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Church Planter

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Ouachita Presbyterian CHURCH

A church plant in Monroe/West Monroe, Louisiana

On behalf of our Core Group, I want to introduce to you the newest named mission church in the Presbytery of the Mississippi Valley – Ouachita Presbyterian Church! (pronounced “Wash-itaw”) Ouachita is the name of our Parish of 150,000 and the name of the river running between Monroe and West Monroe. The Ouachita River is a visual reminder of both beautiful talent and sin-splintered divisions. And yet we believe that there is a greater “river whose streams make glad the city of God” (Psa 46:4), rivers of living waters flowing from the Gospel of Jesus Christ (John 7:37-38). Our name and our logo are a working reminder of what it means for us to embody a bridge of connection – of people to God, of people(s) to one another, and of people to our callings in the Twin Cities.

Progress Report

In our work of “scratch” planting (no prior group), we have clearly moved from mere networking, discipleship, and evangelism at large and into a phase of Core Group Development and growth. As of mid-April, we are around 28 adults and ten children.

Core Group Development

After having to postpone our gatherings in January due to high Covid rates, we began meeting explicitly as a Core Group for the first time in February in our home on Lord’s Day evenings for dinner, fellowship, praying, singing, and a bible study in the book of Acts. Following are some highlights of development:

- Developing the foundations of what it means to be a Gospel Community on Mission.
- Putting the right people into roles to facilitate and lead in key ministry functions (prayer ministry, worship music, children’s ministry, facilities, outreach, and other areas).
- **New meeting space in downtown Monroe, close to the river: the Hub Music Hall.** This has opened a new door for others to raise their interest in what we are doing and an open door for new networks of people who work at this venue.



Outreach? Crawfish, of course!

On April 1st Ouachita Pres hosted a neighborhood Easter egg hunt / crawfish boil / live music event in the Garden District area of Monroe. 250 lbs of crawfish plus fixings were boiled, and almost 80 folks connected. This was our first true public introduction of our newly forming community. We have had several new faces in our gatherings due to this and several new relationships with unbelievers and evangelism opportunities. This is now a template for future events in other neighborhoods and areas represented by our Core Group.



Praising the Lord for Gospel Fruit

One of the most encouraging answers to prayer is that almost half of our Core Group has been relatively unchurched, de-churched, or “under-churched” (coming from non-evangelical or more progressive church backgrounds). I believe we have witnessed 2 conversions (maybe 4?) in our gathering ministry. It is exhilarating to see and hear new-found clarity & articulation of the Gospel and of one’s union with Jesus! And yet, there is much spiritual warfare as we struggle with bringing all our thinking, feeling, and living under the healing reign of Christ.

There is deeper interest on the part of several in the things of God, of wanting to know more deeply who He is as He has revealed Himself in the Scriptures – particularly as we read the Word with others in the Reformed communion of the saints.

Looking Towards Summer

- Summer bible study series and continued efforts to invite and bring others
- Informational meetings
- Gradual shift into “preview” worship services, as we gear towards...
- Target window to publicly “launch” in public worship & ministry in September of this year.

Call to Prayer

- Pray that God continues to gather more people of our core group into a stronger “core” of ministry ownership and that I have more wisdom as a servant and “mid-wife” for this big picture.
- Prayer that God would gather & grow us into a viable size of more than 50 people in time for September by his grace and power. Pray for at least 100 more interested contacts in the community in time for September.
- Pray that key ministry & launch systems be in place and functioning.
- Pray specifically that this growth would display evident outreach, service, and evangelism as central to our life together.
- Pray for the Holy Spirit to grant new birth through our lives and labors.
- Pray for the second round of 3-year commitments to our support team of prayer & financial partners..

