

Oral History Cover Sheet

Interview Information	
Project Name:	Gateway City Church, St Louis and St. Charles, Oral History Project
Narrator:	Robin Gichuhi
Interviewer:	Katie Sweet
Interview Date:	April 20, 2026
Interview Location:	St Charles, MO

Descriptive Information	
Narrator's Biographical Information:	
Interview Summary:	In the interview Robin, who shares her life journey from her childhood in Florida, growing up in a supportive, church-going family, through her faith journey and personal challenges. She recounts formative experiences such as attending Episcopal Church camps, the tragic loss of her best friend in a car accident, and her eventual becoming a disciple at age 25 (September 18, 1985). Robin describes her move from Florida to Indiana to Missouri, her involvement in various church communities, and the supportive, family-like atmosphere she found in the Gateway City Church, St. Louis and St. Charles. She reflects on the ups and downs of her spiritual walk, including her husband's struggles and her own perseverance through faith, community, and service. The interview highlights her commitment to living out her beliefs, the importance of relationships, and the meaningful impact of church life and outreach in her personal and spiritual growth.
Interview Key Terms:	International Churches of Christ; Gateway City Church; Hope WorldWide; No Hunger Holiday; Henry Creed Letter; Reach Conference; St Louis; Orlando Church;

Technical Information	
Recording Format:	Audio
Digital File Type:	Wav
Interview Length:	01:06:07
File Name:	Gichuhi, Robin, 04-19-2026, St Charles (1).WAV; Gichuhi, Robin, 04-19-2026, St Charles (2).WAV
Interview Quality and Recording Conditions:	
Consent Form File Name:	Gichuhi, Robin, 04-19-2026, St Charles.pdf
Restrictions:	None
Additional Materials:	None

Technical Information	
File Name(s) for Additional Material(s):	

Administrative Information

Workflow Process	Name	Date
Cover Sheet Completed By:	Katie Sweet	April 27, 2026
Index Completed By:	Katie Sweet	April 27, 2026
Transcript Completed By:		

Narrator's Name: Robin Gichuhi
Interviewer's Name: Katie Sweet
Date of Interview: April 19, 2026
Location of Interview: St Charles, MO
Index Completed By: Katie Sweet

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Interview with Robin Gichuhi Transcript

Narrator's Name: Robin Gichuhi

Interviewer's Name: Katie Sweet

Date of Interview: April 19, 2026

Location of Interview: St Charles, MO

Transcript Completed By: Katie Sweet

Transcript Edited By:

Additional Notes:

KS: (00:44) So today is April 9th 2026, I am here with Robin Gichuhi in St. Louis. Well, we're tactically St. Charles. And so we're doing this for my Digital History Project on the Gateway City Church oral history project and then eventually the ICOC. So, Robin, do I have your consent to use this for my projects? And eventually archive it?

RG: (01:24) Yes.

KS: Okay. So now we can officially begin after all of that. Now my first question for you is, what is your testimony?

RG: (01:36) Okay. So I grew up in Florida.

My dad was surrounded by, I was just watching something yesterday and just reminding me of my dad working at NASA and the space, all that space was very much a part of my place near Cocoa Beach is kind of where I lived. It's called Satellite Beach. And really my parents went to church. We went to Episcopal Church in Cocoa Beach called St. David's. And we, as a younger, growing up to maybe fifth grade or so, then we went to a church in Melbourne, Florida there nearby.

And it was, I didn't understand too much about the Bible but I did, what I remember in those early days was, I saw a love for God from people around me and my parents are very committed to having that as part of their life. And I appreciated it now as I gotten older, they didn't drink and cuss or it was more very encouraging household. We lived just a few, less than a mile from the beach. So we got to, the house that we lived in, I got to enjoy that part of the area. And, but church was definitely every Sunday, it was not a question, we always went.

So I think in my, with any kind of relationship or any kind of momental things, like you talk about a stone or something of remembrance, in the Episcopal Church, as I went to church camp a couple years in a row and that was very meaningful to be able to focus on God in one setting because I don't think at home we did a lot of, sitting around talking about God or anything, we kind of, it was in the church more. So church camp and there was a retreat I went to, I don't know what year that was, where I remember walking, they talked to us, had some kind of lesson about God and his nature and then they wanted us to kind of go pray and walk. So that was my first kind of getting to own my own faith kind of idea, I guess. And then I kind of got away from anything godly and when I was, got out of high school, so I started really veering towards a lot of the worldly things and boyfriends and relationships that way and so then I found myself as a, let's see, I was 20, I think I want to say I was 25, 24, no 20, how old was I? In my early 20s, it was a year or so, I know I became a Christian in 25, so I think it was a year before that.

Or, yeah, I don't think it was very long before that. I was in my junior college, community college in Melbourne and I met my friend Pat and she and I were just attached to the hip, you know, we were just best of friends and we were both getting close to the graduation of the first two years in community college and we were thinking of where we're gonna go, so we went up to Gainesville for a fun trip to like down the, it was called Itchitucknee River on the Inner Tubes, you can rent that, and while I was there, let's see, well, we just had some crazy time there, so I got back and then, let's see, what year did she pass away in? So we were gonna go again, we were looking into University of Florida in Gainesville kind of idea and she was gonna apply to that and I was applying for that also, school, and then we went, yeah, I guess we were, she was supposed to go, I think the first, I don't know, I can't remember exactly, this has been a while ago now, but we were gonna do the Inner Tube thing again but my brother was going,

