

Illiana Presbytery Church Planting Opportunity in Evansville/Newburgh, Indiana

It is the desire of the Illiana Presbytery of the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) to begin a church planting effort in the Evansville, Indiana area. The metropolitan Evansville area (Vanderburgh and Warrick counties – population of 229,549 as of 2005) represents the largest population area in the Illiana Presbytery. Evansville is in Vanderburgh county and Newburgh is just east of Evansville in Warrick county. There are no PCA churches currently in this area. The two closest churches in the presbytery are in Owensboro, KY (40 miles SE of Evansville) and in Vincennes, IN (50 miles North of Evansville). Both churches are very supportive of bringing sister churches to this area.

It is the long-term vision of the Illiana Presbytery to eventually establish three strong churches around the perimeter of Evansville in three distinct and self-sustaining areas: one on the far east side of Evansville (Evansville/Newburgh), one on the far west side of Evansville, and one on the far north side of Evansville. It is hoped that as these three churches are established that they can form a strong base to eventually plant a church in the inner city of Evansville. Thus, our ultimate goal is to eventually see, Lord willing, four PCA churches in the Evansville area. The Illiana Presbytery has chosen to begin this effort in the Evansville/Newburgh area because the far east side of Evansville is growing and developing the most, and provides more opportunities, presently, for church planting (core group make-up, steady population growth, and real estate availability).

The Evansville area church climate has a strong Roman Catholic and Lutheran presence with many evangelical churches that are shallow in doctrine and theology. There are several large evangelical churches that tend to fit this shallow evangelicalism. The only other Reformed presence in the area is an OPC plant on the far north side of Evansville, which has a different philosophy of ministry than what we hope to bring.

We desire to plant churches that are faithful to the Scriptures, true to the Reformed faith, and obedient to the Great Commission. We believe that the Lord intends for His Kingdom to grow and He does this through His Church as it remains faithful to His Word, the Great Commission, and the Great Commandment. We desire to see lives transformed by the Spirit of God as the Church Body and those outside the Body are confronted with the amazing truths of the Gospel of grace in Jesus Christ.

Employment in the Evansville area is largely blue collar with some white collar professionals. The larger employers specialize in manufacturing, healthcare, construction, higher education, local public education, banking, and a riverboat casino. There are two large hospitals that also serve as regional trauma centers. The area has one state university (University of Southern Indiana - 7,510 students), one technical college (IVY Tech - 1,829 students), one private university (University of Evansville - 2,440 students), and a Bible college and seminary (Trinity in Newburgh). The area has 6 large public high schools and 3 large private high schools, both with many feeder elementary and middle schools. The area is serviced by Evansville Regional Airport and its two main roads to and out of the city are Interstate 64 (East-West) and Highway

41 (North-South). Evansville has an excellent public library system, several large fitness centers, and a large regional shopping mall (Eastland Mall). The Evansville/Newburgh area provides an excellent location for a church planting effort that will grow with a metropolitan area that is accessible and growing.

Another important factor in establishing a church plant in this area is that the Lord has providentially brought together a core group of about 10 families who specifically are interested in a PCA church plant. This group is very well informed of the Reformed Faith, with three of the men ordained as Ruling Elders in the PCA in other PCA churches. This core group has a good mix of ages (including quite a few children) that will bring good church and life experiences.

The Illiana Presbytery is committed to and has approved (April 12, 2008) this church plant in the Evansville/Newburgh area. The following 3-year budget plan has been developed:

	<u>Year 1</u>	<u>Year 2</u>	<u>Year 3</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Presbytery Funding	\$55,000	\$35,000	\$20,000	\$110,000
Planter Raised Funds	\$55,000	\$40,000	\$15,000	\$110,000
Tithing from Church	\$40,000	\$60,000	\$100,000	\$200,000
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TOTAL	\$150,000	\$135,000	\$135,000	\$420,000

Given the Lord’s provision of a core group, the strategic location of the Evansville Metropolitan area in the Illiana Presbytery, and the presbytery’s finances, we seek to have a church planter in place for the Newburgh/Evansville area as quickly as the Lord provides.

Anyone interested in this church plant should contact the Illiana Presbytery MNA Chairman, Carlo Hansen, at cjhansen@htc.net.