

Three new churches join FEC

Delegates welcome congregations in Monticello, Illinois; Nampa, Idaho; and Washington, Illinois, during Convention.

By Kristi Reimer, FEConnections editor

During Convention in August, three new churches joined the Fellowship of Evangelical Churches. Two of them are “new” only to FEC—they each have a history of more than 100 years. The other is less than 10 years old. What these bodies share, other than their new membership in our fellowship, is a commitment to the Word of God and reaching the community for Christ. Here’s a little more about them.

Crossroads Church of Monticello *Monticello, Illinois*

A mile east of Monticello Middle School in the town of Monticello, Illinois (between Campaign and Decatur), is Crossroads Church. At least, that’s where you’ll find the building with the Crossroads sign out front. The church is really the people of Crossroads, who came together in 1999 with a simple prayer.

At that time, a group of families attending church in nearby Mahomet began praying about starting a church in Monticello to which they could invite their friends and neighbors. After five years of planning and prayer, Crossroads held its first service in 2004 on Easter Sunday at the Best Western Hotel with over 100 in attendance. They quickly outgrew the hotel space and moved to the middle school. But that was a temporary solution, too, so they began looking for a permanent home.

After purchasing land, Crossroads began construction on a new facility in April of 2007. Less than six months later, the church opened the doors of its new building. The congregation has since grown to over 130 families, with an average Sunday attendance between 300 and 350. The church has also expanded to two services.

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Construction underway on the Lakeview Bible Church building in a growing area of Nampa, Idaho. Lakeview is one of three recent additions to the FEC family.



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“Our primary goal is to reach people who don’t have a church home,” says Crossroads pastor Mike

Crossroads is known in the community as a place where people can find acceptance in Christ regardless of past mistakes.

*Mike Heiniger
Pastor, Crossroads Church
of Monticello*

Heiniger, who grew up at Grace Church in Morton, Illinois. “The highest compliment someone can give us is to say, ‘This seems very real and very relevant.’ And we do hear it. Lives are being changed.”

While the services are identical in content, Sunday mornings are never predictable. “Our theme is, ‘Today’s going to be a little bit different,’” Mike says. Whether that means a bluegrass worship session, a video clip from *The Incredibles*, or a day when every-

one is asked to wear orange to church, there’s something memorable in each service. The message may examine a topic like “how to pray” or “developing patience,” or it may be part of a series through a book of the Bible.

Kids can attend a variety of age-related options during the second service, and the church has both middle school and high school youth groups. Similarly, adults can choose from multiple opportunities during the week for small groups and Bible studies. Mike says Crossroads is known in the community as a place where people can find acceptance in Christ regardless of past mistakes. “We are open and real, and people sense we allow God to work,” he says.

The church is looking forward to three things now that they’ve joined FEC, according to Mike. They are:

- (1) participating in youth quizzing and activities at Miracle Camp,
- (2) church planting, both in sharing what they’ve learned as a church plant and in examining where they might plant churches in the surrounding communities, and
- (3) expanding their missions involvement by taking part in FEC’s international opportunities.

Incidentally, Mike’s wife Cindy is the niece of long-time FEC leaders Earl Cecil and Don Roth. The church’s associate pastor is Aaron Meeks, who’s married to Leah.

Lakeview Bible Church

Nampa, Idaho

Lakeview Bible Church, formerly known as Nampa Mennonite Church, has a spiritual heritage that goes back more than 100 years. When Mennonite settlers came to the Treasure Valley of southern Idaho and founded the church, they emphasized strong Biblical teaching, missions, regular summer Bible schools, and outreach to outlying communities. These activities dominated the church’s life throughout its history.

As the congregation grew and matured, it attracted a number of people who did not come from a Mennonite background. These participants came as the result of friendship evangelism, Bible study classes, and a willingness to learn and involve themselves in the life of the church.

Eventually, some church members began to question the tie with the Pacific Northwest Mennonite Conference, with which they were affiliated, based on apparent changes in theology, especially regarding homosexuality. So several years ago the church chose to leave the conference and change its name to Lakeview Bible Church.

Despite its difficulties with this conference, church leaders decided they needed to be held accountable to a larger group—one they could fully align themselves with in purpose, beliefs, and statement of faith—and began to discuss joining FEC. In July of this year, the church called Mike Rice, associate pastor at Lawton EMC at the time, to become lead pastor. And in August the church joined FEC at Convention. “We’re excited to be partnering with FEC,” Mike says.