so him and his friends and then Pat was gonna go with me and we went out the night before, this was on Labor Day weekend, so we were gonna go, we had Monday off and stuff, so this was like maybe Friday and then Saturday morning we were heading out and so her and I went out to meet, I was a waitress and I was done and wanting to go out for a drink and meet her out, so we did that and then we met at a Binigan's, I think it was, where they didn't have dancing but we went and ate and she's like, oh, I'm gonna go out more and I said, well, we gotta get up the next day and so we just went around the corner and to a place that had dancing and stuff, so we did that and then I left before she did and she had run into a couple guys we had met the weekend before and they were gonna take her back to her car and that's all I knew and then the next morning I went to go pick her up early because I was gonna be the driver and I think I was someone else coming in my car too, but I was gonna go pick up Pat and she wasn't home and her sister answered the door, or her mom, I can't remember, and said, we don't know where she is and then I went anyway, like this was before cell phones, so this was 85, 1985, so and the, yeah, so I went on but I couldn't even sleep that night, I'm like, where is she, what happened to her, and then as soon as I got back on Monday, I got a call from someone I went to school with, Pat and I were both in the same class with this guy and he says, oh, I'm so sorry to hear about Pat and I said, well, what happened? And so he told me that she had gotten a car accident and died and so that was just incredibly upsetting, you know, it felt, I felt so, you know, I felt so responsible because I had been the one to ask her out that night, you know, and so, you know, that was 84, so yeah, it was a year before, so and then 84, that was 1984, September and then so I, you know, life was really, that was the first time someone close to me, you know, it wasn't my grandparents or something that had passed away and so that was devastating for me and, you know, the guilt too of feeling like if I hadn't asked her out, then it would have happened and, you know, that kind of stuff where I had to come to, you know, grips that it was, you know, I didn't kill her, I wasn't the one to drive and drunk and she, it was her choices to do that. Yeah.

Or be with someone that was and apparently one of the guys that we had met, they kept deciding not, I mean, her car was only a mile away and so I thought that was, you know, he was gonna take her home and so they talked each other into going, continuing to the bars and then, you know, by then they were drinking and driving so, you know, so then they crashed the car into a tree or something, kind of in the middle of nowhere but, and then, so my heart was just broken. She had gotten accepted, we find out later, by her parents to UCF, I mean to Gainesville. I did not so I ended up getting accepted to University of Central Florida and I got myself over, then the next year when I graduated, I went over to UCF and I roomed with some, someone I found on the, oh hi, Shayla, on the board, I just found a, you know, to room to start school and I was gonna start my third year engineering and I, so I, you know, had lived there and I'm trying to think what, so I, it came just like on August, so I think I started in June, I wanna say, of the next year and graduated and everything from the other college and she, and so I, my neighbor came over, her name was Janet Appleby, it's a good name and she invited me over for some pudding, some butterscotch pudding and just wanted to get to know me and so I had not been around many people that, especially at school, you're kind of on your own, you're kind of, everyone's kind of looking for something but, you know, so Janet and I became friends and then she invited me to a Bible study that they had going on at the college, you know, and got to study the Bible and it just really, it was not been anything, I really didn't know other than the traditions and the Episcopal Church really about, you know, the Bible and what it teaches and how, you know, that it would help you really know how to be a Christian. Allergy. She has allergies.

She has allergies? Yeah. Okay, oh. And so I was, you know, I studied the Bible where I learned what it would take to become a Christian and, you know, kind of thought I had to wrestle with thinking I was already won by just being around, you know, the Episcopal Church and all that and so, you know, when I could see that I had not done what the Bible said to be saved, then I got baptized and became a disciple in September 18th, 1985. Oh wow.

I just, yeah, so last year was a big 40th, I think. Wow. Yeah. That's amazing. I know, amazing, and I, you know, just really was able to set my life back and doing good things and not, you know, not, I mean, my heart was just so full because I had done a lot of things that, you know, my conscience was like going against and then to feel free from that, to know that I'm saved and then all the things I've learned from the Bible since then has just been so encouraging.

So I don't know if I need to share more than that. No, that's okay.

KS: (13:31) So how do you get here to St. Louis?

RB: (13:34) Okay, so I was in the church there in Orlando. In 1990, I got to go to be a part of the church in Jacksonville, Florida, and then I was there till 96.

And then when I got back, I dated a couple of brothers and then found my husband in 2001, yeah. And I had been a Christian 16 years by then, yeah. So, and I was 41 years old, so that was a little bit older to be getting married, but it was amazing. And then as soon as we got married in February, then he lost his job. His job that he had come to after college had laid him off.

It was just a very small company and they, you know, financially, they just couldn't afford, he had his PhD and they couldn't afford having a PhD person, two, I think they had two of them. So he was the one to go, the most, you know, the bottom of the total, you know, the newest one in. So then from about March on, he was looking for a job and then in his field, he's a coding chemist, but coding's kind of stuff, not pharmacy, but the other, but code, you know. I don't know. So the chemistry of coding, yeah, coding things.

So we ended up, he got a job in Hammond, Indiana, and so we got up to Hammond. He worked there from 01, November of 01 to, the company got bought over by a company called Israeli Chemical Limited in 2013. And then they asked him to come to their office here in St. Louis and be a part of that and kind of the management team. He was still doing lab work, but he had gotten up. So they hired him.

They hired a lot of the people, but most of them still stayed in Indiana. And then he was able to come here. So that we got here in two, he got here in November and I got here in March and we sold the house by 2014. So then that's how we got here. But we was grateful that there was also a church like the one in Orlando in that Indiana area.

So, you know, we wanted to be able to stay with the church anywhere we moved. So, yeah, and we got to visit and just loved it from the beginning. Yeah.

KS: What was the church like when you moved here?

RG: (16:18) It was very welcoming. It was, you know, I met so many people. It took me forever to learn the names. Like I come and I forget the names. Next time I was there or whatever. But we loved it.

