

# FELLOWSHIP NEWS



## Eden Church Launches First Service in Fort Wayne, Indiana

Eden Church opened its doors to the Fort Wayne community with its first service on Sunday, October 8th. Joyous congregants gathered to worship in a former Methodist church near downtown Fort Wayne. Pastor Phil Borjas led with a message about the new church being named after the garden of Eden and how God strategically placed it there “to be a lifesource to the community.”

Phil’s journey into church planting began after 22 years of youth ministry in places like Chicago, Dallas, and Fort Wayne. God led Phil into a season of rest and “a time of really listening.” As he and his family sought God’s direction by visiting various churches, Phil connected with Nathan DeVaux at Kingdom Collective and Chris Freeman at City Church, both FEC church planters. God then led him to Pine Hills Church where he trained for two years to become a church planting pastor.

Eden Church began with a TAP (Target Analysis Process) team of very support-

ive people who were instrumental in the launch’s success. One family jumped on board to run sound and checked in regularly with supportive text messages to Phil like, “We have your back,” and “Pastor, what do you need?” One man felt God’s call for him to get back into serving at church by directing him to Eden Church. Phil says he has been a proactive supporter every week, encouraging and affirming Phil often.

Phil knows God has big plans for Eden Church serving its community, namely starting with the Lifehouse ministries already active within the building where Eden meets. Neighborhoods surrounding Eden Church are in a “food desert,” so there are no local grocery stores or accessible sources of food. Phil plans to partner with Lifehouse and its food pantry, clothing, and homeless ministries. A Spanish ministry is also being discussed and steps are being taken to connect with Spanish speaking families.

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National Association of Evangelicals

# Financial Health

Solutions for Pastors & Churches

## FEC Celebrates God's Faithfulness in 5-Year Financial Support Program for Pastors

In May of 2019, the FEC received an invitation. The National Association of Evangelicals (NAE) pledged \$25,000 toward financial wellness for our pastors if we would match it. Thus, a five-year partnership was born. Nate Zimmerman, the Director of Finance and Benefits at the FEC says 35 grants were given to 29 different leaders, totaling in \$76,200. Recipients also took financial literacy courses. The experience for Nate has been "tremendously exciting" as he witnessed God's faithfulness.

This program began when the NAE received a donation from the Lilly Endowment Fund to "invest in financial literacy for pastors" and "encourage cultures of generosity in churches," Nate says. Throughout the last five years, credentialed FEC leaders could apply for a grant of \$2,500 toward their retirement fund or student loan debt. Pastors, then, took one of six financial literacy courses designed to help them grow personally, or assist in leading their church body.

Many pastors responded very positively after completing the program. One pastor said it was "a huge answer to prayer" after facing a difficult financial dilemma during his wife's pregnancy. Other pastors and their wives gained insight in communicating together, praying over finances, creating a living will, improving habits, and being intentional. "It's really fun to see how through Lilly and NAE and that partnership, we get to invest into our leaders in really tangible ways," Nate says. "It feels really good to be able to say 'Here, we can help with that,' and they get the benefit of some financial literacy and some good practices with that."

## Lawton Evangelical Church Celebrates 50 Years with Commemorative Service

On October 8th, the congregation of Lawton Evangelical Church in Lawton, Michigan held a 50-year celebration service. Many people traveled from far and wide to reunite with old friends and brothers and sisters in Christ. "It was moving," says Dean Basinger, the elder chairman who first came to Lawton Church in the early 90s and attended the service. "It was encouraging to see them come. It's always good to see friends that you haven't seen for a long time."

Lawton's history stretches back to the 1970s with its first meeting at Miracle Camp. "To God be the Glory" was played during worship on Lawton's first Sunday, so it was again played for the celebration service last month. Previous pastors and original church members of Lawton attended or sent video messages of encouragement and testimonies of God's faithfulness.

Through the years, God called many who stood within the walls of Lawton to enter the mission field or plant churches. Lawton Church was able to witness God leading church planters to places like Pennsylvania, Idaho, California, and the Basque Country in Spain. "It happened organically," Dean says. A relationship continues as Lawton walks alongside these growing churches with financial support, newsletters, and prayer.

The culture of Lawton for decades has been a "hearth and home church" with a sound doctrine, Dean says. "We are blessed for these 50 years to have pastors who hold fast to the doctrines and beliefs. God has provided us with godly men to preach the word, teach the word, and equip us in the word."



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