

WHY STORY?

At Element we believe it is important for people around us to understand the changes that are taking place in our own lives based on the work of Christ in us. To help others understand what Baptism is and what it means to those being baptized on a personal level, we have asked them to share their life and stories with you, those attending and those online, in a more personal way than maybe you are use to.

In Baptism we are making a public statement about our life and commitment to walk in the ways Jesus calls us. Many people only get the Jesus "as seen on TV" and don't understand what Jesus does in "real life" or what following Him looks like on a practical level. Baptism is not magical, but it is a deeply spiritual event that reflects the work Jesus has done in our lives. The act of Baptism is symbolic in that we identify with the death and resurrection of Christ. We are essentially being buried (by going under the water) and raised to walk in new life (by coming out of the water).

The entire point is public identification with Christ and His work within us. That He is our great God and Savior that has come to restore a broken humanity that cannot have a relationship with God on our own. He is the Redeemer, He is the Remedy, He is the Hope, and He is our Life.

We also have the hope that one day you too will come to the saving knowledge of trusting in Jesus with your life. It makes all the difference in the world.

Aaron



OUR STORIES

May 5th, 2019



ELEMENT
christian church

CHRISTY “CURLY” REED

Hello to everyone reading this page. My name is Christy, this is my story.

It all started, as all things do, with God. God brought me to a family that wasn't my own, but became my own. My birth mother couldn't take care of me, so I went into the foster system. While I was growing in my birth mother's womb, the woman who would become my mom, Kimberly, and her mother Jannette, would go out and about places. It seemed to them that everywhere they went they would run into these "darling" babies. Often, it would turn out that the parents of these children would say, "Thank you, but we are foster parents." This happened one right after the other; foster parents, foster parents, foster parents!

At the time the woman who would come to adopt me already had two children and couldn't have any more. She said to my soon to be adopted father, "I think the LORD is calling us to be foster parents!" About two weeks later I was born. I was put into my new family as their first foster placement. They say that they immediately fell in love with me and knew that they wanted to adopt me.

As a child, my family would always go to church, I liked it. I would go to Sunday School and learn about Jesus and how He loved us enough to pay our debt on an old wooden cross. As I got a little bit older, I would sometimes sit in "big church" with my parents and listen to pastors that didn't seem to "pump you up" for the word of God. At least not for me. Then a guy named Aaron came up to the stand and preached. I really enjoyed the way he taught, it actually grabbed my attention and I could understand it (which is hard to do at age 11 or 12). It was actually fun to learn about God.

I don't remember exactly the moment that I "came" to Jesus. It has been a slow process over the years. I used to get mad a lot at my siblings and be bitter towards them. One day in Jr. High School I asked God to refresh my heart and I prayed for Him to bless me with a heart like His (and to remake mine). I wanted to be loving and kind hearted to people, like Him. That next Sunday, there was a verse in the notes that talked all about this. Psalm 51:10 Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.

Over time, He has changed my heart and how I respond to others. He is still working on me in that.

Jesus is God who became an awesome man who came to earth to save me. He is loving and merciful King. His work on that old wooden cross saved me from my sins and from being separated from Him forever. What is amazing is that because of His work, I have been adopted into the Family of God!

Ever since I was small I've just been riding the waves of God's grace and plans for my life. I usually don't realize all the blessings He has given me. God has always been blessing me with a family, friends, and a good work ethic. I want to walk with Him the rest of my days. The most awesome blessing is that I have been adopted twice in my life. The first time by my earthly parents, and the second time by my Heavenly Father and Jesus. I am a Reed and I am daughter of God, loved by both.

Thank you for sharing this blessed day with me.

JOY SNYDER

My name is Joy Snyder and I was born in Elkhorn, Wisconsin, but have lived in the Santa Maria area for about 30 years. My children and husband were the reason I first came to Element and I've been coming ever since.

I have been a believer in Jesus for as long as I can remember. However, I have not always lived as one throughout many stages of my life. If I look at the list of commandments, I have broken a very high percentage of them during my lifetime. The Lord was definitely there with me picking up the pieces. I guess my Christian walk has been like a roller coaster ride and I thank God He was always there waiting for me, drawing me, and ultimately rescuing me.

Becoming a parent and raising my children brought me close to Christ again. I don't know how anyone can raise children, or have meaningful relationships, without the help of the Lord. Many miracles happened along the way of getting my two girls to adulthood (and in my humble opinion they are great adults). But raising children was the stage of my life where I really got more in tune with my relationship with Jesus. I am so grateful He was there with me during many sleepless nights.

Finally, the circumstance that made me so at peace with my relationship with the Lord was my husband, Terry, and his battle with cancer. I would never have made it through all those days and nights without Jesus at our side. Even through the end, I felt the presence of God there to hold me and comfort me. Terry was also baptized at Element shortly before his death.

Each day that has followed the death of my husband, I have found such peace knowing that my Lord is at my side and always will be.

1 Peter 5:7 reminds us, "Give all your worries and cares to God, for He cares about you." Baptism is my outward expression of trusting Jesus with my life and casting my burden (even the burden of doing this in front of people) on Him.

JASON CASTILLO

My name is Jason Castillo, I am 42 years old and was born and raised in Santa Maria. I'm married with 4 wonderful kids- 2 sons and 2 daughters ranging in ages from 21 to 8.

As a kid I remember my Mom being a believer, but my father on the other hand, battled with a terrible addiction. I do remember going to church with my mom as a young child and I was even baptized (eventually), but I really didn't know what it meant or exactly why I was doing it.

Growing up I know I was a tough child to raise. My mother and father split up when I was young and my father passed away when I was 12. After my dad passed away my mom remarried several years later to a gentleman that was a Christian; this is when my introduction to Christ began. We started attending church on a regular basis and my mother and step-father were very involved with the church and even held a regular bible studies at our home. Unfortunately, my 2 brothers, 2 sisters and myself were not really included in this time of worship. As I look back on all that I had learned the only thing I remember is that if I believed in Christ I would go to heaven, not that that was a bad thing, but I was never taught to live for Jesus and love like a Christian.

As a young adult I tried to control everything around me and thought I could get through life on my own. I ended up finding myself in a bad situation, scared and alone. It wasn't until I was at my lowest did I reach out to the Lord and ask for help and...He showed up!!! It really shows that I was the one running from Him and He was there all along.

He did not deliver me from the trouble that I had gotten myself into, but He did take the loneliness and fear away. This was the first time in my life that I realized I had a Father and He loved me

unconditionally. To this day I still remember where I was and how I felt to have Jesus save me. It was amazing and I wish I could say from that day forward I looked to and followed Jesus as I should, but this was not the case.

For a long time I still thought I could control the outcome of all my life's different situations. This led to additional heartbreak and loneliness. I found myself in the same situations over and over. This was taking a toll on me, my wife, and my children. I knew it was time to give up control and trust in the Father that showed Himself to me so many years earlier.

It was difficult giving up, mainly due to the fact I did not know how to give up control and solely trust in the Lord. Currently, I have been attending Element and involved in a Gospel Community; this was my first step in trusting that Jesus will carry me through as I believe and trust in Him.

I am starting a new chapter in my life that I am able to share with my wife, kids, and other believers in my life. Jesus has opened my eyes to see the many blessings He has presented to me. I'm able to see the change in my life and my heart that I have not been willing to accept for many years. I thank The Lord daily for delivering me and giving me the chance to love and be loved. This baptism is a dedication of myself to God and His Son.