The, you know, it just seemed like it was right on task with like very outward focus. Everyone was involved with each other. And, you know, it just was very welcoming. It just felt. And then because they do small groups, kind of a Bible talk, we had a small little group of probably eight or nine of us in the St. Charles area.

And so we got to do that once a week, I guess. We did it. Yeah. So we had a great group, you know, kind of very encouraging to move into another city and already kind of have instant friends. Yeah. So I like that.

KS: (17:13) So since you've been a part of, I call it our sisterhood at Trinity. I know some people go with brotherhood. I'm like, yeah, sisterhood. But from your experience, what makes St. Louis St. Louis? Like what is unique about it?

RG: (17:26) The church itself or the city or the?

KS: The church itself, the St. Louis church. The church itself. I'm grouping that with St. Charles.

RG: Okay. I think what really was neat that it was a very growing church. Like there was a lot of people that were coming in to visit and then studying the Bible and then become. So you had brand new Christians, you had very seasoned and they even had some elders. So I think it seemed like a, you know, kind of a well-running machine as far as like that.

But the people were just very caring and they wanted to help you in anything. Like, you know, Linda and Dennis, my friends came over and helped me unpack, you know, that week I was here and, you know, brought me things and yeah. So it was just, it just was, because we had been coming, we would come looking for a house and so we were coming doing things. We knew a few people and then there was a brother that had actually his parents and he grew up in the area we were coming from. So we had met him just, his name is Carlton.

We had met him when he was coming, he was in visiting the church up there before we moved here. Oh. Like, so that was kind of neat. So, you know, they told us where's the best place to live, you know, what the economy, you know, they were just helping us. And then the guy that helped us find a house was also in the church, Kurt, so that was really good.

Fantastic. Yeah.

KS: So it sounds like the hospitality and sense of family.

RG: very much all that yeah.

KS: (19:00) see. Order of my questions are in different orders. Okay, so 2014. Was that, that was before the REACH conference, wasn't it?

RG: (19:09) Yeah, that was 16. So yeah, that was two years before, yep. Okay. And then REACH going in a couple of years. We were gearing up probably a year before that, you know, to,

KS: (19:19) What are your memories of the Reach Conference?

RG: (19:21), yeah. Oh okay.

KS: So helping to like, because now, I knew you're very much a servant heart. So like I can see you helping in some capacity. So like, what was your experience with the hearing?

RG: (19:34) It was fun. I mean, just knowing that people were coming from all over the world and, you know, I had been in the church already at that point, 20 something years or whatever. And so I was looking forward to people coming that I knew. So that was really cool. And I got to be, to be able to be this, the host for it was, I didn't see it as work. It was like really, you know, just going to be a big family party.

So it was going to be fun. So, you know, you just, I was on the committee for ushering, I guess. Almost everyone had to usher, cause it was, you know, it was at the center downtown at the, what is that called? The big ball, football stadium. Oh, yeah.

Enterprise Center, is that what they call it, or? I forget. No, what is the name of that? The football stadium where the Rams used to play. Whatever that's called.

My brain's not always the best on names. And, you know, so they needed a lot of ushering and stuff. So we did that. And, you know, I was able to still make it to a lot of classes. They kind of worked where you didn't have to serve every second either there.

And then I got to host, which was really cool. So we got to host. They had a theatrical group doing this play called Upside Down. Oh, yes, yes. And I got to be one of the host's families.

So we had, in our basement, we had two bedrooms. So we had a lady that was married from Fort Lauderdale, Florida. And then we had a couple and their daughter that lived in the other room. And they were from Georgia. And I still keep them up on Facebook and everything.

And they were all part of the play, you know, and acting and trying to think if they were involved in acting. But anyway, they were just wonderful. So I got to be a part of that and host them. And then I had, and then they left. They stayed, the week of the actual conference, they stayed closer, of course, because we were kind of, what, 40 minutes out from the city where they were gonna do it.

So then I had other friends that I knew from Chicago came and other sisters. A couple sisters stayed in our place. Three or four. Three or four. Yeah.

So that was fun to do that too. Even though we lived far out, it was still nice. They still appreciated it, so.

KS: (22:06) Any other favorite memories from that that conference?

RB: (22:10) Well, I got to, one of my memories is that one of the sister and brother, a married couple from Orlando, you know, my original place, I had known, and then we have a mutual friend.

So when she knew they were moving to the church here in St. Louis, when I was down in Orlando, I got to spend time with the sister. Her name is Kathy Kreitz, and Kathy and Kevin were moving to be closer to their daughter, and they were moving over in Illinois, but it was still, you know, a suburb of St. Louis, so they came to reach, and I got to spend time with them a little bit at reach. So that was really great. Fantastic. So that was another good time.

I got to see an old boyfriend, actually, that I loved back in Orlando, really great guy, and he had also gotten married, and had two children, and we had two children, so it was really neat to see the family, and that he was still faithful, and other people that were faithful. Yeah, it was really great.

KS: (23:15) Okay, so you moved here in 2014. So we already had the Sandsbury building.

RG: (23:29) Yes, we did. We were totally in that building. So when did the St. Charles region become its own region? They always talk about it from the beginning. But so that kind of surprised me, because I wasn't in

leadership or anything, but I just talk about it, but that came around, and you'll have to help me out with the years then. So that was, it's been a year since we had the building, and then was it, how long before that?

Maybe a year before that we started meeting at 8020, or maybe it wasn't that. Yeah, because the Hammers moved here. Yeah, the Hammers moved here a few months before we did, and we moved here August 2024. But then Kristen and Bill were assigned to that, and I think they were here maybe just six, three months before that, and we started meeting. So what month was that?

The Hammers came. The Hammers came in the summer. Yeah, I always think they got here in April. I'll be talking with Cheryl. Okay, and then you got here in.

