

# partners

THE KINGDOM EXTENSION NEWSLETTER OF THE EC CHURCH

## KINGDOM CARE:

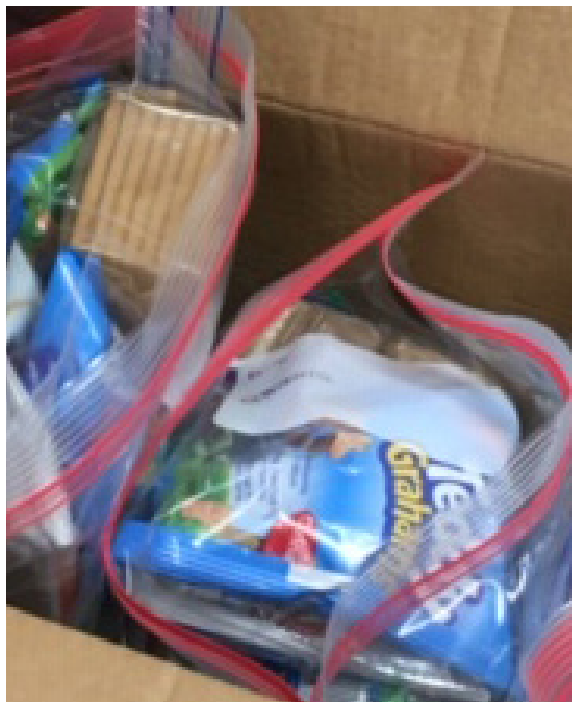
### The Harvest is Plentiful

**W**hile the COVID Pandemic has definitely created a challenging time for churches, I believe God has called us

to break out of our comfort and “normal” zone to “Be the Church” in ways we may not have previously imagined. Sometimes we just need to sit back and be open to God’s leading and direction and then watch Him work. Such is the case with Bushkill Community Church over the past several months.

Our church had planned a free community spaghetti dinner on March 21, 2020. Our goal was to serve those in our community with a free meal and to make more connections. As events unfolded with the virus the week leading up to that dinner,

*(continued on page 2)*



it became clear that we were not going to be able to host a sit-down dinner in our church, so we decided to still provide the meal as a take-out dinner. That first night we served more than 80 meals. We were amazed at the response, but more than that, we were burdened by the stories of so many who came.

That first dinner has now led to a dozen free Take-Out Time Dinners that have served more than 1500 meals to over 70 different families. Many who come each week have shared their stories of lost jobs and income. We have cried with them and prayed for them. God has provided the resources for the food through our local food bank and the generous support of community friends and coworkers. The community connections and relationship building have far surpassed what we ever first envisioned in planning our first dinner back in March. We have been able to advertise our live-streaming (and later in-person) worship services with flyers attached to the take-out bags and are finding several



families attending them.

When our county moved to the yellow phase at the end of May, we began holding in-person worship services on May 31; however, many families were apprehensive about their children attending with all of the health uncertainties. As a children's ministries director, this left me a bit deflated at first even though I completely understood and respected the parents' perspectives. However, God again reminded me that there was a whole harvest of children that we had now established a connection with who needed to learn about Jesus, and we had contact with them each week at Take-Out Time! Therefore in June, in addition to ordering their meal, we offered families a kids' Bible activity pack filled with a Bible lesson, craft, and activity pages. That first week, we had orders for 32 Kids' Packs! Additionally, with the help of the Kingdom Extension Community, we were able to distribute 50 Hands-On Kids' Bible with this outreach. Parents have shared their delight

of having a Bible that they and their children can easily understand. The harvest is plentiful!

Like many of our churches we also struggled with what to do with Vacation Bible School this summer. While it became clear that we could not bring all of the kids to the building for several

hours of activities, we built on the success of the Kids' Bible Activity Packs and designed a Remote Vacation Bible School that incorporated lots of hands-on-activities and supplies that we packaged into backpacks and then coupled with Youtube links of Bible stories, song choreography, and science experiment videos on our church's web page. In addition, we held daily Facebook Live sessions where we introduced the day's theme with a skit and reviewed the activities for the day. We also ran a mission project of collecting toiletry items to be dropped off at the church so we could distribute the much needed necessities to Stroudsburg's Homeless Mission. While Vacation Bible School may have looked a lot different this year, children were still engaged in learning God's Word through various interactive activities right in their own homes! Plans for the Fall Children's Ministry are now underway building on a similar platform.

