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Newsletter

Spring 2018

Advancing a movement of healthy, reproducing legacy churches in the Charis Fellowship.



WHAT'S HAPPENING:



Grace Fellowship Church launches in Brunswick, MD



Main Street Church aims to grow roots in Chelsea, MI



Renew Cambridge counts down to launch



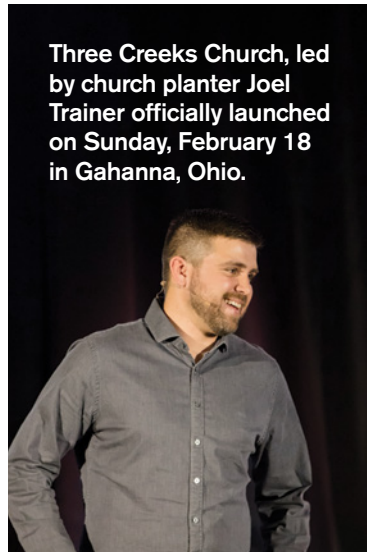
Assist approves 4 new projects



Assist announces its 5 year vision



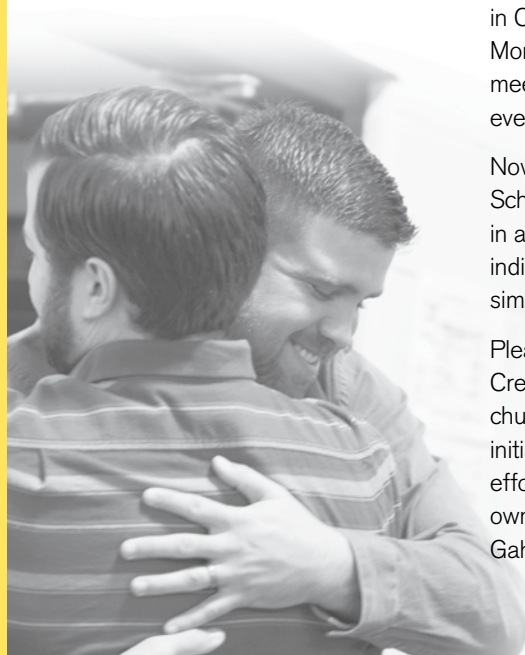
230 GATHER FOR LAUNCH OF THREE CREEKS CHURCH



Three Creeks Church, led by church planter Joel Trainer officially launched on Sunday, February 18 in Gahanna, Ohio.



www.threecreekschurch.com



After having served in a residency at Movement Church in Columbus, OH (Mark Artrip, Pastor), Joel and his wife Morgan relocated to Gahanna in early 2017. They began meeting with a small core team in their living room that eventually became the launch team for Three Creeks.

Now meeting on Sundays at Goshen Lane Elementary School, their inaugural service saw more than 230 people in attendance with dozens of people making connections, indicating a desire to join community groups, volunteer or simply to learn more about following Jesus.

Please pray for the strength and endurance of the Three Creeks team as they learn to live and love as a new church family. Pray specifically for an upcoming outreach initiative they are calling "The Free Gift." This will be an effort on the part of the Three Creeks family to use their own personal gifts and talents to bless the people of Gahanna and to reflect Jesus in their community.



GRACE FELLOWSHIP CHURCH: FROM BIBLE STUDY TO LAUNCH



What began as a small group Bible study in the home of Scott and Jennifer Avey in 2017 has now come to full fruition as Grace Fellowship Church in Brunswick, Maryland.

Scott, having grown up in Grace Brethren churches, had recently been serving as the worship pastor at Grace Community Church in Frederick, MD (R Greene, pastor) when he began to dream of starting a new church in a neighboring community that would seek first to connect with people who are far away from God.

The Aveys' home group Bible study began with 4 families and eventually grew to more than 40 people, requiring a move to a new

location. Gatherings were relocated to the Brunswick Elementary School where they would worship, study and pray together for four months in preparation for their public launch.

