

CREATING NEW spaces FOR NEW PEOPLE

by Rev. Dr. Tim Catlett



Recently, I was speaking with a national church planting expert, and he said, "The pandemic will forever change the way the local church conceives of our relationship with buildings and physical space."

For almost 70 years, members of the \$10 Club and New Room Society have been helping co-create new spaces for new people to gather into communion with Jesus Christ. And while the local church's relationship with buildings and physical space might be changing, the need for new spaces for new people to encounter Jesus Christ is as important as ever.

Over the last ten years, North Carolina is the sixth fastest growing state in the country, adding over 900,000 people. In 2020, our total population increased to 10.4 million people. While the state is growing in numbers of people, the state is also growing more diverse. NC leaders project that five of eight people added to our state through 2030 will be a person of color. Like much of our country, our state is also aging, with a continued increase in our older adult (65+) population.

Your prayers, support, and financial gifts are helping our Annual Conference actively engage in co-creating new spaces for new people moving into our communities with the hope they might encounter and enter into communion with Jesus Christ. Thank you!

We are currently actively supporting 16 new faith communities (congregations less than five years old) and exploring adding two to four additional new faith communities in 2022. This newsletter reflects on what our current new faith communities are doing. In particular, church planters will share how their teams are creatively using alternative spaces to invite new people into communion with Jesus.

Thank you again for your support. To make a financial contribution for 2021 or 2022, please visit us online, <https://nccumc.org/newfaithcommunities/>, or fill out the attached form and return it to:

New Room Society
700 Waterfield Ridge Place
Garner, NC 27529.



PLEASE SUPPORT OUR PLANTERS
with your prayers for communion to be celebrated in new ways in their lives and in their communities.

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Six:Eight Church, Durham

Daniel Childs
Kindred Church, Durham

Randy Evans
The Feast Gathering, Wilmington

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Storied Church, Mebane

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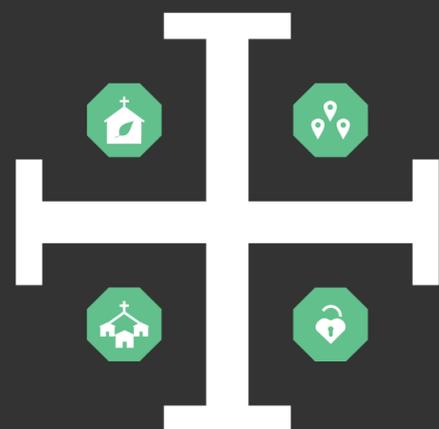
Meg McBride
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Gayle Tabor
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Jamie Thompson
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Edgar Vergara Millan
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Laura Wittman
The Mills Church, Rocky Mount



An order of laity and clergy dedicated to embodying apostolic hospitality for new people to be gathered into communion with Jesus Christ.

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**GATHERING
IN AN
HISTORICAL
space**
REV. JASON GASKIN

Where is your church located? This was the question I would get when I first started planting Storied Church. It was almost as if the building made Storied Church legitimate. Over the past couple of years we have been able to start and grow a church without a space that was ours. The fact that we don't have our own space has allowed the church to cultivate a sense of identity outside of a building. We are more than a building. We are a community of people bonded by Christ. New people feel safer in our community because we all realize that this space is not ours.

Each Sunday I welcome people with these words, "Thank you for bringing the body of Christ into this place..." For those next few hours in whatever space we occupy becomes the body of Christ. A place where we grow in our love of God and relationship with one another. Just recently we started meeting at the Mebane Historical Museum. Meeting at the museum has created beautiful opportunities to partner with organizations in the community. The museum wanted to be better stewards of their space and we needed a space to grow and for our children to be able to play. Being a church that has a number of children under the age of 5 meeting at a historical museum did make many of us nervous. What if they broke something? It was a reminder that this space wasn't ours. It is someone else's. We have to work together. We have to trust one another.

In fact our children have been transformative in helping us realize that not having a physical space that is just ours is okay. They call it church when we meet at people's homes, playgrounds, museums. Because to them the physical space doesn't define the church. The church is the body of Christ. And wherever the body of Christ is located at that particular moment is the Church.+



**GATHERING IN
A movie
theatre**
REV. DANIEL CHILDS

Kindred Church, a multi-site plant in Durham out of University UMC in Chapel Hill, was planning to launch weekly worship services inside an elementary school on Easter of 2020. After covid derailed those plans, the new community launched online and continued to reach new people digitally. As it became possible to gather in-person again, Kindred discovered that the school in which it had previously planned to meet was not allowing facility rentals. So after a lengthy search for an alternative venue, the young church plant settled on an unconventional choice: a movie theater!

Kindred is already holding worship services at AMC Classic Durham and is gearing up to launch weekly services there in January. The venue, though a bit out-of-the-box, comes with some wonderful upsides for the mission of gathering new people into communion with Jesus Christ. Kindred is particularly focused on reaching the excluded, ignored, and questioning. The movie theater provides a space that is familiar and comfortable to people of all kinds of backgrounds. It's disarming and approachable in a way other venues may not be. Plus, it gives the church a visible presence in a high-traffic, secular space within the wider community. That is a great benefit as Kindred seeks to make the love of Christ known to neighbors who may not yet know that love.

So while there are some challenges associated with setting up worship, hospitality, and children's ministry spaces inside a movie theater, Kindred is finding that those challenges are worth the benefits. The Kindred community looks forward to filling the theater with prayers and praises on Sunday mornings, offering a church family to those who might not have found it elsewhere, and gathering more people into communion with Jesus. +



**MILLS CHURCH:
THE REPURPOSING OF
LEGACYspace**

REV. LAURA
WITTMAN

In 2020 I was appointed to serve and plant The Mills Church, in hopes of building a reconciling and welcoming community in Rocky Mount. We were given use of the former Marvin UMC building to make something new. Most church plants start with an idea, or a vision. They start with people gathering together and working in small groups and growing to create something new, and some years later they have the conversation about buildings and space. We, however, started with a building.

With the repairs and work that needed to be done, we wondered how in the world we would be able to make The Mills Church happen, but the connection and the faithfulness of our other UMC churches in the area were immediately visible. First UMC, Englewood UMC, St. Paul UMC, Battleboro UMC and Lakeside Baptist all came together to clean, paint, and breathe new life into the space, and they continue to be partners in the work that we are doing.

Because we were given the gift of our building at the beginning of our work and ministry in Rocky Mount, we were also able to create community almost immediately. We were extremely fortunate to begin a partnership with the Tar River Arts Collaborative, a group of artists who are diverse, talented, and missionally minded who were looking for a space to set up studios in the area. Our Sunday school space quickly went from empty rooms to studios filled with light, art, joy, passion and hope. In addition, we began in person worship in July of 2021 and have created programs like Sunday School Yoga, hosted a Trunk or Treat that brought nearly 200 people to our space at Halloween, and we are partnering with our local domestic abuse shelter, My Sister's House to create a community service of lament on December 21st.

My favorite part of all of this, though, is that not only was Marvin UMC generous in their dying, but they have continued to be generous in the new life that has come out of it. Not only have former members come to support and be a part of the new vision and mission of our congregation, but some of them are also returning as new members and even serve on our lead team. The forward thinking and love of this congregation have helped us to lean into our call and vision of what is to come for Rocky Mount. We can't wait to see what happens next. +



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