



## Church Plant Project Profile

### *A PCA church plant in and for the urban west Charlotte community*

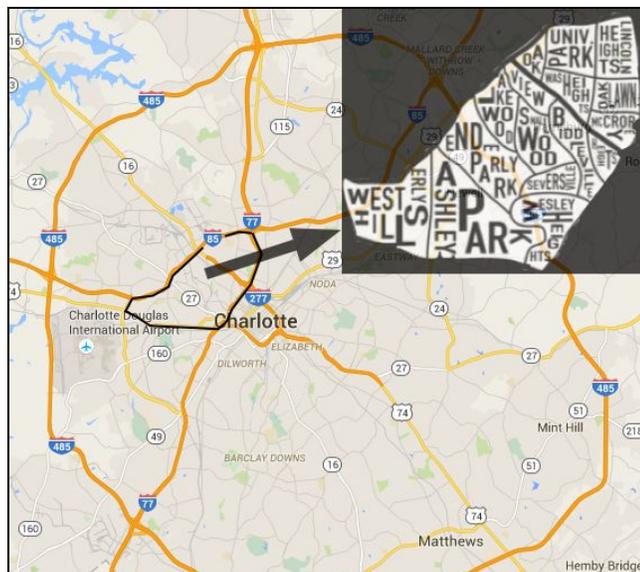
Our desire is to plant a Presbyterian (PCA) church in and for the urban west Charlotte community. We envision a church that is rooted in and reflective of our neighborhoods, dependent upon the ordinary means of grace for Gospel-centered growth, and committed to leadership development and ministry multiplication. We want to be a church that celebrates the gospel, that emphasizes fellowship and service in the body of Christ, and that seeks every opportunity to serve as a gospel witness in the urban west Charlotte community, all in obedience to the Great Commandment and the Great Commission.

### **Target Area**

The geographic target for this plant is the western region of the city of Charlotte. Specifically, our desire is to reach the peoples that reside in the 14 urban neighborhoods in the ZIP Codes of 28216 and 28208 located within the bounds of Interstate 85 to the north and west, Interstate 77 to the north and east, and US Route 74 to the south.

### Target Neighborhoods:

- Lincoln Heights
- University Park
- Oaklawn
- McCrorey Heights
- Washington Heights
- Oakview Terrace
- Lakewood
- Smallwood
- Biddleville
- Seversville
- Wesley Heights
- Enderly Park
- Ashley Park
- Westerly Hills



### **Target Area Demographic Data**

According to the latest census data, Charlotte, NC has the 14th highest African-American population in the US. Our 14 target communities are some of the most densely populated by African-Americans in the city. According to City-Data.com, the 2013 estimated total population of these 14 communities is 23,191.

- 85% of residents identify as African-American, and most of the other 15% identify as Caucasian.
- Median annual household income is \$26,193, nearly 50% below the median income of the city.
- 34% of residents live at or below the poverty line, nearly double the average of the city.
- 21% of all households are single mother homes, nearly double the average of the city.
- 26% of residents are children grades K-12, nearly 40% more than the average of the city.
- 44% of adult residents have some college education, compared to 69% for the city as a whole.

In summary, this is primarily an African-American, low-income, area with limited access to higher education and a high percentage of fragile family structures. However, over the past few years, the communities closest to Charlotte's Uptown, particularly the Biddleville and Wesley Heights neighborhoods, have begun experiencing an influx of young, mainly white, upwardly-mobile professionals, and with them, new public and private revitalization initiatives.

### ***Churches in Target Area***

We have identified 62 churches in the target area. To our knowledge, all 62 churches are Protestant or nondenominational mono-ethnic black churches.

- 37%: Non-denominational/unidentified denominational affiliation
- 24%: Baptist (including American, National, Primitive, and Missionary Baptist churches)
- 19%: Pentecostal/Apostolic
- 8%: Methodist (UMC, AME-Zion)
- 5%: Presbyterian (PCUSA)
- 6%: Other

*There are no evangelical Reformed churches in the target area.*

### ***Major Public Institutions/Resources In Target Area***

- K-12 Public Schools: 12
- Public Libraries: 1
- Public Recreation Centers: 4
- Public Parks: 13
- Police Stations: 2
- Fire Stations: 2



### ***Colleges/Universities in Target Area***

Johnson C. Smith University (JCSU) is a small, private, coed, four-year, liberal arts HBCU (historically black college/university). It is located on 100 acres in the Biddleville community of west Charlotte, and describes itself as "Charlotte's Premier Urban University."

