

SPRING 2021 NEWSLETTER



2020 ALUMNI EVANGELIZATION AWARD

With the abrupt ending of the 2019-2020 ministry year due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we were unable to celebrate our 2020 Alumni Evangelization award winners, Brad and Libby DuPont. With restrictions loosening, Brad and Libby were invited to attend the 2020-2021 closing mass celebrated by Archbishop Hebda on Friday, May 14 to receive the award.

Brad and Libby met while serving with NET back at the turn of the millennium (Brad: 1998-2000, Staff 2000-2003. Libby: 2000-2001, Staff 2001-2003). They were married in 2003 and are the parents of four children. Combined, they have 42 years of ministry experience including 8 years with NET, 16 years of parish youth ministry experience at St. John the Baptist in New Brighton, MN and 18 years in the Kansas City Archdiocesan Family Life Office where they co-created The Joyful Marriage Project. Additionally, they serve on the National Leadership Team for the Pastoral and Matrimonial Renewal Center who publish the Every Day in Love course, the Living in Love retreat, and the Preparing to Live in Love Marriage Preparation Course.

Pictured: Brad and Libby DuPont receive the Alumni Evangelization Award from NET Program Director David Rinaldi.

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NET is under the ecclesiastical vigilance of the Archbishop of Saint Paul and Minneapolis. It is governed by a national board of directors, is a member of the Association of Fundraising Professionals and has been audited by Lewis, Kisch and Associates, Ltd.

A WORD FROM OUR FOUNDER

DEAR FRIENDS,

What a year! I am so proud of the outstanding work of the NET missionaries and staff. When last summer began, people questioned if NET could even send out teams in the midst of a pandemic. Churches were closing, parish youth ministry wasn't allowed to meet in person, and who in their right mind would even want to serve in such an unsettled time?

But faith and hope were alive! One hundred forty faith-filled young adults stepped forward and said, "Send me!" They brought faith in God into an uncertain mission, and they brought hope to thousands whose lives were turned upside down by the pandemic.

I want to express our gratitude to all the people who helped us with our mission during this crazy year. To all those who prayed for us – thank you. We felt the grace. To those who opened your homes to our missionaries – thank you. Your hospitality was so refreshing. To those who supported the missionaries financially – thank you. Your generosity kept the teams on the road serving.



In Psalm 107, we pray, “Give thanks to the Lord for he is good, for his kindness endures forever.” We are so grateful for all the people who walked with us during this challenging time for the Church. We experienced God’s kindness time after time, coming through so many of you.

The mission continues to grow. We are actively recruiting missionaries to serve for the 2021-22 school year. If you know Catholic young adults with a passion for sharing their faith, please invite them to consider serving with us. As the Church comes out of this pandemic, it will be vital that we help people reconnect with their faith and faith community. I hope we can continue to count on your support as we continue to challenge young Catholics to love Christ and embrace the life of the Church.

WITH MY GRATITUDE,

Mark Berchem

MARK BERCHEM, M.S.W., M.T.S.
Founder and President
NET Ministries



SPRING FUNDRAISING EVENTS

As we drew towards the end of winter and began planning for our spring fundraising season, we were unsure about whether we could host in-person events or if we would have to pivot to a completely virtual event like last year. However, with some diligent planning to accommodate social distancing requirements, NET recently hosted two in-person banquets and a virtual fundraising event to help fund our mission to Catholic teens.

The first of these events was a virtual fundraiser called Abounding Hope which streamed nationally on Saturday, March 27th. We were blessed to have Chris Stefanick present the keynote address, and his talk encouraged us to choose to live joyfully in Christ and let our joy in Him be our witness.

NET also hosted two traditional banquets: the first was held at the JW Marriott at the Mall of America in Minneapolis on Friday, April 9th. The overall feeling was one of excitement and delight at being able to gather together again in person. Typically, our Twin Cities banquet is attended by 650 guests, although we were thrilled during this COVID year to hit the 250 person maximum allowed at our venue. We were blessed to have former Minnesota Vikings All-Pro Matt Birk give our keynote presentation. He spoke about focusing on the fundamentals of our faith and working at them to remain effective in our efforts to evangelize.



