

SEPT 2023 NEWSLETTER



Growing churches today to bring generations alive in Christ tomorrow

CEM CONNECT

SEP
celebrate
12

YOU ARE INVITED BY

CHRISTIAN EVANGELISTIC MISSION

SEPTEMBER

12

2023

5:30 - 7:00 PM

NORTHFIELD CHURCH OF CHRIST
2933 N 15TH ST, FORT DODGE, IA

RSVP | CEMCHURCHPLANTING.ORG

CEM CONNECT BANQUET

CEM Connect is a time to share a meal together, fellowship, and celebrate God's goodness! We look forward to sharing CEM news and our plans for next year. We also kick off our Harvest Offering Fund, which directly supports church planting projects in 2024. \$85,000 is our goal this year!

Connect is FREE to attend, but please RSVP so we know how many to serve for dinner.

RSVP BY: Friday, September 11, 2023

REGISTER ONLINE: Scan the QR Code or go to cemchurchplanting.org/events

BY PHONE OR EMAIL: (319) 331-6884 or suzi@cemchurchplanting.org



If you cannot attend but want to support CEM's mission of "growing churches today, to bring generations alive in Christ tomorrow," donations to the Harvest Offering can be made online at cemchurchplanting.org/donate – please choose the "Harvest Offering" option.



HARVEST OFFERING 2023

CEM emphasizes a fundraising push during the harvest months of October and November, partly in reflection of Iowa's primary industry of providing food for the world. It's also a time to

store up resources for the following year. Harvest time stands as a reminder of our dependence on God for three reasons:

- God provides the sustenance we need for our future (Deut 11:14).
- We are to "ask the Lord of the harvest" to send out people to his fields (Luke 10:2).
- It takes a team of co-workers in God's service to do the work of the Lord (1 Cor 3:8,9).

Special donations gathered from the Harvest Offering are invested in future church planters. We prepare them to make disciples through training, developing, funding, and sending them out. This happens through the generosity of CEM-partnered churches and individuals who donate Harvest Offering financial gifts.

Last year, a record amount of \$75,650 was donated!

We were able to help fund:

- Two church plants
- Three church planter residents' part-time salary
- Eight Bonhoeffer Project Scholarships

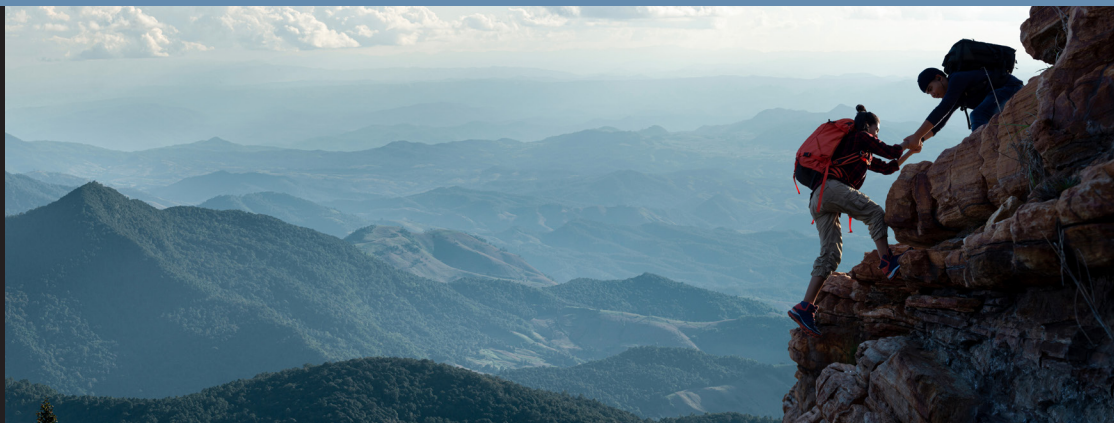
\$85,000 – Our 2023 Goal

Raising this amount for a small Christian organization takes solid faith in God. However, CEM believes He goes before us to draw those who care about church ministry to our doorstep. Even more, He compels the hearts of these same people to offer their resources to the collaborative effort of planting new churches and investing in church health. We humbly invite you to invest in future churches with today's resources.

Please give at cemchurchplanting.org/donate and choose the **Harvest Offering** menu option.

THEREFORE,
GO AND MAKE
DISCIPLES OF
ALL NATIONS.

MATTHEW 28:19



HAVE YOU HEARD ABOUT THE BONHOEFFER PROJECT?

This year, 13 men and women from CEM churches around Iowa are studying discipleship together through The Bonhoeffer Project, an international organization that exists to equip leaders for discipleship. Named for martyr Dietrich Bonhoeffer, the project aims to teach leaders to be disciple-makers.

Each month, Bonhoeffer participants read several chapters of selected books such as Learning to Live and Love Like Jesus (Brandon Cook 2018), study scripture, and discuss what they're learning in cohorts of five to ten people. The discussion focuses specifically on how each participant is discipling the men and women in their lives and how they can be more intentional as they learn to be disciples who make disciples. The groups meet once a month for ten months, and each participant spends a significant amount of time between classes working to create and implement their discipleship plan.

