



New Hope Christian Church

Disciples Making Disciples

I was born and raised in South Florida. We moved around a lot because of difficult family circumstances. My dad was killed in an armed robbery when I was 4 and my mom went through a very difficult season trying to navigate the pain of losing her husband and the weight of being a single mom. Eventually my brother and I settled in with an uncle who sacrificially and lovingly did all he could for us.

My family were not (and many still are not) followers of Jesus. We had a very caring home but not a lot of direction or guidance when it came to our spiritual development. Honestly because of losing my dad and then my mom, (who would be incarcerated for drug abuse) I was a very angry kid. I covered my anger and resentment with pride and arrogance. I held a grudge against a lot of my family members and was a difficult person to be around.

During my senior year of High School one of my friends continually invited me to come to his youth group (something that I didn't understand – A group of High Schoolers hanging talking about Jesus and having fun without drinking or breaking the law...was very weird to me). Eventually, Nhu (my determined friend) teamed up with a local Youth Minister (Nate Bush) and together they answered all my questions and showed that they really cared. I will never forget sitting in Nate's old Dodge truck outside of my apartment complex and hearing him ask, "Rob, I have answered all of your questions, what's keeping you from making a decision for Jesus?" I didn't have an answer to his question. The next morning, Nate baptized me into Christ. It was the best decision I would ever make.

About 6 months later I left for Bible College. Sometimes, I still can't figure out how Nate and Nhu convinced me to go to Johnson Bible College after being a Christian for less than a year! I spent two years at Johnson before transferring to Florida Christian College to finish my undergraduate degree. It was at FCC that I met my wife (Sarah) and began to take my education and spiritual development very seriously. God did some incredible things during that season of my life. I was able to spend some time with my mom and even baptized her 1 year and 2 days before she passed away. The hope I have because she made that decision is one of the joys of my life.

Sarah and I did ministry together at a church plant in St. Cloud, Florida called Canoe Creek Christian Church. It wasn't long though before I felt the need to continue my education. I had only been a Christian for 5 years at this point and wanted to learn more. We moved to Lincoln, Illinois so I would study under Dr. Robert Lowery at Lincoln Christian University. Again, God did some wonderful things during this season of our lives. I was able to finish my degree with Dr. Lowery before he passed away, we welcomed our son Caleb into the world, and we answered a call in January of 2009 to come to New Hope to be the next Youth Minister.

We have now been at New Hope for 8 years. In those 8 years we bought our first home, added 3 more kids, and developed some of the best friendships in our lives. I started as the Youth Minister, then became the Teaching Minister, and in the fall of 2016 became the Lead Minister. These 8 years have honestly been the best 8 years of my life. I love this church and this community. Sarah and I (and Caleb, Abbey, Luke, and Noah too!) can't wait to see what God has in store for New Hope moving forward!

Rob Jankowski