JCSU was established in 1867 by the NC Catawba Presbytery as a seminary to train African-American Presbyterian ministers. The divinity school moved to Atlanta in 1969, but campus officials have expressed to us a desire to begin taking steps towards bringing the divinity school back to Charlotte. A large chapel remains on campus, and may be available for rental for Sunday worship.



JCSU has approximately 1450 students, of which 85% are African-American, 3.5% are international, and fewer than 1% are Caucasian. Approximately 59% of its students are from out of state, and 75% live on campus. Of the students who applied (88%), 97% of them qualified for need based aid.

According JCSU's website, 42% of freshmen "frequently engage in spiritually enhancing activities like worship, meditation, and prayer." However, JCSU has very few on-campus Christian organizations. The only national evangelical organization currently on campus is Fellowship for Christian Athletes. Other Christian organizations/groups on campus include P.U.S.H. (Pray Until Something Happens) and a Bible study group organized by the director of the Spiritual Life Center.

## ***Evangelical Seminaries Near Target Area:***

- Charlotte Christian Theological Seminary
- Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary
- Reformed Theological Seminary
- Southern Evangelical Seminary

## ***Key Aspects of Mission and Vision***

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- “Parish” ministry:
  - Emphasis on the target area of *west Charlotte*
  - Emphasis on *intentional outreach* (to individuals, institutions, community groups and organizations)
  - Emphasis on *strategic use of resources* (to reflect demographics of the community, including racial, socioeconomic, and educational factors)
  - Emphasis on *cultural self-awareness* (regarding avoidance of structural and stylistic, as well as other hurdles to cross-cultural ministry)
- “Ordinary means of grace” ministry:
  - Emphasis on *simplicity* in general
  - Emphasis on *corporate worship* (strong biblical teaching, weekly communion, and practically applying the principle of *lex orandi lex credendi*)
  - Emphasis on *pastoral visitation* (high view of benefits and responsibilities of church membership, discipleship of all members, and the proactive exercise of church discipline)
  - Emphasis on *fellowship* (the importance of shared life together, love for one another, and bearing one another’s burdens)
  - Emphasis on *prayer* (structured into all aspects of ministry in both preparation and practice)
- “Multiplication” of ministry:
  - Emphasis on reaching out to *Johnson C. Smith*
  - Emphasis on close relationships with *area seminaries*
  - Emphasis on identifying, discipling, and supporting *potential future elders and pastors*
  - Emphasis on raising up African-American leaders in particular
  - Emphasis on leading by plurality by carefully *organizing and delegating the work of ministry*

## ***Charles McKnight's Sense of Call to Plant a Church in West Charlotte:***

Eight years ago I sensed a strong call to plant and grow a PCA church in an urban, African-American, under-resourced context. Church planting in west Charlotte is the fruition of this calling. Since childhood, I've watched my father give his life personally and vocationally to gospel ministry among under-resourced African-Americans in Eastern N.C. In retrospect, the Lord used my father's influence to bend my heart towards a unique gospel burden for this demographic.



In my early twenties I had the pleasure of being discipled and mentored by Drew Martin during my time under his pastoral leadership at Sandhills Presbyterian. Drew and the session of Sandhills provided me with several opportunities to test and discern my sense of call to pastoral ministry, and helped shepherd me towards a season of deeper discernment of and preparation for this call through seminary training at Reformed Theological Seminary (RTS) in Charlotte N.C.

A primary reason I chose RTS-Charlotte was that the seminary's location allowed me to receive both mentorship as an intern under the only African-American PCA senior pastor in NC, Howard Brown, and to become part of a local church (Christ Central) that desires to plant churches in non-traditional PCA contexts. During my time under Howard's tutelage, I received a broad array of opportunities to test not only a call to pastoral ministry and to church planting, but also a call to minister among African-Americans.