On Sunday, February 25, Grace Fellowship opened its doors to the public, welcoming more than 175 guests, many of whom are new to church or returning to church for the first time in a long time.

Please pray for this new church as they look for effective ways to reach out and connect with the many people in their region who do not yet know Jesus as their Saviour.

www.gracefellowship.church

An intensive coaching, strategic planning, peer mentoring and training event that will allow you and your team to develop a great plan, establish tangible action steps and connect with ongoing coaching to reach your goals for expansion.

REGISTER NOW AT ASSISTCX.ORG



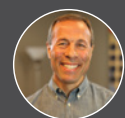
NATHAN BRYANT
Executive Director of Assist



KEITH MINIER
Lead Pastor of
Grace Fellowship Church,
Pickerington



TIM FARRANT
Executive Pastor of
Grace Fellowship Church,
Pickerington



RICK SCAVUZZO
Director of Advancement at
Grace Church, Akron



KEVIN MARSICO
Formerly Regional Director
for NAM



MARK ARTRIP
Planter and lead Pastor of
Movement Church, Columbus



ED SHORT
Consultant and coach for
CE National



PHILIP BRYANT
Planter and Director of
Development for Assist



WADE RININGER
Planter and Campus Pastor at
Renew Mayfield West, Canada

NEW CHURCH
RESTART
EXPAND
NEW SITE
TUNE-UP

**ASSIST
BOOTCAMP**

APRIL 12-14, 2018

Grace Fellowship Church
Pickerington, Ohio

UPDATES



Church Planter Josh Kuck is no stranger to the Fellowship of Grace Brethren Churches and Charis Fellowship. Having grown up in Ohio attending Worthington Christian Schools and his family being part of both the Polaris and Wooster churches. To put the icing on the cake, Josh attended Grace College after high school.

Josh was surrounded by godly men who loved Jesus during his formative years, and has now found himself leading a new community of Jesus-followers with the intent of providing for others what was so important for him; healthy, biblical, discipling relationships.

In 2015, after several years serving at Grace Community Church in Fremont, Ohio, Josh, his wife Andrea and their four daughters moved to Chelsea, MI with the dream of someday starting a missional gospel-centered church that would effectively reach unchurched people in the community.

On September 17, 2017 Main Street Church in Chelsea, Michigan began its public services and has averaged approximately 130 since then.

Please pray for the Kuck family and Main Street Church as they aim to grow deep roots with the many new Christians who are part of their community in hopes to make a great impact for God's kingdom in Chelsea and beyond.



The countdown is officially on as Renew Church prepares to start its fourth campus. With a projected launch date of September 16, newly transplanted pastor Erik Jensen is excited about the faith and commitment of his core team and is hopeful that God will use this new church community to reach many new people in Cambridge, Ontario.

Cambridge is a beautiful, growing city approximately 60 miles west of Toronto. The launch of this site has been a couple of years in the making as members of the Renew Meadowdale campus relocated to the city and began praying together that God would bring them a pastor to lead their team.

Those prayers were answered as Erik and Austen Jensen (along with their three young children) moved from Ohio to Ontario last summer to take the reigns of this new Renew campus.

The launch team has been busy meeting their neighbors and making new friends by opening their homes to soup lunches and social nights. They will be supported this summer with additional outreach and service initiatives during the **Great Canadian Adventure** (see below), as several Charis Fellowship churches send teams to Canada for a weeklong mission experience.

You can pray for Pastor Erik and the team as they anticipate their first public service in September. Please consider supporting this expansion effort financially as they are still in need of approximately \$40,000 to fully fund their launch.

