

FELLOWSHIP NEWS



Archbold and Fayette, Ohio: 1 Church, 1 Mission, 2 Places

On Sunday evenings in Fayette, Ohio, a group of worshipers can be found gathered under a big, white tent in the former Fayette Supermarket parking lot. This summer, the group of worshipers is introducing themselves to the town of Fayette, a rural northwest Ohio town with a long history and quiet charm. The group is Wellspring: A Fayette Worship Gathering, and the launch team from Archbold Evangelical Church is led by Peter Rupp, a northwest Ohio native.

Since the Fayette area is known for natural springs, the name Wellspring was the natural choice for the worship gathering since it reflects their passion: To be “an inexhaustible source of new and continuous life” to their community. Their name, Wellspring: A Fayette Worship Gathering, reflects both their passion and purpose as a simple worship gathering that connects people to Jesus, the Living Water. Peter explained that “springs and water describe life with Jesus Christ.” During their worship

gatherings on Sunday evenings, they hope that Jesus’s words to a Samaritan woman in John 4:14 become a reality: “Whoever drinks the water I give them will never thirst. Indeed, the water I give them will become in them a spring of water welling up to eternal life.”

On June 6, 20 people from Fayette and Archbold hosted about 100 Fayette residents for a soft launch. Peter Rupp, the Ministry Facilitator for the site, led the full band in worship. Afterward, the team served food and connected with the people who came.

Through August, Wellspring invites Fayette residents to take part in simple worship and a study in Philippians. By the end of the summer, Peter says, “If someone hears the word Wellspring, we want them to think, that’s the worship gathering that meets at the old grocery store.” In September, Wellspring will host an official launch in the community.



Band of Brothers Groups: Soul Care for FEC Pastors

Wes Hoffmire has worked in pastoral ministry for 25 years, and he understands the unique challenges that pastors face. Over the years, he has faced challenges, too, but when older, more experienced men came alongside him, they helped him manage those pressures. Now, he wants to put his experience to work helping other pastors by leading a Band of Brothers. Through a three-year FEC program for pastors called SHIFT (Soul Health Immersive Formation Training), he will join a cohort of 15-20 pastors twice yearly at Miracle Camp in Lawton, Michigan, and more frequently with a smaller group of five or six, his Band of Brothers.

Many pastors feel lonely in their role and desire deeper connection. Data compiled by the Fuller Institute, George Barna, and other organizations about pastors indicates that at least 70% “do not have someone that they consider to be a close friend,” and 84% “desire to have close fellowship with someone they can trust and confide with” (pastoralcareinc.com). In an effort to support pastors and help them connect with one another, FEC leaders plan to address these needs to connect with one another through the Band of Brothers.

Wes, the Care and Community Pastor at Crossroads Church in Napoleon, Ohio, knows the statistics are against pastors—only one out of every 10 will actually retire as a pastor—when he says that he hopes to retire from the ministry and help other men to do the same.

‘Ministry Conversations’ for Leaders Kicked Off in May

Imagine sitting down with a 30-year veteran of church leadership to learn from his experience. In May, FEC church leaders listened to Cal Rychener, the Founding Senior Pastor at Northwoods Church in Peoria, share how he has maintained his focus on Jesus through more than three decades of ministry. Ministry Conversations like this one connects pastors and utilizes FEC’s greatest resource: Experienced leaders.

On Thursday, May 20, at 3:00 p.m. EST, pastors gathered via Zoom to talk about “Soul Hydration: Avoiding Leading from an Empty Well.” During the one-hour video conference, Cal Rychener challenged the group: “It’s love for Jesus that started it all. It’s love for Jesus that needs to sustain it all and end it all.” He also gave practical tips like taking a monthly day away and a two or three-week study break every year. The 20-minute conversation was followed by breakout groups. The one-hour Zoom closed with encouragement from President Rocky Rocholl.

At least 90% of pastors report feeling that their ministry role was different than what they expected, and over 50% did not feel adequately prepared for the challenges they have faced (pastoralcareinc.com). Ministry Conversations brings pastors and experienced leaders together to discuss topics like how to manage time and how to take critique.



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