Before this last summer, the church had been

We’re excited to be partnering with FEC.

*Mike Rice
Pastor,
Lakeview Bible Church*

meeting in a school for over 10 years, but they moved to a storefront in downtown Nampa when the school building was sold. “It’s been a good transition,” Mike says. “The temporary location has been a blessing. We’ve seen 40 to 50 visitors in the last four months, and we’re in the high 80s for attendance in worship services lately. God has been good.”

If all goes according to plan, Lakeview will be in a new building next spring. With a generous donation and the work of a local developer who's a Christian, the church received four acres on a corner property in a new subdivision. The church purchased an additional acre for a soccer field to be used in youth outreach. "We're on the Nampa outskirts, where there's potential for a lot of growth," Mike says. "God has richly blessed our church and clearly moved with everything that's happened."

The church is ready to plug in to Vision 2020, FEC's long-term church-planting and outreach strategy, and is working to identify its Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria. Mike says, "We're busy getting organized for the future, setting goals and initiatives for the next few months," Mike says. "We're planning outreaches into the community, and our focus is going to be the neighborhoods of Midland and Greenhurst."

"We would love to see more FEC churches out in the Northwest—maybe even a church camp," he continues. "We're praying through how we can best meet the needs of the community and reach the lost. And I hope that FEC will pray with us."

Calvary Mennonite Church Washington, Illinois

The first meeting of believers who would eventually form Calvary Mennonite Church took place in May of 1866 under some shade trees. The meetings continued, and over the next few years the church grew to the point where a pastor was called from within the congregation and a building was constructed. Since then, the church has had its ups and downs, but it has generally tried to be faithful to the Word of God in its teachings and ministries.

Average attendance at Calvary is currently around 120, and Sunday school draws about 80. In recent years the church has emphasized youth ministry, with mission trips an important focus. Calvary has a strong Women In Mission program, with women of the church meeting regularly to help with aid and relief work through larger Mennonite organizations. These efforts might include quilting, knotting comforters, rolling bandages, making photo albums, sewing, and baking pies, with proceeds going to support various Mennonite projects, mission workers, and local mission agencies.

Over the years Calvary has sent missionaries to Africa, China, and college campuses. Currently, a young family from the church is serving in Senegal, and a young man is working with inner city youth in Canada. The church puts on an annual pancake and sausage breakfast at the Mennonite Relief Sale, serving

about 4,000 people and raising money for relief efforts. Calvary has also been involved in urban ministries in Peoria.

Like Lakeview Bible, Calvary Mennonite was part of a larger Mennonite conference that began to part ways with the church's doctrinal values. Church leaders spoke with conference leaders but weren't satisfied by the answers they got. So they started looking elsewhere for denominational affiliation.

Milo Nussbaum, pastor of Grace Church in nearby Morton for many years, had served as Calvary's interim pastor for about a year. "Naturally we started looking at FEC," says Del Dester, a Calvary trustee and council co-chair. "Their confession of faith and core beliefs are similar to ours. It was an easy decision."

This fall Calvary called Ken Sistrunk of Pine Hills Church in Fort Wayne, Indiana, to be its pastor. Ken's first Sunday with the church was Nov. 1. "We've been waiting a long time for that," Del says. "We're happy to be part of a group that holds strongly to the Word, and we're looking forward to getting involved. We were very warmly welcomed after the delegate vote at Convention. That was encouraging."

He admits that the church has had its struggles throughout the process of leaving the Mennonite conference and joining FEC, but now the church is looking forward and ready to make a fresh start.

Del's wife Lois says that she'll be focusing on how the Women In Missions program can integrate into FEC. "It's going to take some prayer and time as we learn how we can fit into the women's programs within FEC," she says. "Other churches have women's Bible studies, and we do too, but we're very active in our missions involvement, physically as well as prayerfully. We hope to tie that into FEC somehow. We have a lot of energy to bring forth."

And so do all of these churches, in many areas. They have gifts to offer even as they take part in the blessings and encouragements God has granted to FEC. ■

We're happy to be part of a group that holds strongly to the Word, and we're looking forward to getting involved.

*Del Dester
Trustee, Calvary
Mennonite Church*

Quizzing &



Above: Pine Hills junior high champion quiz team.



