

*Note: C12 is about community, which is why we meet in our forums. However, there is a broader community of C12 members throughout North Texas. Look for a series of introductions that you can use to get to know others that share the bonds of C12. – Tom Hawes, Joe Galindo, Mike Gullatt, Tom O'Dwyer, Kevin Pate, Michelle Moore, Andrea Rodarte*



## Meet Trent Lewis

Trent has been married to Emily for 20 years. They have six kids: Tanner (15), Tatelyn (14), Tucker (12), Tessa (10), Taylor (8), and Tinsley (6). Last year they moved to a home on Lake Texoma where they love to host friends and family. Their church is Advance Underground, a house church network. Their ministry involves the first two commands of Christ – “follow me, and I’ll make you fishers of men.” Trent and Emily are the founders and Chief Visionary Officers of PondMedics, a family of brands that includes seven different companies that work together to specialize in all areas of water resource engineering, management, and consulting.



### Where did you grow up? Where are your roots?

I grew up in Plano. My dad was the second dentist in Plano in the 1960s when Coit was an unpaved road. As a teenager, I started a successful landscaping company and almost didn't go to college until my dad encouraged me that I could always re-start my business later. The sale of that book of business paid for most of my expenses at Texas Tech, where I majored in Agricultural Economics and minored in Biology. After graduation, I spent some time in office jobs, but I knew that was not what God created me to be. I needed to get back outside.

### What are some of your favorite things? How do you like to spend your spare time?

Living at the lake, I like to fish and be out on the water, and I love to host people so they can relax and experience what we get to every day. We have been homeschooling for 11 years. I direct the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>-grade classes at our homeschool co-op. My personal outlet is street bikes and road circuit tracks, so my country club, Eagles Canyon Raceway, has asphalt instead of a golf course. We are at the track if my wife and I aren't touring on our touring motorcycle in NW Arkansas. I love being with my wife and want to be wherever she is.

**What was the last 'outing' or trip you took with your family?**

We recently returned from a 4200-mile road trip to CO, UT, NV, CA, AZ & NM. This was a work trip, and I took the whole family. We love to travel together to experience the things we read about, though I am a homebody at heart, and my favorite place to be is home with my family. We would have never been able to do that if not for homeschooling.



**How did you start your business/ how did you get to where you are now?**

Emily worked at a large engineering firm, and I was at a crossroads career-wise. I am a fourth-generation entrepreneur on my dad's side. I started working for myself at an early age and knew I didn't want to work for someone else for the rest of my life. One day, Emily and I were dove hunting on a pond, waiting for the birds to come, and we started thinking about the pond. Somebody had to build it, maintain it, stock it with fish and take care of it. This idea in September led me on a research spree that resulted in PondMedics incorporation by January.

The exciting part of the story is how God architected it all. I was 23 years old and a General Manager for a commercial landscape company. Our absentee owner was pursuing a second career. One day he came into the office to announce he had made bad decisions co-mingling personal and business money, the IRS was on his back, and the situation was terrible for his health. He wanted to drop his \$2 million commercial landscaping business that day. He told the sales manager and me we had two options: Either find another job right away or convert it to your business. He said, "You do not owe me anything. Just take it and go!" The sales manager chose to get another job, and I decided to take over the business. This was 30 days after we incorporated PondMedics. I started a subsidiary, Commercial Gardeners. I had relationships with all our clients and industry contacts, so I retained 85% of our clients and subcontracted the work. A year later, we sold that whole book of business to subcontractors. Our management fee plus the proceeds from the sale of that book of business entirely funded our start-up costs for PondMedics.

## **What service does your company provide?**

We provide engineered surface water solutions, and that is everything from planning, permitting, and engineering surface water assets to managing and renovating those assets. Assets are everything from storm water detention in urban areas, a private lake in a rural area for a private landowner, to a state agency or anyone who owns or manages or touches water on the earth's surface, like inland freshwater. Any of those could be our client. Every one of the brands in the family has something to do with the chemical, physical, or biological touch of surface water.

The engineering side is how to move or hold or detain water physically. The chemical part of water considers if there are any pollutants in the water that will be harmful for irrigation or livestock watering. We also look at the chemical pieces of water in industrial water, or if a manufacturing facility has an open water lagoon that all their processed water ends up in. It is an amalgamation of all this type of chemistry that



must be cleaned before it can go downstream. The biological component is consideration of the plants, organisms, fish, zooplankton, and phytoplankton that live and grow in water.

## **How do you describe your mission and values?**

Our mission is to creatively engineer surface water solutions with integrity. Our Vision Statement: Our goal is to bring life to surface water and the people it supports. Our Core Values center around the 5 H's: happy, hungry, humble, honest, helpful.

## **Who are your primary customers?**

Our customer is anybody who manages or owns surface water. We serve a broad range of clients, including municipalities, golf courses, state agencies, private landowners, industrial sectors, freshwater districts, engineering firms and more.

## **How and why did you come to C12?**

I was introduced to C12 by a friend, Derrek Housewright. One day, we were having lunch, and I said, "You are a business owner. You know the fears and failures and struggles I have, and one of those is that as my businesses are growing, I need additional tools and connections and that sort of thing. I remember you mentioning an organization." Derrek gave me the C12 spiel that day, and I asked if he would make an introduction.

## **What do you value about your group?**

I'm not expected to put on a facade of strength and capability. Instead, I am welcome to be real and honest, and I am loved. We think we won't be loved in our weakness, but that's maybe where we are most loved. Satan would love to isolate and keep us in hiding and make us think we are the only ones who feel incompetent to do this. When I sit in a room of C12 guys and gals who admittedly say, "I don't know that I'm prepared for this. I need you to pray for me, and I need some tools to equip me," that's when Christ is glorified, and Satan is shoved out of the room. That's what I love about being part of my C12 group. My weakness is welcomed.

**What challenges as a business owner have you experienced, and how has your C12 group helped with these challenges?**

The most important thing for me has been how to make the transition from owning a job to owning a business. Emily and I have owned PondMedics for 20 years. I thought I was owning a business for most of that time when I was holding a job. I had maxed out my ability. When it came to making the transition to offering other people opportunities, that's where C12 came in. Now, any new initiative or new idea God gives Emily or me is only done in the presence of others who want to take it and run with it to see success in and through their families and their teams. My joy has shifted from personal accomplishment to seeing others accomplish their goals. C12 meshes right in with that and gives me the tools, the dashboard, and the feedback I need to know if I am doing everything to glorify God and stewards that He's given me.



**How could you help other C12 members? This can be either professionally or personally.**

If there were anything I could do, it would be in terms of sharing my story of not coming to the group feeling like you must have it all together. In the world of business and the marketplace, people expect you to have it all together and show no weakness, but as a Christian, we admit our shortcomings, and Christ strengthens us and is glorified through them. Anything good that comes out of our business comes from Him. As God brought me into C12, I had a significant shift in mindset. The stewardship piece that runs through C12 says God is the owner of my business, and I am the steward. I'm not a Christ-follower in this circle and a business owner in another circle. The practicality of putting that principle into practice is one of the most helpful things C12 has done for Emily and me. Learning how to do that has been invaluable, and I want others to embrace that in their lives and businesses.



## How do you use your business as a ministry?

In addition to producing profits to help people, we bring church to the workplace, because believers are who make up the church, not a building or a staff of pastoral professionals. It starts with us asking how we see God moving. The Apostle Paul's strategy for ministry was using the profession God gave him. The perspective was personal and global. That's what we strive to do in terms of ministries. The majority of our people are not Christ-followers. So, we ask the question - How can we take care of the most intimate needs of a team member and their family? If we meet their physical needs, we can also help meet their spiritual needs by sharing the gospel and discipling them in Christ, but we want to carry that through to a global mindset. We are looking at our 10-year vision called the PondMedics Flow to have the same consistent experience with the same vision and core values throughout everything we do. We're asking God to show us the routes for the gospel to go forth, and we'll put people, money, talent, the resources toward that. Each of our brands has a General Manager with their own ministry initiative. For example, through our Fountain Freedom brand, we give to a battered women's shelter, a sex trafficking refuge – a very vulnerable group. I love how ministry starts very purposeful and personal with our people to whom we are the closest.

