach out to our neighbors, to plant churches, and to make disciples of all nations, right where the nations are—in our own backyard.

Rev. Kristian Anderson and his wife Mary have been called to plant a CLB church in Boston Massachusetts.

Pastor Jason Rogness is the Church-Planting Pastor of New Hope Church in Colorado. He leads missional communities in Parker and Castle Rock.

MAKING DISCIPLES

JASON ROGNESS

I collect sports cards. It's a hobby I began as a kid. I picked it up again recently and have thoroughly enjoyed it. There's a local card shop I go to, and I've gotten to know some of the other guys who frequent there. Local card shops are a "Cheers" of sorts in the sports card industry.

New Hope Church has two small groups that meet regularly. As a disciple-making church, one of the sayings we use frequently is: "Make disciples where you live, work, and play." For me, the card shop is where I play.

I said to the Lord, when I started this hobby again, that there must be redeeming work in this, otherwise it won't serve a good purpose. When you desire to make disciples, it's a part of everything you do. I've been told we should be ready for what we pray for. Because when we pray to make disciples, we're asking the Lord to send us into the harvest field.

Two men in the field are Chris and Mark.

Chris and I hit it off when we found a motherlode of Kobe Bryant rookie cards in the back of the card shop. We both happened to be there that day, and we each went home with a nice stash. As we talked and looked through cards, Chris expressed interest in getting together to see some of my collection. So we set a time and place to meet. My plan was to make this meeting about more than looking at cards. This was an opportunity to share my story: My story about Jesus in my life. So I did. Chris' response was that his parents were pushing him to bring his family to church. When I mentioned we have a small group nearby, he was interested. But as often happens, initial interest didn't turn into them showing up. There were reasons why they couldn't come, and I didn't hear from Chris for the next two months.

Little did I know that the Holy Spirit was working on him during that time away. The seed was planted, and Chris finally started bringing his family to a local church. Then I received his message: "We need to get together." Long story short, as Chris sat in church, he was hearing the gospel, and he believed it. He needed to talk to me to get some things straight. So we met again. He needed to "repent," but he didn't know what that meant. He'd heard that the Bible was a good book to read, but he didn't have one, other than his grandfather's big old Catholic Bible. That day, Chris shared with me his struggles—what he needed to repent of. I listened. And then I shared with him the good news that God is faithful and just and will forgive him of his sins and purify him of his unrighteousness. Chris believed it. And he wanted more. So I asked if he wanted to continue to meet weekly. Hungry for the gospel, he was all over it. Then Mark came to mind.

I had met Mark at the card shop too. He's a semi-retired hobby collector who also knows Chris. We began having conversations that matter when he mentioned his appreciation for the online catechism service I was posting during COVID. Growing up a Lutheran, Mark said it was fun to go through the material again. He was catching things he'd never thought of before. So when Chris showed excitement about getting together, I messaged Mark and asked if he wanted to join. He happily agreed, and a weekly discipleship group began.

With a COVID lockdown looming, it is a refreshing truth that the Word of God doesn't lock down with the gathering restrictions. As a group of three, we can continue to meet, whether it's at Starbucks, the card shop, or online via ZOOM. We can continue to grow in the truth of God's Word, mature in his mission toward others, and pray for the other guys we know at the card shop.

Rev. Jason Rogness is the Church-Planting Pastor at New Hope Church in Parker, Colorado.

Parker, Colorado

pho. 1

Worship in Parker

pho. 2

A Baptism in Castle Rock, Colorado

pho. 3

Bible Study in Castle Rock

pho. 4





church planting
north american mission

We Need You...

The North American Mission [NAM] department is an extension of our CLB congregations in the United States and Canada. We coordinate and facilitate our unified vision for congregational vitality and planting new churches. We are partners in this God-given calling to make disciples. To do this, *we need YOU!* For this to be accomplished, it is essential that NAM connect with congregations and individuals that have a passion for the mission field of North America.

We are looking to identify, equip, and send church planters. You may feel called to do this as a pastor or as part of a team. What could be more exciting than being a part of a new church plant? Or maybe God has blessed you with the resources to make this happen, and through your financial support a new congregation can be formed. If you have this passion for the CLB to make disciples in North America, now is the time to step up. We would love to connect with you.



Partner with Church-Planting

NICK MUNDIS

North American Mission has a vision to plant three new CLB churches each year. To do this we must join together in this unified mission with individuals and congregations. Jesus has called the CLB to make disciples in North America *NOW*.

Does this call to build God's Kingdom excite you? If you feel called to *GO* or to *designate support* to this exciting disciple-making opportunity, please contact me, Nick Mundis. I would love to hear from you!

Rev. Nick Mundis serves the Church of the Lutheran Brethren as Director of North American Mission.

CONTACT: nmundis@CLBA.ORG



www.CLBA.org/giving

Your Mission

LaWayne Rogness

Greetings from the CLB Finance Office. We have just finished tabulating the October 2020 contributions, and a pattern of generous giving has emerged. Each month, we have received just a little more than we anticipated. We currently sit about \$50,000 over our anticipated goal for October 31, 2020.

We are blessed!

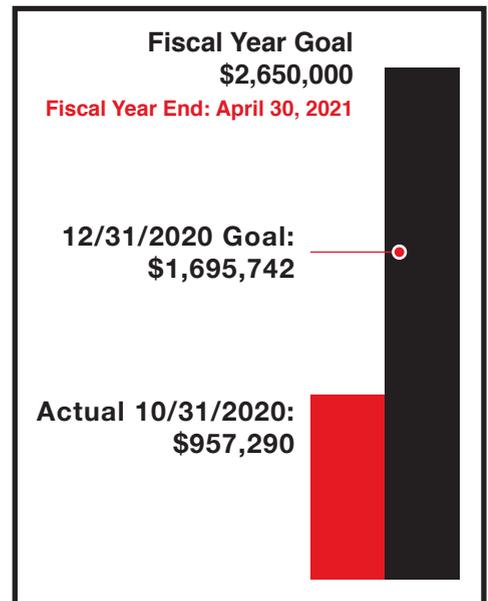
Our November/December needs are \$738,452. We are praying the Lord will supply, and that the generosity of the CLB will continue. We appreciate your giving, both as churches and individuals.

Thank you for your prayers and support. This is *your* mission. You are the Church of the Lutheran Brethren.

*Text **weareclb** to 206-859-9405 to contribute right now.*



LaWayne Rogness serves the Church of the Lutheran Brethren as Director of Finance.



Support the CLB:

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www.clba.org/giving

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