Sr. Karolyn Nunes, FSGM speaking at the Modern Missionaries Fundraising Banquet in Cincinnati, OH



Matt Birk speaking at the Catholic Youth Benefit Banquet in St. Paul, MN

Our final function of the spring was held at the Sharonville Convention Center outside of Cincinnati, Ohio, on Friday, April 30th. This is a newer event for NET, but despite it being only our third banquet in the Cincinnati area and the dampening effect of the pandemic, we welcomed 225 attendees. Again, everyone was overjoyed at being together and delighted to celebrate the courageous work of the NET missionaries. Sr. Karolyn Nunes, FSGM, a long-time friend of NET, presented the keynote address and reminded us that even when aspects of our life don't go as we want or expect, we should maintain our focus on God, who really does have our best in mind at all times.

The combined revenue of NET's three spring events was \$390,000, missing our hoped-for goal by just \$10,000. We are very grateful to all of you who participated in our events this year and for your generosity. If you would like to make a donation to help us reach our goal and provide for all the unique ministry expenses of this past year, you can do so by donating online at www.netusa.org/banquetgift. You can also access the recording of Matt Birk's very inspiring keynote address at this same website. The other two spring event keynote addresses can be viewed by visiting netusa.org/aboundinghope or netusa.org/ohiobanquet.

Please feel free to let others know about these uplifting messages. As always, please keep our missionaries in your prayers, especially those currently discerning serving with us this fall.



INTRODUCING

Known: Experiencing God in Daily Prayer



Every Catholic Christian knows that prayer is important, that we should pray, but few of us have ever been taught how. In this new YDisciple series, teens will not just learn about the building blocks of personal prayer time; they will also take time to practice and experience different types of prayer so that they can build a habit of daily prayer.

For the last four decades, NET Ministries has been teaching its young missionaries how to pray. The content of this series is inspired by this time-tested methodology affectionately called “Prayer Labs.”

This series includes:

- 4 video sessions (approximately 15 minutes each) to teach and ignite discussion about prayer
- 3 non-video sessions for the group to practice prayer together
- A training session just for leaders on how to run this series effectively
- Leader Guides with carefully-crafted discussion questions, suggested activities, and prayers (Separate guides for middle school and high school)
- Parent resources in English & Spanish
- Participant Guides

To help remove common barriers to prayer, we’ve created a couple of bonus products, including hand-lettered Bible tabs designed by NET alumna and series co-host Ali Hoffman. Also available is a prayer journal that goes through NET’s “30 Day Walk with Jesus,” initially developed for young people to pray with after attending a NET retreat to jump-start their daily prayer lives. To learn more, visit ydisciple.com/prayerseries.

THE YOUTH MINISTRY MINDSET PODCAST

When a tidal wave occurs, the water is first drawn out for miles revealing plants, rocks, and sea creatures. It also reveals all the things that don't belong in an ocean: garbage and wreckage. And then the wave comes.

2020 was the year of a big reveal in many aspects of our lives. It was also a year of a reveal in youth ministry. When business-as-usual came to a screeching halt in ministry, we felt so much loss. What also happened was, just like with a tidal wave, a reveal of everything that was under the surface included some things that didn't belong there in the first place.

