

# STANDING IN THE GAP

NEWSLETTER WINTER 2025

*“To be and make disciples of Jesus Christ”*

## A SEASON FULL OF PRAISES AND GRATEFULNESS FOR GOD’S PROVISION AND GIFTS

Winter can be the busiest and at the same time the longest part of the year. Early winter brings the hustle and bustle of the holiday season, with no shortage of things to do and see. Our Standing in the Gap students used this time to not only honor the birth of our Savior but also spend time together in fellowship.

Over the fall semester, God has been working faithfully through both chapters, not only growing the size of the chapters but also growing the strength and faith of each Gapper involved.

At this fall’s retreat, there was much to praise God for. Deeper experiences with others, with God, and even a baptism. This year’s Merit Bongard Scholarship receipt was also presented to Anthony Oswald. More about Anthony and the scholarship are contained in this newsletter.

Thank you for your continued prayer and support. Please keep Standing in the Gap in your prayers.,

*“Give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over, will be poured into your lap. For with the measure you use, it will be measured to you.”- Luke 6:28*



-Natalie Steffes; Standing in the Gap Communications Manager

# MERRIT BONGARD SCHOLARSHIP

By Connor Steffes;  
SVSU Alumni

The Standing in the Gap Foundation has established the Merritt Bongard Memorial Scholarship in memory of Pastor Merritt Bongard, former Senior Pastor of New Life Christian Fellowship of Mt. Pleasant, MI (now New Life Church of Central Michigan). Standing in the Gap started as a campus ministry of New Life, to the students of Central Michigan University, in 1996.



While Pastor Merritt was not leading the church when Standing in the Gap began, he was extremely supportive of the campus ministry during his time as pastor and beyond. Merritt's encouragement to Standing in the Gap shall never be forgotten. Recipients for the Merritt Bongard Memorial Scholarship must exhibit superior commitment to Standing in the Gap on their campus.

Those who have shown exemplary commitment, sacrifice, and service to the mission and ministry of Standing in the Gap, and being in their senior year will be selected by the Standing in the Gap Foundation board for this honor.

Throughout the years, the Merritt Bongard Scholarship has blessed many dedicated and devoted Standing in the Gap students leaders. Many recipients after graduation, become deeply invested in their church bodies, growing others and continuing to spread the good news of the gospel to many.

This scholarship, along with much of the work of the Standing in the Gap Foundation is made possible by the generosity and support of our alumni network. If you would like to give to support more gappers who have shown superior commitment to Standing in the Gap, as they transition out of college and into their next phase of life, please consider donating.

You may [Give Now](#)

# MERRIT BONGARD SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT

By Connor Steffes;  
SVSU Alumni

The votes are in, and the decision is final. This year's recipient of the Merit Bongard Memorial Scholarship is Anthony "Tony" Oswald. To say that he earned it would be an understatement.

Those who have worked as a Gap leader in the past know the amount of time and labor is quite extensive. Tony, however, consistently went above and beyond the bare minimum expected. In his years at Standing in the Gap, Tony put an extraordinary amount of effort into serving God and others. He founded a service team for SVSU's standing in the Gap chapter!



In that role, he found numerous ways to serve the community needs of Saginaw, with an extra emphasis being put on bringing college students to assist an organization called The Caring Closet, helping feed many in need.

On top of that, he's led many studies at SVSU's Gap, which directly invested in many of Gap's current members and leaders. Tony graduated this past semester, but his time at Gap is not over yet. He will continue to serve as Intern Campus Pastor, and his continued presence will undoubtedly yield more fruit. God blessed many by drawing Tony to Gap, and this Scholarship is a great way to recognize the profound contributions Tony has made.

# STANDING IN THE GAP: CHAPTER UPDATES

## Northwood University; Pastor Gabe Nelson

2025 begins an exciting year for the Northwood chapter of Standing in the Gap! In the fall semester, we had many new freshmen and sophomores join the group, including a group carpooling to the church on Sundays! What I've seen is a strong culture of fellowship and mutual edification emerge among our members.