During my time in seminary, my wife and I also had the privilege of serving as domestic missionaries with Apartment Life, a ministry to apartment residents in the city of Charlotte which gave us several years of training in the art and science of cross-cultural evangelism. Furthermore, the Lord has used my time at Christ Central as both an intern and now as an Assistant Pastor, to deepen my appreciation for ministry in and among individuals from diverse racial, ethnic, cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds. The Lord has used our time in Charlotte to clarify our sense of call by developing within us a heart for the people of the urban west Charlotte area. After relocating and residing in the West Charlotte community of McCrorey Heights for over a year, our love for, and desire to plant in west Charlotte only increased. We recently purchased a home in the Washington Heights neighborhood, located in the heart of our target area. This internal sense of call to church plant in west Charlotte has been externally confirmed by the MNA church planters assessment center and the session of Christ Central Church. Currently, I embrace the opportunity to cast the vision for ethnic and multi-ethnic church planting in the Central Carolina Presbytery (CCP) as a member of the CCP Ethnic Church Planting subcommittee.

I am overjoyed that the Lord has seen fit to allow our relationship with the Martins to come full-circle to partner in visioning for a church plant in west Charlotte.

## ***Drew Martin's Sense of Call to Plant a Church in West Charlotte:***

My life and Christian experiences have given me the desire to be part of a church plant in a diverse urban context with the opportunity to train pastors for ministry, and this church plant in west Charlotte represents a unique opportunity to pursue this desire.

Having grown up in a military family and having lived for at least three years each on the west coast, in the midwest, in the south, and in the northeast of the United States, as well as in Japan, I always have been interested in and accustomed to cross cultural experiences. My wife Meg and I, both by intentional choice and by God's providence, have been called to serve in a series of diverse environments before, during, and especially since my time in seminary. Our

experience in Nashville was particularly formative, as we lived in a transitional urban neighborhood and Meg coordinated a Young Life ministry to teen mothers from a variety of economic and racial backgrounds. Furthermore, through adoption we ourselves have become a multiracial family.

In addition to these experiences, my time working on my PhD at Vanderbilt provided me with depth not only in my primary area of study (history and theology), but also in cultural theories related to race and socioeconomics. Living in west Charlotte puts me in close proximity to a number of colleges and seminaries where I can utilize my PhD in order to teach in an adjunct capacity, thus fulfilling my sense of bivocational call to both the church and the academy, and also providing a unique opportunity to attract and train seminary interns, a ministry close to my heart.

I long for the PCA to bring the gospel to the groups it presently struggles to reach, and also to enjoy the benefits of a body of Christ more reflective of the cultural diversity within its geographical bounds. All these experiences inform that passion as well as my sense of call to ministry. Finally, Meg and I both have a deep respect, trust, and love for Charles, Charlotte, and their family, and a desire to share life and ministry with them, as well as the vision for this church plant in west Charlotte. I cannot imagine a more ideal set of circumstances in which my and Meg's gifts and passions could be utilized.



## Timeline to Launch

- **Spring/Summer 2016:**
  - CCC called Drew as Assistant Pastor of Church Planting and Outreach
  - Begin recruitment of prayer and financial partners
- **Oct/Dec 2016**
  - Begin gathering with current core team targets as a community group
  - Begin evangelism and community engagement in target area with core team
- **Jan/Feb 2017**
  - Vision casting and official recruitment from Christ Central Church
- **Mar/May 2017:**
  - Begin core team training
  - Carry out summer evangelism and recruitment events
- **Jun/Aug 2017:**
  - Begin soft launch worship
- **September 10, 2017:**
  - First public worship service

## Support Needed

- **Prayer:**
  - To receive prayer updates, please sign up at [westcharlottechurch.com/pray](http://westcharlottechurch.com/pray).
- **Financial:**
  - If you are willing to support us financially, please review the information below and go to [westcharlottechurch.com/give](http://westcharlottechurch.com/give) in order to a) give online, b) give by bank draft, or c) give by check.

<b>Partnering Goals</b>	
Christ Central Church has already committed \$150,000	
<b>Remaining Need:</b>	
\$200,000 (average) annual need	
\$1,000,000 total five-year need	
<b>How This Goal May Be Reached</b>	
monthly (annually / five year total)	
4 gifts of \$1,250 a month (\$15,000 / \$75,000) =	<b>\$300,000</b>
10 gifts of \$500 a month (\$6,000 / \$30,000) =	<b>\$300,000</b>
15 gifts of \$200 a month (\$2,400 / \$12,000) =	<b>\$180,000</b>
25 gifts of \$100 a month (\$1,200 / \$6,000) =	<b>\$150,000</b>
25 gifts of \$50 a month (\$600 / \$3,000) =	<b>\$ 75,000</b>
<b>Five Year Goal: \$1,005,000</b>	

## Contact:

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