Join us for a short-term missions trip to make a real impact in Toronto, Canada

JUNE 17 - 23, 2018 | AUGUST 9 - 15, 2018

GREAT CANADIAN ADVENTURE

CANADIANADVENTURE.ORG

COSTS	
REGISTRATION:	ACCOMMODATIONS:
\$50.00 per person	4 people per room \$425.00* each
Early-bird registration (on or before Feb 1):	3 people per room \$475.00* each
\$25.00 per person	2 people per room \$575.00* each
After April 15: \$75.00 per person	1 person per room \$875.00*

*Note: costs are based on guests 12 years and older. Lower rates may apply for children.

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NEW PROJECT APPROVALS FOR ASSIST



WHO:
Mark Lingenfelter,
Rod Lingenfelter

WHERE:
Western Pennsylvania

FINANCIAL NEED:
\$50,000
for staff salary, relaunch funds



WHO:
Jason Brown, Suntree
Grace Brethren Church

WHERE:
Melbourne, Florida

FINANCIAL NEED:
\$50,000
for equipment, space,
marketing, staff salaries and
community engagement

CONNECTED BY MORE THAN A HIGHWAY

While 14 miles of Pennsylvania blacktop separate the Grace Fellowship congregations meeting in Leamersville and Altoona, they are connected in ways that geography cannot defy.

Pastor Rod Lingenfelter has led the Altoona congregation for almost 20 years. His son, Mark, has been the shepherd of Leamersville for just a couple of years shy of that. For the past five years the two Lingenfelters have served together to ensure the health and sustainability of both of these western Pennsylvania church families.

Assist Church Expansion will be working alongside these two congregations to begin a leadership succession plan for Pastor Rod and the Altoona campus.

According to Pastor Mark, the present and future goals include a continued modernization of the Altoona church facility, leveraging technology to more effectively reach people in their community. They would soon like to bring in a younger leader who can eventually take the primary pastoring responsibilities in Altoona.

Although the two churches have been working together in recent years, there is hope that a successful leadership transition in Altoona may lead to the eventual relaunch of Altoona back into an autonomous congregation. In whatever way God chooses to lead the church now and into the future, Pastor Mark and the Leamersville family are committed for the long haul, ensuring the longevity of the Charis ministry in their region.

BRIDGES, BEACHES AND NEW BELIEVERS

There is little more exciting than when we see churches in our fellowship intentionally making efforts to reproduce themselves. For that reason Assist Church Expansion is excited to join in partnership with Pastor Jason Brown and the Suntree Grace Brethren Church in Melbourne, FL.

The Suntree church has experienced a resurgence in the past several years with a considerable increase in weekly attendance as well as its sending ability. They have sent one pastor out to lead another Charis Fellowship church. They have assisted in the launch of an Hispanic ministry. And they are preparing to send another staff member out to lead another Charis congregation.

You might think that would be enough activity for this church of approximately 100 people. But they have an even greater vision to multiply and reach more people in their region for Jesus.

The Suntree church is located in what is known as a "mainland" community. Just a few miles down Highway 1 and across the

5th Avenue bridge the Suntree leaders have launched a "beachside" community gathering on Sunday evenings at the Oceanview Fitness Center.

The Sunday 6pm gathering, which began with five families from Suntree, has grown to more than 50 people. Catalyzed by several weekly Bible studies and social gatherings designed to draw people toward the Sunday evening service, the group has quickly outgrown the authorized occupancy of their temporary meeting space.

Assist will be working alongside Pastor Jason and his team to build structures and strategy that will enable a full-scale launch of the Oceanview Fellowship, leading to an autonomous new church.

Please pray for Suntree GBC and Oceanview Fellowship as they follow God's lead in multiplying their ministry.



WHO:
Matt Niemier

WHERE:
Fort Myers, Florida

FINANCIAL NEED:
\$25,000
for equipment, marketing,
community engagement

BUILDING ON A SOLID FOUNDATION



Pastor Steve and
Hally Shipley

For over 27 years Pastor Steve Shipley has been guiding and caring for the Grace Brethren congregation in Ft. Myers, Florida. Considering the time span of almost three decades, it goes without saying that the church has seen its fair share of joys and pains, ups and downs and a massive cultural shifts. Not to mention that more than half a dozen major hurricanes have blown across Florida during that timespan.

