

THE HARVESTER

APRIL 2024



*Dan & Heather
Litchfield*



*creating experiences for
people to know God and
live like Him.*

BECOMING A SISTERHOOD

“Wow, I am hearing nothing but glowing reports about the retreat. Thank you so much for creating such a wonderful experience... one woman told me the retreat was the ‘best thing I’ve ever done!’ Another told me she believes the retreat will ‘change the culture of our church.’”

This was an email the women’s ministry coordinator sent me regarding the recent women’s retreat. God truly had moved our hearts: on Friday night women were hesitant to even

face each other and have quick one on one discussions (an activity we started out with) but by Saturday night women were confessing sin to each other and asking each other to pray for them. By Sunday, they were setting up coffee dates with those they had never spoken to at church before and were crying over words of encouragement from their sisters in Christ. The weekend’s theme was “Building Authentic Community.” Despite the strong faith of these women,

they recognized the relational distance between them. One admitted she’d been attending the church for ten years and hardly knew any of the women at the retreat. Sadly this is a common reality in Maine. We are committed enough to spend years standing isolated in a pew. But how much better it would be if we really knew and loved each other! We need practice in building godly community; that’s what we did, and found that it’s a joy to do so! Pray they can extend it at church!

PLEASE PRAY WITH US

For Carley, our new intern, and the building of the internship program
For Thrive’s connecting with new churches, new retreats, new publicity
For our move to camp for the summer (We have to be out May 20) and the rental of our house



ELDER'S RETREAT

Sometimes it just takes a catalyst to begin conversation and a safe space to troubleshoot. That is largely what this past elder's retreat became. As Thrive led programs, issues were brought to the surface where the pastors and elders from the participating church could work through them in grace and truth. Often creating a healthy environment and asking the hard questions is what is needed to turn

people's eyes to God and toward each other, and when we do that, God causes growth. We are blessed to offer that. In this case, it meant changing the schedule to allow time for that real work to happen, which is ultimately the goal! Praise God that His plans are better than ours and He knows just what each group needs in order to grow to maturity—reflecting Christ Himself.



DAN'S TEMPORARY MINISTRY GIG

Since Dan has been on crutches for the past four weeks after his Achilles surgery, he has been largely relegated to rest and office work. Fortunately, God had pre-planned for him to preach this month and he has had plenty of time to write sermons! In April he did a two-sermon series based on love. "The devil wants us to believe lies—to make God's love conditional," he warned. But, based on 1 Jn 4:7-21 Dan asserted that love is God's essence, it is freely given, and "your love tank is full!" He added, "John's identity is in God's love. Let it be your identity." In the second sermon he expounded on virtues as the attributes of love. Next month Dan will preach and speak at two other churches. Please pray for the Spirit to speak through Him.

Carolina, who I have been mentoring for two years, just graduated and is moving to Kansas to work in wilderness conservation. She will be greatly missed! Please pray for her move and continued walk with God.



NEW INTERN

I am so pleased to announce that today we accepted our first Thrive summer intern! Carley Ross will graduate from Gordon College next week and move to Maine for an academic practicum in outdoor ministry, something she intends to pursue full time. We are excited to train her and offer practical ministry experience for wherever she ends up serving (maybe with us?!) And we are delighted to have her help for the summer. She will work in Bar Harbor part time and give 200 hours to Thrive. We hope this paves a way for future interns and college partnerships!