

# Praying for Church Planting

**DAY OF PRAYER FOR CHURCH PLANTING, the first Sunday of each month**

**PRAYER POINTS:**

- Passion and strength for the planters
- Contagious outreach that draws people to Jesus
- Health for the planter and his family
- Provision for daily ministry needs



*(Continued from page 1)*

to finding our place in the Body of Christ.

Building a chartered congregation often takes five to ten years of hard work. Since 2003, five of our plants have reached that milestone; 12 others are currently in the process. In spite of their great needs, I must report that at least one pastor I spoke with admitted that outside support for his church has been almost nonexistent. Our church plants need individuals and congregations who will stand beside them in practical and tangible ways. This is how Christ's body should function!

We invite you to grow alongside a church plant. Be Christ's hands; become his feet in active service. As you find ways to match up your talents with specific needs to help a church grow, you'll be surprised at how your own faith grows as a result. And when the Body of Christ works as it should, only amazing things can happen.



**The PURPOSE** of the Church Planting Commission of the Evangelical Congregational Church is to know Christ and make Him known.

**The MISSION** of the Church Planting Commission of the Evangelical Congregational Church is to help churches plant healthy churches that proclaim Christ to a hurting world.

**The VISION** of the Church Planting Commission is that the Evangelical Congregational Church becomes a Church Multiplication movement, realized when churches plant healthy churches that plant healthy churches.

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The Church Planting Newsletter of the E.C. Church

## WE ARE HIS HANDS *by Kolleen Long*

Church planting is a fundamental part of the Evangelical Congregational Church, so much so that the drive to start new churches is considered part of the healthy EC congregation's DNA. The idea has a good source, after all, when one considers the Great Commission in the opening chapter of Acts and our historic roots as a church planting denomination. Missions should start in our own backyards.

Do you like the idea of building healthy congregations where there is a void and continually adding new believers to the body of Christ? The answer to that question should be, "Yes!" The follow-up question might be trickier: "So what are you doing about it?"

I recently talked with a group of people who have found ways to stand by an EC church plant. They supported the churches financially, meeting an obvious and ongoing

need. But they also found ways to use their gifts and abilities to provide meaningful encouragement, from providing a sounding board for the pastor to filling in as volunteer staff to actually joining the new congregation as a member.

**B**ut in Christ we are one body. And each part of the body belongs to all the other parts. We all have gifts. They differ in keeping with the grace that God has given each of us. Do you have the gift of prophecy? Then use it in keeping with the faith you have. Is it your gift to serve? Then serve. Is it teaching? Then teach. Is it telling others how they should live? Then tell them. Is it giving to those who are in need? Then give freely. Is it being a leader? Then work hard at it. Is it showing mercy? Then do it cheerfully. (Rom. 12: 5-8, NIRV)

Since the Great Commission was issued, believers have found ways to use individual talents and gifts to further the Gospel. When Paul wrote to the Romans, he likened the task *(Continued on page 4)*



# Supporter Snapshots

## SUPPORTERS: BOB and ALYSE IOCCO

**CHURCH PLANT:** Horizon, Lehigh Valley, Pennsylvania

**Pastor:** Rev. Robert "Bud" Daneker

**"It's a much better way to build your faith in Christ by being involved with starting something. It forces you to get out of the spectator role and into the participant role."**

The Ioccos came to know the Lord when a neighbor invited them to a contemporary, seeker-style church in Florida. Their move to the Lehigh Valley led them to the Seibert church, which Bud then pastored.

"Bud has a vision for a church that's friendly to the unchurched, where people can come and don't feel they're outsiders," Bob explains. "We shared a passion for reaching people who would never go to church [otherwise], people just like me."

When Bud decided to build a new, seeker-sensitive church, Bob provided moral and financial support. A certified public accountant, Bob also helped set up the initial accounting systems at Horizon.

"I definitely believe if you want it, you have to get involved with it," Bob says.

"And ultimately, I believe it's a much better way to build your faith in Christ by being involved with starting something. It forces you to get out of the spectator role and into the participant role. Really, that's what I believe we as Christians are called to do."

His initial contributions allowed the fledgling church to purchase needed equipment. "It's not an understatement to say that without his gift, we would not have been able to get started," Bud notes.

Ironically, the Ioccos moved out of the area just before services at Horizon began. "I didn't get the chance to benefit from attending," Bob now says, "but it's been immensely pleasing to see that they are growing and providing a spiritual service to their community that was otherwise void."

## SUPPORTER: DON VOEGELI

**CHURCH RESTART:** New Direction, Tallmadge, Ohio

**Pastor:** Rev. Timothy Ream

**"There are so many, many things, so many needs right now. . . You just have to pick something out to support."**

Why support a church plant? Don has a straightforward answer: "Because it's the right thing to do!"

