

MRC Kluster – Idaville, IN – Vol. 9, No. 16 – April 17, 2015



Last Friday Linda and I traveled with Bill Shoemaker to Idaville, IN which is about 80 miles west of Ft Wayne and 70 miles north of Indianapolis. We went there to attend the third Midwest Region Kluster Meeting on Saturday. Instead of holding their large annual gathering of all churches in 2015, the region is hosting a series of district meetings across the three states comprising the region. Previous meetings occurred at Mt Carroll, IL and Sullivan, IN; and those on the upcoming schedule include Decatur and Charleston, IL; Brighton, IA; and Oak Grove, IN. The hope for these one-day gatherings is to involve more people and save on both time and travel.

From Findlay it took us just over four hours with an hour lunch stop. When we arrived we stopped by the church building to unload and set up the Churches of God, General Conference display tables. From there we drove to Monticello, the neighboring town, to check into our hotel and find a place for dinner. We ended up at a \$9.99 all you can eat fish fry place called Harvest Time. It was family owned and operated, just the kind of mom and pop place we like.



The CGGC display tables



The 1908 Idaville bethel

Early Saturday morning we headed back to Idaville for the day's events. The Idaville church joined the Southern Indiana Eldership of the Churches of God in 1901, but the congregation actually had its beginnings in 1843 as part of the New Dunkard branch of the Brethren Church. In 1908 the church dedicated a new brick bethel which served the congregation for nearly a century. In 2001 the church broke ground for their current facility on the edge of town along Route 24.



The current Idaville First Church of God building



Idaville Church of God hosted offering snacks and a luncheon for the 70 or so people who came and Faith Covenant Church of God from Monticello, IN provided music (pictured below).



Jeff Rockey leads a Kluster workshop

The day consisted of a rotation between praise and worship times and a variety of thirty minute workshops. I conducted three: "Discovering Your Life Plan," "Praying with the Psalms" and "Better Church Structure." Bill led several on church development topics. Other leaders included Jeff and Julie Burns, Steve Johnson, and Jeff Rockey. In one of the business sessions Joe Carpenter, Eleanor Estes and Toddrick Gordon were presented with ministerial credentials and later helped with the Lord's Supper led by Steve Johnson (pictured below).



Joe Carpenter, Eleanor Estes, and Toddrick Gordon (l to r) receive ministerial credentials





Darl and Barb Clemons

The Kluster ended late afternoon and everyone headed home. A group of us went back to Monticello to see the facility Faith Covenant is in process of purchasing (pictured below).



A view of the sanctuary in the future Faith Covenant facility

Darl and Barb Clemons who lead the congregation walked us through the building and recounted an amazing story of God's provision. Sometime we'll need to give a detailed account, but in summary this twenty-two year old congregation is buying a five year old 1.6 million dollar foreclosed property for 250k. In addition, they have a buyer for their existing facility which will pull the mortgage down to about 100k. AMAZING! Work will be needed to complete renovations and the facility is totally unfurnished, so there will be some additional expenses, but overall this is nothing short of a miracle. Did I mention it sits on 13 acres?



Inside the Silver Creek sanctuary

Sunday morning we traveled about 90 minutes to the greater Ft Wayne area. Bill visited the Olive Branch Church while Linda and I worshipped with our Silver Creek congregation.



The Silver Creek facility



The fellowship hall at Silver Creek

Both church facilities are in rural locations, but are actively engaged in ministry locally and overseas. Silver Creek began in 1849, but didn't formally organize until three years later. The church built a log bethel which was replaced in 1890 with a frame structure. The congregation remodeled and expanded that building several times since, although it's hard to tell the old meeting house is actually part of today's facility.



Deb and Tom Craig



Tom Craig presents Ed with a shirt that reads,
"If You're Not Dead, You're Not Done!"



Pastor Tom Craig graciously invited me to bring the morning message (pictured above). He and his wife Deb began serving Silver Creek in 1997. Being the week after Resurrection Sunday I chose John 20:24-31 as my text and used Jesus' command to Thomas as my title: "Stop doubting and believe!" At times we all have doubts, but they need not dominate nor discourage us. We do have a choice. When we believe Jesus lives, we find hope (the antidote to doubt and fear). So, will we choose to believe "He lives!" or not?

After morning worship Linda and I went with Tom and Deb at a local Mexican restaurant where Bill also joined us for lunch. We talked about Silver Creek's engagement in local prison ministry and the homeless shelter, as well as their summer mission work trip to Spirit Lake, North Dakota to minister to the Sioux Nation. Given where we were eating lunch we also shared conversation about the Hispanic population in the area. There's a Spanish language congregation in nearby Akron, IN that may not have a church family. Tom said he'd check on their affiliation (if any), and I agreed to check with Caleb and Christina Acosta about making possible Latino connections in Indiana. After lunch Bill, Linda and I headed back to Findlay.



Lunch location

This weekend was an on-the-go couple of days, but we got to see Jesus at work in and through his Church. As great as that may be, I was even more excited about the potential kingdom impact I saw everywhere I looked. Pray for God to bless the leaders and multiply the work!

ONE Mission together,
Ed
Soli Deo Gloria!