Above: Salem Church senior high champion quiz team.



Above and left: Pastors and Wives Dinner with speaker Matt Williams.

Convention



Mark your calendars!
Convention 2009 will be held July 30 to August 1 at Brookside Church in Fort Wayne, Indiana.



Above and right: Friday night worship led by Pine Hills included keynote speaker Matt Williams of Biola University

Above: Delegate Session with (from left): Mariano Ramirez, Harry Hyde, Dionicio Valdez, Earl Cecil



Below and right: Ladies Luncheon. Pictured below (from left): Lynnette Hyde, Angie Morton, Jane Diggle, Cheryl Cecil, Anna Mortenson, Allison Roseboom, and Mary Shadowen



Above: Men's Breakfast with Brent Preston.

Christian Service Foundation names new president

Al Rupp serves FEC in dual role as CSF President and FEC Stewardship Director

Alan L. Rupp has joined the FEC Resource Center in a new career as President of the Christian Service Foundation and Director of Stewardship for FEC. Al joined our team on October 1, 2008.

Al graduated from Taylor University in 1968 and Purdue University in 1971, attaining bachelor's and master's degrees in mathematics education. Al spent 31 years in the education field, ending his teaching career as the head of the computer science department at Northrop High School in Fort Wayne, Indiana. In 1999, he became a CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™ through the College of Financial Planning, and for nine years he served as Taylor University's Director of Planned Giving. He became the Executive Director of the William Taylor Foundation two years before joining FEC and the Christian Service Foundation.



Al Rupp

was formed in 1949 for the purpose of providing financing for building projects within FEC. With initial deposits of just \$6,000, the foundation has grown to over \$20 million. During this period most FEC churches and affiliate corporations have borrowed from CSF or have a current loan with the foundation.

The key to this growth has been twofold. First, the churches of FEC have been good stewards of the funds loaned to them. Most of the time loans are repaid in advance of the amortization period, and we have never had a church default on a loan. The second key is the many depositors who loan money to CSF. These deposits are the source of the funds loaned to our churches. It's a win-win for depositors. While their money is on deposit with the foundation, they are paid a reasonable rate of interest and their money is helping FEC churches at the same time.

Overseeing the work of CSF is a 12-member board of directors. Ron Habegger has served as a part-time president since 1982, and Sara Smead is our bookkeeper. While this arrangement has served us well in the past, increased regulations from the states in which we operate and managing \$20 million in assets (including \$16 million in loans to churches) requires more than a part-time effort. Therefore, the foundation's board of directors and the General Board have combined to establish the position of CSF President and Director of Stewardship for FEC. In this position Al will be responsible for the operations of CSF and help promote the foundation's work. Also, Al is available to work with churches and sister affiliates to encourage good stewardship practices.

Please give a warm welcome to Al and Jo Rupp as they begin this new responsibility. ■

FEC's Christian Service Foundation is a win-win for depositors.

Al is a member of Brookside Church and has served on the board of directors for the CSF, holding the office of treasurer. He currently serves on the FEC's General Board as Treasurer.

The Christian Service Foundation, an affiliate corporation of the Fellowship of Evangelical Churches,

FEConnections is now available for download at www.fecministries.org. If you desire to continue receiving the newsletter, fill out the form below. Those selecting a hard copy will be able to obtain one from their local church. We ENCOURAGE you to sign up for the e-mail option to help lower budgetary expenses.

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If you choose e-mail, please provide your address: _____

For your convenience, **complete this form online at www.fecministries.org.**

Or return this completed form to: FEC Resource Center, 1420 Kerrway Ct., Fort Wayne, IN 46805

Happenings

Missionary updates

Kent and Angie Morton, Albania

Kent and Angie Morton, along with Grace, Emily, and Ethan, recently completed five weeks of training in Colorado at Mission Training International Conference Center. They have reached 88 percent of their support. Please continue to pray for them as they desire to be on the field in the beginning of 2009.

Home church: Brookside Church,
Fort Wayne, Ind.

E-mail: kentmorton@hotmail.com

Jerry and Sandy Lugbill, Albania

We express our sympathy to Jerry and Sandy as they mourn the death of Jerry's mother, who went home to be with the Lord September 11, 2008. Please remember the family in your prayers as they adjust to life without wife, mother, grandmother, and friend. Jerry and Sandy returned to Albania October 3 to continue serving with Albania Bible Institute. We praise God for the seven new students at ABI, which now gives them a total of 10.

