



# SeedStories

from the Christian Evangelistic Assn  
December 2021

## Different Strokes for Different Folks

While the Gospel message remains unchanged, our planting methods must constantly adjust to changing culture and new contexts. We've moved prayer into its rightful, first-priority to ensure that all our efforts, from beginning to end, are aligned with God's purpose and plan. Our assessment process has been tuned to more accurately determine if planting candidates have the necessary mix of spiritual gifts and practical experience to effectively build a new church from the ground up. We're investing more to coach and support planters in years 2 through 5 to promote long-term growth beyond the initial launch phase. And we're shifting our planting strategies to leverage the best practices of both attractional events and personal discipleship.

The result is a growing number of healthy, self-supporting churches that encourage believers and reach spiritual seekers. Because so much of what we've learned is reproducible, most of the churches we launch follow a somewhat typical approach:

- A "pre-launch" period where the planter builds a core team and plans for the first public service.
- A "grand opening" when public worship begins and relationships built with those who attend.
- The formation of small groups where deeper connections are made and discipleship begins.
- Building a culture of "giving" so the church becomes financially independent.
- Creating intentional "mission" opportunities to serve the community, demonstrating God's love in practical ways and creating pathways where the Holy Spirit can draw people toward Jesus.

However, we've learned that this typical approach cannot be a *universal* approach. In our diverse and unchurched culture here in the NW, planting new churches isn't an assembly-line process where we simply crank out church after church according to a set, pre-determined model. Yes, we're using proven strategies... but we're also experimenting with new approaches, *particularly in communities that are hard to reach*.

So in this issue of *Seedstories*, we're highlighting two very different church starts: **High Plains Church** and **EveryOne Church**. Each has adopted an approach that is designed for their respective communities. And these dramatically different approaches are working! Both High Plains and EveryOne are experiencing early success. Both are building community and creating environments where people find spiritual truth and experience the presence of God in meaningful ways.

These very different stories are a reminder that we need all kinds of churches, in all kinds of places, to reach all kinds of people and be successful in our efforts to build God's Kingdom.

Executive Director



# Planting with a Proven Strategy



**High Plains Christian Church, Twin Falls, Idaho**  
**Erik & Laura Neilson**  
**Launch date: January 2021**

The Neilson's moved to Twin Falls expecting to launch a new church in a more-or-less typical way, following the proven kind of strategies laid out on the cover page. They've largely done that, but they – like the rest of the world – had a huge wrench put in their plans by the global COVID-19 pandemic. Nevertheless, Erik adapted, pressed forward, and High Plains church started this past January.

High Plains is the first CEA plant to hold its very first services online and it was largely successful! The church began to form connections, laying the groundwork for a solid public launch once the pandemic restrictions were eased and things began to open up. Following the church's public launch, Erik pursued the logical next step: forming small groups so people could connect in richer, deeper, more meaningful ways.

Through worship and small groups, High Plains is building a community of believers who want to grow stronger in their faith, reach others in Twin Falls, and invest in the ministry of the church. Erik says, *we targeted three years as our self-support goal. We started support in February of 2020 which means we have two years to go! We're currently about 50% self-supported which is a good start!"*

That is a great start just a few months into public services! God clearly was bringing together the people and resources to carry High Plains through its first summer. (a challenging time for a new church in both attendance and finances). In September Erik reported: *Our church has been self-supporting since June... Praise God!"*

The church's momentum has continued this fall. They've moved into a wonderful new location at a local elementary school with easy access, plenty of meeting space, and ample parking. In addition to Sunday worship, they have launched 6 small groups, based on Erik's principle of "gather big, grow small".

The future is bright! Erik's goal is for people to form the strong relationships that provide the "glue" and then reaching people in the community who do not know Jesus. Erik is consistently praying for Jesus to be glorified in and through their church, and for people to make the decision to follow Jesus and be baptized. Please join him – and us – in these prayers!



