



Take Our World by Force

October 3rd at Liberty First Christian Assembly

You will not want to miss Pastor Rhonda Belles at our October 3rd Day of Equipping as she shares about "Spiritual Formation, or Sanctification." Through her own experience with a season of difficult circumstances and depression, the LORD lead Rhonda down a path of victory! She has a Word of Wisdom to help equip us to be prepared to take our world by force.



A Glimpse at History



"Say His Name"

By Claudette Hoag and Roberta DiMichael
Erie Christian Assembly

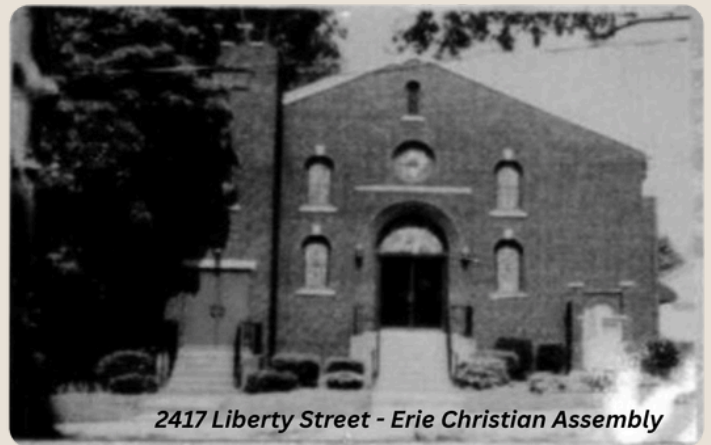
In 1916, Joseph Bongiorno traveled by train from his hometown of Erie to California seeking relief from illnesses that had been troubling him. During his journey, he met Pastor Giovanni Peru, who shared with Joseph about Jesus Christ and a church where people believed in the healing power of God.

Joseph attended Pastor Peru's church, accepted Jesus as his Savior, and experienced a life-changing healing. Filled with excitement, he returned to Erie and shared his faith with his brother Mario, family, and friends. As letters continued between Erie, California, and the Chicago Christian Assembly, believers began gathering together in homes throughout Erie. On January 27, 1917, Umberto Gazzeri became the first pastor of what was then known as The Christian Assembly Church. The congregation worshiped near 16th and Poplar Streets for many years before officially establishing a church at 1706 Poplar Street in April 1921. As the church family continued to grow, a larger building became necessary.

On September 25, 1949, the church dedicated its new home at 2417 Liberty Street—where Erie Christian Assembly continues to worship today.

What began as one young man seeking healing became something far greater. A ministry was born, lives were changed, and generations have come to know Jesus because one pastor chose to speak His name to a stranger on a train.

These early believers remind us to be bold and faithful. Speak the name of Jesus...because only eternity will reveal what God can do through a single conversation.



The Christian Assembly Church

In 1916 Joseph Bongiorno went to California to find relief from his illnesses. While on the train he met a gentleman with whom he became friendly.

The gentleman, Giovanni Peru, was a pastor of a church that believed Christ is the healer of all sicknesses. Joseph went to his Church and became a changed man. He brought his faith to Erie and shared it with his brother and friends.

On January 27, 1917 Umberto Gazzeri became the first pastor of the Christian Assembly Church. The congregation worship on 16th and Poplar for 28 years.

The new church at 2417 Liberty was dedicated September 25, 1949. David Frank is the current pastor.



Recipe for Living

by Charity Pryborowski
Greenville Christian Assembly

Food is often used in times of brief stress or sadness. Sometimes we refer to it as "comfort food" or to ourselves as being "food happy". We also seek the instant gratification of a "no bake" or "dump" recipe that cuts out the work required for a more significant result. However, in our spiritual journey as Christians, we know there are no shortcuts. Our instruction is clear, and the path is narrow and defined. We cannot be "no bake believers" expecting to receive God's blessings, and the only "dumping" should be at the altar.

