

Got Questions?

Frequently Asked Questions Related to REACH

Over the past year, Christ Church has been mobilizing “to fuel a movement that reaches people and renews communities.” We believe this is the exciting next step God has placed before us. REACH is the name of our effort to organize, fund and implement this plan. Discussions about REACH began over a year ago. They accelerated this fall. As we move further into 2018, they are gaining church-wide attention. What follows is a document for leaders that is broken into three sections: general questions, specific questions, and objections.

What are we hoping to accomplish with REACH? The motivation animating REACH is the call of God. We have been commissioned to help lost people discover life with God and equip everyone to Love God, Serve Others and Reach One (Matthew 28:18ff). What makes REACH unique are our goals over the next three years. During that time, we want to expand our efforts both locally and globally. To be more specific:

- On the local front, we want: to start three new Christ Church campuses, expand the church’s work among the poor and help other Gospel-centric churches grow.
- On the global front, we want to help our international partners plant churches that are committed to reaching people and renewing communities.

Why are we so focused on churches? At the heart of what we are trying to do is multiply vibrant, Gospel-centered churches. This is our goal because the local church is God’s plan. Mission focused churches mobilize people to proclaim Christ’s offer of eternal and love and serve others. When local churches thrive, everyone wins. When they hold back, everyone loses. The United States - and the world -desperately needs more vital, growing and prevailing churches.

But aren’t there enough churches already? Establishing new churches – or restarting stalled ones – is the most effective way to reach unchurched people and make disciples. When a new church is launched – or a stalled church is “re-started” people on the sidelines: step forward to serve; they join with others to pray and help jumpstart the new venture. In short, they grow, get excited and invite their friends. There are currently 350,000 unchurched people in Lake County. Most of these people say they believe in God, are “spiritual” and pray regularly. Many claim they would attend a church if invited.

Is the Multisite model working? Yes, the multisite model – in which Christ-followers mobilize under one vision, one mission, one statement of faith, one elder board and one budget, but meet in more than one location – is working well. Both the Crossroads and Highland Park campuses are success stories. People have come to faith, attendance and membership have climbed, they are financially viable, programming has expanded, etc.

Where will the fourth Christ Church campus be located? We are actively exploring several options at the moment. Additionally, we are diligently praying that the Lord will guide our path as he has in the past. When we started praying for a third site, we assumed our focus on North Chicago would lead us north. We got as far as identifying a key spot in Waukegan and working with the city to get it zoned for a church. But then God opened the door for a merger with Crossroads. We currently have a team of people praying and working on identifying options both to the West and the South. When Paul set out on his second mission trip, he thought he was going to Asia, but God redirected him to Europe (Acts 16). We are open to wherever God leads.

What's a One Fund Initiative? If you participated in a stewardship campaign in the past, you were likely asked to make a pledge 'above and beyond' your usual giving. These additional dollars were then earmarked for a special initiative (e.g., a new building). REACH is slightly different. We are rolling all our work – and all of our expenses -under one banner. This means that everything from our operating budget (e.g., funding our current programs, maintaining buildings, paying staff, supporting our local and global work, etc.) and the new initiatives (new campuses, funding towards North Chicago, helping our level one partners plant new churches) will be combined. We are doing this because it reflects the way the money is actually spent, and because we want to challenge everyone to get involved in all that we do.

What are you asking me to do? Our prayer is that everyone who calls Christ Church home will be involved with REACH in two ways: for starters, we want this initiative and its three-year roll out to drive you closer to Christ. During this time we are praying that you will lean more fully into the call to Love God, Serve Others and Reach One. Secondly, we want you to generously participate with both your time and money.

Additional Questions

Our mission calls for us to reach people and renew communities. If starting new churches (and campuses) lies at the heart of the "reaching people" initiative, what are our plans to Renew Communities? As with the "Reaching People" prong, what we want to do through REACH is accelerate what we are already doing. Over the last few years, we have been expanding our efforts to Renew Communities in a variety of ways:

- We have been doing more through outside organizations, such as PADS, LOVE Inc. and North Chicago Community Partners.
- We have also been quietly piloting a housing program (Matthew Homes) and a job creation effort.

In addition to these two areas, last year we launched a nonprofit organization called "ReNew Communities" in order to coordinate work with churches, government agencies, businesses and foundations. Pastor David Weil recently transitioned out of

his role as Executive Pastor of Ministries at Christ Church to become the Executive Director of ReNew Communities. In this new role he is particularly focused on the Matthew Homes program and the Jobs Initiative.

What is the Matthew Homes program? The goal of the Matthew Homes program is to help North Chicago by providing simple decent homes for families seeking to love and serve their neighbors. Housing is acquired for around \$30K, rehabilitated using volunteer labor and then sold to qualified buyers. Mortgage rates are established using interest free loans, with the funds from one home rolling ahead to help purchase future ones. Over the last few years we have successfully tested the model on seven homes. We are ready to expand it.