# Planting in Reverse

**EveryOne Church, Eugene, Oregon**  
**Gabe & Gina Piechowicz**  
**Launch Date: April 2021**



Eugene, OR is considered by some as a “church planting graveyard”. Many planters have tried, and failed, to launch healthy churches here. The typical model that is working so well in Twin Falls, ID has not been effective in Eugene.

So God called Gabe Piechowicz to attempt a radical approach that we call “reverse-planting”. Rather than starting a worship service, then small groups, and then community mission, EveryOne Church started with a mission. In this case, the mission is the urgent, local problem of homelessness. City leaders have been trying to deal with the issue for years, yet the problem has only grown worse.

Gabe has stepped boldly in to encourage, support, and bring hope to what has seemed a hopeless crisis. On the streets daily, Gabe demonstrates God’s love in all kinds of ways to the unhoused and to those serving them. Through these efforts, different players are beginning to work together for the first time: local government, non-profits, business leaders, and churches.

Together they’re scoring some “wins”. They’re getting people off the streets and into shelter. Together, they’re helping people who are down and out to step up and into a safe, secure transitional home. Together they’re finding employment for those able to work.

As a new vision is emerging, EveryOne Church and the team around them are working together to create a holistic village of wrap-around services that include job training, peer support, counseling, and more. EveryOne *Village* will open on a 4-acre parcel donated by a local Christian businessman with the goal of helping residents flourish physically, mentally, emotionally, relationally, *and spiritually*.

Gabe and his team are building connections with people from all walks of life. Some are believers, some are far from God, and some believe in other forms of spirituality. Yet, because he has earned trust, respect, and the right to be heard by those he serves with, Gabe is creating and building community with these people.



Every day Gabe relentlessly looks for natural opportunities to tell “Jesus stories” that link Him to the lives of Eugenians. The stories stir a natural curiosity about Jesus. The stories plant seeds which the Holy Spirit can use to draw people into relationship with God. As that happens, EveryOne Church creates opportunities for these new believers to fellowship, pray, study, worship, and grow in faith.

This is a very different way to plant a church, but in Eugene, it’s time for some new strategies. Gabe is pioneering one such approach and we look for great fruit to come from the work of EveryOne Church. Please pray with us that through their efforts, human beings made in God’s image will be lifted up and able to flourish and will choose to put their trust in Jesus.





*planting churches in the Pacific Northwest*

Christian Evangelistic Association  
PO Box 92  
Edmonds, WA  
98020-0092

## Be Part of the Story

As we celebrate Jesus' birth and prepare to cross the threshold of a new year, the CEA is deeply grateful for your interest, your prayers and your financial support this year. Thank you!

**Join our Prayer Team:** To receive a monthly update of prayers and praises go to [www.theCEA](http://www.theCEA), select "Contact" and write "Prayer Partner" in the message box or contact [dottie@thecea.org](mailto:dottie@thecea.org).

**Text 2 Give:** Text **CEA** to 73256.

**Mail:** Send a check payable to **CEA**. Designate a gift for a specific project on the memo line (*mail to PO Box 92, Edmonds WA 98020*).

**Online:** Go to [www.theCEA.org](http://www.theCEA.org)—and click the "Give" link. Make a one-time or recurring gift.

**IRA RMD:** Contributions made directly from an IRA trustee to a charity count toward the RMD requirement but are not included as income to the donor.

**Wills & Trusts:** Make a gift that creates a legacy beyond your lifetime.

**Legacy Gifts:** Consider making a gift in memory of a deceased loved one or friend you'd like to honor.

**Shop Amazon Smiles:** Go to [smile.amazon.com](http://smile.amazon.com), sign into your Amazon account and select the Christian Evangelistic Association / Edmonds, WA. Amazon will donate .5% of your purchase total to CEA.

*The CEA is a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.  
Contributions are tax-deductible to the extent permitted by law.*