Those who know Pastor Steve and the GBC family will firmly attest that his commitment, faithfulness and steadfast spirit have provided a strong foundation for this church, a foundation that is soon to be built upon by a new leader for the congregation.

On March 11, Pastor Steve preached his final sermon as the lead pastor of the Ft. Myers Grace Brethren Church. While he and his wife Hally will remain part of the team at Ft. Myers, the primary leadership of the church will now be transitioning to Matt Niemier.

Matt is a native of Warsaw, Indiana and a graduate of Grace College and Seminary. He has been involved in ministry in several Grace Brethren churches over the years and is excited about his opportunity to lead the Ft. Myers church, with its long history in the fellowship.

The church was originally planted in 1963 in what is known as The Villas community. The Villas is a culturally diverse neighborhood that has grown up around the church over the past half century. With a high visibility location and a strong presence in the community, Pastor Matt believes that the church has incredible potential to make inroads into the lives of those in the neighborhood and make more disciples for Jesus.

Pastor Matt's vision for the church is to be a reproducing neighborhood church that is fully committed to the great commission; being disciples who make disciples who make disciples.

Assist Church Expansion will be partnering with Pastor Matt to develop a plan that enables this vision to come to fruition. It is a wonderful opportunity to preserve a Charis Fellowship Church and to enable its members to look forward to a fruitful future in Florida.

LOOKING FOR A NEW HORIZON IN HARLEM

Manhattan's familiar neighborhood, Harlem, is changing. Gentrification is the term used to describe the transformation that has seen a significant cultural and socio-economic shift in this community.

As Pastor Laban Reeves of New Horizon Church sees it, this transformation has created a prime opportunity to shift the vision and focus of his spiritual family to engage the increasing population of "nones" in their neighborhood.

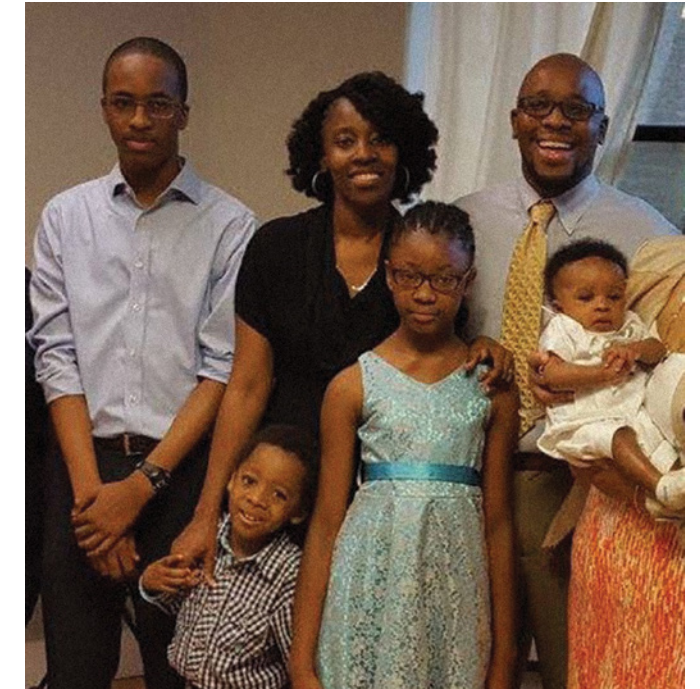
"Nones," as defined by Pew Research, is the rising population of people in American who have no religious affiliation, no church background, no faith. They often self-identify as atheist, agnostic or "nothing in particular."

Pastor Laban took over as the lead pastor of New Horizon Church approximately a year ago as founding Pastor Michel Faulkner stepped aside to follow God's call into other areas of service. Laban was part of the original launch team when New Horizon held its first public service in 2006. All along he knew that Pastor Michel would eventually hand over the reins to a successor. However, it was not always clear that Laban would be that successor.

