

# JUNE 2023 NEWSLETTER



Growing churches today to bring generations alive in Christ tomorrow



## CEM FALL CELEBRATION

### CEM Fall Celebration

- **Tuesday, September 12, 2023, 5:30 pm**
- **Location: Northfield Church of Christ, 2933 N 15th St, Fort Dodge, Iowa**

Every 2nd Tuesday in September, we have a party to honor people like you who invest in CEM in some way, whether financially, through prayer, volunteering, or just helping us get the word out about the organization. You're invited to the celebration, where we will dine together, visit one another, and hear about CEM's upcoming plans for the following year.

We'll bring the food, and you bring yourself (plus your family, staff, or friends). See you this fall!



## CEM CATALYST CONFERENCE

- **Saturday, November 4, 2023, 9:00 – 3:00 pm**
- **BONUS: Friday, November 3, 2023 - Pizza and Movie Night, 6:00 pm**
- **Location: Antioch Christian Church - Stoney Point Campus, 300 Stoney Point Rd SW, Cedar Rapids, Iowa**

community and the LGBTQ community through awareness, education, and support.

They assist Christians in hundreds of churches on every continent, teaching and presenting workshops to help Christians effectively love and counsel those who are same-gender attracted or transgender, along with parents, spouses, and siblings dealing with this challenge in their family relationships. In addition, they help Christians reach out to gay neighbors, friends, and co-workers. Guy Hammond shares his story of struggling with same-gender attraction, becoming a Christian, and how Christ has blessed his life. The movie we will watch on Friday night is ***Finding Guy***, a fascinating documentary about his life.

This is a crucial topic for Christians throughout our region, so please mark your calendars for this event!



We're excited to have guest presenter Guy Hammond, who directs the *Strength in Weakness* ministry organization (visit [strengthinweakness.org](http://strengthinweakness.org)). *Strength in Weakness* is a Christian organization that helps bridge the gap between the Christian

# MEET CEM'S CHURCH PLANTING RESIDENTS

Have you heard? CEM launched a church planter residency program! Residents receive a partial salary as they complete a yearlong course on discipleship (the Bonhoeffer Project) and are placed with a CEM-selected church where they engage in hands-on ministry training. CEM's residency program also supports our churches as each one serves as additional staff for the local body for one year. Here's an introduction to our current residents.



John Frerichs and his wife, Ashley, and their two boys, Carter and Hudson, are excited to be a part of the body of believers at Pathway Church in Johnston, Iowa, where John serves as Worship Pastor. He says, "I have recently felt God guiding me towards full-time ministry. I have been volunteering with Pathway for two years, and CEM's residency program allowed me to take a step towards that goal." A graduate of Crossroads College, John has served for 13 years in various roles and faith communities. Even so, John said, "I never could answer the question of how to create a disciple. As a result, I was drawn to The Bonhoeffer Project to learn and be better equipped for future ministry and disciple-making."

Rockwell City Church of Christ hosts resident Nathan Lichter, his wife Stephanie, and children Kjerstin, Adelaide, Isabelle, and Emmett. Nathan attended Northwestern College and has served for 15 years in various roles, including as an Elder at Northwest Christian Church in Alta. When asked about his future dreams, Nathan replied, "The process of dedicating my life to ministry has been long. It's scary, but I'm increasingly excited about what God has for us! I dream of being part of a church where people will hear of it and say, 'Wow! The Kingdom is happening there!'" As a bi-vocational pastor, Nathan feels he has a close-up perspective of various peoples' understanding of Jesus. "I don't have to hope they show up at church and ask me; I'm right there with them every day."



Todd Dempster will serve as the Discipleship Pastor in the state's Northwest corner at Elevate Community Church in Sioux City. Todd graduated from Central Christian College and has volunteered in youth, worship, and men's ministries for the last 25 years. His biggest joy in ministry so far? "[When] someone has learned a truth about themselves or God that is brand new to them. It's exciting to see, months later, how that truth has impacted their lives as they make changes to follow Christ more closely." Todd joined the residency program saying, "God gave me a new love for the unchurched and those with new faith. Serving in a church specifically trying to reach those people is an answer to God's calling, and CEM can help me be better equipped to do so." Todd and his wife, Andrea, have five children: Han, Piper, Varian, Nora, and Emery.

CEM is excited to support John, Nathan, Todd, and their families as they enter vocational ministry. Please join us in praying for our residents and their host churches this year. To send our residents a note of encouragement and support, please contact Elizabeth Miller at [elizabeth@cemchurchplanting.org](mailto:elizabeth@cemchurchplanting.org). Want more information about becoming a resident or think your church is a good candidate for residency? Reach out to Chad Halbach at [chad@cemchurchplanting.org](mailto:chad@cemchurchplanting.org).



# WHEN DEATH PRODUCES FRUIT



As Christians, we just celebrated the resurrection of Christ, but my mind is stuck on a passage shortly before Jesus was arrested. In the Gospel of John, we read, “Jesus replied, ‘The hour has come for the Son of Man to be glorified. Very truly I tell you, unless a kernel of wheat falls to the ground and dies, it remains only a single seed. But if it dies, it produces many seeds.’” (John 12:23-24 NIV).

As we look back, it is easy to see how the death of Christ multiplied His ministry and mission, but at the time, Christ’s disciples struggled to understand! History has shown us that this Kingdom principle of death that produces fruit is valid for organizations, churches, and people.



I recently had a difficult conversation with an established church that was no longer viable. As we met, I cast a vision for how the church closing could be like a seed dying to produce many seeds if they choose to invest in church planting. Ultimately,

the leadership of this body of believers decided to embrace the message found in John 12 and generously donated their facility so the funds from this sale could support CEM in planting a new church. As I am writing this, the closing date is quickly approaching.

This faithful body of believers has been doing God’s work since the 1880s, and now, in death, they have become seeds just as Christ was. Logically, this all makes perfect sense. However, as I observe the apparent anguish in the faces of these last elders ever to lead their church, my heart breaks, and I mourn this death with them.



This must be how the disciples felt as Jesus was arrested, beaten, and crucified. Yet, even in my mourning, I turn once again to Jesus’ words, “Now my heart is troubled, and what shall I say? ‘Father save me from this hour?’ No, it was for this very reason I came to this hour. Father, glorify your name!” (John 12:27-28a NIV).

As tears stream down my face, I praise God for the extraordinary courage and faith the leadership of Washington Chapel has displayed throughout this process. I pray every disciple of Jesus would come to understand Christ’s call and his promise that death will produce fruit, and I pray that we may live the most challenging days of our lives with great courage, full of faith, and quick to say, “Father, glorify your name!”

Sincerely,  
  
Chad Halbach  
CEM Executive Director

Christian Evangelistic Mission is a 501(c)3 entirely supported by donors. Since 1957, we have been serving in the Iowa region, planting more than 30 churches since that date. Please consider donating to this mission of **Growing churches today to bring generations alive in Christ tomorrow.**

You can donate online at [cemchurchplanting.org/donate](http://cemchurchplanting.org/donate) or by sending a check in the enclosed giving envelope.



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## NEW WEBSITE AND EMAIL ADDRESSES FOR CEM

Search...

We are rolling out a new website domain reflecting our nonprofit organization status. Instead of *cemchurches.com*, our website address is [cemchurchplanting.org](http://cemchurchplanting.org). Our old address will redirect you to the right place, but you'll see the updated web address in our publications.

We also have new email addresses for CEM Staff that match our new domain. If you receive an email from us, kindly update our "Contact" information in your email account. What if you forget? No worries! Our old email addresses work just fine for now, and your email message will still reach us. Thanks for making that change!

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