So it sounded like it was probably like the last half of 2023 that you really. Yeah, I think the Muldins were in charge of that, and they were already here. The Muldins had been here, and they were friends of a lot of people. They were in the Chicago church. So Bill actually and his wife, but it was mainly Bill, that would come over to the Indiana church and would preach every once in a while.

Our evangelists knew him, and so he was kind of the go-to guy. I think they were leading the single pro group in Chicago, a suburb of Chicago. So I love Bill and Kristen already, and I'm just so glad that they came, and then we got a house. They had trouble at first to get a house out here, but we finally worked out, and then it was wonderful to have them here, and they had a big pool. They had all the teens over, and they had chickens, and they had all kinds of parties at their house. They had a big backyard that was just really great for a party.

KS: We almost bought their house.

RG: (25:50) Oh, you almost did, yeah. But it was, there was a few things that were like, mm. Yeah.

But it was a hard one, because that closed-in patio, like I looked at it, and I just saw it. That is perfect. In the land and everything. Oh, yeah. Like that was. Yeah.

So it was great to be with them, and it was just, it was, everyone was just excited to be able to come out here, and I know, you know, Linda, one of my closest friends here, I guess they had been talk of St. Charles for years back. I mean, I don't know if it's 20 years back, I think it was 2021, or 20, 2001, there we go. So it was that long ago. Okay. So, yeah, so, I mean, it got, you know, they just weren't able to do it, weren't able to do it, and Linda's like, I'm not gonna believe it till I see it, you know?

But it was great, because then you felt so much better that your neighbor, you could say, okay, I'm just meeting down the street, because a lot of people didn't want to go across the river. It just sounds funny, but you just get, you know, like kind of in your own rut sometimes, and I mean, they might go to work over there, but they darn aren't gonna go there on a Sunday, right? Yeah. So it was like, you know, hard to get people to come with us over, you know, to over there. So it was, you know, encouraging for my faith to say, okay, I can meet someone here, and someone can actually be a Christian from just meeting them a neighbor.

Yeah. So that was great. I loved that.

KS: (27:25) What were, what are your memories of like the St. Charles Church building?

RG: In In the beginning, like the 8020 and stuff? Um, well, like, Oh, the, because they were looking for a building fairly early on. Yeah. So when did you find out that? Like, were you in the know, or?

Kind of in the know. Bill, yeah, Bill shared, you know, they were looking, I think they announced it even, that they were looking for a building. That's after we had first done the rental. We were doing the rental place, 8020. So I'm trying to think if we'd met somewhere before that.

KS: It was the 8020 on Highway K, right?

RG: Yeah, on Highway K. So I don't know. Did we just go directly there, or was there another place we met a couple of times?

KS: The, when Michael and I moved here, we were pretty, like, it was just at the 8020.

RG: Oh, okay. I'm trying to think. So, whatever. Why do I think there was something else in between, like one or two weeks? I don't know.

Well, maybe we, maybe we met just outside when it was warmer. Oh, yeah, we met at the park. That's what we did. We met at Tribute, one of our veterans' Tribute Park. And that was great.

We really enjoyed that. Yeah. Yeah. And, you know, it was outside, so people were walking by. I was like, oh, come on over, you know?

So that was the start of it really being encouraging to come to that. Yeah, yeah.

KS: Let's see. It's so funny, because, like, a lot of, I know we share a lot of memories of the church building there, and, like, needing to help out and clean it up. Like, what was one of your favorite memories of when we got the church building?

RG: Oh, the building we were in there? Yeah, on Mexico Road. For, first of all, I thought I wouldn't have changed as much as they wanted changing, like painting everything. Some of it looked fine to me. I loved it that, I mean, there probably wasn't anyone that didn't help in some way or another.

And so it was just fun. And then my friend that was coming, Pat, had expertise in painting and in remount, because she was a landlord for many years, rented out a lot of property, and I had met her at my swim class. And so she ended up helping just on her own. She volunteered to help and even pay for the flooring, the paint. Well, the paint was probably ours, but she did the flooring and bought things for it and, you know, just had a vision for it, too.

So that was kind of cool that people around us. And I think it was nice to see people that came, like Yvonne and her husband, Gary, I don't know, Randy, Randy and Yvonne Kochman, or what was her last name? She has the gray hair, Yvonne, gray hair? Oh, okay. They came early on, too, and they were helping.

And it was like, oh, who's this beautiful girl? You know, Yvonne would come. So it was great to meet people. They just seemed to come out of the woodwork, honestly, and it was like really funny. I just saw God working and all of that, you know?

And just a lot of hard work, and went into it, and you felt a part of it, you know?

KS: Yeah, it was great. Like, in the last year in the building, like, what's one of your favorite memories? Or if you have several, you can list several.

RG: Let's see. I like that Kim and Julie did the stickers on the walls, because I'm in with the kids. And it's just so, I would just love that if I was a kid. Animals and trees and, you know, all the motifs that they did on the walls. And then the one room is butterflies, and they're actually, the butterfly's, like, glued to the wall and, you know, higher than the kids can reach in the baby area, you know? But it's just, I think just making their final touches, I like that, because it has come together.

Like I said, I don't necessarily have an eye for real expertise in decorating. So it was like, you know, I was happy that, I guess, Cheryl, I think it's Cheryl's doing, and some of it just has a, she's very particular. And so she wanted it to look a certain way, but I now appreciate it, because I would have probably. So I think I'm very proud of the way everything looks, but I love that. And even just this last week when it's come, where we, you know, it was loud up there in the, what do they call that area, where the kitchen is and stuff.

I think it was a meeting room, or a great hall. Yeah, upstairs, and you couldn't really hear the people in your tables. If you were in tables, you couldn't hear them. And someone's, it's still, people are still giving to, they put that sound barriers on, and it really made a difference. So I love that.

