

Church Plant FAQs

What type of church will the plant be?

Will the plant be PCA? Yes, but keep in mind that while the PCA's doctrinal beliefs stay the same, churches within our denomination often look different from one another. When asking the question "What type of church will this be," there are really 3 questions to consider: 1) What does scripture say that a church should look like?, 2) Who are we as a church body (our past experiences, giftings, and calling)?, and 3) Who are we trying to reach (how do we best communicate the gospel to a target demographic)?. Combining these 3 factors in the formation of a church is called contextualization.

What will the music/worship style be like? We don't know yet! But we do know that we will need to contextualize our music to our target demographic. The Bible directs us to sing doctrinally true songs, and to sing them out loud together as a congregation. But aside from that, we are free to choose a style of worship based on who we are (what talent and backgrounds there are in our church) and who we are trying to reach. (Some examples include having a smaller repertoire of songs and hymns so that people have a chance to learn them, and defining the words in hymns or songs that new or not-yet-Christians may not know before we sing them, etc.)

Where will you meet? We don't know yet! Generally speaking, since we are looking to reach people in the Woodman/Powers corridor of the Springs, the meeting location will be in that area as well. But we will need to consider our context as we make this decision. We'll need to think through things like which location creates the fewest barriers for unchurched and not-yet-believers to attend, and what connotations they have regarding possible gathering spaces. We will likely spend time asking unreached and unchurched people in the area these questions face-to-face as we begin this process.

When will you build a building? We don't know. A church is not the building itself, rather it is the body of believers, united together in Christ and under the oversight of a body of elders. If having our own building is the best means to effective ministry and to reach the unreached in our neighborhood, then we'll begin working to that end at some point. But it will definitely be a few years down the road.

What programs will the church offer? We don't know yet. In asking this question, it's possible that you're interested in what you or your family can "get" out of the church plant. I would offer you the encouragement that church planting is about giving. We want to do whatever we can to reach new people for Christ in our area, providing what they need, not

what we want or what we desire. Churches can get in the habit of offering the best Christian programs to attract other Christians, but that can often lead to the neglect of so many outside the doors of the church. Kingdom growth starts small (think mustard seed) so as a small gathering, we won't have much to offer at first - except the gospel! But we will have a tight-knit community where everyone is working together and having fun, along with lots of opportunities for involvement in our community.

What are the common pitfalls that cause church plants to fail?

By not reaching anyone new for Christ. Simply reshuffling other Christians around on Sunday mornings accomplishes nothing for kingdom growth.

By planting out of comfort or frustration. Failed church plants are often the result of a congregation who is looking to get something out of a church (a closer location, music more toward their liking, etc.) more than they are looking for the chance to form a new church around reaching new people in new areas with the gospel.

By focusing too much on control and security. As we talk about contextualization, we should see that it is a positive thing for church plants to look different in order to reach different people. But too often people bring their own expectations of what church should be, rather than looking to contextualize it for a new target group. There can also be fears that planting a church will hurt the sending church. In some ways it will. Being on mission is always a call to die to self to gain the kingdom of God. We should already be living in a way that gives ourselves completely to help save those who are perishing. The church at Antioch sent out their best (Paul and Barnabas) on mission; I'm sure that wasn't an easy thing to do but those mission trips led to the founding of new churches all over Asia Minor.

What does the sending church get out of this? Planting a church often increases the missional focus of the sending church. It also helps to create evangelistic momentum in the area and can feed new converts back to existing churches. New church plants often generate new ideas and a better understanding of an area. Finally, planting a church forces a sending church to live by faith as there is no guaranteed formula for success when it comes to church planting.

When do you know you are ready to be a sending church that plants? You are never fully ready. It's like giving birth to your first kid...You can't truly be ready because there's so much unknown, but you can prepare. Like you would for an expectant mother, you can make sure the sending church is healthy. Healthy churches pray, have a burden for their community, develop leaders, demonstrate stability, and demonstrate living by faith. And

you can seek advice and wisdom from those who've done it before. In our case, that means joining church planting networks, building a network of mentors, and seeking out opportunities for training and support.

