

# LEBANON CALVARY GROWING IN JOYFUL SERVICE

Story by Carmel Palmer  
Photos by Micah Martin

Sitting in a huge waiting room while his wife underwent radiation treatments, Terry Orr reached a breaking point. His mother, brother, sister, and 32-year-old son had all died in the last two years. Now he feared he would lose his wife as well. *I don't know if I can do this*, he confessed to God. In response, he felt God telling him to entrust his wife to His hands, and to instead focus on praying for everyone in the waiting room. "So I did," he related. "I just kept moving forward, holding on to who Jesus is." Terry thanks God that his wife is now cancer-free.

Finding healing through serving others was something Terry had been learning since arriving at Lebanon Calvary Chapel, OR, five years earlier. Though he had accepted Christ as a young man, he admitted, "My whole life I ran from responsibility, using drugs and alcohol to escape reality." Now in his fifties, he had one failed marriage behind him, and his second was crumbling. When he came to Pastor Tom Sanderbrink for help, Tom asked him to join Lebanon CC's usher group. It was not the answer Terry had expected, but as he served alongside Tom and the other men, he learned how to become his family's spiritual leader. As Terry's relationship with Jesus strengthened, so did his marriage. Soon he was encouraging others to persevere in difficult marriages. He now serves Lebanon CC in a host of capacities, including leading the Celebrate Recovery program for those who struggle with addiction.

"Part of being healed is getting our eyes off ourselves and serving others," Pastor Tom stated. "Terry's now one of

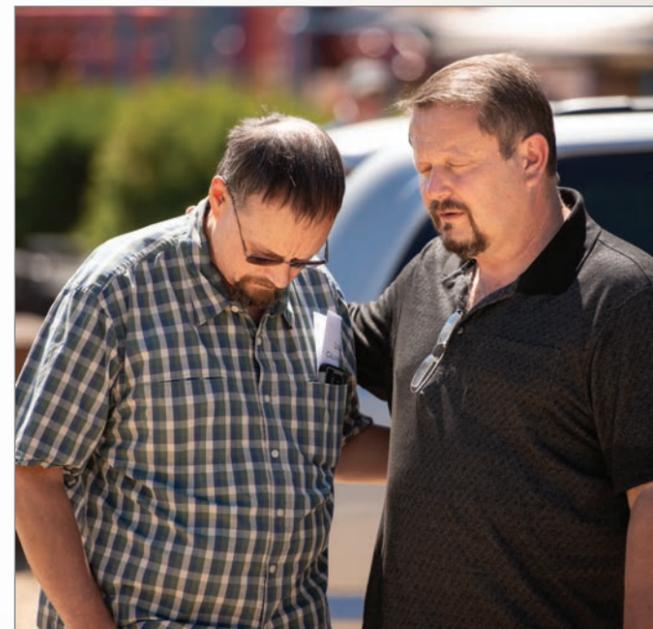
my many right-hand men. We're long on service here, and short on titles. The handful of people my wife Sherry and I started the fellowship with were all team players, and we've just fostered that." Fourteen years later, the small group which once met in the Sanderbrinks' coffee shop has grown into a close-knit, mid-size church whose culture of joyful service has grown with it. Tom continued, "You can't nail this church down to a certain size or demographic—we just love everyone who comes in the door."

## Building Momentum

Looking out the front door of Lebanon Calvary Chapel's new building, founding member Paulina Wilcox can see the coffee shop where the fellowship began. Now the church's administrative assistant, Paulina recognizes God's hand all along the meandering path between these two points. "In the coffee shop, He planted the seed," she explained. "At the senior center, He watered it and created that core group. In the middle school gym, we learned about servanthood, fellowship, and working together. He guided the entire process so that we can bear fruit now."

*A man's heart plans his way, but the LORD directs his steps.* PROVERBS 16:9

Tom added, "The Lord wants us to plan, but the key is being flexible. So often we've wanted less than what He had for us." Early on, the church purchased property they intended to build on. In 2017, a couple days before breaking ground, they were able to purchase a downtown



Top right: Pastor Tom Sanderbrink confirms a young girl's statement of faith during her baptism at Lebanon CC.

Middle left: Tom prays with Bill Richards (left) in the parking lot, where a lot of one-on-one ministry occurs.

Middle right: Bethany O'Liele leads crafts in the children's ministry that once nurtured her own spiritual growth.

Bottom right: Tom encourages Alexis Blay (right) and her family after her baptism.

building 3 1/2 times larger for 70 percent less cost. The remodeling could be handled by the church family—an advantage Tom measures not in dollars but in relational growth. “The strength that comes from working together has broken down generational barriers,” he said. “We have people in their early eighties down to six-year-olds working, laughing, and eating together.”