So I think I'm continuing just to still be in love with people just, you know, and they would, what I really liked, they would put it on, okay, here's our need list, and whoever could do it was doing it, but not everyone had to do that. It was whatever financially you were able to help, just, you know, because the church already had given so much to buy the building, you know. And then the, so I don't have one thing, but I think I was even looking last Wednesday, Tuesday or Wednesday when I was there with something else, on my own with another sister, just how lucky we were. Like, I was asking where the, you know, where the coffee is in the mornings when you walk in. I said, did that come with the building?

I mean, they were so generous when we got the building. They, the people that were there before, left so many very nice wood things, and you know what I mean? It's just really, really nice, and things that we didn't have to buy extra. So that was, I love that. Just the way it's all come together.

I think of the storage room full of Christmas stuff. Yeah. The bathroom that had the baby Jesus. Oh, yeah, I know. Oh, they're crazy.

I mean, some of this, I mean, it was good, because when she got rid of, Cheryl got rid of things, she's like, no, that's not gonna fit with my vision, you know? Some people took it on home, or, you know, whatever. Most things got taken, and if not, you know, we finally got rid, had to get rid of it. But yeah, there was a lot of things that were very useful. Yeah, yeah.

KS: I think about the, for the playground for the kids, and how Cheryl worked that out.

RG: Yes, I'm glad she had the vision. I know, yeah. Yeah. That's good news.

KS: How does the St. Louis St. Charles Church interact with the greater community? Some of the things that I know you've been involved in.

RG: (34:27) Yeah, a few things I guess I was involved with that. I'd been since they Trying to think so one thing that I can remember Years ago, from COVID time we did a foods The donation being, whatever we would I guess the church was paying for the food coming and so they would deliver in a truck and then we'd send it all out there and people would drive by and pick it up during COVID time.

KS: Oh, wow.

RG: (35:08) Yeah, a few things, I guess, I was involved with that I've been since they, ah, it was, trying to think.

So one thing that I can remember, years ago for COVID time, we did a food donation thing, whatever, and we would, um, I guess the church was paying for the food coming, and so it was, they would deliver it in a truck, and then we'd send it all out there, and people would drive by and pick it up during COVID time. Oh, wow. And there's a lot of nice things, I mean, milk and eggs and, you know, things that people really did need. Yeah. And so we let the people that were at the food banks, you know, they were advertising, or, you know, not advertising, but, you know, to saying, okay, this is the food.

And people were looking for areas that, you know, they could get extra help. So that was great, because you got to meet a lot of people, they'd drive by, you'd pop the trunk, and, hey, you know, and we'd have about 10 or 15 of us, and then, since I didn't work from home, I mean, you know, I worked at home, but out of the home, then I got to go and help out a lot of that, and it was great to see, especially the lead couples were, you know, that were evangelists and stuff, they were the ones out there doing it, and kind of heading up that. So that was great, and then the No Hunger Holiday, that comes out of, you know, St. Charles, I mean, the Stansberry Church in November for, you know, for Thanksgiving meal, that you get the turkey and all that, and I've been on the meeting of the, you know, we have Zoom meetings before, way before, and then, and you have to start calling people that we already have on the list, and in October, so I get to be a call person, and then I've met people like a friend of mine, Christine is someone I met during that time, and we've remained friends, and yeah, so that's been great, and in the beginning, people would come inside, and all the boxes and all the stuff that people would get would be, was in the sanctuary, kind of, but now it seemed like it's easier and faster for them, they don't have to come in, they check them in with like a computer thing in the parking lot, and then they have, you know, you go down and you drive through, and it's all done in a matter of minutes, and we do that once a year.

KS: How long have you been involved with that?

RG: I wanna say, it wasn't when I was first here, so I think it would have been, I think we've been doing it eight to 10 years now, I wanna say, and that's good, and then at St. Charles, it's more different using the building, like I know one of the sisters is, her and her husband have a group of, they have a class that they're going through, or a class they were going through on grief, they had lost their son, and they are now invited that group over for the potluck, and I think just having the potluck there, and everyone chipping in, and got the group me going, or the meal thing, or whatever it is, you can sign up, so everyone gets involved with that, and you can invite your neighbor, I think that outreach to the community and your neighborhood, and you can meet your neighbors, your own neighbors, and say, hey, we're doing this on, it's the first Wednesday of the month, and we do it all year long, and we've gotten to meet so many great people through that, and I like the sharing of that.

KS: (38:27) Did that start when the hammers arrived, or kind of pre?

RG: (38:29) Yeah, the hammers came up with that, because we did have it, let me see, we were doing a couple, like I said, we met outside before we had the building, and then we did, we met also at a place off in Cottleville, we probably went to that, and I think the Old Town Cottleville, we did a couple times there also, where we had, so I

think, I mean, some of that did start with Kristen and Bill, because I'm pretty sure at that point, at that time, I think they were still around, yeah, so, but then, I think having it once a month on our calendar, yeah, was probably Sheryl and Ron's kind of pushing, taking something that's good, and even doing better, or something.

KS: I think one day we'll have to do a cookbook.

RG: (39:25) Yeah, that's too,

KS: like a little church cookbook.

RG: That's funny.

KS: So, okay, we'll probably come back to some St. Louis and St. Charles, but there's some other extra questions, just because I'm always curious about it. So, you were still down in Florida when the letter came out.

RG: (39:45) Yeah, we were, and what year was that? That was, 03, right? Or 02? I usually think of it as, yes, 02, 03. So, we had just moved to Indiana.

KS: Oh, okay, you had just moved.

RG: And so, what I didn't explain earlier, was that Indiana was more of a, it was part of the Chicago church.