How do I find out if being part of this church plant is for me?

How many people from Forestgate will be coming along? Forestgate's elders do not have a set number of people in mind. The answer to this question has much more to do with who has heard Steve's vision for the plant and wants to be part of that work. It's more important to have a few committed individuals and families all going the same direction than it is about having enough people. It is also more important that the plant start off with a clear vision to reach a new area and give of themselves to bring new people in. As the core group forms, we are hoping there will be people from all different backgrounds, some from other PCA churches in town, some people who have no background in the PCA, and hopefully, even a few unchurched and not-yet-believers join in before the plant begins.

What if I live in the Woodman/Powers area where this church is being planted? There is no requirement to go on the plant if you live in this area. Everyone is free to worship wherever they want. The plant is primarily looking to reach people in a target area (Woodman/Powers) and a target demographic (military and veterans), so it helps to fit into one of these two categories if you are coming along!

I'm interested but I don't feel qualified to be part of a core group. We are all in a process of growing as followers of Christ; no one has arrived. Participating in this plant will likely be a great way for you to grow in faith. But if you still feel unqualified, let me ask you this, what sounds like the better approach? A team of believers who feel superior to those around them, who imply they have it all together, or a group of believers who can be honest about their struggles, disappointments, and weaknesses and through this vulnerability demonstrate to those around us our need for Christ and the gospel?

I'm too busy. Church planting is nothing more than a call to focus more deeply on what all Christians are called to do, that is to be committed to your own growth in grace and be committed to reaching the lost. If we aren't already doing those things now then we have a priority issue, not a time issue. Sometimes we allow ourselves to get so busy doing good things that we never find the time to do great things for the kingdom.

I'm too uncomfortable with the idea that unchurched people would come. All churches are called to reach the unreached, the lost sheep, the hurting, the wandering. No matter where you are, this is a calling for all Christians and is no different in a church plant.

What is the timeline for the church planting residency? In the first year, we will be gathering a Launch Leadership Team to do a deep dive into church planting and form a clearly defined vision we can all rally around. In the second year, we will begin working out that vision with a core group, teaching and training them to go out into the community and share the gospel in their networks. At the end of the two-year residency, it is just the start of our missional work. We will launch Sunday services, but we won't stop being a church body that exists to reach our community for Christ. Eventually, we want to be a self-supporting, self-governing, and self-reproducing church that plants even more churches.

Why such a long residency? Skyscrapers need deep foundations and good soil requires a season of tilling. Church planting is not just about offering a Sunday service, it's about building a body of believers, forming a missional culture, leaning into the gospel, and learning our biblical mandate, ourselves, and our area so that we can reach our context. We need time to do this before the busyness of putting of Sunday services comes.

What does the process for planting a church look like? It involves a lot of networking and evangelism in the target area. It will also require us to spend time developing the core competencies needed for church planting. Leadership for the Launch Team will begin to gather early on to learn about church planting and begin to put down a vision for the plant on paper. We will then expand into a Core Group that will get an abbreviated version of that church planting training and we will then launch into living out the vision in the target area to see if it works! Likely looking to hit certain goals before moving on to each stage of the process instead of following a timeline. (Ex. Seeing at least one conversion from our ministry in the area before we launch Sunday services.)

How can I be involved in the plant? There are lots of ways! You can be involved by praying for us, financially supporting the church, sharing the vision with others who might be interested in joining or supporting us, or joining the plant yourself. Have you heard Steve share the vision for the church and if so, are excited about it? Overall we are looking for people who want to be sent out to reach new people in a new area with the gospel. We want those who are committed to give of themselves to reach the lost. Are you already doing this with unchurched friends? If so, you may want to prayerfully consider if God is calling you to step out in faith by joining the plant.

For more info, you can go to:

Churchplantcos.squarespace.com