Having been born in Liberia, raised in Florida and educated in Indiana, Laban eventually made his way to New York to pursue a career in the music industry. As is often the case, God had other plans for Laban.

After falling on some difficult times, Laban reconnected with God and recommitted his life to Jesus leading to an eventual relationship with Pastor Michel. Laban's journey was not the typical road to church leadership, but his passion for reaching lost people for Jesus and his call to lead New Horizon into a new season of ministry affirms that God will equip those He calls.

Assist CX will be working with Pastor Laban and his leadership team to refine the details of a new missional direction and strategy with a strong outward focus. Pray for this congregation as they prepare to relaunch this fall with a renewed vision for reaching Harlem for Jesus.



WHO:
Laban Reeves

WHERE:
New Horizon Church
in Harlem, New York

FINANCIAL NEED:
\$75,000
for pastor family relocation, staff salary,
equipment, marketing, community
engagement

THE ASSIST VISION:

To help our Fellowship become a movement by 2023.



A “Movement” defined:

An organization achieving forward progress as evidenced by growth greater than 3%.

2023
2022
2021
2020
2019

5%
NET
GROWTH

NEW CHURCH PLANT
CAMPUS EXPANSION
MULTISITE
REVITALIZE
RESTART

The first time I verbalized this dream I honestly doubted it was possible. It was too big of a dream; too far out there.

Perhaps I doubted because, on first thought, when using the word movement we often think revival – a rapid, overnight expansion of the church, like wildfire. Of course we all pray and long for that to happen in our Fellowship and across North America. But I believe there is a marked difference between a movement and a revival.

In an organizational setting a movement is defined as “forward progress.” Experts state that if an organization is growing by more than three percent it could be classified as a movement. This really changed my perspective. Is it possible that the Charis Fellowship could actually achieve an annual ongoing growth rate of more than three percent?

With our current membership of 250 churches could we net seven more churches per year?

Now that “out there” dream didn’t seem so far fetched. It is still a big dream and it will be difficult – but not impossible. And of course we know that with God all things are possible!

I am inspired to be part of a movement. But the more I thought about it, the goal of three percent growth wasn’t that inspiring. If we’re going to trust God for our dreams of church expansion, let’s dream bigger!

How about five percent? Is it possible that we could expand by five percent as a Fellowship? That would be 15 churches a year. That is a big dream. That is a dream that without God would be impossible.

While trusting God to lead us in this mission of expansion, there are other areas that we clearly need to address. To achieve our goal of five percent growth we not only will need to expand but we will also need to close the back door of churches that are closing.

We will do this by assisting in the revitalization and restart of churches that are plateaued or in decline. We have many churches in our fellowship with a long, rich heritage.

We don’t want to see those churches close. We want to assist them in reestablishing a missional focus and find hope for a fruitful future.

In addition to planting new churches, expansion must also include the start of new campuses of existing churches and multi-site venues. These are equally effective in reaching new communities and spreading the gospel.

We don’t believe that Assist will do this on our own. We believe leaders and churches expand our movement, we are here to help – to Assist. Expansion in our fellowship is already happening. A number of churches are starting new churches and campuses. Others are helping to restart and revitalize declining churches.

Grace Church Akron, Grace Fellowship Church Pickerington, Marysville Grace, Grace Community Church of Freemont and Movement Church, to name a few, are setting the pace and are fully committed to reaching new people for Jesus through the expansion of the church. Together we are focused on assisting our fellowship to become a movement by 2023.

Growing our number of legacy churches by five percent annually would result in doubling our number of churches in 15 years. It is a big challenge but we believe it can happen and it would honor the King if we did. It will take a team effort. Let us know how we can help your church be part of the expansion.

Living to see our Fellowship become a Movement,
Nathan Bryant
Executive Director



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