



# LIGHTLINES

## Celebrating Legacy Looking Ahead

by Eli Williams

We reminisce with gratitude for what the Lord has done through our humble ministry over the decades. Feelings of thankfulness arise every time a mom, children in tow, says to me, "I remember you!" or "There's Mr. Eli, the Sunshine man!" Likewise, volunteers and staff from those days share their joy with me at being remembered in similar ways. It's such a blessing!

It is especially gratifying to be working with former Sunshine Club members who are now fathers raising their young children and serving other dads with me. That's generational impact! God alone gets the glory.

The annual FatherFest and Good Dad Awards, established in 2011, continues to grow as community celebrations of fatherhood. The Springfield Mayor's Breakfast, promoting unity and positivity, is becoming one of our city's most cherished annual events. Thanks are due to ministry partner Bruce Stapleton, board members and other volunteers, and sponsors for the success of those endeavors. The God-honoring legacy belongs to Him.

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We have reached over 210,000 people through our Google Ad Grant in 2025.

## FATHERING STRONG Progress Report

The year 2025 marked a watershed moment for the Fathering Strong initiative, as the movement to equip and encourage fathers reached new heights of influence and engagement. With over 210,000 impressions across digital platforms and more than 13,000 clicks on the Urban Light website, the numbers tell a compelling story of a message that resonates deeply in today's culture. These metrics represent thousands of fathers, church leaders, and families actively seeking resources, wisdom, and community in the vital work of fatherhood. The momentum built throughout 2025 positions the initiative as a catalyst for a broader movement of father engagement and family restoration.

A cornerstone of 2025's progress was the release of two significant published resources designed to equip churches and men's ministry groups. Bruce Stapleton's "Fathering Strong - God's Blueprint for Leading Your Family" provides men with a theological and practical framework for understanding their calling as fathers. Complementing this release, Eli Williams' revised hardcover edition of "Father Love - The Powerful Resource Every Child Needs" brings fresh insights about the irreplaceable role of a father in a child's development.

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**URBAN LIGHT MINISTRIES** & **navigators** Church Ministries

Annual Holiday  
**Open House**

Join us on **December 18** from 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM  
**20 S. Limestone St. - Atrium**  
Food and Fellowship | Optional: Bring a Dessert to share

## Celebrating Legacy - Looking Ahead *(continued)*

### LOOKING AHEAD

Moving forward, we see our Fathering Strong initiative expanding to work with pastors to assist them in developing congregation-based fatherhood ministries. This is crucial as the fatherhood crisis among church-going men comes to more light. For example, a 2025 Manhood Journey survey of over 6,000 Christian fathers, called the "Godly Father Assessment," found that many fathers are not regularly engaging in spiritual practices at home. Key findings include that 83% of fathers do not pray regularly with their families, and 78% do not regularly discuss the Bible with their children. Additionally, 42% only occasionally read the Bible, and nearly 80% lack accountability relationships.

Urban Light has received a clear call to this mission field to address the crisis in Christ's name. To that end, we have created Bible-based resources for Christian men and churches that include:

- Church-Based Fatherhood Ministry Framework
- Weekly in-person Dads Group
- Weekly Fathering Strong Podcast
- Weekly Fathering Strong Blog posts
- Books, devotionals, courses, and videos
- Fathering Strong® mobile app

Throughout 2026 we will be further developing these resources to turn the hearts of fathers to their children (Malachi 4:6).

### YOUR VALUED PARTNERSHIP IN THIS MISSION

As 2025 draws to a close, we look back on a year of profound challenge and inspiring faith. For many nonprofits, the final weeks of the year are the most critical, often bringing in 25-50% of annual operating funds.

This year, Urban Light Ministries (ULM) has faced increased headwinds—from rising costs to economic uncertainty—making your partnership more vital than ever.

#### **The Crisis: A Generation Without a Shepherd**

As you prayerfully consider how to invest in God's Kingdom this season, we ask you to focus on an undeniable crisis right here in Clark County: fatherlessness.

Currently, approximately 1 in 4 children in the U.S. (18.3 million) live without a father in the home. In some of our local neighborhoods, this devastating rate is twice as high.

This void creates a crisis of opportunity. Children from fatherless homes face higher rates of behavior disorders, lower academic performance, drug and alcohol abuse, and increased poverty. These precious children are truly like sheep without a shepherd.

#### **Our God-Given Mission**

This is why ULM exists. Our mission is to teach the biblical principles of fatherhood, with our Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ as the ultimate model. We are dedicated to turning the hearts of as many fathers as possible toward their children with timeless truths, directly helping to reverse these concerning statistics (Mal. 4:6).

It is a daunting challenge, but with your support, we can equip fathers with the tools they need to lead, protect, and love their children well.