Just as dough is kneaded, so are we to allow ourselves to be molded and shaped by God. We understand we will go through times of trial and heat, but it is needed to refine us. The time is specific and according to His will and purpose for our lives. All baked desserts require a cooling period before we can enjoy them. As Christians, we need times of reflection and devotion - time to pray and praise ahead of the blessing. In the end, we get to "taste and see that the Lord is good!"



Isaiah 64:8

Yet you, Lord, are our Father. We are the clay, you are the potter; we are all the work of your hand.

Romans 12:2

Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is --his good, pleasing and perfect will.

Isaiah 40:31

but those who hope in the Lord will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.

Proverbs 3:5-6

Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to him, and he will make your paths straight.

Romans 12:12

Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.

Psalms 30:5

For his anger lasts only a moment, but his favor lasts a lifetime; weeping may stay for the night, but rejoicing comes in the morning.

Psalms 34:8

Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the one who takes refuge in him.



Word of Wisdom

by Dorie
Abundant Life World Outreach Center



Recently, I flew home to Pittsburgh from Phoenix, Arizona. With everything going on the U.S. airports--recent flight mishaps and staffing concerns--I felt a bit apprehensive, to say the least.

As we prepared for takeoff on a full flight, I sensed a single word in my spirit: trust.

It made me pause and think. Here I was, placing my trust in a pilot I had never met--someone behind a closed cockpit door. I didn't know their age, their experience, or anything about them. And yet, I trusted they would get me home safely.

That's blind trust.

Then my thoughts turned to my Father in heaven--the One I do know. the One who has walked with me through every difficult moment, who continues to guide my steps and steady my path.

How much more should I trust Him?

Trust that He will carry me safely home. That He watches over even the smallest details--my luggage, my direction, my peace. That in every step, He is present, providing a calm that goes beyond understanding.

In that moment, I had a choice: Would I stand on the familiar truth of Proverbs 3:5-6

“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to Him, and He will make your paths straight”

or would I give in to fear?

I was grateful for the gentle nudge, the quiet reminder that my God will never leave me or forsake me--no matter where I am or where I'm going.



Prayer Requests

- Our missionaries -for provision and safety
- That the Lord would move and have His way in our upcoming event together
- That we would have the boldness to share Christ and take this world by force



A Word from Our Upcoming Speaker

Spiritual Formation

By Rhonda Belles

Richmond Heights Chagrin



Last June 2025, I graduated with my Bachelor's degree in Theology and Ministry. During those three years of study, I took several classes on spiritual formation. In one class, we were asked to create a practical plan for intentionally incorporating spiritual disciplines into our daily lives. That assignment introduced a level of intentionality that had been missing in my spiritual walk up to that point.

The exercise encouraged us to think in terms of daily, monthly, and yearly practices. For example, a yearly discipline might include taking a weekend or week-long retreat to spend extended time with the Lord—something that would not necessarily be possible on a weekly or even monthly basis. What made this especially significant for me was that I felt spiritually stuck and deeply discouraged at the time. Difficult circumstances had led me into a season of depression, and I found myself continually crying out to the Lord for relief.

When I speak about spiritual formation, or sanctification, I mean the ongoing process by which, through God's grace, we engage in spiritual practices and disciplines that shape and transform us into the likeness of Jesus. As Dallas Willard said, "God is opposed to earning, not effort."

As I began mapping out my own rhythm of spiritual disciplines, it looked something like this:

- Daily: Bible reading, prayer, and journaling
- Weekly: Deeper study of Scripture and reading challenging material from faithful men and women who have devoted their lives to theology and spiritual growth
- Monthly: Fasting and extended times of silence and solitude. Scripture memorization
- Yearly: Retreats set aside specifically to seek the Lord and listen for His direction

In sharing this, I am not suggesting that I have "arrived." However, I have learned that if I am not intentional about making a plan for engaging in these disciplines, they simply will not happen. Every day, we choose what will take priority in our schedules and, ultimately, in our lives.

Dallas Willard captures this well when he writes: "We are all apprentices to Jesus or to something else. We are always being shaped into something."

I look forward to sharing more with you when we gather in October for the Equipping Day!

We want to encourage you to submit articles and pictures from your own church for our next newsletter. Please submit information to:
Bobbie Reed: skidster3@hotmail.com