What is the Jobs Initiative? In addition to working on housing, we have chosen to focus on job creation. We currently have three programs in place: 1) business mentoring; 2) efforts to woo employers into North Chicago; and 3) the creation of a jobs pathway from the high school into manufacturing. At the moment, plans are also underway to develop a jobs readiness program. These initiatives are being led by men and women from Christ Church in partnership with community leaders in North Chicago.

How will we plant churches overseas? We will work with our Level One partners in Turkey, Ghana and India for the first three churches.

- Our partners in Turkey have already started Bible studies among groups of Muslim refugees living in and around Istanbul. We intend to work with them to help one of these fellowships grow to the next level.
- Our partners in Ghana have already planted hundreds of churches in rural settings. We intend to help them start a church among urban professionals in Sogakope, just outside the capital of Accra.
- Our partners in India have also planted hundreds of churches in rural settings. We will work with them to start a second site for New Calvary Church, (which meets on the HBI campus in Chennai). We also expect to help start a church among the Ormid group in eastern India. (Last year we raised money to translate the Gospel of Luke into their language).

Will these overseas churches be Christ Church campuses? No, these will be independent works, operating under local leadership. Our plan is to help them with funding and by sending Short Term teams to help. We will scale down our involvement over the second and third years.

How much will REACH cost? REACH initiatives will require an additional seven million dollars over two years. We are using the One Fund model, which means that we are focusing on the total amount we need to raise over two years – i.e., both the money for an annual budget and the additional funds for the new projects. That amount is \$19 M – which includes \$5.8M for the 2018-2019 budget, \$6.1M for the 2019-2020 budget and \$7.1M for the new work.

REACH sounds bold. Perhaps, but God is infinitely bigger than REACH. This plan is very doable. For starters, what we are setting out to do is a continuation of what we have been doing. Over the last seven years, Christ Church has expanded from one campus to three, and from three weekly worship services to nine. In addition to adding members, growing small groups and doubling our volunteer hours, our budget has climbed from 3.1 million in 2010 to 5.3 million in 2017, we've baptized hundreds of people and started new ministries such as the Justice Center, CARS and HOGS. During this time, we've also worked with our global partners to plant churches, build schools and reach the lost. REACH is a plan to stay the course.

Secondly, we can raise the money. During the Step of Faith campaign we held ten years ago, our operating budget was just over \$2M and we raised an additional \$6.7M. Today our operating budget is over \$5.3M and we are attempting to raise an additional \$7.1M.

But let me add, the goal is not to be bold. The goal is to be obedient to the call of God.

What is the time frame of REACH? REACH formally begins in mid-February. Pledges will be made just before Easter. The funds will be collected over the next two years and spent over the next three.

What will we do if we do not raise enough money? If we fail to raise \$19 million dollars, we will slow down the roll out of our work -or scale some things back – and then move forward. (We will not go into debt). The larger concern is that we fail to faithfully pursue God's call. Everything worthwhile involves risk. Imagine where we'd be if various groups -i.e., the 17 people who started Christ Church, or the groups that planted Crossroads Church or the Evangelical Church of Highland Park -had not taken a few risks. Our bigger concern is that we will fail to be good stewards of the opportunities before us.

What happens if we raise more money than we need? After offering heartfelt thanks to God, we'll prayerfully consider what being a faithful steward of the additional funds will entail.

Are we carrying debt from previous projects? By God's grace, our balance sheet is very strong. We currently owe just less than \$700,000, which gives us a debt to income ratio of .13.

Who will know how much money I give? Several members of our Finance Department will be aware of your pledge. But giving has always been confidential at Christ Church. It will remain so.

Will the two years of REACH overlap with the calendar year, our fiscal year or something else? The operating budget -which will continue to be presented for approval -will remain consistent with our fiscal year. Reach dollars will be allocated internally to both the operating budget and the vision initiatives.

How much will it cost to launch a new campus? It is hard to know how to project the cost of a new campus, because so much depends on where we launch and what kind of facilities we use. Both the Highland Park and Crossroads works came as a result of mergers in which we acquired existing properties.

- When the Evangelical Church of Highland Park joined Christ Church, we invested \$300K for remodeling the facilities and another \$100K to fund staff for the launch. Since then, we have invested another \$300K in the remodel of the building, additional technology (for video sermon delivery) and other capital improvement projects. The Highland Park congregation covers its operating costs.
- When Crossroads voted to merge with Christ Church, we assumed \$800K of debt (on their \$7M building), invested \$1M in the facility and another \$100K in startup staffing. Since then, we have invested another 100K in capital improvements. The Crossroads congregation currently covers all of their operating costs.

For the purpose of projecting the cost of a new campus, we have averaged the costs of three different models: 1) renting a facility – such as a high school gym or theater; 2) merging with another church (as we did with Crossroads and Highland Park); and 3) buying an existing building (church or facility).

Will we vote on these plans? Each year the congregation will vote on the operating budget. Additionally, the congregation will vote on any plans that include assuming debt. The elders and deacons have endorsed both the vision and the campaign.

Who is helping us organize this initiative? Last fall we engaged the services of Generis, a ministry that helps churches expand generosity and fuel vision.

