

CHRISTIAN EVANGELISTIC MISSION

NEWSLETTER

Winter 2025



CHURCH LEADERS GATHERING RECAP - SEPTEMBER 22, 2025

As a September luncheon, CEM hosted the first Church Leaders Gathering with over 110 men and women in attendance, representing Restoration Movement churches in Iowa. Mini reunions were happening right in our midst, and new relationships were forged. It was the beginning of a larger story being written: our desire to be more closely connected than we have been in the last two decades. As we face the newest challenges of ministry, CEM leaders believe we can do so best in unity.



Nebraska Christian College Alumni Picture - Sept 22, 2025

CEM VISION

- ▶ CALL - Identify new prospects for ministry
- ▶ DISCIPLE - Train and equip church leaders
- ▶ CARE - Invest in pastors and their spouses
- ▶ CONNECT - Churches with one another

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Strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith.

-Acts 14:22



WHAT IS THE FUTURE OF RESTORATION MOVEMENT CHURCHES IN IOWA?

For 68 years, CEM has served as a church-planting arm of Restoration Movement churches here in Iowa. While that mission remains vital—and we fully intend to continue it—we also recognize a growing, urgent question rising across our state: What is the future of the Restoration Movement in Iowa?

We are witnessing a major shift within evangelical churches throughout Iowa. Many rural communities have little to no church presence, and many of the churches that do remain are unsure about their long-term future. Who will lead us? Who will carry forward the mission? How do we strengthen what we have while preparing for what's next?

As the CEM Board has prayed about these concerns and listened to church leaders across Iowa, we've identified five strategic movements that we believe will guide us forward:

1. Unity

Unity has always been at the heart of the Restoration Movement. Jesus prayed in John 17 that His followers would be one, and we want to take that prayer seriously. Our desire is to develop a Restoration Movement Network in Iowa—a way to rally like-minded churches and leaders to join together in Kingdom work across our state.

2. Develop a Pastor Pipeline

If we don't intentionally raise up future leaders, they simply won't appear. We've already seen God bless our efforts with young leaders and second-career individuals responding to His call through our residency program. We want to continue financially supporting churches that are discipling, mentoring, and equipping the next generation to become church leaders.

3. Care for Our Pastors

Healthy churches need healthy pastors. We are committed to caring well for pastors and their spouses who are already serving in Iowa. When leaders are supported and encouraged, they flourish—and they want to stay and continue the work God has called them to do.

4. Gather

We believe deeply in the power of gathering. Whether for encouragement, collaboration, prayer, or equipping, leaders are strengthened when they come together. We want to provide more opportunities throughout the year for church leaders across Iowa to connect in meaningful ways.

5. Church Planting

Finally, we remain committed to planting new churches. Across Iowa there are regions with no Restoration Movement presence—and in some cases, no churches at all. We want to partner with churches to plant new congregations in these communities so the gospel can take root where it is needed most.

These five strategic movements are ambitious, but they are also essential if we are going to faithfully step into the future God is calling us toward.

Would you prayerfully consider giving sacrificially to help make these efforts a reality? We promise to steward your generosity wisely and use every dollar to advance the Kingdom work Jesus has entrusted to us in this great state we love.

5 STRATEGIC MOVEMENTS

Unity

Develop a pastor pipeline

Care for our pastors

Gather together

Church Planting



I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one—I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.

John 17:22-23



FROM NEW VISITOR TO MINISTRY LEADER – GABE SOLIS

Gabe Solis first walked into Iowa City Church as a University of Iowa sophomore in 2022—unaware that his life was about to change dramatically. After accepting Christ and being baptized, he quickly began sharing his faith, even launching a Bible study on campus. By 2023, he felt a clear pull toward ministry.

Now, in 2025, Gabe has graduated, married his wife Samantha, and completed a year-long CEM residency that he describes as a season of practical learning, spiritual growth, and clearer direction toward full-time ministry.

During his residency, Gabe regularly spoke during communion, preached, made announcements, and led both college and youth ministries. These responsibilities strengthened his confidence and deepened his understanding of church leadership behind the scenes.

Looking ahead, Gabe plans to pursue full-time ministry and enroll at Ozark Christian College. He remains open to whatever comes next. “I’m ready to do whatever God tells me to do,” he said.



“Working with youth taught me to lead authentically and deepened my own spiritual growth.”

From Barry Steiner – Pastor at Journey

JOURNEY CHRISTIAN CHURCH – BETTENDORF, IA

God is moving at Journey! Our 2025 attendance is averaging 172 weekly, and since our September 7th launch we've averaged 190. We've celebrated 14 baptisms since October 2024 – 4 this past month!

