



# New Hope Christian Church

Disciples Making Disciples

"I lift up my eyes to the mountains; from where shall my help come? My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth."

Those verses from the 121st Psalm are a constant reminder to me that we are not alone and that we are not intended to be alone. The Lord is always with us and He is always watching over us. Not only are we meant to be in a relationship with the Lord, we are meant to be in relationships with one another. It took me many years to realize that and it happened through my relationships with other believers as I got involved with the church and joined a mid-week small group. In that group, I learned that God desires to know us personally and that He yearns for us to know him personally. The people in that group and my relationships with them were instrumental in my coming to understand my need for Christ and to accept him as my personal Lord and Savior. So in mid-2000 I accepted Jesus' offer of forgiveness and was baptized in His name for the forgiveness of my sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

There were many people involved in leading me to Christ, but none more important than my wife, Michelle. She is the one who pushed for us to start attending church after we got married. I grew up in a Catholic home and my family attended church regularly, rarely missing a week. But as I got into college and away from home, it became very easy for me to stop going. Looking back now, I realize that it was because it was not personal to me. I never developed a relationship with Christ and going to church was just something we did. Michelle had grown up in a Christian church and after getting married, desired that we start attending together. We attended several churches before arriving at New Hope. At New Hope, within weeks of our first visit, we were invited to check out a mid-week group. I resisted at first, but eventually gave in and my life has not been the same since.

At New Hope, I served as a deacon for six years before joining the elders. Michelle and I have also been actively involved with the mid-week disciple group ministry for several years. Just as our first mid-week group was vital to our relationship with the Lord, we believe that is crucial for believers to be in community with each other to study God's word and support each other in our successes and tribulations.

Michelle and I have two young adult children, Elise and Ben. One of our greatest joys has been watching them grow in their faith and seeing them accept Christ as their Lord and Savior. Our youngest child Curtis went to his heavenly home shortly before his third birthday as a result of a congenital heart defect. We look forward to the day when we are all reunited and can bask together in the glory of our King.

Jon Stafford