### A Hand to the Hurting

Attendance has nearly doubled since acquiring the new building, but more important is the surge in spiritual growth. “They really want to be Jesus’ hands and feet in a practical way,” Tom said. “That’s always been emphasized, but we’ve really seen it stirring in people’s hearts the last year-and-a-half.”

In her 13-year career as a sexual assault advocate, Donna Currie witnessed the horrors of sex trafficking firsthand. Some of the girls she helped were sold into slavery as 10-year-olds, or had witnessed other girls killed in front of them. In 2016, Donna retired and moved to quiet, rural Lebanon with her husband Kent. She left the intensity of her job behind—but not her heart for suffering girls. When they heard their new church was partnering with a Christian safe house and mentoring program for trafficked teens, the Curries immediately got involved.

The church pours love into girls who, for security reasons, they will never see, speak to, or even know their real names. At Christmas that first year, Kent laid 12 girls’ wish lists on a table in the lobby. When he checked after the first service to see if any lists had been picked up, only one remained. “A little bit of love from God’s heart, through His people, makes such a difference,” he observed. They frequently deliver pick-up loads of needed items along with home-cooked meals. People donated cars, appliances, and even a coffee roaster that Sherry uses for fundraising. A 2018 benefit dinner rallied community



support, and another is planned for this April. Donna reflected, “People have been extremely generous for such a small farming community. That dinner was the first time a church had done something like that for the girls. It helped the community understand that modern slavery exists—but I hope it also helped the girls understand that when they get out, church will be a safe place for them.”

*For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. ROMANS 8:18*

Through Celebrate Recovery, Terry Orr sees God using his past mistakes and suffering to help other hurting people. He leads the church’s chapter with what he calls “a Calvary Chapel emphasis.” He shared, “Grace has to be the common denominator. Before Calvary Chapel, I never understood I didn’t have the power to change my ways except through Jesus. If you’re Christ-centered, freedom comes. If you’re not—if you believe the enemy’s lies—bondage comes.” One man, who was on the verge of suicide when he began attending a year ago, is now helping teach and reach out to other depressed people. While at a multi-church Celebrate Recovery outreach, Terry met a veteran whose marriage was dissolving. Terry reported, “There were tears in his eyes as I talked to him. I don’t even know what I was saying, but the Holy Spirit was speaking to his heart.” Terry befriended him and continued inviting him to Lebanon CC’s group until he finally came. His wife and children began attending with him as his marriage healed.

### Learning to Lead

Pastor Tom recalled his roots in relational ministry. As a young man, Tom dealt drugs with Jeff Smith. Later, after both were saved, he served as Jeff’s assistant pastor at Calvary Chapel Cottage Grove, OR. “Jeff allowed me to be part of everything,” he remembered. “He taught me to allow people to fail and extend them grace. His training method was, ‘Watch me minister; minister with me; I’ll minister with you; go minister.’ I’ve learned not to be a micro-manager—I’m very macro.”

Worship volunteer Robert Davis appreciates Tom’s encouraging leadership style: “The reason this is such an appealing place to people is that we have great quarterbacking to direct everyone’s gifts. You’ll think out loud to Tom, ‘Oh, this ministry could—’ and before you’re done talking, he’ll say, ‘Great—you have a heart towards that, go do it.’ Everyone’s doing something they’re passionate about.”



The church has an amphitheatre for holding outdoor services during Oregon’s four months of good weather. Years ago, the Sanderbrinks’ son Tommy, who runs the children’s ministry with his wife, approached his father about building a playground there. It seemed like a waste of money to Tom—somewhat grudgingly, he approved it before leaving on a trip. “They never showed me the drawing to scale,” he laughed. “I came back to this 18-foot castle structure. I’d hear kids saying to their parents after services, ‘You always want to leave early! I want to stay!’ It was music to my ears. Our children’s ministry doubled that year. The biggest thing for me as a leader has been learning to trust the Holy Spirit’s work in the people around me. The Lord has a unique flavor He wants to bring out in everybody’s lives that He’s shaped for this time and place.”

*Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think ... to Him be glory in the church. EPHESIANS 3:20a, 21a*

Lebanon Calvary Chapel, OR  
[lebanoncalvarychapel.com](http://lebanoncalvarychapel.com)



Bottom left: Elder Mark Russell (right) prays with a man, one part of the church’s relational ministry.

Top right: Junior High Pastor John Barnes teaches the elementary Sunday school class. Four months of the year, Lebanon CC holds services outdoors in its amphitheater.

Bottom right: Roxanne Peters (right), of the women’s ministry team, encourages another woman.