NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2026

A PLACE TO GROW

AT THE ORCHARD

In 2 Timothy 2:2, Paul tells Timothy, "What you have heard from me in the presence of many witnesses entrust to faithful men, who will be able to teach others also."

THE ORCHARD PASTORAL RESIDENCY



From its earliest days, the church has engaged in the essential work of identifying, training, and deploying pastors. And for years, this multiplication of ministry leaders has been one of our key priorities here at The Orchard. Since 2008, God has allowed us to invest in the lives of nearly 60 pastoral interns and residents, who are now serving the church locally, nationally, and around the world.

This fall, we officially launched our new pastoral residency. The purpose of this program is to raise up pastors with a lifelong commitment to godliness, a robust biblical doctrine, and competence in a wide range of ministry skills. Over the course of three years, residents will engage in seminary coursework leading to an accredited graduate degree, expository preaching preparation guided by seasoned preachers, and mentored ministry experiences in the life of our church.

As many of you know, we hoped to offer coursework in partnership with Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. Unfortunately, those plans were unable to come to fruition. However, we are excited to work with Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, a school very closely aligned with The Orchard in mission, theology, and values. We are also thrilled to send our residents to the Chicago Course on Preaching, a world-class in-person preaching preparation program.

In addition to these excellent opportunities, our residents will serve 20 hours per week in a mentored ministry setting during all three years of the residency program. Our pastors will also help residents as they take what they are learning and apply it in the areas of preaching, pastoral care, and leadership.

This year, we have two new residents. Ethan Sampson is serving as pastoral resident at the North Shore campus, and Andre Nelson is at the Vernon Hills campus. We are planning to expand our program with an additional 3–4 residents in next year's cohort. Please join me in praying for God's continued blessing on this initiative.

Brad Wetherell, Senior Pastor



ETHAN SAMPSON

Meet Our Residents!



ANDRE NELSON

STORIES OF GOD AT WORK

ITASCA
A NEIGHBOR'S STORY

In July during the All-Church Prayer Service in Itasca, Phil, a neighbor of the Itasca campus, pulled up a chair in his backyard to watch what was happening.

During the weeks that followed, Pastor Ryan had an opportunity to get to know Phil a little better, and Phil indicated a desire to return to church after years of looking for a church home. Phil laughed and said the church he was looking for was "right under his nose." Phil said that what drew him to The Orchard is that the sermons come from God's Word and not someone's opinions. Praise God for His unfailing love and faithfulness!



> "the sermons come from God's Word and not someone's opinions"

ARLINGTON HEIGHTS
WOMEN TEACHING THE WORD

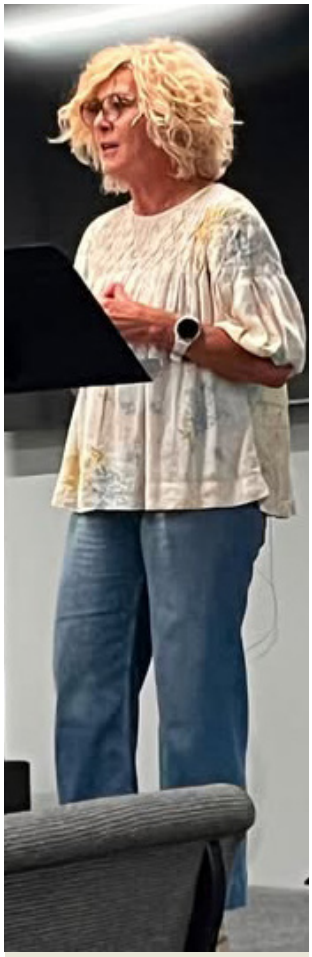
By Heather English

As Director of Women's Ministries, I love watching the Lord equip lay leaders for His work in the church.

Last year, LIFE Group Leader & Coach Beth Weil shared her desire to equip women to read, understand, and teach Scripture faithfully to other women. It was an answer to a prayer I had been praying for more than a year.

After much prayer and planning, Beth and I had the privilege of offering the first-ever Women Teaching the Word Cohort in 2025. Women completed a nine-week Charles Simeon Trust course, gained skills for studying and explaining the Bible accurately, and delivered eight expositional messages.

One of the highlights was seeing Sonja Cox, a cohort graduate, prayed over by her cohort sisters before teaching at our summer women's event, Rise & Shine.