Are we trying to be a mega church? No. We are trying to fuel a movement that reaches people and renews communities. The goal is not to reach a certain size, the goal is to be faithful to our call. As long as there are lost people, we want churches to be growing.

I heard that we have a goal of 100,000 service hours. What is involved with that? One of the ways we assess our health is by tracking the number of hours Christ Church people spend serving. This includes hours serving inside the church (ushers, greeters, Sunday School teachers, small group leaders, musicians, office volunteers, etc.) and hours directed towards those who do not attend Christ Church (tutoring at Forrestal, staffing the Justice Center, delivering furniture through Love Inc., mission trips with one of our global partners, etc.) We recognize that this does not measure all the ways people serve. But we find it a helpful metric. Our goal is that between now and the end of 2020, we donate 100,000 hours to our local and global partners. Serving hours inside the church are vital, but they will not be part of the 100,000 hour goal.

Why is serving such a big part of the plan? There are many reasons we encourage people to serve: there are real needs out there; we are called to love our neighbor; we can make a material difference; being cared for softens people to the Gospel; and serving is one of the ways we become more like Christ. Everyone wins when we serve, starting with us.

Will the next campus look like Highland Park, Crossroads, The 01 or something else? The goal is that every campus has the same DNA -after all, we are one church worshipping in many locations -but that it express our DNA in ways that are culturally appropriate. The unique expression at our next campus will be determined by the needs of its community and the makeup of the congregation that gathers there.

How will adding a new site(s) affect those who stay at the LF, HP or CR campuses? On the one hand, very little will change for those who stay where they are. On the other hand, we will need everyone to step up. At a minimum, we will need to cover the work and fill-in the seats of those who leave the service they are currently attending to help launch a new site.

What do you say to those who believe that raising money for new campuses (or for churches overseas) dilutes our focus. We need to focus on our own backyard and we will continue to do so, but the mission Christ gave us (Mt. 28:18f) mandates reaching out as well. It may be helpful to realize that, when it comes to churches, there are two models: Jerusalem and Antioch. We want to follow Antioch.

- Jerusalem came first and had a multi-year head start. We see good things happening there after Pentecost (Acts 2) and we know that they grew because we read about the growing pains that forced them to change some of their systems (Acts 6). The problem with the church in Jerusalem is, it never got around to "going." They reached out in Jerusalem, but Christ had commissioned them to go the world. He stated this in Matthew 28 and it is repeated in Acts 1 (Mt 28:18f, Acts 1:8). Their assignment was Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the utter most parts of the world. The problem is, though they were the oldest and most established church – and though they were the ones with the leaders and money -they did not reach out until persecution forced them to flee the city (Acts 8:1).
- Contrast that with what happened in Antioch. The church there was planted by Paul and Barnabas, and it was missional from day one. Consequently, not long after it was established, the people there sent Paul and Barnabas to take the Gospel to others. It was not a large fellowship. There is no reason to think it was wealthy or that it had an abundance of leaders. But it was focused on the mission, and so they launched Paul and Barnabas.

God calls us to reach out. Tragically, this is one of the hardest things for a church to do. Most churches say that they will reach out after all of their needs are fully met, but they never are. We are here today because of the Church of Antioch. We want to follow their model.

On a similar note, what would say to those who believe we should build out the Lake Forest (or Crossroads) facility. We are blessed with wonderful campuses. And right now they are well maintained and well used (we have five weekend services at LF and the CR campus is busy almost every night of the week). It would be wonderful to have the fourth parish house at LF or to build out the CR facility, and perhaps someday we will. But at the moment we do not see the need to spend four or five million dollars to gain the space the fourth Parish House would provide.

Is any REACH money being used to remodel the existing campuses? No, the current work being done – i.e., the remodel of A201 and the bathrooms at LF, the carpet in the sanctuary at HP, etc. – is part of our ongoing maintenance budget. While we did budget some dollars in the REACH campaign for welcoming spaces, we think that most improvements can be made with our capital maintenance and improvement reserves therefore freeing up more dollars in REACH for reaching people through additional site locations and renewing communities through our Matthew Homes and jobs initiative programs.

What will we do if we do if funding is less than the \$19M target? As noted earlier, we will not go into debt to fund any REACH related projects, we will simply slow down the roll out of the plans. At the moment we have pledges of just over \$16M, with two additional years to close the gap between \$16M and \$19M.

What projects will we not do if we do not reach the \$19M goal? Good financial planning includes the path forward if revenue (in our case, giving) is lower than expected. In our “Plan B,” we intend to: 1) move forward with global church plants and the Matthew Home initiatives. While 2) slowing down the rollout of new local sites, eliminating the capital improvement portion of REACH (which was for new welcoming spaces) and reducing the operating expenses.

I serve somewhere outside of Christ Church’s local partners. Do those hours count for REACH? Yes! We want to see people serving anywhere and everywhere, and we would love to know about it. Go to reach.christchurchil.org and click on the Volunteer Hours tab to let us know where you’ve been serving.