

Mission Team Report

Ten years ago, we were a church of a 150 partially involved Christians. Now, we are garnering membership of more than 1,000 missionally engaged Christians. Our growth can be attributed to our commitment to mission work. We are now engaged in the community more than ever by providing support and services to local non-profits. We are also hosting several public health classes and groups for our community members. Between the youth group and our adult Sunday school classes, we are able to conduct annual foreign missions. Our church is known for its passion for serving all people and priorities within our community. Ten years ago, all of this was only a dream.

When we presented the idea to become a church of missionally engaged Christians ten years ago, we aspired to have a space that could host community based programming. These programs would include weekly fitness programs and social-emotional health series, as well as storage of materials for our foreign missions. We also imagined expanding the food bank into the new space, which would allow us to train new food bank volunteers for satellite campuses. An enlarged food bank would give us the ability to provide support for other community based programs, such as Meals on Wheels, sports team feeding, and a soup kitchen.

In order to become a church of missionally engaged Christians, we started by focusing on local mission work. We wanted to be known within Jefferson as an inspired, mission-minded church that strived to help all people in our community. We started by incorporating city clean up, and we were even featured in the Jackson Herald for all the work we were doing. We partnered with other churches in the town for some of these projects. This gave us the opportunity to get to know the people in and around Jefferson even better. We also joined forces with local organizations, such as the Boys and Girls Club of Jackson County, Peace Place,

Habitat for Humanity, the local school systems, local nursing homes, and senior centers, in order to help those specific members in our community. Through our community outreach, as well as other efforts, we were able to double the size of the Turkey Can Run! We were also able to develop a local mission that focused on the needs of first responders and the specific populations that they serve, such as children and victims of violence. Lastly, during this time period we laid the groundwork for annual foreign and large domestic mission trips.

In the next few years, while still keeping our local focus, we really started a push to have the entire congregation missionally engaged in some form, whether that was physically involved, either through one of our many groups/circles/Sunday school classes or as individuals within the church, prayerfully involved, or financially involved. By the sixth year we achieved this goal. Every person in our church committed to be a missionally engaged Christian in the way that suited them best. During these years we expanded our local missions into Jackson County. We assisted three smaller churches in forming food banks of their own, which then became satellite campuses for our growing food bank. We committed twenty mentors to Legacy Youth Mentoring. We began conducting school supply drives. We used our expanded food bank to pack food backpacks for students before long weekends and holidays. We started providing meals for teachers during weeks of appreciation as well. We decided the Turkey can Run was doing so well, that we added a 10k portions, and encouraged people to come dressed up. We even got the local butcher shop to sponsor the runs, with winner receiving a turkey!

As our local missions grew, we added and alternating domestic and foreign mission, and focused on getting the youth group involved in these as well as the Reach Band. The most exciting part was, of course, that during this time we broke ground on our new community space, which would house our expanded food bank, as well as the state of the art kitchen we use for

banquets and as a soup kitchen, and classrooms for fitness, Sunday School, and public classes (such as support groups, mental health seminars, etc...). This space expanded our reach, and allowed us to engage with more people who then became part of our missionally engaged congregation.

Over the last few years, as a group of missionally engaged Christians, we have accomplished quite a lot. We acquired a delivery truck, which allows us to provide food to homebound and elderly residents in Jackson County. We added a spring fundraising event to raise money for our annual foreign and domestic mission trips, which are taken by our ever-growing youth group, our talented reach band, and various Sunday School classes. We started a bus program, in which our church bus picks up children and the elderly in our community to ensure access to our church. We host community events monthly, and we are working towards holding them weekly. Some of the more popular events have been our self-defense classes and our mental health classes. We have several support groups that meet here weekly, which has allowed us the opportunity to serve even more areas of our community, such as those experiencing incarceration of a loved one, loss, and poverty, along with providing Christian-based emotional interventions.

The past ten years have been a lot of hard work and required the commitment of every missionally engaged Christian in our congregation. However, we can all look back and say we are proud of the work we have done to become a community hub. Being able to work with everyone in our community, regardless of where they come from or what they do has given us the ability to show God in a new and different way. We have been able to minister and reach out showing God's love for all people. We are now known as the church that welcomes everyone,

and there is a place for everyone here if they want it. We look forward to the next ten years and beyond.