

FELLOWSHIP NEWS



CROSSROADS CHURCH NAPOLEON CELEBRATES 10 YEARS

Ten years ago, Crossroads Evangelical Church, Wauseon, Ohio, launched their first church, in nearby Henry County, and Napoleon became the home of a new Crossroads Church. In October, Crossroads Church celebrated its 10-year anniversary while anticipating their future.

In 2007, Crossroads, Wauseon, gathered a group of 60 people who were driving 10 miles from Napoleon to attend services. Then, they asked a former associate pastor, Wes Hoffmire, to return and lead the new church. The group launched their first public Sunday gathering on September 20, 2009. A few months later, the church purchased the facility that they had been renting.

Since their facility has ample warehouse space, they have forged community relationships by loaning out the space as often as they can to other groups like Head Start, foster care training, and a senior center. Hoffmire says, "We want to be seen as a church who loves her neighbors." That

love has welcomed people from all backgrounds and age groups, from professionals to welfare recipients.

Four years ago, they added teaching pastor Levi Stuckey. About the 10-year celebration, Stuckey wrote, "I was reminded once again that nothing is impossible. As bad as things get in the world, God is and always will be establishing His Church. We believe God's answers to the world's ills are found within Christ and His local Church. We've experienced the love of God in tangible ways through this local Church and we look forward to another 10 years."

On celebration Sunday, Crossroads baptized five new Christians, a fitting way for the church to honor the last decade and look forward to their next one. Hoffmire reflects on Galatians 5:25, which reads "Keep in step with the Spirit." He said, "He was one step ahead of us all the time. We just took the next step to follow Him."



Great Oaks Church Vision: 10 New Churches in 10 Years

A month ago, Great Oaks Church in Germantown Hills, IL, realized its first step toward a big vision: To plant 10 new campuses in the next 10 years. Their vision is fueled by a desire to help as many people as possible to take their next step toward God. On September 22, Nate Westerfield led the new community in Washington, IL.

Great Oaks, Germantown Hills, was started in 1997 by Grace Church, Morton, IL. Through the leadership of Pastor Jake Mills, the church has envisioned planting 10 multi-site campuses in the surrounding communities. The Washington campus was a perfect fit for Westerfield, a native of the community. He has been serving the Germantown Hills campus for almost 14 years as the Creative Arts Pastor, leading worship.

To accomplish their vision, Great Oaks hosts a resident program to train pastors. Currently, they are hosting two residents to lead future sites. They plan to plant the next church campus in 2021, and the following year, they plan to launch a new site out of the Washington campus.

The vision is big, but Westerfield sees it as a simple step of faith and obedience to Jesus's command in Acts 1:8, "Be my witnesses." For Great Oaks, that command includes the smaller, rural communities around them.

Grace Church: Outreach Through Upward Sports

In January, 400 children along with their families will burst through the doors at Grace Church in Morton, IL, to participate in Upward Sports. Since 2002, a team of volunteers has been building children, first through sixth grade, through basketball and cheerleading. Grace Church uses the opportunity to not only teach sports skills, but they also provide a place for discovering faith and making connections since 25% of the participants don't attend a church.

Each year, Grace Church sees Upward Sports as an all-week facility and volunteer commitment for the months of January through March. The program requires 80 coaches who can weave devotions and the gospel into their instruction. Between games, the church provides the Overtime Cafe for guests to connect with the church family while enjoying free popcorn, lemonade, and coffee. Each week, that effort requires 40 additional volunteers. Even though families begin by participating in Upward basketball or cheerleading, they connect with the church family through the volunteers.

The vision of Upward is to help "church leaders leverage the power of sports to connect with families in their community." Brad Habegger leads the program as the children's ministry pastor. Around town and in the schools, children who participate in the program give him a high-five and call him "the guy from Upward," and through sports, they discover Jesus. For Brad, that's a worthwhile investment of time and volunteers.



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