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Feb 24

CARTECAY GATHERING



Signage? ✓ Bulletins? ✓ Coffee supplies? ✓ Clipboards for kids? ✓ Toys for nursery? ✓ Bibles? ✓ Instrument? ✓ People . . . people . . . will there be people?

Eight years ago a handful of folks tried to plant a PCA church in Ellijay, Georgia. After gathering to pray and having the necessary conversations, a potential church planter visited and passed on the opportunity. Defeated and tired the group dispersed into various existing congregations. When Holly and I moved to the area a year ago we began hearing about that work and caught a name or two of those formerly involved. I knew that one of those people was the owner/operator of Chick-fil-a. I Googled her contact info. Holly and I met with she and her husband for lunch. By June of 2022 we had met several more families, some of whom were a part of that initial group. In July we determined to pray together for three months “for clarity in starting a conversation about a potential church plant.” When the three months were over we gathered in a living room with five couples to hear the heart of the group. They all wanted to take a next step toward a potential church plant. In November we started a Bible study.



We initially met on Wednesday evenings at a senior center in downtown Ellijay. It was only one room but it was free. We now had seven couples and two handfuls of kids. To help the parents with children's schedules, we moved to early Sunday evenings. A month in and we realized that we needed a larger space in order to invite and accommodate more people.

Our study was foundational. We learned the Church; what it is and its function in the world and community. We talked about its goals and principles and its relationship to the kingdom of God. We prayed about being an outward-facing transformational church rather than isolating from the surrounding culture and community. We dreamed about having a space that was close to downtown where we could visibly show Ellijay that we are for her and not against her.

Within eyesight, and about thirty paces from the senior center, is the George Link, Jr. Playhouse that hosts music, community events, yoga, and plays. It is right off of the downtown square of city center. It has a large foyer with sliding barn doors into the main auditorium which seats about 150 people. What if we moved our Sunday evening Bible study to Sunday mornings and began a small worship service? We could meet in the foyer with the hope that we would grow to need the auditorium. It was not only available to us, they actually *wanted* us there.

On Sunday, February 5 about 30 people gathered for our first worship service in Ellijay, Georgia.



We are three weeks into doing simple worship and life together. We sing, pray, and open up the Bible for teaching. We determined to not advertise or invite people too quickly so that we could ease into worship, yet every week the Lord is adding to our number.

Engineer, shop owner, organic farmer, social media influencer, retirees, young moms, pool repair . . . these are some of the spaces that our people inhabit . . . the places that the Lord has gifted with these, His friends, for the beauty of His kingdom and the good of Ellijay. Would you consider praying for

Cartecay Gathering? We need wisdom on next steps as we begin looking for a church planter, seek to serve in the community, and grow together as a gathering of followers of Christ.

www.cartecaygathering.com

ON BEING A PARISH PASTOR



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