

The Project SOIL Report

Episode 3: June 2020

Gathering at The King's Table

I can't believe it's been three months since the last edition of the SOIL Report. So much has happened since then. First, we are excited to announce that God named our new church! Through a two-week process recently, the elders have felt led to the name **The King's Table**. We feel this name is so incredibly significant, because it describes the gathering of God's people, the church, both in this life and in the life to come. It communicates the hospitality we want to exemplify in our neighborhoods – welcoming people into our homes – and it points to the wedding feast of the Lamb, when God's people will ultimately gather around His table to dwell with Him and enjoy His presence and favor for eternity.

Second, after six wonderful years at [Trinity Evangelical Divinity School](#), Jeff graduated this May with his Master of Divinity (M.Div). These were some of the best years of Jeff's life, and we thank God for the wonderful education and ministry preparation he has received at TEDS.

In other news, God has provided the Blocks with a home in our target area, just 0.4 miles from the Nenns (whom you met in [our last edition](#)). In fact, we are moving in less than two weeks. We're so excited. Also, the Andersens are in the process of doing some renovation of their home and have recently put it on the market. So, please pray for them, for the timely sale of their house, and that God provides a new home for them in our target area as well.

Meet the Andersens



Speaking of the Andersens, we want to introduce ourselves! After 16 years living in Wauconda and serving the Lord at [Life Bridge Community Church](#) (our sending church), God has called us to move to Southern Illinois and plant house churches. Our family has grown up in Wauconda and we never expected God to call us into a completely new adventure. And believe me - it was not an easy decision to make. But the Lord has been so faithful to our family throughout the past decade. He has provided for all our needs and it's because of His goodness that we live, so we are committed to following wherever He leads. He gave His life for us, so we want to live fully for Him.

We have been married for 25 years. In that time, our family has been deeply invested in our church. Each has served in a variety of ministries. Bob has been church board chairman and an elder, started and led the safety and security team, while Michele has helped to lead worship. Most recently, we agreed to lead a Life Group, which has been a source of great encouragement for us, providing an atmosphere for honest transparency and growth as a result of mutual commitment of all the members to do life together, both in our group time and throughout the week as we spent time together investing in each other's lives.

Bob worked as an engineering manager for over 30 years before leaving work to see what else God might have for him. He originally thought this might be starting his own business, but now he sees God's hand in preparing him to plant churches. Michele loves to sing and gives voice lessons. She also recently led our family in opening a resale business at a local antique mall.

We have 6 children:

- Dylan (14) is learning the drums and just finished Middle School
- Alex (16) is the Thespian of the family, sings and plays many instruments
- JJ (18) graduated from Wauconda High School, loves computers and plays trombone
- Jess (20) came to live with us during some difficult times and has become family
- Robbie (22) works at Best Buy and spends his spare time fixing his Mazda Miata
- Kayla (24) recently left her job at Moody Bible Institute to become a freelance writer and a [doula](#) ... and to plant churches with us in Southern Illinois!



Proclaiming Freedom and Rebuilding Ancient Ruins

We are all going to Southern Illinois to be the church and make disciples in our neighborhoods. We are all captivated by Jesus and His beauty. He is truth and goodness and strength, and we want to draw near to Him in every aspect of our lives – for our good and His glory. We also want to be used by Him to show others how amazing He is and how greatly He can be trusted to rule over us as our King. Thinking about all the things the Lord wants to do in us and in the lives of our neighbors reminds me of another of our church’s “pillar” passages in Scripture...

Isaiah 61:1-11

The good news is that God has made a new life possible.

The only Son of God set aside the glory of heaven and walked among us as a man, Jesus of Nazareth, to bind up broken hearts, to proclaim freedom to captives, to give sight to the blind, to release prisoners from bondage, to replace mourning with joy, and so much more. Jesus is the great Restorer and Rebuilder of shattered lives, hopes and dreams. And we, His people, are His instruments in this work. In this passage, God makes the most amazing commitment both to us, His children, and to those who come to believe in Jesus through our ministry. He says, “They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the Lord for the display of His splendor. They will rebuild the ancient ruins and restore the places long devastated; they will renew the ruined cities that have been devastated for generations” (Isa 61:3-4).

That’s so beautiful! God is not only about the work of making old things new and restoring that which we might otherwise thought was ruined in our lives, but He then uses regenerated sinners like us to help others and rebuild devastated areas in their lives. It’s amazing! And on this foundation, we want God to build His church throughout the St. Louis Metro East region ... through us! We want to be agents of proclamation – freedom to the captives! – and restoration – rebuilding ancient ruins that have been devastated for generations.

Pentecost Sunday Preaching and Commissioning

On May 31st (Pentecost Sunday), the Blocks and the Andersens were [commissioned by the elders at Life Bridge](#). We have all loved Life Bridge during our time in Wauconda. They have been our church family and we greatly value their desire to partner with us in this church planting work. In fact, Jeff was [invited to preach that Sunday](#) (for the last time, at least for a while). He preached on another of our church’s pillars, 1 Thessalonians 2:1-13, describing Paul’s way of life as it authenticated his team’s proclamation of the gospel in Macedonia.

Working with the EFCA

As you probably know, we are a part of the [Evangelical Free Church of America \(EFCA\)](#) (our denomination). It is under their authority and with their guidance that we are planting our church. Recently, we submitted our paperwork to incorporate (a necessary step in organizing the institution of a local church), to establish our tax-exempt status under the EFCA’s banner, and to open a job requisition for interns to participate in our ministry in Southern Illinois. In fact, the Blocks plan to host one post-seminary resident (student concluding their M.Div training at TEDS) per year in their home, working with and being disciplined by our elders and pastors. Jeff and Faith also recently attended a church planting conference with the EFCA to seek counsel and guidance from others who have gone before us. This was time well spent as we were greatly encouraged and challenged by EFCA staff and other church planters and pastors.

Please pray!

Your partnership in prayer means so much to us. Please pray for these specific needs:

- 1) Pray for our new neighbors – that God would draw them to Himself and create opportunities for us to invest in them, even during the strange times in which we live
- 2) Pray for the Andersens – that they would sell their house quickly and purchase the perfect house in the target area
- 3) Pray for the Blocks – that their move would go smoothly and safely
- 4) Pray for the Nenns – that they would be able to engage their neighbors effectively in the challenging days of COVID
- 5) Pray for the kids on our launch team – that they would draw near to the Lord and develop a deep sense of mission
- 6) Pray that God would bring the 4th family to our launch team, ideally someone with apostolic gifting

Signup for these reports at report.projectsoil.net/signup, and read more about our journey on [our team’s blog](#). God bless you and keep you!