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Celebrating the faithful,
forty year ministry of Pastor John Hays.



For the past 40 years, God has been using Pastor John and Jan to impact lives.
But how did this amazing, 40-year story get its start?



The story begins on an Easter Sunday morning in 1980.

Under the sponsorship of Brookside Baptist church in Reynoldsburg, Ohio, the Mission at Jersey began. A handful of people, mostly from the surrounding area, met to worship in a 100-year-old building.



That same year, Jersey was faced with the challenge of finding a new pastor. They were led to contact John Hays, a young seminary student. Although John had a great deal of enthusiasm, he had no pastoral experience.





He said to Jan, “You can’t grow a church where there are no people!”

But shortly thereafter, God’s calling became clear. In a defining moment, he received a shoebox full of the names of prospects. Doubt was replaced with a God-sized dream of a dynamic church - one with a real building, filled with devoted disciples.

In August of 1981, John Hays became the pastor of the mission and this small community, and soon the world, would never be the same.

*The first structure at the corner of Morse and Harrison
(currently the Shalom Center).*



Breaking ground for the new Chapel building

With the five acres of land that the mission church had purchased at the corner of Morse and Harrison roads, Pastor John began leading this young church to develop plans for a 3,400 square foot building. The building was completed and the church was constituted in 1983.



From the very beginning, Pastor John has been hands on - quite literally - in the process of growing the church and its facilities.



God brought incredible growth at Jersey. Pastor John would lead the church through this growth and Jersey would soon outgrow its facility. It became obvious that if Jersey Church were to grow into the future, it would require construction of a larger building for both Worship and Small Groups.

In 1985, Pastor John and the building team developed plans for a 14,000 square foot addition attached to the present facility with a sanctuary seating capacity of 400. Small Group space was tripled, which later served as a catalyst for growth in the Bible study program. The Chapel opened its doors in the fall of 1987.



In 1990, the Southern Baptist Convention asked Pastor John to serve as a trustee on the International Mission Board. God used the eight years that Pastor John served on the IMB as a catalyst to lead Jersey in becoming a pacesetter in investing and sending people around the world. God had placed a seed in Pastor John's heart.







As that seed has been cultivated, individuals have served on short-term mission opportunities over 21,000 times while \$14 million has been given to support missions locally, throughout North America and around the world.



*Caption: aiding in
Hurricane Katrina relief*

*Construction of the Central Venue (originally known as the
Worship and Activities Center (WAC))*



Growth continued, and once again fueled the dream to expand the ministries of Jersey. In 1995, construction began on a larger worship center. In many ways, this project presented the greatest challenge the congregation at Jersey had ever faced. As Jersey accepted the challenge from God to build this building, God was faithful to meet each need, every step of the way, as Pastor John led Jersey to pursue this vision.

After two additional building projects were completed, the senior staff began evaluating future growth projections both in the community and within the church. Once again, Jersey was challenged with a facility that would not support the growth.

Pastor John began praying for ways to continue reaching the communities using our existing facilities. He felt God leading Jersey to expand our worship services to include different styles of music at different locations on the church campus. Beginning in the fall of 2004, Jersey would launch four unique worship services that served us well through this period of church growth.





In 2007, Pastor John felt we had outgrown our current church constitution. In an effort to better protect our church and prepare Jersey for the future, we began the work to establish a new church constitution.

In early 2012, Pastor John would lead our church through refining our mission for the future. A defining attribute of Jersey has always been the way it cares for people. Combining our heart for caring with our passion for evangelism, our new mission was born. Pastor John continues to lead us as we care for people and connect them to Christ.



Pastor John crosses the finish line at our Feet for Food 5K, a race that for many years supported our Feed the City efforts in the community.

In 2014, Pastor John challenged us to Feed the City. That year we had the opportunity to feed over 500 families in need. Jersey has been feeding the city ever since in more ways than one. Not only have we been able to provide food to over 1000 individuals and families in the years that followed, we've had the awesome opportunity to share the Gospel of Jesus with them.



In 2018, Pastor John led Jersey to renovate several parts of our church facility to better serve the needs of our ministries. With the primary vision of attracting and retaining young families, we renovated 25% of our facility during our churchwide Believe campaign.



In 2019, Pastor John asked us to imagine what it would look like to baptize 100 people in the course of one year. We were challenged and encouraged to begin praying for and having Gospel conversations with the people in our lives who don't know Jesus. We celebrated God's faithfulness that year as we had the awesome privilege of watching 113 people follow through in baptism.





Not only have Pastor John and Jan invested in a growing church, they continue to pour into a growing family. John and Jan's children, Buck and Beth, grew up right before many of us. Today, they have added a son-in-law, Ben, and three grandchildren, Hannah, Silas and Malachi to their family.





Pastor John continues to lead a church that is on mission. Over 20,000 people have attended Jersey over the last 40 years and new individuals and families continue to show up to this small church in a cornfield every year.

In 1981, a young pastor and his wife accepted the call to lead a small group of believers in the community of Jersey, Ohio. 40 years later and through God's leading, Jersey's impact under the faithful ministry of Pastor John has not only touched the lives of a small community where nearly 3,800 people have been baptized, they continue to touch lives around the world.





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