

METROGRACE

Developing Urban Churches

June 2019

MetroGrace is developing gospel-centered, community-based churches with Crossroads Community Church of Philadelphia in the neighborhoods of Holmesburg, Wissinoming and Bridesburg.



Last month we gathered at Crossroads Wissinoming for the National Day of Prayer. I was initially disappointed because attendance was low. Then I saw a woman that Pastor Pete and Danielle have been working with for years. Her children, Emma and Sean, (not their real names) participated in a Monday night ministry at the church. The relationship began well. Ann (not her real name) loved that her children were involved in a positive activity where they received care. Later, she was quite upset with our church and threatened a lawsuit that never happened.

Over the years, her life spiraled out of control. Her daughter left home as soon as possible. Her son was raised by relatives. And she wandered down the path of addiction. During those years, she lost her house and was living on the street. She lost half her body weight and looked like a skeleton. Pete and Danielle continued to love her. At times, she slept on their sofa. They helped her find shelter and placement in multiple rehabilitation programs. Each time addiction would take over. When I saw her that evening, she had gained some weight. She was smiling and speaking with another woman in the church. I hugged her and remarked about how healthy she looked. That night we sang songs of praise. We prayed for our church, our city, our country and our world. I was touched when Ann prayed. It went something like this:

"Lord, please help people to see those caught in prostitution and drug dealing as individuals – not just for the bad things that they do. I know them like you do. They're just people who got lost along the way."

The sincerity and depth of that prayer has been running through my mind ever since. Prostitution has caused some problems for our ministry. Pervasive addiction to drugs has ruined families in our neighborhoods and church. It's easy to begin defining people by the bad things they do. We fail to see them as real people. They are lost - but they are loved by God who knows them by name. He sent His Son to rescue them from sin in all its forms.

I'm so glad the Lord doesn't define me by the bad things that I do. I'm thankful that He knows me and invites me to know Him. Lord, please help us see people the way that you do!

Pastor Pete's Ordination!

Last month the Northern Atlantic Fellowship Examining Board met at Crossroads Bridesburg to examine Pete Forshtay for ordination. Pete passed with flying colors! (Charlie Hirschy from Grace Church in Willow Valley did a great job, too!)



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Dr. Jim Brown,
Executive Director**



The board wrote:

“This affirms that Pete Forshtay has successfully met the requirements for being ordained as a Charis Fellowship pastor. This is being given in recognition of a call to Christian ministry, a life of personal and professional integrity, a demonstration of skills as they relate to pastoral care and a demonstration of a working knowledge of the Bible and a commitment to the word of God.”

It was a great time of fellowship and encouragement. Pastors throughout our region had the opportunity to hear Pete's heart. And, they were able to see our newest neighborhood. Please pray that many young leaders would gain a vision for urban ministry and make a commitment to serving the Lord in the city. We'll be planning an ordination service later this summer.



This month, we're planning a Vacation Bible School outreach during the week of June 24th. Please pray for Mike and Margarete Connor as they lead. Our congregations plan to work together in reaching out to children and their families. Pray for teachers, for leaders in crafts, games and snacks, and for others who serve. Pray that many neighbors would participate. Pray that some would trust Christ for salvation. Ask the Lord to add new families to the church through this ministry.

Toward the end of this summer, MetroGrace plans to partner with Grace College and CE National's Urban Hope Training Center to sponsor the Studies in Urban Ministries program. I'm looking forward to teaching gap-year students and college students who participate in this urban immersion program. Class time will be combined with hands-on training in Philadelphia. Students will travel to cities throughout the east coast, gaining exposure to a variety of urban ministries. Do you know someone who would benefit? Find out more about this exciting opportunity by contacting SUM, Studies in Urban Ministries, online at sumstudies.org.



Thanks for all you do to support our work! Please ask the Lord to provide for our urban ministry. Through the first four months of this year, our contributions have been about thirty percent lower than last year. We have cut expenses; but that trajectory is unsustainable. Please ask the Lord to move in the hearts of people, churches and others to advance the gospel in the city.

I would like to add or change my address, phone number or email address: