

APRIL 2021 NEWSLETTER



CEM exists to strengthen current churches and to facilitate new church planting.



DIRECTION CHURCH Opens

It finally arrived! Direction Church in West Des Moines, Iowa opened its doors to several preview services in February and March to hone their live worship service, kids ministry, and simultaneous live streaming. After the long wait during the COVID-19 pause, Direction Church officially opened its doors on Sunday, March 28, 2021 as a prelude to Easter Sunday services the following week. CEM congratulates Jared and Rachel Nassiff, Patrick and Emily Willis, and all of the Direction Church volunteers who worked so hard to make this happen!

Direction Church is the first venue and home base for their vision to plant 20 churches in and around the Des Moines metro. Jared Nassiff, from the start, sees Direction Church

as a “church-planting church” whose priority is to grow wide instead of large. Already, Direction Church has hired a worship director, a media content creator, and launched their children’s ministry. Jared also gladly reports that they have an office space and a recording studio. Community relationships are a priority at Direction Church. “Not only do we get to invite people to a popular community bar for worship,” Jared states, “but we also encourage them to stay for brunch, relax, and take in a game on the big screen after the service.”

We hope you can drop in and visit Direction Church! Services are Sundays at 10 am, inside “The Hall” on 111 South 11th St. in West Des Moines or live-streamed at directionchurch.com.



RENEWED VISION



During 2020, numerous churches had three choices moving forward: 1) shut down temporarily and hope they can survive to open again; 2) implement radical changes to serve their people virtually; or 3) close the church...permanently.

Many churches were able to choose #2 because they had the resources to do so. Some found themselves in a position that they had to rethink everything, learn new skills, and find a cost-effective way

to continue “church” in lockdowns. Prior to 2020, several churches were already looking for needed change to deal with shifting population, post-Christian thinking, and cultural habits that no longer included church attendance, let alone having a vibrant relationship with Christ.

In 2019, CEM leaders grappled with the knowledge that starting new churches is challenging if existing churches are closing faster than a new church is

planted. The time had come for CEM to double-down their efforts of giving back to the very churches that built CEM’s legacy. We decided to focus equally on the dual mission of facilitating new church plants and being an active part of church health for existing churches. In 2020, CEM began developing the infrastructure needed to use our resources for the greatest benefit to new and mature churches alike.

Here is our three-fold focus:

CHURCH PLANTING



CEM facilitates new church planting by partnering with existing churches around our region. From training to project management, CEM helps planters prepare for a successful launch for the new church.

CHURCH HEALTH



CEM invests in church health by offering an in-person process that helps church leaders develop and implement a renewed church vision and the strategic goals to meet that vision. CEM-hosted conferences, podcasts, and resources are also purposed for church health.

LEADER DEVELOPMENT



CEM connects ministry leaders with development opportunities, especially geared for those in small-to-mid-size churches. Whether it is mentoring, coaching, or networking in small groups, CEM is the touchpoint to connect leaders with the resources they need.

Harvest Offering Update

Thank you to everyone for a successful Harvest Offering in 2020. Our vision was to raise enough support for a year of full salary for a church planter in Iowa. CEM donors rose to the challenge and raised \$52,532.29 (wow!) for the next phase of church planting in the Des Moines metro. We are partnering with Direction Church to offer church planters a residency program for future church campuses. With Harvest Offering funds, CEM was able to pay forward Jared Nassiff’s 2021 salary to Direction Church as they, in turn, hire the next church planter. Even now, their leadership team is interviewing and assessing a specific planting candidate to start in the next few months. Harvest Offering 2020 had a God-sized goal and CEM supporters delivered! Thank you!



A message from Dave Fremstad, Executive Director



These last twelve months have seen sweeping changes across the landscape of churches and non-profits. In fact, I think I heard the word “pivot” used more in this past year than I have in the previous ten years combined! It is a very fitting word for the place we find ourselves in, as it signifies adaptability while still maintaining momentum. Organizationally, CEM has had to adapt right along with the changing environment of churches.

For me, this involves a personal ministry pivot of my own. I will be scaling back to a part-time role as Executive Director of CEM as I transition to the Lead Pastor role at Journey Christian Church (Wayne, NE), a sister church within a short drive to the Iowa/Nebraska border. I will continue to work with CEM to encourage, coach, and equip our churches for greater ministry impact. I confidently believe that the ministry will continue to progress, even as we step into this new paradigm of a part-time Director.

Over the next few years, we will work closely with Jared Nassiff at Direction Church to expand new church plants in the Des Moines metro. Suzi Steele

will become our point person for coordinating the organization’s day-to-day operations, along with donor engagement. The Board of Directors are actively stepping into collaborative roles to offer resources to more church leaders at a given time. We are all excited about this next step of ministry as we harness the collective experience and passion for the local church!

CEM will continue to plant new churches and strengthen the ones already ministering in our communities. Our mission has not changed, nor has our commitment to our churches diminished. We believe God will utilize CEM in new and collaborative ways within this growing network of faithful churches.

If you are interested in learning more about the coaching services offered by CEM, please reach out and contact me at dave@cemchurches.com or by calling (712) 309-1118.

In Christ,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dave". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial 'D'.

Dave Fremstad

Building a Sustainable Mission

CEM believes that fiscal responsibility and sustainability are a part of God’s plan for carrying out His mission. How do we do this? By living within our means and wisely investing donor-entrusted dollars toward the dual mission of church growth and church health.

Monthly givers are the fuel for consistent, ongoing ministry toward new and existing churches.

If you are interested in joining our team of monthly supporters, go to cemchurches.com/donate to set up a recurring, online gift. Rather give by check? Contact Suzi Steele at suzi@cemchurches.com or call (319) 331-6884 and she’ll send you monthly giving envelopes to use at your convenience.

Any mail/donation can be sent to:

Christian Evangelistic Mission
PO Box 1445
Ankeny, IA 50021





4643 American Legion Road
Iowa City, IA 52240

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We are excited to announce that Dale Sellers will be our guest presenter for Catalyst. Dale is the Executive Director at 95Network (see 95Network.org) and the author of *Stalled: Hope and Help for Pastors Who Thought They'd Be There By Now*. Dale has served in ministry for 40 years and is dedicated to helping

Save the date for our
Catalyst Conference on

Saturday, October 16, 2021

small- and mid-size churches get healthy. Dale has served in nearly every role of church leadership and has a wide variety of coaching and consulting experience. CEM's vision for Catalyst is to deepen church health by providing relevant, practical resources for all church leaders. Plan to join us at Catalyst this fall!