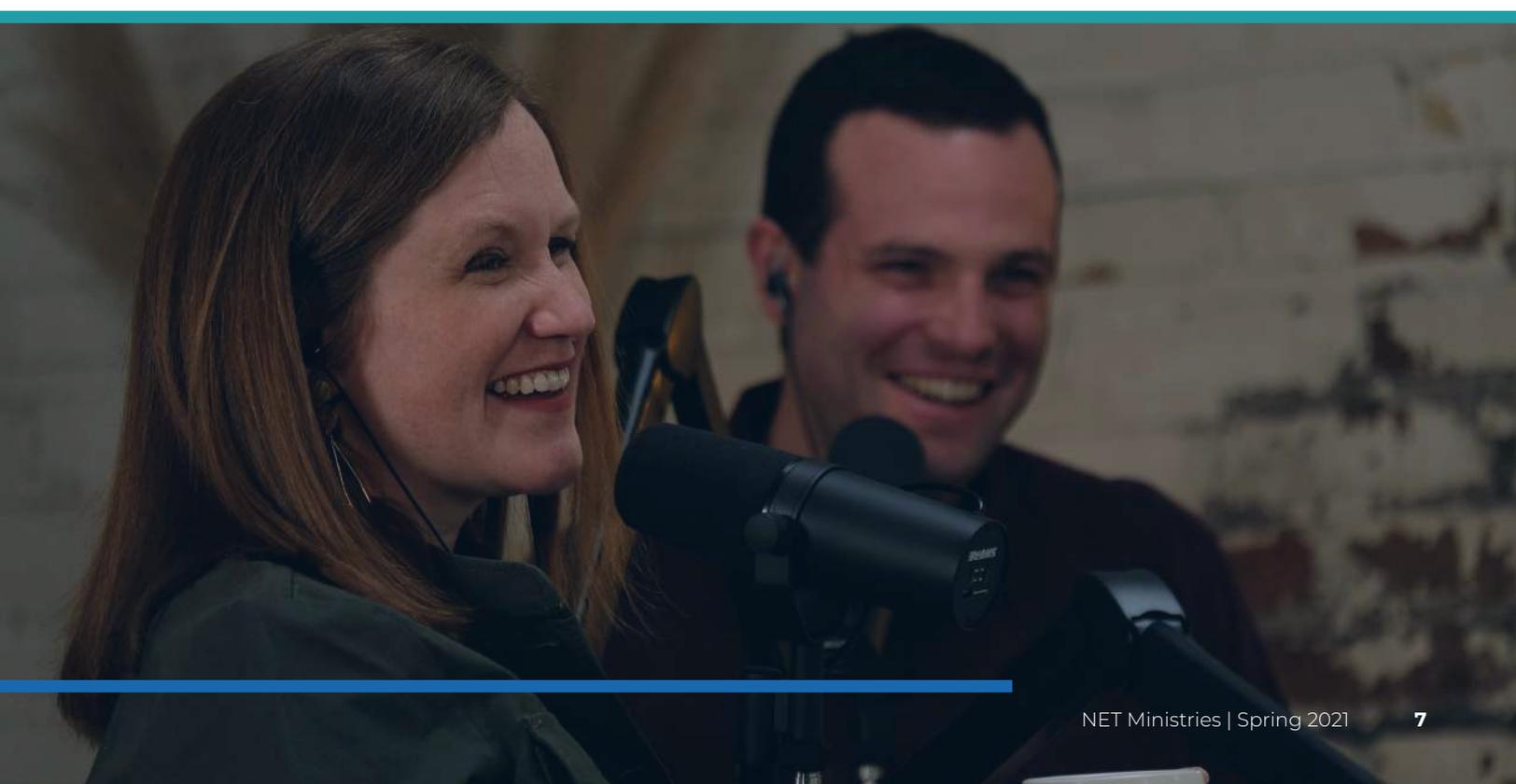
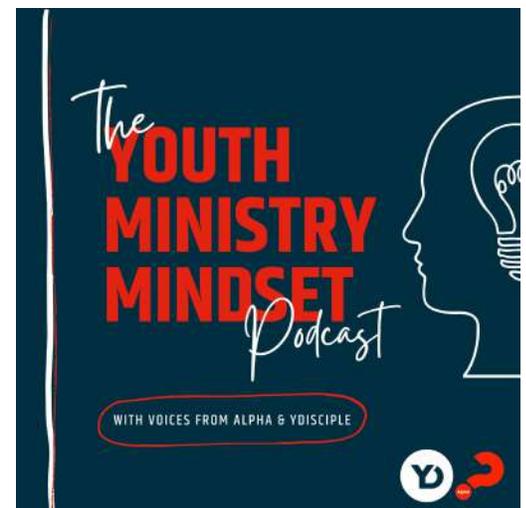
As we look forward with cautious hope to preparing for in-person ministry again, what was revealed that we need to let go of? How can we use this moment to reevaluate how we do ministry with young people?

Let's not just "get back to normal," because we believe that a tidal wave of grace is coming for and by Gen Z in the Church.

Joshua Danis and Jordan Biere from Alpha and Annie Grandell from YDisciple out of NET Ministries bring their voices and unique perspectives together for this limited series podcast to talk about how we can begin to shift the mindset in youth ministry.

The Youth Ministry Mindset podcast features special guests Katie Prejean McGrady, Jim Beckman, Sarah Kaczmarek, Jason Ballard, and Ben Woodman.

You can find the Youth Ministry Mindset podcast on YDisciple's YouTube channel ([youtube.com/ydisciple](https://www.youtube.com/ydisciple)), Spotify, and Apple Podcasts. For more information, check out youthministrymindset.com!



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NET CENTER BUILDING EXPANSION

We are expanding our capacity to train more missionaries by increasing the size of our main meeting room, adding more public restrooms, and adding a variety of smaller rooms to be used for both training teams and hosting youth on retreat. Construction began on Monday, March 22 and, God willing, will conclude by the end of the calendar year.

READY FOR YOUR NET RETREAT?



NOW BOOKING 2021 - 2022 RETREAT DATES
NETUSA.ORG/RETREATS