KS: Oh, okay.

RG: (39:55) So, when we first got there, we would drive in even on midweeks. But then, within six months, I think we started having it in for the midweeks. But it, because it was a lot going through, you know, coming from Florida, the wintertime in Chicago can be treacherous for Tony and I to really drive there. And then, you know, when you have little kids, we had little kids at the time, to get back home, you're getting home at...

KS: You had adopted two [kids].

RG: (40:35) Yeah, we adopted two in Indiana. They were nine months old each, and from the foster, what is it called? DHS. So, they were in foster care, because they were both cocaine positive. So, they were taken away, and put into foster care in the city, you know, like the government foster care. Yeah. And yeah, so, we got them in 2004 and 2006. So, they're in Indiana. Yeah, in Indiana, yeah. Right there from Gary, Indiana, where Michael Jackson was born.

KS: So, yeah. So, the question was? Oh yeah, about the just, I've been curious about kind of like your experience, especially since you've been part of the church since 1985, that you've seen a lot of changes.

RG: (41:26) Yeah. So, with the letter and the changes, I think what's been the hardest for me through the change, I'm glad it came out.

I'm glad that we re-evaluated ourselves. But then I think a lot of us, including me, stayed away from getting, what you would call discipling by each other, you know? Like, I was friends with people, but it wasn't like, okay, every week, you know, that time that you would get with somebody wasn't so rigid, and then people were like, oh, I'm pretty busy, you know? Kind of like, oh, that kind of, because you got a marriage, and then you got a church, and then you got another thing you're adding on there. So, and then for us, we had littler kids, you know?

And so, I was an older mommy, so it was like, you know, it was not as easy to sleep, and all that stuff that came through with all that. But I evaluated my thoughts about it as I looked at it, it's like, okay, it's humans still. I didn't take it as, okay, I need to find another church, basically. Because I felt like I had studied the scriptures, and this is what the scriptures say, and this is how to live, and this is, you know, yes, discipling is still good, it's still, we need to be, you know, asking, helping, being humble, asking advice, and things like that. So, you know, if things get twisted because of someone's thoughts, you know, a person saying, okay, maybe let's do it this way, or then, it just, you know, it's still God leading us.

If we go back to just, okay, God is gonna lead us and direct us, and God will, I felt like God would take out if somebody was in the way doing the wrong thing, he would take it out. So, I just trusted in God, and for Tony and I, it was kind of a dark little area for us in other ways, because he started struggling, he was a new Christian, and I think that just added some stuff to the dynamics with us, and him, you know, for me, I've been a disciple a long time, this is, I'm not going anywhere, you know, I'm gonna continue being a disciple, and for him, he's like, well, so we did go to another church, and I decided to try it out, and we were there longer than I thought, I think we were there about three years, but it kind of, one thing which was good and bad, it let you think, well, maybe this isn't the only church around doing this, teach the same teaching, and the doctrine being the same, but when I did look into it

deeper, you know, at first we just went, and then we got going there, for me, I should have spoken up a lot sooner and said, you know, I don't know how to convert anyone, because they're not using the scriptures that I know for conversion, so, you know, how can I bring someone, so then I finally, that's what I finally wrestled with, and decided, no, I've gotta go back, because this is the right teaching, you know, and the teaching was wrong, it was too, it wasn't teaching at all about, you know, what it says about teaching each other to obey the word, and, you know, Matthew 18, and to believe, repent, be baptized, it was, you just believe in your Christian, and then you might get baptized later, for, I guess, obedience, but not to be saved, and so, then I just talked to Tony, and said, I've gotta go back, and at that point, you know, I'm like, I'm just gonna have to trust, you know, if he comes, he comes, if he doesn't, he doesn't, and the family will be not what I wanted, to be broken up and, you know, going to two different churches, but he did decide to go, which I was thankful for, so, but he struggled with the driving, he struggled with working all day, and the driving, so I tried to be respectful of that, and to say, yeah, I understand, and, you know, but, you know, we still have to, you know, obey, so, I really shouldn't, I shouldn't have left, but out of that, it kind of gave us a, you know, oh, well, maybe we'll look, and then, yeah, so I feel like the letter did bring up, like, okay, let's just reevaluate, but I wasn't struggling with that part, Tony was struggling with just going to a different church, and he didn't necessarily, because he's enjoyed a lot of churches through the years, he grew up Catholic, and then he was in Catholic school, and, you know, it just, to him, it was, as long as it was kind of a good place, he didn't, he wasn't looking at the scriptures directly, and then it was hard as a mom, as a wife, to, like, okay, you know, disciple, might as well help him, so it was kind of a hard place to be at the time, but God worked it out, so.

KS: like, going back and thinking about your walk as a whole, that, I know, like, I became a disciple in 2002, so, like, right before the letter came out, so, my experience is a little bit different, and so, hearing people's, like, experience, and, like,

RG: (47:26) while discipleship, in some cases, went unhealthy, kind of toxic, others mentioned, too, but, like, if you had people who were giving you godly advice, bringing you back to the Bible, providing some structure, especially if you came from a family that didn't provide that, that it could, like, help in relationships, your walk with God

KS: And what are some of the things that you're like, we did old school, like pre letter that you're like, can we bring it back? Can we, you know, not throw out the baby with the bathwater? Let's keep the good

RG: (47:57) I still shared my heart and got advice from especially women that I just saw their life and saw how much they love God and how much they wanted to obey the scriptures and obey God and And You did still continue. I never changed really that relationship. I think you know the relationship with women, but as far as like, because I think when we were in it. And we went to cycle. It was kind of like more like a class. You know, okay, you do this, you do this, you do this? And it wasn't just sitting and sharing so much, it was more. You know, okay, tell me, tell me how you send this week. You know, tell me, you know. And so that kind of we're in a way, but I still had you know, I tried to share, you know what I needed advice, you know advice, especially being a new mom, say at that time I was, I mean it was when say yeah, I had we got Colin in 2004. So that was a few years later, and I needed the advice on. Yeah, with the women and at the time, so what do you mean?

