

# FELLOWSHIP NEWS



## TWO INDIANA FEC CHURCHES PARTNER WITH ALBANIAN CHURCH

When organizations and churches commit to the same mission, beautiful partnerships are formed in the same town and around the world. In July, two Indiana churches joined Albanian missionaries and a church in Tirana (Albania) to share the gospel. The 16 people from Westwood Fellowship Church (Woodburn) and Highland Gospel Church (Fort Wayne) traveled to Albania to join Kent and Angie Morton, FEC missionaries from Brookside Church (Fort Wayne) and an Albanian church to teach at an English camp.

The partnership between Nate Schumacher and Angie Morton goes all the way back to their family roots—brother and sister, the children of missionaries. Now, Nate pastors Highland Gospel Church and Angie serves with her husband in Albania through European Christian Mission International (ECMI). Nate and his wife Steph have traveled to Albania to serve before, and he shared that opportunity with his friend and fellow pastor Chad Olszewski. Chad gathered a team from his church,

Westwood Fellowship, and Nate recruited a team from Highland Gospel. Then, they traveled to a retreat hosted by Kisha e Besimit Biblik (Bible Faith Church) to teach English to the church members' guests.

Albania has a large Muslim population, and it was under communist control for nearly 50 years, so most Albanians have not heard the gospel. The church members invited unbelieving family and friends to the English camp. The team used Bible parables to teach English lessons and share the gospel. Two years ago, the Schumachers met Alfons at the camp, and this year, he brought his brother, Bernard. During the English camp, Bernard heard the gospel and said that he now believes in Jesus "with his heart and not just his head."

The team plans to return in two years. In the meantime, a partnership that has been built between siblings and friends who live half a world away continues to make an eternal impact.



## Life Community Church (Hilliard, OH) Provides New Home for Community Food Pantry

When Life Community Church in Hilliard, Ohio, acquired their 30,000 square foot facility in 2004, they believed that God would show them what He wanted to do with the space. After renovating two-thirds of the building, they used the rest for storage until recently, when the Hilliard Food Pantry needed a new home.

In August, the Hilliard Food Pantry moved into the facility, expanding their storage capability and the number of people that they are able to serve. After opening at their new location in the Life Community Church building, they assisted 428 families and individuals, up from 349 during their busiest month, according to Matt Austin, Director.

Life Community Church members have provided food to help stock the pantry and volunteers to organize and shelve the food. The church hopes to find other ways to serve the food pantry and partner with them to serve the Hilliard community.

## Tom Bennardo, FEC Church Multiplication Director, Launches New Book for Church Planters

Whoever said, "Experience is the best teacher," overlooked another important teacher: someone else's experience, especially someone else's failure. Tom Bennardo has written about his own ministry successes and failures in his new book, *The Honest Guide to Church Planting: What No One Ever Tells You about Planting and Leading a New Church*. In the current climate of church planting, Tom offers his hard-earned experience as a pastor, a church planter, and FEC's Director of Pastoral Development and Church Multiplication in the Western Region.

When Tom took on his current FEC role in 2017, he brought 35 years of ministry experience with him to help equip men and women who were planting and leading churches west of the Rocky Mountains. In the past decade, church planting has boomed into a big industry with organizations and conferences offering kits and "how-to" advice. As helpful as those organizations and conferences are, Tom knows that church planters often experience unexpected opposition and sometimes failure. For those struggling with challenges, his book provides a heart-to-heart conversation.

According to Tom, "this book is for those toiling in the trenches, those about to bail out, and those considering jumping in. It's for the church planters laboring and struggling, seeing little movement, and wondering what they're doing wrong or why God is failing them. It's also for mother churches, planting organizations, and denominations, as a challenge to rethink and re-calibrate the way they approach and measure planting endeavors."

*The Honest Guide to Church Planting* is available now on Amazon.com.