> "I love watching the Lord equip lay leaders for His work in the church."

MARENGO | ONE STEP AT A TIME

By Michael Oceloti

This year, I feel as if the Lord has really been teaching me what it truly means to trust Him and let Him lead me. I think the biggest place I saw this was on my mission trip to Albania.

One of the biggest things God taught me in Albania was to slow down. I started realizing that I didn't want to rush through something God had brought me into.

When I came home, I wanted what God taught me there to affect how I live here. Since coming back, I've gotten more involved with my youth group and church.

I don't know exactly what the Lord has planned for me. But Albania taught me that I can slow down, trust Him, and let Him lead me one step at a time.



Your gifts help make stories like these happen at The Orchard and around the world through Global Ministries.

Click **HERE** to give.

ARLINGTON HEIGHTS | FROM PICKLEBALL PARTNERS TO LIFE PARTNERS

By Daniel Oyarzun

My time at The Orchard has been an awesome blessing from God. I started attending regularly in 2022 after college, looking for sound Bible teaching and a community of believers with whom I could grow.

God especially used Orchard Young Adults (OYA) to connect me with other young believers. Through OYA, I joined a LIFE Group and eventually began serving in Men in Action.

One summer when OYA began playing pickleball after church, I met Misha. As Pastor Greg Lawrence said at our wedding two years later: we started as pickleball partners and became life partners.

God has faithfully shaped us through His Word, the teaching at The Orchard, and our church community. We are grateful to be part of what He is doing here.



VERNON HILLS | AN UNEXPECTED YES *By Mike Huff*

I invited three people to come to the Men's Steakout event: an old neighbor, a new neighbor, and our handyman, Forest. The last person I thought would go was Forest, and he's the one who came!

We've had many conversations with him while he worked on our old house and helped paint our new one. During the event, Forest told me he had never had an employer invite him somewhere before. It was both sad and sweet to hear.

He seemed to have a good time and even picked up a couple of the books that were available. You never know how God might use a simple invitation!



BARRINGTON | STUDENTS REACHING STUDENTS *By Josh Newton*

Every Tuesday morning at Barrington High School, 20–40 students gather at Uprising, a student-led Bible study where teens read the Bible, discuss what it means, and pray for one another.

Many of our students have been active participants for years and now help lead this ministry. Cooper Hart, Adysen Minneman, and Josephine Perez, who attend The Orchard Barrington, currently serve on the leadership team. Our students are inviting friends, both those who know Jesus and those who don't, and using Uprising as a bridge for sharing the gospel and inviting others to church.

Just last week, two students attended youth group for the first time after receiving an invitation from Cooper through the group chat. Praise God for the work He is doing in and through students at Barrington High School.



GLOBAL MINISTRIES

SHORT TERM TEAM | SE ASIA

In September, a team of 13 people from The Orchard traveled to SE Asia to augment a national team conducting an encouragement and training retreat for ethnic ministry workers laboring in very difficult circumstances.

These men and women face deep discouragement and opposition when sharing the gospel and desperately need to know the love of Christ demonstrated through the support of His people! During the conference, there were many joyous reunions of workers who had not seen one another in quite a while.

The Orchard team offered a ministry of prayer and physical, spiritual, and emotional care so the workers can stand firm in the Holy Spirit and not back down during difficult challenges. The week included discussion and prayer groups, worship times, and evening fellowships with crafts and games.



SHORT TERM TEAM | TANZANIA



In October 2026, the Africa Inland Mission (AIM) hosted their biannual field conference for missionaries and ministry partners working in the East African nation of Tanzania. This important gathering provided refreshment, team building, and training for full-time workers.

The Orchard supports Jacob and Amy Ott, AIM missionaries who attended the conference with their children. The Orchard team served by providing children's ministry, daily Bible teaching for adults, and leading worship during the four-day conference.

The seven adults and four children sent by The Orchard were blessed to encourage the missionaries, support their families, and learn how God is at work in this part of the world.

Calling all prayer warriors! Each week, Global Ministries sends prayer updates with current praises and prayer requests. To be added to the Global Ministries Prayer Team, please send a request to **missions@theorchard.church.**

THE ORCHARD
THEORCHARD.CHURCH

UPCOMING

PREACHING SCHEDULE

Click **HERE** to see who's preaching at each campus.