Eli Williams,



ULM President and CEO



# Springfield Comes Together in Faith and Unity at 2025 Mayor's Prayer Breakfast

The annual Mayor's Prayer Breakfast brought together an inspiring gathering of community leaders, faith leaders, and residents, creating a powerful moment of unity and reflection for Springfield, Ohio. The event celebrated both the city's remarkable progress and the individuals who have made it possible.

A highlight of the morning was the recognition of ten "Transplant Heroes"—residents who moved to Springfield and have made significant contributions to the community's fabric. Their stories reminded everyone that Springfield's strength comes from those who choose to call it home.

Mayor Rob Rue delivered remarks that acknowledged both the past and future. He thanked outgoing commissioners Crystal Brown, Bridget Houston, and Dave Estrop for their dedicated service, while welcoming incoming commissioners Chris Wallace, Larry Ricketts, and Andy Rigsby to their new roles.

The Mayor painted an exciting picture of Springfield's transformation, highlighting new housing developments at Melody Park, Sycamore Ridge, and Maple Grove. Downtown revitalization continues with over 250 market-rate apartments coming online, while the Springfield-Beckley Airport now hosts the National Advanced Air Mobility Center of Excellence. Perhaps most thrilling is the return of the Pulitzer Air Races after a century—a testament to Springfield's aviation heritage and innovative spirit.

Mayor Rue outlined three essential leadership commitments for the community: keeping people at the center of every decision, leading with both humility and clarity, and staying steady during times of change.



The morning also featured a remarkable act of generosity when the Jeff Wyler Automotive Family presented a \$70,000 check to Urban Light Ministries, supporting vital fatherhood programs and assistance for families in need.

As attendees departed, the message was clear: Springfield's future shines bright when its people come together in faith, service, and shared purpose.

## 2025 Recipients

# TRANSPLANT HEROES PROJECT



Wes Babian



John Brown



Sunil (Sunny)  
Dhingra



Levi Duncan



Adam Groshans



Moses Mbeseha



Jeff Pinkleton



Rose Ann  
Pratt



Daniel Snow



Dr. Yamini  
Teegla

## Fathering Strong - 2025 Recap

Both books include accompanying workbooks and facilitator guides, transforming them into dynamic tools for church men's groups, small group studies, and mentorship programs.

The Fathering Strong podcast continued its trajectory of growth in 2026, expanding its audience while deepening connections with influential leaders across the fatherhood movement. The caliber of guests featured throughout the year underscores the initiative's growing influence: Mike Mattes of Kingdom Dads, Caleb Ingram of Declare, Chris Lightfoot from the Center for Christian Virtue, acclaimed actor and activist Cameron Arnett, and Peter Lawson Jones. These conversations have woven together a growing coalition of leaders and organizations united by a common vision: to see fathers equipped, engaged, and empowered to lead their families with strength, love, and biblical conviction.

As we look ahead, the momentum is undeniable, but sustaining and expanding this vital work requires continued support from those who share our vision. Your partnership enables us to reach more fathers, strengthen more families, and ultimately transform communities through the power of engaged fatherhood.

## Upcoming Events

- **20<sup>th</sup> Annual Holiday Open House** – Thursday, December 18, 2025, 11:00 AM to 2:00 PM @ The Atrium at Commerce Pointe. This year, in collaboration with Navigators™ Church Ministries. Optional: Bring a dessert to share.
- **15<sup>th</sup> Annual FatherFest** - Saturday, June 20th, 9:00 AM to 7:00 PM @ Gammon House Green, Springfield. Part of the Juneteenth Festival.
- **15<sup>th</sup> Annual Good Dad Award Presentations** (GDA nominations are open now) June 20th at 1:30 PM @ Gammon House Green
- **25<sup>th</sup> Annual Jeff Wyler Charity Invitational Golf** Scramble benefiting ULM - Monday, August 17th, 9:00 AM @ Springfield Country Club
- **4th Annual Springfield Mayor's Breakfast** - Thursday, November 19th, 7:30 AM (Transplant Hero Award nominations are open now)

## Will You Invest in a Father Today?

We need your help to close out 2025 strong and enter the new year ready to expand our reach. Your generosity ensures that every father who seeks help finds it, regardless of his financial situation.

Here are specific ways your tax-deductible gift partners with us:

Partnership Level	Impact
\$100	Supports one father through a crucial local workshop
\$500	Sustains our online resources (provided free to all fathers) for one month
\$1000	Provides the resources for a 12-week men's ministry for a group of 10 or more fathers

## Three ways you can partner:

1. **Provide Financial support** by donating today by scanning the QR code below or using the enclosed envelope.
2. **Pray for the ministry** that doors will open to serve incarcerated fathers, and we can continue to build strong partnerships with local churches to build fatherhood ministries.
3. **Volunteer your time** by hosting or facilitating our fatherhood programs within your church or by becoming a mentor to fathers or hosting a Fathering Strong online group.

Thank you for believing in the power of a committed father. Your investment changes a child's future.

Scan QR Code to donate



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