

Detroit Church of Christ Update

Allan Aubert 10/21/2006

Phil 1:3 I thank my God every time I remember you. ⁴ In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy ⁵ because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, ⁶ being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. ^{Phil 1:7} It is right for me to feel this way about all of you, since I have you in my heart; for whether I am in chains or defending and confirming the gospel, all of you share in God's grace with me. ⁸ God can testify how I long for all of you with the affection of Christ Jesus.

^{Phil 1:9} And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, ¹⁰ so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, ¹¹ filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God.

It is time for another update about the Detroit Church of Christ for our members. We urgently want each of our members to pray for and help the Detroit Ministry Leadership Group (MLG) continue on into the future with vision and faith. My feeling about our plans for the remainder of 2006 echoes Paul's introduction to his letter to the Philippians above. They had a great beginning (v6) and were striving forward for Christ to bring it to completion. They were unified (v5). His prayer for them was that they would "be filled with the fruit of righteousness" (v9-11).

In Detroit, our unity and faith has blossomed this year. We have continued our plan to encourage our over-seas brothers by visits of our members. This builds ties of relationship and understanding that can't be obtained remotely. "Mission PNG 2006" greatly encouraged the Papua New Guinea (PNG) churches as seven Detroit members preached and loved the disciples and the lost in Port Moresby and the 'highlands' of PNG. It was exciting to hear more about the great things happening in PNG as Tony and Tasha Williams visited Detroit this past weekend.

We have been able to strengthen the 32 members of our first church planting in Grand Rapids (GR). Sandy and I recently visited with the church in GR. The church in GR is a church of vision and hope. We have already seen the church pull together and depend on God through the battle with cancer that the young Matthew Robinson victoriously conquered earlier this year! This July, our dear friends, Phil and Pat Morr were sent by the Spirit to help strengthen and rebuild the church in GR! Phil and Pat's arrival has helped re-energize the church as they have reset their hearts on growing. Phil and Pat Morr are the first full time ministry staff for the GR congregation in over two years. The leaders in GR have done an excellent job preparing for this day financially. During our visit they expressed their thanks for the \$10,000 contributed by the Detroit church in the 2005 missions contribution to help them hire new ministry staff. They are now fully self-supporting and have great plans to grow into a flourishing church in the home of Zondervan!



Phil and Pat Morr

This summer, Mission Detroit 2006 and our “Downriver Conference” all contributed to a focus on our members and mission efforts in the “frontier ministry” of our own downtown area. Despite the terrible economic climatic climate of the Detroit area, we have continued to grow our numbers. As of September 30 we are 330 members.

The ministry leaders took time to re-evaluate the needs of the church, resulting in big changes this fall.



Wayne and April Wright

We have taken the step of faith to hire an incredible couple, Wayne and April Wright, to train for and work in the ministry. This was done in the hopes of better meeting the many needs of a large number of teens and preteens who are children of our members and to provide leadership to grow this vital youth ministry in the Detroit church. The Wrights will be meeting with the Wayne county region to impact the larger number of teens and pre-teens in the church. This decision, however, is not only about the present, but we are “straining toward what is ahead...” (Phil 13-14). The long-term plan of the Detroit School of World Missions is to start now to find and train the people who will devote their lives to the ministry of the Word of God. We intend to train disciples who have the heart and gift to be ready to start and lead new churches in such places as Flint/Saginaw, Kalamazoo/Battle Creek, Traverse City and the upper peninsula of Michigan in the coming years!

The other step of faith we have made is to more completely regionalize. Three weeks out of four on Sunday our three regions (the Wayne, Oakland-Macomb and the West), typically meet closer to their geographic area. Additionally, regionalization will allow each group to have separate mid-weeks to better meet the ‘family’ needs of each group. We believe that these smaller groups that are typically ‘closer to home’ will help disciples better build family in each group. It would also allow services that are more conducive to our getting our friends and neighbors to join us at our times of worship. This change is a call for each of us to ‘raise up’ and truly build the church ‘as each part does its work’. We also look forward to more fruitful relationships as we can more adequately take care of each region of the flock. But look out, because on first Sunday of each month we will have a “family reunion” meeting! Here, we will all be together in a church-wide service where we can rejoice as we see how God is moving in each region!

In the last few weeks, the Detroit Church of Christ has also begun teaching the ‘study series’ to help our friends become disciples. These series are taught at the midweeks services in each region and will help each member be more grounded in his faith and be better able to share the gospel with his friends and family. Many have commented on how this focus on ‘getting back to basics’ is helping their faith and focus!

The church continues to ask for your prayers, support and service as we move into the fall. There is much to do as we strive to reach and exceed our 2006 special missions contribution, take care of those within the church and continue to reach this world for Christ. We also encourage each member to continue to be sacrificial, both financially and with our time so we can build God’s church in a manner that is pleasing to Him. Each region is striving to encourage disciples with the heart to lead a small group to step forward and give and serve in a greater way, recalling the scripture: 1Co 15:58 Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain. We are striving to leave no need unmet and bring glory to God through prayers of thanks to him.

Despite the challenges of the economy and of life, the Detroit church has continued to focus on God. We are praying and working hard that our faith – and growth will accelerate this year to the glory of God!