Might I also challenge your church to perhaps begin a new ministry and look at the needs and opportunities that God has placed before you in a new light? The Church has never been closed. God has given us a new challenge and new opportunities. If you are interested in learning more about how to provide this type of ministry in your church, feel free to reach out to me at [lmiller61387@gmail.com](mailto:lmiller61387@gmail.com) or call 570-369-3323. We have learned a lot of lessons over these weeks to help maximize our target area and minimize potential issues. I would love to be a resource for you. The harvest is plentiful. ■

Lynda Miller  
Bushkill Community Church

# KINGDOM COMMUNICATION:

## Becoming the Church Online *Addison Roberts*

**O**n February 26 I told Addison Roberts I wanted to interview him about his “virtual church.” He immediately responded: “I think online church is a more helpful term because it’s a church that happens online. Online church is the attempt to bring a church online. Anything you would experience in a church, we would attempt to replicate in an online environment. What does that look like for communion to exist in an online space? What does it look like for a children’s ministry?”

Little did we know that a few weeks later the vast majority of churches in America would be trying to figure out the exact same things because of COVID-19. Addison simply had a head start.

He had been working and planning for his launch on Sunday, January 26, 2020, for just over a year. He had assembled a studio at the Grace Community Church in Willow Street using equipment they already had along with a few small purchases. “This project was supported by the Kingdom Extension Community,” says Addison, “and we want to be a resource, so we didn’t want to build something other churches couldn’t replicate. Sixteen-year-old YouTubers are doing this with an iPhone; it doesn’t have to be fancy. We often become victims of desiring equipment or perks only we care about.”

The Grace Community Online Church live streams all four of the church’s weekend services with the help of four individuals. One volunteer mixes stream audio much like you would in the sound booth of an

average church service. One volunteer runs the two remote cameras. Another mans a camera in the sanctuary. And a fourth switches between available video sources to give it more of a live feel—most of us don’t stare straight ahead without moving for the whole church service. Addison produces the event, provides training on the spot when necessary, and engages with those attending the service through the chat feature.

The chat opens 15 minutes prior to the service and Addison appears in a short video and then interacts with “attendees” as they arrive, replicating the in-church meet-and-greet. As the service starts, he continues to interact with those who chat, whether they are making a comment on the quality of the sound or sharing a prayer request. Another individual might pray through their written words in the chat. Addison does “back-door duty” by hanging around for about ten minutes after the service ends to chat with anyone who is still interested.

Addison likens offering online church to the Bible story of the friends who tore the roof off to get their lame friend to see Jesus. Grace Community Online Church has people attending who have chemical sensitivities or disabilities that make sitting in the sanctuary impossible. Some regularly attend in person but are home due to sickness or are traveling elsewhere. Others who don’t live near the church at all have simply discovered the church online. “Churches are always afraid that online church will be made up of once-regular at-

tenders who simply decided to stay home. But we haven’t found that to be the case,” says Addison.

“COVID-19 simply accelerated everything,” says Addison in our follow-up to the pandemic church shut down. “Being able to experiment at critical mass over these last 12 weeks has allowed us to get more cooks in the kitchen and grow and develop this online ministry. We improved the experience each week and have endeavored to increase the quality of the stream. We recruited a QA team who gives me feedback each week, and we are onboarding volunteers at a pretty crazy pace.”

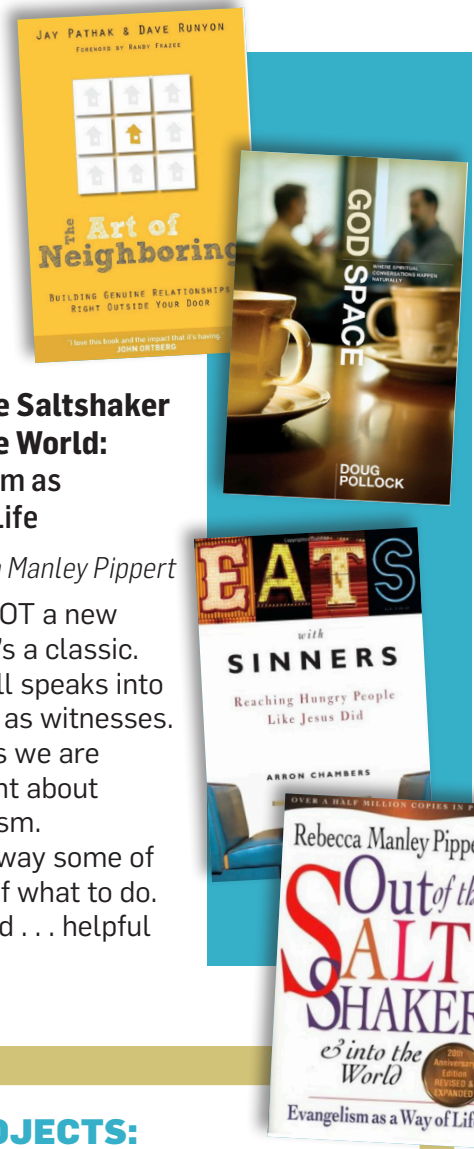
When COVID-19 sent all churches scrambling to meet without meeting in person, Addison became a resource. “We have made our best effort to give feedback on equipment purchases or strategy (Sim Live vs live or the like), and I have tried my best to be available for questions and help as people troubleshoot,” says Addison. “Ultimately though, I think this time has stripped away the fear surrounding online and has made an opportunity for us to truly take this everywhere.