The project begins with an intensive discussion about The Gospel. By first ensuring that every leader can clearly articulate the good news of Christ and that the gospel they share is not a skewed or partial representation of scripture, Bonhoeffer

participants craft a plan for discipleship that teaches truth. The cohorts then move into a study of the call of discipleship. Scripture teaches that we are all called to make disciples, but the reality is that in churches around the country, many believers think discipleship is only for 'serious Christians.' The Project ensures that participants understand that everyone who professes faith has been called to discipleship.

As the Bonhoeffer Project continues, participants study salvation, the Holy Spirit and the ongoing work of sanctification, the process of making disciples, and how God designs the Church to disciple its members. The Project concludes with teachings on the dangerous distractions leaders face and a discussion of what is at stake, leaving leaders with an understanding of why this is all so incredibly important.

If you want to learn how to disciple others like Jesus, new cohorts will launch in 2024. For more information about how your church can be involved or for questions about the Project, contact CEM's Executive Director, Chad Halbach, at chad@cemchurchplanting.org. Watch CEM's newsletters, emails, and socials for more information about how you can apply to join us. If you want to sponsor a Bonhoeffer Project participant, you can do so online at cemchurchplanting.org/donate.

Andrea Dempster, CEM Communications Director

IOWA
CHURCH
LEADERS



P O D C A S T

CEM Board President, Tom Steele, is the host of the Iowa Church Leaders Podcast, where he provides insightful interviews with church leaders across the USA. In the latest podcast, Tom visits Dan Leitz, President and CEO of The Bonhoeffer Project, to discuss how they turn leaders into disciple-makers. Go to cemchurchplanting.org/podcast to listen.

the
BONHOEFFER project

Please pray for our 13 Bonhoeffer Project participants, who are finishing their 10-month training in a few months: John Frerichs, Nate Lichter, Todd Dempster, Bud Wood, Dan Hudson, Brent Whitney, Dillion Brandt, Luke Cargin, Wes Hinkle, David Nassiff, Tom Steele, and CEM Staff, Suzi Steele and Andrea Dempster.



HEAVY RAIN COMING

Drought is defined as “1) a period of dry weather, especially a long one that is injurious to crops; 2) an extended shortage; scarcity” (Webster’s Dictionary). This word often describes our region’s weather pattern. Looking closely at our lakes and rivers, you can see the apparent effects. We are living in a dry time.

Even so, the severity of our drought does not compare to the lack that the prophet Elijah foretold, “As the LORD, the God of Israel, lives, whom I serve, there will be neither dew nor rain in the next few years except at my word” (1 Kings 17:1 NIV). As a result of the drought pronounced by the prophet, a severe famine set in, one that impacted the lives of everyone in the entire nation of Israel. During this challenging season of scarcity, God used Elijah in mighty ways to call the people back to Himself.

Many things are worthy of our focus in 1 Kings, but I have been particularly drawn to a declaration that Elijah made to King Ahab: “Go, eat and drink, for there is **the sound of a heavy rain**” (1 Kings 18:41 NIV). These words have captivated my attention—as though God is speaking to us now, in our time and region. We are living in a drought. Serious moral decay has seen our society falling away from the things of God, which seems to rival the debauchery we read of during Elijah’s time.

Amid these troubling times, “**I hear the sound of a heavy rain!**” As I look off into the distance, I see a small cloud starting to form. God is raising young men and women in our time to bring generations alive in Christ. CEM is actively recruiting 40 disciple-makers to train, then send them out to 20 communities throughout our region. The fields will be white for harvest over the next ten years.

“Elijah climbed to the top of Mount Carmel, bent down to the ground, and **put his face between his knees**” (1 Kings 18:42b NIV). Will you join CEM in doing the same thing for the next 12 months? We are praying for God to end the scarcity of leaders within His church. Every Saturday at 7 am and 7 pm, we will pray for leaders that will grow churches today and bring generations alive in Christ tomorrow. Will you join us in petitioning God for men and women who faithfully answer His call (Matthew 9:38)?

Can you hear the sound of heavy rain coming to our region?

Sincerely,

Chad Halbach
CEM Executive Director



PO Box 1445
Ankeny, IA 50021

Growing churches today to bring generations alive in Christ tomorrow



FOR CATALYST 2023

Our Catalyst speaker, Guy Hammond, gives church leaders the tools to bridge the gap between Christians and the LGBTQ community, to love and counsel people the way Jesus modeled with grace and truth.



Catalyst 2023 Registration



Date: November 3-4, 2023



Time: Friday, Nov 3 (Session 1) 6:00 pm – 8:30 pm

Saturday, Nov 4 (Sessions 2-5) 8:30 am - 3 pm



Location: Antioch Christian Church Stoney Point Campus
300 Stoney Point Rd SW, Cedar Rapids, Iowa



Cost: \$55 per person

*Early Registration Discount: \$5 off per ticket until September 15, 2023. Enter promo code: **EARLYBIRD5**