KS: (49:12) What are some of the things that you're, like, we did old school, like, pre-letter, that you're, like, can we bring it back? Can we, you know, not throw out the baby with the bathwater, let's keep the good, and?

RG: I mean, I still shared my heart, and got advice from, especially women that I just saw their life, and saw how much they loved God, and how much they wanted to obey the scriptures, and obey God, and I did still continue, I never changed, really, that relationship, I think, the relationship with women, but as far as, like, because I think when we were in it, and we went to disciple, it was kind of, like, more like a class, you know, okay, you do this, you do this, and it wasn't just sitting and sharing so much, it was more, you know, okay, tell me how you sin this week, you know, tell me, you know, and so that kind of went away, but I still had, you know, I tried to share, you know, what I needed advice, you know, advice, especially being a new mom, see, at that time, I was, I mean, it was, let's see, yeah, I had, we got Colin in 2004, so that was a few years later, and I needed the advice on, with the women in that time, so I still had that.

When you moved here to St. Louis, do you feel like you got the support you needed, and like, like your marriage, your kids, and? Yeah, we did. Well, you're friends with Linda. Yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah, we did continue getting some advice, some of it, how do I say this?

You know, Tony and my husband started struggling, his kind of lack of conviction on some things led him astray, and then he did stop sharing so much with me, that struggle with the kids, that it made him struggle with, so then he started drinking, and it was hidden, so he was just, it was, I felt alone for a while, just trying to be, you know, following God, raising the kids without his help, so that happened probably, even in Indiana, I mean, I think, yeah. I think, you know, when there was a brother that he was discipling, shared that he had had an affair with somebody, he didn't really help the brother like he needed to, and that was weird to me, like, why aren't you getting in there more, you know? Like, help him out to, like, really help him to repent and whatever, and he, and the brother did, but it wasn't with my husband's help, it was with some of the people, so he just kind of distanced himself from, even before we came here, he was kind of distant, and then when we came here, and I was going back to Indiana quite a bit to visit, you know, we had not sold the house for a few months, between November and March, and so I was going back a lot, plus then I went back every three or four months, because I still had great relationships, and, you know, one time I went on vacation, Tony was busy, and I went with the kids, and we went to see the Noah's Ark in Ohio, and it was with meeting with the other friends, and, you know, relationships to me have always been so precious, you know, and I treasure them, so, and I asked him one time, it's like, why, you know, who do you miss back in Indiana? And he's like, oh, nobody, you know, so he had really disconnected, you know, and I don't know when that happened, but, you know, so that was kind of hard. What was the initial question? Oh, yeah, oh, yeah, another, did I answer it?

KS: (51:59) Well, that brings up, like, the other question of just, like, well, oh, there's another question left, so I'll get, like, it's like, what has helped you, like, run the race? Like, helped you stay faithful all these years? What were those, like, what are the things? If it helps to get out, if you were giving a baby disciple advice, like, what has helped you?

RG: (52:24) I mean, I, a conviction I had from the very beginning was to protect my heart, like, guard my heart, so if I'm feeling something, I will share it, and I would get help on it. I, you know, it's just like in a marriage, it's like you love that person, and you wanna do everything you can for the marriage, so, you know, you want to, as soon as something happens, I felt like, okay, that's why you try to resolve arguments, you know, and get that out, you know, and try to deal with that, because you do love each other, you're in it together, and then if you let things fester and harden your heart, then it's really, really tough, so I think, you know, just understanding the scriptures, understanding, you know, that if I'm not open, if I'm hiding things, then it's so easy for Satan to really get me discouraged, and I mean, there's been a lot of up and downs, especially when Tony was drinking, you know, that was, and I didn't understand, because it was, he was doing it, of course, you know, he was ashamed, so he's doing it in secret, and then when you get addicted, and you can't hide anymore, that, and all of it comes out, that's just crazy, so I think still having those relationships helped me through that time, they, you know, one of the sisters printed out the thing about God making a way, there's a scripture in the Old Testament of being a way maker, and I would look at that every day, she'd have it on, you know, she framed it up, it was like a little scripture there framed up, and that God's gonna make a way, so I think people would point me back to my, you know, strength in God, and they would pray with me in whatever I needed, yeah, so I think, yeah, so that's kept me faithful through the years, and, you know, thankfully that my love for God has not wavered, and, yeah, you know, still they are as strong as ever in that, yeah.

KS: So you already mentioned a few, but like when, as I mentioned, like the idea of the pillars of stone, pillars or piles of stone, like it's both seen, at least that's what's in my head, so of course the Old Testament, you know, those are marking great victory, so that you're passing it down to those, you know, younger generations, but they also might mark great defeats, so the highs and lows, so what are like the kind of pillars or piles of stone if you were gonna be?

RG: (55:05) Oh, goodness, I don't know if I can get through this. Well, it sounded like one was, like when you had left for those three years, like that was like a pillar, like I could see that reminding you, like this is where God was pointing me.

Definitely, and let's see. Yeah, I don't know if I'm coming up. Yeah, I do. I just think of like we have those moments of like I wanna remember this. And we usually talk about our victories, but there's sometimes like those low moments, you're like, I wanna remember that.

I need to remember that. Yeah, I mean, being on the other side of his, you know, of his addiction, and he's healthy now. And so I think, what would be a pillar there? Just that, that would be a pillar, I guess, not to just, you know, I can still remember it. I think, I don't know, because if I wanna go back and say during my first years, you know, I had been in my wrong thinking, had, you know, in my dating life before I became a Christian, I would give myself up very quickly and easily to a guy just to get his attention on me, or that he would maybe love me.

