

The Beginnings Of Christ Fellowship Church

by Donna Davis

When the Israelites were beginning to build the temple to the Lord, the prophet Zechariah in chapter 4 verse 10 said, "Do not despise these small beginnings, for the Lord rejoices to see the work begin..." In 1982, after helping to launch a new Evangelical Presbyterian Church in South Denver called Cherry Creek Presbyterian, Ed and I moved back to Fort Collins. After several months of prayer, the Lord spoke clearly to us that we were to plant a church in Fort Collins. We asked the Lord to give us a vision. His response was that the building of this church would be like going up a mountain and he would show us the way step by step. Climbing a mountain can be long and difficult at times, but there is joy, new learning, and development of character as you persevere in the Lord's work.

Fort Collins Fellowship was what we called ourselves when we met with that first Bible study group in our living room in the fall of 1982. Grant was a few weeks old and Jeremy was 2 ½. The denomination was barely two years old so there wasn't any financial support or help available for a church plant. We pioneered the church by contacting our friends from previous ministry experiences. Within a few weeks we were receiving funds in the mail that covered all of our living expenses. Some people gave a one time gift others gave a monthly gift. It was exciting to go to the mail box. For over 6 months we lived on faith. The total amount we received each month only varied by \$15. It was amazing and faith building to see the Lord's provision and confirmation of his call to this church and his call to Ed to be in full time ministry.

Through the years we have met in schools and rented facilities. Our first meeting as an established church was at Boltz Junior High. We were no longer a Bible study fellowship at this point and decided we needed a new name. Christ Fellowship Church was our choice because Christ and his mission for the world was our focus as we came together to fellowship as a church body. We met in the New Creations exercise club building for several years and then met in several local grade schools including Linton Elementary. At each location there was always a lot of work involved with hauling in chairs and Christian Ed. toys and materials then setting up sound equipment for our Sunday service. We often joked that we wore out several different congregations along the way. I remember many years when Ed got up early on Sunday morning, good weather and bad to hitch up our storage trailer to our pick up so that he could help set up. He was grateful when Wayne Rothgery and Jim Rudolph arrived on the scene and volunteered to help bring the trailer. Many of our congregation willingly served the church by teaching Sunday school, setting up, greeting, singing on the praise team, serving as deacons and elders and hosted small group

gatherings. My mother, Ilene Shields, hosted a variety of meetings in her home including the intercessory prayer team which met in her home for 15 years. Our final meeting place before building our current church building was in the chapel at Good Samaritan Nursing Home. At this point in time, we were a small church with a big vision but God had spoken to our hearts and “God will find a way where there seems to be no way.” He gave us a plan to build a church building that would house a child development center. He brought along the right leaders who could work as a team with Ed’s leadership to bring that vision to pass.

Today we celebrate our church’s birthday enjoying our new facility and new ministries that grew out of the faith and labors of those throughout the years who helped build this ministry. We have a lot to celebrate. We miss our founding pastor, my beloved Ed today, but we celebrate all the work of Christ in our midst. We celebrate all the lives who have been touched, saved, healed, and encouraged because of their participation at CFC. We celebrate all the children who have come into a new life of faith because of our children’s church and youth group. We celebrate the growth and maturity our young people and adults have experienced through various Bible Studies, small groups and Ed’s outstanding teaching/preaching through the years. We celebrate the work of the Spirit as we have joined together in great times of worship and praise. We celebrate all the opportunities we have had to make a difference around the world through prayer, short term missions, missions giving, and acts of service.

Before this church was conceived, the Lord gave Ed a dream that he would be the pastor of a church in Northern Colorado and it would be “all white.” When Ed asked the meaning of the dream, the Lord told him that the church being “all white” meant that the church would be “set apart” for God’s purposes. When you look back through the history of Christ Fellowship Church, you see that God has used this church to affect lives for Christ both here and abroad. Ed isn’t here to lead us into the next phase of the ministry of Christ Fellowship Church, but he planted many good seeds. It’s up to God to bring the harvest and it’s up to the rest of us to do the work of the ministry and to point people to Jesus.

Ed and I didn’t despise the small beginnings and the Lord rejoiced to see the work begin. But, the story of this church doesn’t end here. There is much need for Christ and as the song says, greater works are yet to be done here. So I celebrate the past with you

And I look forward to what God will accomplish in the future.

Happy 27th Birthday Christ Fellowship Church!