

FELLOWSHIP NEWS



LIFEGATE DENVER TURNS 4!

While Jason Best, worship pastor at LifeGate Church, and his friend, Vinny, stood in line at a coffee shop, they met Chris. During their conversation, Chris opened up to them about a difficult situation. By the time they left the coffee shop, Vinny had paid for Chris's coffee, and Jason had his email address, telling him that he'd love to hear more of his story. In the meantime, another LifeGate member, Kevin, met Chris at a triathlon and invited him to play volleyball with other young professionals from the church. When Jason and Chris met for lunch, Chris admitted, "God must be trying to get my attention."

After attending a Sunday morning gathering at LifeGate, Chris told Jason, "I want more of what Nirup was talking about." That day, Jason told him about Jesus, and he decided to follow Him. These days, Chris is living a new life in Jesus Christ, surrounded by the faith community at LifeGate Church, Denver, Colorado, where he

serves on the set-up and tear-down team and participates in a bible study.

Chris represents the largest demographic that LifeGate Church is reaching in the Denver metro area, people aged 19-35. That demographic, combined with the number of children 0-18 years old, represents over 80% of the church. LifeGate lead pastor, Nirup Alphonse conveys the gospel in a relatable way for young professionals, aged 22-35, who are exploring different worldviews and asking questions.

LifeGate Church was planted four years ago in the Denver Tech Center area, south of downtown, by 45 individuals from Pine Hills Church, Fort Wayne, Indiana. Since then, the church has experienced exponential growth. They envision a multicultural church that reaches 1% of the Denver metro area, a city of more than three million people and a growth rate outpacing the national rate (*Metrodenver.org*).



Full Strength Network Encourages Health in Ministry

When he was 11, Denny Howard loved spending time with his church's youth pastor even though he wasn't old enough to attend the youth group. That young pastor also attended seminary, and when he returned to school, he ended his life. Denny remembers processing that sad event with his parents. That day, his mother gave him advice that he has never forgotten. "Denny, there's always a story that you don't know." That experience 50 years ago impacted him. Even then, he wanted to help ministry people. Over the years, as a licensed professional counselor, Denny has worked with thousands of pastors and their families, so in 2015 when the leadership of Brotherhood Mutual asked him, "Would you like to help tens of thousands?" together they created Full Strength Network

Brotherhood Mutual Insurance, a national company based in Fort Wayne, Indiana, serves churches and related institutions. They realize that pastors and their families need support since they are vulnerable to burnout. When surveyed, 50% of pastors report burnout as their number one issue. Brotherhood and Denny realize that when you support one pastor, you promote healthy churches, too. Full Strength Network exists to help pastors monitor their well being and connect to strengthening resources. **Denny will address FEC pastors at the annual conference this year about Full Strength Network.**

Re:generation at Heartland Church Transforms Lives

Heartland Church in Normal, Illinois, wants to be a place where people connect with Jesus to find hope and healing that ignites life transformation. For years, they have been hosting a 12-step recovery group to help people find freedom from their personal struggles. Since 2014, they have offered this discipleship program called **Re:generation** which integrates Biblical steps to freedom into an authentic community of growing believers. Re:generation offers a unique 11-month track that focuses on Jesus and full devotion to Him.

When Re:generation, a 12-step program which originated out of Watermark Community Church based in Texas, was introduced at Heartland, Paula Reich took part in the pilot group. Paula, a former missionary to Venezuela and staff member at Heartland, was interested in helping to start the program, but during that first year, she said, "God showed me that He wanted to work in me." Since that time, Paula has begun leading Re:generation at Heartland along with a team of men and women.

As a result of re:generation, lives and marriages are being transformed. One couple who has participated began to work on their struggling marriage. Another woman who came to re:generation by referral had been raised in an atheist home, so spiritual topics were new to her. Through the program, she decided to follow Jesus.