And so when I became a Christian, you know, I didn't wanna get anywhere close to, you know, struggle with that. I didn't want to fall away because of that. Yeah. Because of the, so I, you know, do things like where I wouldn't put myself in situations and where I would be alone with anyone that I might be attracted to or something, especially a guy. So, and then funny things would happen.

Like I was, I was at work, I was a new Christian when I was still at college. And I, there was a guy I worked with and like it was a job I had on campus. And he was, you know, he just started, I was starting to have feelings. I'm like, what's this? You know, like, and then I prayed about it.

And the next day, cause he was, you know, I was at college older. I started, I didn't finish till I was 28. So I was, you know, most of the people there, what were 18 or they start off at college, 18 or 19. So they were about 10 years younger than me, right? So I prayed about it.

And the next day he did something very stupid, but normal for this 18 or 19 year old, right? And, and I just laughed and it was like, and I could almost feel the attraction leaving me. You know, just that stupid kid, you know, why am I letting this get to me? But so, I mean, I stuck to that. And then I was able to, when I got married 16 years later, I was able to say I had been pure the whole time.

And so I think just taking something from the old and saying, no, I don't ever want to get back to that. You know, I don't know if that's something, but I don't know if it's exactly a pillar, but it's things that spurred me on. And I still have that wayward, you know, scripture in my, on my dresser. Cause I feel like that's something I want to look at all the rest of my life and just realize God is going to make a way through whatever I'm going through. Yeah. So I don't know.

Let's see. Any other things? So I, I don't know. That's probably because I don't like, I don't know. I never thought about it like that. Maybe I'll come up later.

KS: (59:30) It's kind of weird to do this towards the end. But what is the icoc mean to you?

RG: (59:37) I feel like it means, see if I can explain it the way I want. I mean, I feel like it's, it's just a group of people all trying to make a difference in the world and going out and trying to meet people wherever they're at, go and make disciples everywhere you go.

And it's such a, I mean, I've been to other cities. We've gotten to go to Jerusalem. We got to go to the church there in Tel Aviv. It was neat. We've gone a few other churches and it was just amazing to be able to see people believing the same, living the same life, amazing people all over the world, just serving and loving God.

And so their whole heart is to help someone be right with God and continue and stay faithful. So I think it's just a great, I don't know, how do you explain it? Just a group that you know when you meet them, you're gonna share the same convictions. You know, the word is the word. If I can go to the word and see it, then that's what I need to live out.

And there's not a lot of debate in it, you know? So it's like you will find people doing the same thing in other places because they're just following the same Bible, you know, God's word. So I love it. I've made so many friends. I've had people at my house for a day.

I don't even remember who they were always because it was like, it was fun to, especially being single, it was, you had more opportunity on that. And it was, it's just always been such a strong organization that I, you know, a group

of people really and all over the world doing the same thing and looking forward to seeing them in heaven. Yeah. And that's what I think.

KS: And I think possibly my last question. Okay. You've already mentioned a few, but what are the verses that in your walk with God like you keep coming back to?

RG: (01:01:59) Again, I just, the other day I read Psalm 42 about the deer pants for water, you know, as the deer pants for water. So I, so I, let me read it. Yeah.

I will be like, admit I'm one of those. I'm like, I can't remember. Well, and that's about me is I can't remember words even if there's a fight or there's a something I can't remember. What did he say? I can't remember exactly.

I like as a deer pants for streams of water. Let's see. Psalm 42. Okay, yeah. As a deer pants for streams of water, so my soul pants for you.

You know, desire for God. Like we just had that thing on craving God. You know, I want, always want that. Yeah. That's my favorite.

The way maker verse. In the way maker, which I don't know exactly where it is anymore. We just broke that picture frame. I need to get a new one today. I actually went to grab it and it broke, but I've forgotten what scripture is.

The Old Testament, but I don't know. So, but the, I mean, I can't even point to one scripture. I mean, it's just amazing, but I think Philippians, Philippians two, I did when Tony and I were dating, I did a cross stitch thing and I still have that. I think it's, yeah, I, this is one of my favorite Philippians two, imitating Christ's humility. Therefore you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the spirit, even tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete.

Being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and one of one mind. Do nothing out of selfish ambition and vacancy, but rather in humility, value others above yourself, not looking to your own interest, but to each of you to the interest of others. Yeah, so that's one of my favorites too.

KS: (01:04:20): Okay, so is there anything you'd also like to share? Anything about the St. Louis, St. Charles Church that I should have asked, but didn't,

RG: (01:04:31) I mean, there's no doubt that it's God doing it all together. It's like, it's just the way it's all come together with everyone, the way that you see the faces on Sunday where people are really loving each other, enjoying being there, it's a family. I think having the smaller group in St. Charles, I honestly do feel more of a family. I think I like that it's from a big group, but I like that we can break it down into a smaller group and you feel like you get to have time to get to know people. Because for me, I wanna take someone to lunch for their birthday, and if you get 300 people, it's gonna be hard to do that. So I don't know, but I want to know every single person and not just, ah, I wanna be able to really spend time and get to know them.

I like the smaller group, and I feel like Cheryl and Ron do such an amazing job of family, and I love their heart about little children and how they're, that's how, and even less than a day on, we need to be like little children, and that when the kids are, because I was kind of a strict mom, stop throwing those things around. If you throw them around, you're gonna need to pick them up, right? But they're running around, and they're like, oh, would you like a donut? Oh, would you like, and just spend time in getting to know, even to the littlest one, they just honor them, and so it really helps us to see how we need to treat each other. I like that.