We continue supporting our host elementary school with snack donations and will launch our Angel Tree Christmas outreach in December, collecting gifts and hosting a party where each child receives a gift and a Bible.



Our seniors recently served 140 people at One Eighty's Thanksgiving meal. Looking to 2026, we plan to add three part-time staff roles and send three young men through Renew University's CIT Program. A Summer 2026 mission trip is also in the works.



Our CEM resident, John Bayer, continues to lead worship and grow in ministry leadership. After a recent review, he'll continue in a six-month evaluation period starting in January, with next steps to be discussed in July 2026.



IGLESIA CRISTIANA CONEXIÓN COLUMBUS, NEBRASKA

On behalf of Iglesia Cristiana Conexión, we want to express our heartfelt gratitude for CEM's faithful support throughout this year. Your generosity has been an essential part of what God is doing in and through our church, and we are truly thankful for your partnership in this ministry.

As we look back on the past months, our hearts are filled with joy and awe at how God continues to bless our Sunday gatherings. These times of worship have become more than services—they have become moments where we grow as a spiritual family. Each Sunday, we come together not only to exalt the name of our God but also to celebrate the beauty and richness of the Hispanic community. God is uniting us as one body, despite our cultural differences, to reflect His love and fulfill His purpose.

Thank you, Fernando and Sarai Perez, for your faithful service and church planting endeavors!

WEVER, IA

The Crossing Church Multisite Campus

► 44 Baptisms

Since launching on Christmas Eve 2024, The Crossing in Wever has led dozens to Christ

► 358 in attendance

The church's largest attendance to date (Nov), and 300+ in attendance four weeks in a row

► Sustainable Growth

The beauty in a multi-site location is that the church DNA is already established and resources are efficiently maximized.

► "God is moving, and I'm glad to be a part of what He is doing." -Ji Ramatowski, Campus Pastor



THE CROSSING CHURCH

This CEM-supported church plant is celebrating remarkable momentum in its first months, marking significant attendance milestones and an outpouring of spiritual commitment.

Ji Ramatowski, campus pastor at the Wever location, reports that church leaders had been praying this fall that attendance would reach 300 or more people for four consecutive weeks—a goal that has now been met and surpassed. "The week before last, we hit four weeks in a row over 300," Ji noted on November 20, 2025. "Praise God!!"

Momentum continued to build, with the November 16th service drawing 358 people, the highest gathering yet since the church opened its doors. Alongside the growing attendance, the church reports 44 baptisms since launch. Leaders attribute the growth and life-change to God's work within the community.





CEM: NEARLY 70 YEARS OF PLANTING, STRENGTHENING, AND SENDING

As we close another year of ministry, we look back with gratitude at a moment 68 years ago when a group of pioneering Christian men from various churches united around a bold vision. In 1957, they launched Christian Evangelistic Mission with a simple but powerful goal: to send church planters—then called missionaries—into towns and cities without a Restoration Movement church. Through the generosity of established congregations and faithful individuals, CEM was able not only to support these church planters financially but also to help established churches in need of renewal.

Today, the fingerprints of that early vision can be found across our state. Dozens of congregations are alive because CEM helped plant, rebuild, or encourage them. From these efforts come future pastors, missionaries, and church planters—just as they did generations ago.



Nearly 70 years of ministry have been possible because God has worked through the generosity of churches, families, and individuals who believe in the mission. CEM has never relied on grants or government funds—just the faithful giving of people who take Christ's command seriously: "Go and make disciples."

Together, we continue the legacy begun in 1957—planting the gospel, nurturing churches, and raising up leaders for generations to come.

Will you send a year-end gift to fund one CEM ministry resident in 2026? Our goal = \$13,500

We also ask that you add us to your ongoing charitable commitments each month. These gifts give us confidence to invest in people and churches that will bear fruit for decades. Thank you for standing with us!



Ways to donate to CEM

Send a check and use the enclosed envelope

To mark monthly support, check the box on the envelope's inside flap.

In 2026, CEM enters a new era while preserving the same unwavering spirit and unity of 1957.

- **To support, strengthen, and create Restoration Movement churches**
- **To identify, train, and disciple those called into ministry**
- **To care for pastors and their spouses serving on the front lines**
- **To unite churches in partnership, fellowship, and shared mission**

You are a vital partner in this mission.

**We need you in 2026.
We'll need you in 2027.**

And, if God wills, we will need partners like you 30, 40, and 50 years from now.



Give online using a debit or credit card at cemchurches.org/donate

Click "recurring" to establish a set monthly donation.

CEM

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