“If America were completely unchurched, a missionary would look at our culture and realize that about 70% of these people spend their lives on devices. And they would say, we need to be here. It’s our responsibility to lean in to the mediums available to us, just as throughout history, believers have made use of the mediums of the spoken word, then the written word, then radio and television, making them missions for good and the Gospel.” ■



# RESOURCES to Extend Your Reach

**Jesus said,** "...go and make disciples..." And then he returned to his Father, leaving us under the influence of the Spirit and his Word to fulfill his command. Some of us easily develop ways to do so. Some of us flounder. We invite you to consider the below noted books as one way to jumpstart your adventures with reaching out. Consider reading these books with a group of interested fellow travelers. Read. Discuss. God and make disciples! ■



## The Art of Neighboring: Building Genuine Relationships Right Outside Your Door

By Pathak & Runyan

- We used to KNOW our neighbors.
- Now we "might" know their names.
- And we live radically different lives.
- So – how do we connect?
- This is a journey toward a plan.

## God Space: Where Spiritual Conversations Happen Naturally

By Doug Pollock

- Helps us think through how we speak with the unsaved.
- Discusses how to make these conversations take place.
- Great illustrations to consider.
- Humorous.

## Eats with Sinners: Reaching Hungry People Like Jesus Did

By Arron Chambers

- Notes that Jesus ate with real people.
- Discusses the power of eating together.
- Provides recipes.
- Challenges why we do what we do.

## Out of the Saltshaker & Into the World: Evangelism as a Way of Life

By Rebecca Manley Pippert

- This is NOT a new book – it's a classic.
- But it still speaks into our lives as witnesses.
- Assumes we are all uptight about evangelism.
- Clears away some of the fog of what to do.
- Easy read . . . helpful ideas.

## Praying for Church Planting

### PLEASE PRAY FOR:

- Health and safety for our planters and their families as they balance family, ministry and, when necessary or desired, second jobs . . . especially during these trying times
- Life and ministry priorities for our planters and their families as they seek to avoid the negative impact of busyness
- Creativity and opportunities for planters and leaders developing outreach ministries
- Positive experiences as our younger congregations develop community connections
- Spiritual eyes to see the harvest and tender hearts eager to respond in spite of or because of current life circumstances when many people are living uncertain lives

### CURRENT PROJECTS:

#### Churches and Church Plants

- Ephrata, PA . . . Christ House Church (Tim King)
- Ephrata, PA . . . House of Blessings (Abe Montanez)
- Lehigh Valley, PA . . . Horizon (Bud Daneker)
- Pottstown area, PA . . . Journey53 (Rick Christman)
- Slatington, PA . . . Trinity (Brian Kern)
- Willow Street, PA . . . Virtual Church (Addison Roberts)
- York, PA . . . Iglesia Cristiana (Carlos Kelly)
- York, PA . . . The Next Step (Carlos Kelly)

#### Partnerships

- Lancaster, PA . . . Iglesia De Dios Ven A El (Luis Ramirez)
- Mohnnton, PA . . . Dinner Church (Robert Shuey)
- Palmerton, PA . . . Gaming Grotto (Chris Bronico)
- Sinking Spring, PA . . . Fresh Expression Launches
- Slatington, PA . . . Dinner Church (Brian Kern)



100 WEST PARK AVE, MYERSTOWN PA 17067 • 717-866-7581  
office@eccenter.com • www.eccenter.com

**KINGDOM EXTENSION COMMUNITY MEMBERS:** Rev. Leslie Cool, Associate & Chair; Bishop Rev. Bruce Hill; Rev. Ron Anderson; Rev. Matt Hill; Rev. Carlos Kelly; Mrs. Lynda Miller; Rev. Adam Roberts; Mrs. Michelle Roberts; Tim Seiger; Rev. Mike Snedeker; Rev. BJ Whitaker.