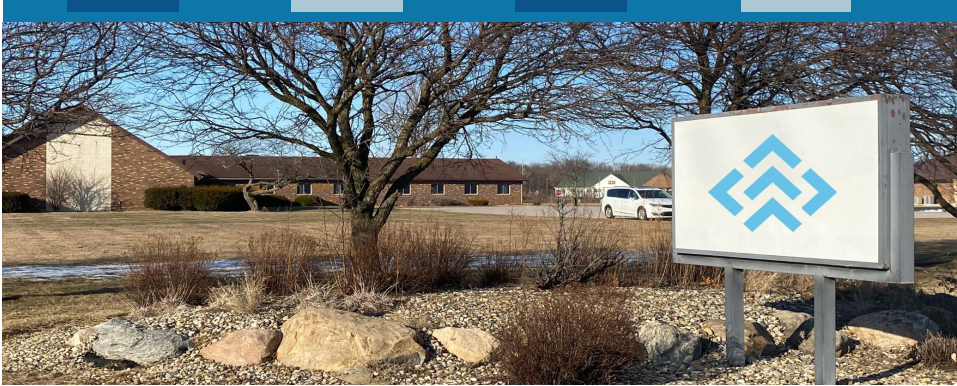


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Pine Hills Auburn Receives New Church Building in Auburn, Indiana

Pine Hills Auburn is “a church for the city, loving people where they are with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.” Now they’ll serve Auburn in a permanent location after being given a building this spring. Pastor Matt Lehman praises God for the opportunities this gift provides. “We have an incredible tool to use for the community.” Instead of setting up in a rental space once a week, this gives the six-month-old church a chance to plant roots and connect with and serve its neighbors weekends and weekdays.

How did this donation come about? Pine Hills Auburn’s new building was functionally vacant for the past decade. Pastor Matt Lehman heard from the city that they were going to tear it down, so he made some phone calls. The owner knew Matt from his previous work in the Auburn community in social services, so he gave the green light.

“As long as you’re willing to take the building as is, we’ll donate it to you.”

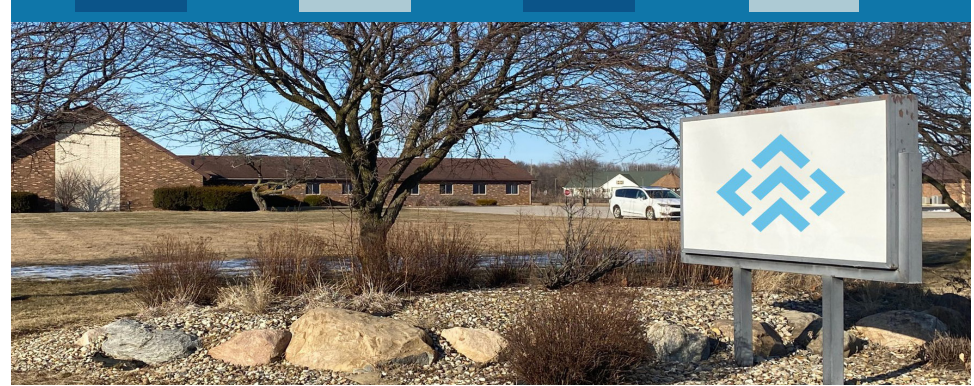
Having the support of the government and other local pastors has been huge, Matt says. “We’ve been able to build a really good relationship with the city of Auburn.” Mayor Mike Ley gave his consent for various Pine Hills Auburn activities, and not a Sunday goes by that Matt doesn’t receive encouraging texts or emails from other Auburn-based pastors.

One of the biggest blessings Matt sees is from the body of Pine Hills Auburn itself. “With church planting, everyone is in the lineup, nobody’s on the bench. Watching them shine to the glory of God and watching people come alive with those gifts and abilities is probably my favorite part of this.”

Pine Hills Auburn plans to move into the new building this month, but some repairs and updates, as well as a new roof, will need to happen. “We are in process right now of figuring out what all of that looks like.”

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FEC President Chooses "Illumine" for 2023 Conference Theme

The Fellowship of Evangelical Churches will gather for its annual conference on July 27-28 at the Parkview Mirro Center in Fort Wayne, Indiana. This year, the theme will be "Illumine," FEC President Rocky Rocholl announced. "Illumine," which means "to light up or brighten," points everyone to God's message in John 8:12 when Jesus says, "I am the light of the world." Rocky says this speaks to the hope we have in Christ, especially in the darker times we've faced in recent years.

Our society has experienced division and negativity, but Rocky sees this conference as a chance for making connections and "to celebrate what God has done." During last year's conference, the lead pastor from one of FEC's smaller churches came with his team. Being poured into with truth, encouragement, and fellowship helped him realize they weren't alone. The team went home "extremely encouraged" that they were on the right path.

Each year, the two-day conference brings leaders from around 70 different FEC churches and over 200 attendees. It's an atmosphere much like a "family reunion," Rocky says, with the sweetness of the Holy Spirit stirring and encouraging believers just as we saw in the early church in Acts.

Keynote speakers and sessions will emphasize "Illumine" with topics such as what evangelism looks like in an age of chaos, hands-on advice for being the light in ministry, and finding ways to better understand our community around us. "If we don't take the light outside the church to the community, it doesn't change the darkness in the world."

Christian Service Foundation Awards Scholarships to FEC College Students

The Christian Service Foundation will, once again, award scholarships to qualifying college students for the fall of 2023. Applications opened in November, 2022 and 20 FEC students were awarded a scholarship. In the last 10 years, over \$410,000 have been awarded to college students and CSF President Bruce Wright hopes it's just the beginning. "We believe sincerely those scholarships are kingdom building, one of the most enjoyable activities we do on the board."

Founded in 1949, CSF has a long-standing relationship with churches and believers. Bruce describes it as "a big circle." CSF lends money to churches, they get the money from other congregants, they pay it back, they use that interest to provide scholarship to kids, and give back to FEC. All of it centers around people doing kingdom work for God's glory. Providing funds for college courses is no exception. "Every scholarship we give out, the kids are very, very grateful for it. They have made a commitment to receive a Christian-based higher education. We let God do the rest of it."

Students who are members of an FEC church and enrolled full-time at a Christian college can apply for a CSF scholarship in November (<https://christianservicefoundation.org>). On the application, students will share their personal, educational, and spiritual journeys, references, and plans for their chosen field of study.

Bruce Wright invites youth pastors, parents, and ministry leaders to point college students toward these scholarships. "These are available so take advantage," Bruce says. "It's very gratifying to give this money away."



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