Home church: Archbold Evangelical Church,
Archbold, Ohio

E-mail: jerrylugbill@yahoo.com

MinistryStyles assessment tool for FEC churches

MinistryStyles is a personality assessment tool designed specifically for churches. In addition to the standard information provided by instruments such as DISC, Myers Briggs, and others, MinistryStyles provides insights on how individuals study, learn, and teach.

When used in team-building exercises, MinistryStyles helps people understand the roles they and others play in the larger group. This tool can help reduce not only conflict but also burnout. When people as-

sume responsibilities they would rather not be doing, and continue to serve in that capacity for a period of time, they are far more likely to suffer from burnout.

This program normally sells for \$389 for an annual contract to assess anyone in a congregation. However, through a special arrangement, it's available to FEC churches for \$250 per congregation. We recommend performing an assessment of the church staff first, then the leadership, and then branching out to the rest of the church.

To take advantage of this opportunity or for more information, call 260-615-9839, e-mail info@ministrytba.com, or go online at www.ministrytba.com. You can also contact Ron Habegger or Earl Cecil at 260-423-3649 to learn more about the applications of MinistryStyles.

Short-term missions

Thinking about a short-term mission trip next year? Check out these options.

Oakes work team, June 8-22, 2009

Join a team of youth through adults for focused maintenance on The Oakes Camp's facilities in Sheffield, England. Cost: \$1900

For additional info on short-term missions opportunities, contact Hal Lehman at 260-423-3649 or H.Lehman@fecministries.org.

Summer Impact 2009 (young adults)

- Join The Oakes Camp summer program staff for several weeks or the whole summer.
- Become a Summer in the USA intern. Join churches hosting Basque students from Spain during July 2009.
- Study abroad in Lebanon. Study in English, earn college credit, and be salt and light in the Middle East for a semester or a whole year. To participate in the fall '09 semester, please initiate contact by April 2009.





1420 Kerrway Court
Fort Wayne, IN 46805

President's Corner

In God We Trust



*We wait in hope for the Lord;
he is our help and our shield.
In him our hearts rejoice,
for we trust in his holy name.
(Psalm 33:20-21)*

The phrase “In God We Trust” first appeared in 1864 on a two-cent coin. The archives of the Treasury Department contain a letter written by a Rev. M. R. Watkinson from

Pennsylvania, in which he expresses a grave concern that the war would destroy the country and we would be known to history as a heathen nation. He suggested that our currency recognize an almighty God. The Secretary of the Treasury responded, “Dear Sir: No nation can be strong except in the strength of God, or safe except in His defense. The trust of our people in God should be declared on our national coins.” Soon after, an act of Congress placed “In God We Trust” on our money.

More than 140 years later, some people want “In God We Trust” removed from our currency. They’re not concerned that history will know us as a heathen nation, for heathenism has been replaced with humanism. We are a nation inspired by humanity and guided by reason; we aspire to lead fulfilling, ethical lives—without religious belief.

The Civil War storm clouds tested our nation’s resolve, and concerned Americans increasingly declared their belief in God. Today, the storm clouds over our

nation are much different: financial crisis, energy crisis, and political gridlock, to name a few. We trust the financial markets to protect our investments, our ingenuity to solve our energy needs, and our government to act on our behalf. When they do not, our trust is shaken and we look for safe harbors.

My three-year-old grandson recently reminded me of this. Gavin was having difficulty sleeping at night because there were “bears” in his closet. When he cried out in the night, his parents would come and assure him there were no bears, pray with him, and stay in the room until he returned to sleep. One evening his father was giving Gavin a bath and placed a small amount of bath lotion in the tub. He told Gavin that this was a special repellent that would keep all the bears away. That night Gavin slept through the night without waking up. In the morning he proclaimed, “Daddy, the oil worked. We don’t need God anymore!”

Even while I chuckle, I’m reminded that we’re not that much different. We place our trust in the physical, that which is seen, that which we have accomplished, and we do not need God. We unintentionally move towards humanism.

Across turbulent times and peaceful times, prosperous times and times of drought, Psalm 33 remains. Let us wait upon the Lord and rejoice; let us proclaim our trust in his holy name. Let us become a people whose proclamation of our trust in God is not only seen on our currency, but in our lives.