The plan for this semester is to capitalize on our momentum through intentional win events and service events, potentially partnering with other groups on campus to help build stronger relationships. Please be praying that we continue to grow in holiness and love toward God, even as the group grows in size and closeness.

Thank you, and God bless!



## Saginaw Valley State University; Pastor Nate Polzin

The new year is off to a great start at Saginaw Valley State's chapter of Standing in the Gap! We had been praying for 10-15 freshmen to get involved this year and that prayer has been answered! We have had a good response for our small groups - the fall semester saw two Foundations groups running with 5-7 people in them and this semester we have about the same number, one for Foundations and one for Network. Helping students to understand and share the basics of the Christian faith and then learn about their spiritual gifts has been a priority for Standing in the Gap for decades and it is exciting to see it continue each year.

The leadership team is studying John Bever's series, Under Cover, which examines God's authority structure and how it works. The student leaders work hard planning events and leading groups. This semester, Tony Oswald, the most recent recipient of the Merritt Bongard Memorial Scholarship, became SVSU's intern campus pastor. He has been a big help! Plans are underway for a Spring Break Mission Stay here in the Saginaw area. Instead of traveling over break, students will stay local and work with ministries and non-profit organizations. They are also raising money to get a couple of hotel rooms to make it more of a bonding time of ministry.

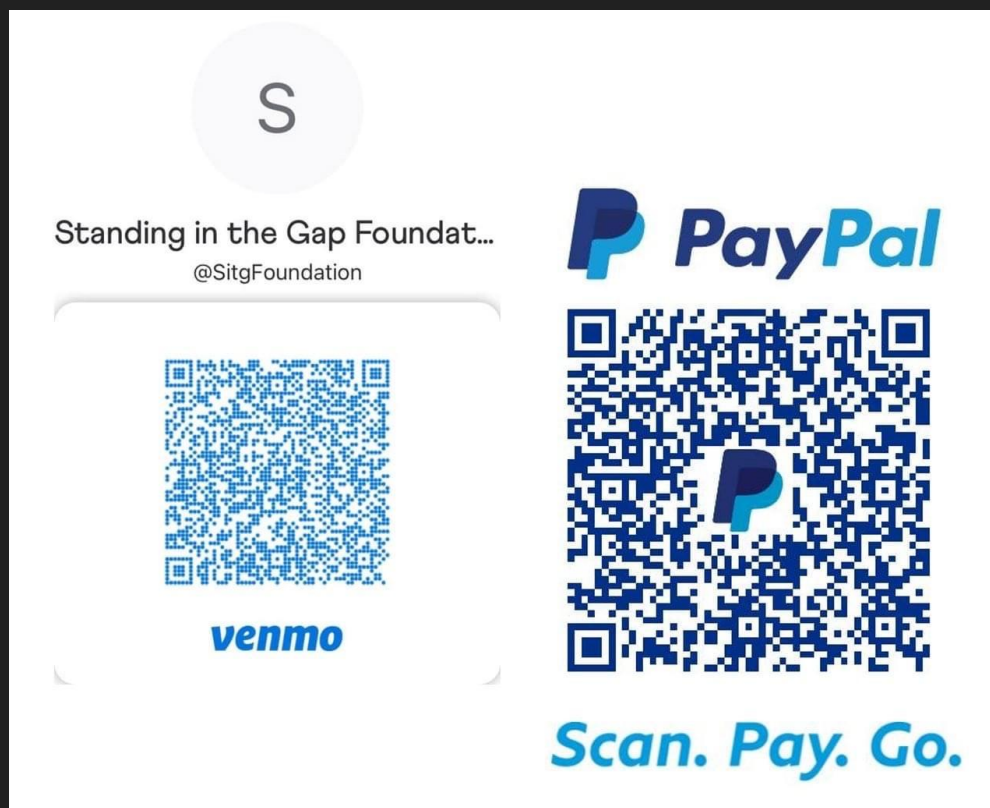
Thank you for your continued interest, support, and prayers for the ministry of Standing in the Gap!

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## LOOKING TO SUPPORT GAP'S MISSION? DONATE TODAY.

**We are working toward a goal 100 monthly donors contributing \$25 per month. Your support makes the difference!**



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