

To: Congregation of Eastern Avenue CRC
From: Council
RE: Bi-lingual Sunday Worship Service
Date: November 10, 2011

History

For the last three years, Rev. Gilbert Varela has been employed at Eastern Avenue as the Chaplain to the Saturday Food Program. In this capacity he has led an English/Spanish language Bible Study every Saturday from 8-8:30 AM in the Logan Room while the program clients wait for the line to open. He has also made himself available to our Food Program community for pastoral care. He is frequently called on to provide spiritual counseling and connect people with community resources. This ministry has gone very well and attendance at the Bible study averages about fifty people. He is often asked where he pastors and if there is a church that would welcome the participants in worship.

Last April, the Evangelism Committee sponsored a breakfast for the Bible study participants and program volunteers. Opportunity was given to tour the sanctuary and to meet Pastors Thea and Arlan. The first question asked by the group was if they would be welcome to worship at Eastern Avenue and if they would be able to worship in Spanish, if they came. Four to six families have, in recent months, indicated to Pastor Gilbert that they would attend a worship service at Eastern Avenue if the worship was conducted in Spanish.

Taking the next step in reaching out to our Hispanic community with the gospel has long been a goal of our Evangelism Committee. The Percept Group report reviewed in the Strategic Planning process predicts that in our "parish", the African-American percentage of the population will decrease while the Hispanic population will increase. (Between 2009 and 2014, the African American population is projected to decrease from 51.6% to 46.6% of the total population of our neighborhood; the Hispanic/Latino population will increase from 12.5% to 15.7% of the total.) We feel that the right leadership is in place with an experienced pastor and church planter in Pastor Gilbert and that the time to take that step is here.

Proposal

That Eastern Avenue CRC host a second worship service on Sundays in her sanctuary. Our goal is to begin primarily as a Spanish language service but to gradually develop, over time, to a bi-lingual Spanish/English service. This will provide a hospitable worship environment for our Spanish-speaking neighbors but will also allow for English speakers to participate meaningfully in the worship service. This service is not intended to be the start of a church plant, but a second Sunday worship service of Eastern Avenue.

The announced time will be 11:30 AM with the expectation that worship will begin at 12 PM. This will allow the two worship gatherings to overlap in a time of fellowship and hospitality.

We will be asking thirty to forty people to commit to attending this service until such a time as the numbers are not needed to "fill up" the sanctuary. Knowledge of Spanish is not essential for these attenders, but a heart for outreach is.

Eastern Avenue will also be asked to provide a prayer support team for this ministry beginning immediately.

Staffing

The services will initially be led by Rev. Varela with Roberto Venegas as worship leader. Roberto Venegas (also known as Tito) is a Calvin Seminary student who will be apprenticed and mentored by Pastor Gilbert so that he can take over primary leadership of the service when he is ready. Pastor Gilbert will increase his time with the church by approximately five hours per week for this year; Roberto will receive a stipend based on an average of fifteen hours a week for worship and music leadership and planning. We would anticipate paying one of our sound technicians to run audio for the service. Musicians and other worship participants will be volunteers.

Timeline

The services will begin on Easter Sunday, April 8, 2012.

Costs

Initial start-up funds will be provided by the Williamson Fund as entrusted to the Evangelism Committee. The committee has set aside \$75,000 towards this endeavor. EACRC has also applied for a grant from Classis Grand Rapids East and will look for other funding sources through grants from Christian Reformed Home Missions and The Calvin Institute for Christian Worship.

Budget (First Year)

Additional stipend for Rev. Varela	\$ 5,200
Stipend/hourly compensation for Roberto Venegas	12,000
50 Bi-lingual Bibles	750
Outside yard sign	500
Publicity	500
Sound tech stipend	3,000
Hospitality	1,000
Miscellaneous (music, office supplies, etc)	1,000
TOTAL	\$23,950

Council has approved this proposal and asks the congregation to support it with a vote of affirmation at our congregational meeting on December 4.