Don was a member of the original Tallmadge congregation. He now mows the church grounds and recently purchased a

new lawn tractor to do the job. He also supports New Direction financially.

Today's Christian, Don states, should have no trouble finding a church need to meet, both worldwide and at home. "You just have to pick something out to support,"

Don says. "Of course, church planting is a good thing to support. The need is there and you just need to take care of the need."

"He's been more than faithful," Tim says. "He's been amazing, actually, in maintaining the large piece of property."

## SUPPORTER: ROSS STUART

**CHURCH PLANT:** Horizon, Lehigh Valley, Pennsylvania

**Pastor:** Rev. Robert "Bud" Daneker

**"I felt it was not necessarily my duty, but my calling to [support this church plant]."**

Longtime EC-er Ross Stuart is the first to admit he is most drawn to the elements of a conservative church service. But, he says, "while I am personally a traditionalist, - and I say this reverently - I could care less how people worship as long as they do, as long as they get the message however possible. And Bud Daneker is able to do that."

Ross served as president of the official board at the Seibert congregation when Bud arrived as pastor. As the two men worked together, Ross caught his pastor's vision for a seeker-style service and saw how it could reach other segments of the population, particularly young couples.

"[Bud] is a very talented and unique younger pastor," Ross says. "He presents the Lord's Word in a very realistic and Biblical manner. I enjoyed his sermons immensely. I think he has a great appeal to a younger generation."

When Bud left Seibert to start the Horizon church, Ross recalls, "I supported him financially for some period of time. I felt it was not necessarily my duty, but my calling to do that."

"For over a year" Bud confirms, "[Ross] made a monthly contribution to Horizon. His contributions were very encouraging and meant a great deal to everyone."

## SUPPORTERS: BOB and SUE MISHLER

**CHURCH RESTART:** New Direction, Tallmadge, Ohio

**Pastor:** Rev. Timothy Ream

**"I think that you need to [ask the pastor] 'What are you going to be doing in your church that's unique?' That's so much more fulfilling than just putting a check in the envelope for world hunger."**

When Bob, a Palmerton-area cabinet maker, remodeled the Ream's parsonage bathroom, a lifetime friendship began. When the Reams headed west to Tallmadge, Bob and Sue prayed together, then decided to financially support their friends' new congregation.

"We've always supported the local church," Bob, a member of a Lutheran congregation, says, "but we've also taken the money for non-local church support, where we donate directly to missionary efforts." A church plant, Bob adds, "is something that was close to my heart, which is building good churches today. It was a good opportunity for us."

Bob often calls or emails Tim just to ask, "How's our church doing?" During one such conversation, Tim mentioned he was starting a family movie night. Bob learned a projector was needed and is now looking for ways to meet that specific need. "That's so much more fulfilling than just putting a check in the envelope for world hunger," Bob says.

Both men note that, beyond financial support, they have benefited from their friendship. "It's very important in the Christian life," Bob explains, "to have someone who's a brother or sister you can communicate with and share joys, sorrows or ideas."

## SUPPORTER: RAY CHAVOUS

**CHURCH RESTART:** Trinity, Slatington, Pennsylvania

**Pastor:** Rev. Brian Kern

**"I learned to do what God wants you to do. Make sure it's from God and do it!"**

It all started when Brian invited Ray, a former parishioner from New Bethany, to sing at Trinity the Sunday before Easter. As he sat through the worship service, Ray recalls, he felt God prompting him to make this new congregation his own.

"The Lord told me that's where he needed me. I just told the Lord, 'I need you to tell me a little more than this.'" After talking to Brian, Ray was convinced God was leading him and shared the news with his wife and three children. At that time, Ray explains, he and his wife had separated. On Easter Sunday, however, the family attended Trinity together.

"I learned to do what God wants you to do," Ray says. "Make sure it's from God and do it!"

The following week, the Chavous family held a meeting and decided that Ray and the children would continue to attend Trinity; his wife opted at that time to spend Sundays working at the family's horse farm.

Today, the couple has reconciled. "I can see that in the near future, God will make a way for the whole family to be back [at church]," Ray says. "Sometimes we have to be broken before we can be used."

At Trinity, Ray continues to use his talent for singing. He also stepped into a new area by hosting a Bible study at his home. Originally, Ray envisioned someone else leading the group, as he wasn't sure if he was spiritually up to the task. Then he heard a radio speaker, Ray recalls, who said, ". . . we all can teach - look at some of the people Jesus used, and they weren't scholars. God will give you the work if your heart is sincere."

Brian counts Ray as one of the congregation's supporters. "He came into our fellowship because he felt a burden to help us build," the pastor says, "which was a real blessing to all of us." Ray, however, sees the blessings as his own.



Alexandria Kern (left) and Ray Chavous (right) believe in supporting church plants. Ray is an active supporter of Trinity, an EC restart in Slatington pastored by Alexandria's father, Rev. Brian Kern.