

Our Story



“Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding. Acknowledge Him in all your ways and He will make your path straight.” Proverbs 3:5-6

These verses have become the foundation of TJ’s Christian Bookstore. God has been the leader of this store from the beginning.

My husband went home to the Lord in October 2016. I knew that I needed to reach out to help others in order to ease my grief. I began volunteering for organizations like Fellowship of Christian Athlete.

A friend encouraged me to sign up for Perspectives on the World Christian Movement, a fifteen week class about God’s big amazing story from Genesis all through Revelation and our role in it. It was challenging and it totally turned my life upside down!

I grew up in the church and my husband, Tom’s and my faith grew immensely during his four and a half year cancer battle. Perspectives showed me for the first time the entire picture of God and His plans.

I began praying for Him to use me in bigger ways. I opened my home to a missionary family who was back in our town for a week. I volunteered for Intervarsity Urbana 2018 in St. Louis. (Hanging with 10,000 college students for a week was definitely a stretch!). I traveled to the US Alpha conference in Arizona by myself. I opened my home to a recovering young woman who came out of sex trafficking—another lean into my trust in God.

In February of 2019, I was taking my two granddaughters and a friend to Florida for spring break. We were sitting in the Philadelphia airport on a long layover. I was scanning Facebook and ran across a post from our local family-owned Christian bookstore that said they were closing May 31 after 43 years in business. I jokingly texted a friend asking if we should buy it. Her typical response was “why not?”

The Lord had planted a seed. I began praying and doing some online research. I have a business degree and an eclectic career background but absolutely no retail experience.

After much prayer, meetings with the other owners, talking to another bookstore owner, negotiating buying and leasing options, at the last hour my goddaughter found a rental space in a strip mall with a great parking lot and several other pluses.

The store was becoming real!

TJ's has several special meanings. My husband's name is Thomas Joseph. Together we were Tom and Joyce. Someone even said it can represent To Jesus.

I pushed my contractor and POS provider hard to open in the middle of July 2019. Our community hosts a week long Bible conference the last week of July each year and I knew we had to be open and ready for that. God kept bringing the necessary people to my path—a carpenter, a credit card merchant, employees.

A few days before we opened, I invited my pastor, attorney, goddaughter and several prayer warrior friends to the store for prayer and blessings.



July 10, 2019. Opening day! Thank goodness for our credit card sales rep who spent all day that first day on the phone with our POS supplier! And for a friend who had a Square merchant system we used all that first day!

Looking back, I know it was totally God because it is unbelievable how little I knew...and I'm still learning!

I have loved the stories of faith our customers share. We have a Prayer and Praise board in the store where people can share and have their requests prayed over. So many people tell us they are so grateful to have a Christian bookstore in town. I remind our team members all the time that we are just the managers of this store that is truly God's.

Our Mission & Purpose

TJ's Christian Bookstore exists for God's glory. In everything we do, we intend to reflect Christ's love, truth, and grace. We are His servants, and we share the Gospel and trust Him in every situation. We see everyone as someone Jesus died for and loves.

We treat everyone with grace and respect. To God be the glory.





Book signing with Rebecca & Erwin Lutzer, Cedar Falls Bible Conference 2019



Book signing at TJ's Christian Bookstore with Sean McDowell 2019