



**Life Community Church
Ada, Oklahoma**

**Growing Tradition and Regional Mission
Backgrounder**

Founded in February 2006 by Pastor Mickey and Glenda Keith, Life Community Church's mission is to bring people to Jesus and membership in his family while helping them develop a Christ-like maturity in the ministry and in service to others.

In founding the LCC, the Keiths have utilized their 30 years of experience in ministry and teaching to create a non-denominational church that offers a "casual environment and serious faith."

"We have found our non-denominational status to be one of our greatest assets in the mission we have been called to," Pastor Keith said. "By definition, denominations separate. They can become walls that keep members in and non-members out," he said.

Life Community Church -- like more than 140 non-denominational churches in the national Independent Assemblies -- offers Christians a worship environment that is open, engaging and relevant to their everyday lives.

Since its humble beginnings, LCC has met in a 9,000 square foot renovated building that was formerly a small grocery store on 14th Street in Ada. Within this setting, the church provides its congregation with a living Christian message in a contemporary and caring environment. There are weekly services on Sundays and Wednesdays and the church maintains an active schedule of ministries for adults, young adults and children. Life Community Church ministries include evangelism, benevolence and mercy missions in Ada and surrounding communities and states. The church also supports Bible schools, churches and orphanages in Mexico, Philippines, Kenya, Haiti, India, Ivory Coast and Guinea-Bissau.

Growing Tradition

Pastor Keith proudly acknowledges the inspiration and guidance of his deceased father and spiritual mentor, Reverend John Keith, who was a pastor in Ada for 43 years, having served as the pastor at Evangelistic Temple at the time of his death in 1997.

"My dad participated in television ministry for 20 years and was on daily radio for more than 25 years. He became a 'regional' pastor and many people in southeast Oklahoma grew up listening to him either in person or over broadcast media," Pastor Keith said.

Growing up in that Christian tradition of evangelism, Pastor Keith came to understand the value and necessity of spreading 'The Word' to all who would listen. In describing the mission of Life Community Church, he has cited a Biblical passage from Acts 1:8:

"But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth."

From the beginning, Pastor Keith has believed the mission and the ministry of Life Community Church eventually would be regional and this inspiration grew stronger as the church began to outgrow its space in the former grocery store on 14th Street.

Giving Over Grief

As noted in the famous hymn by William Cowper, "God moves in a mysterious way, his wonders to perform." That can certainly be said for the next development in Life Community Church.

During the time the LCC leadership began searching for a larger space for the church, two members of the congregation, Harland and Shirley Stonecipher, were searching for a way to allay the grief they continued to experience over the deaths of their son, Brent Stonecipher, daughter-in-law Tina and granddaughter Nikki in a plane crash in 1995.

Harland Stonecipher, the founder and former CEO of Ada-based Pre-Paid Legal Services (now LegalShield), had spent 40 years creating and growing one of America's premier companies in the in the prepaid legal service industry.

"As an entrepreneur, I'd spent most of my life 'fixing' things to improve corporate performance and to provide the best possible product to customers, but with the deaths of Brent, Tina and Nikki, I finally came up against the 'unfixable,'" Harland Stonecipher said.

Then, in a moment of spiritual clarity, Stonecipher realized, "The only way you can relieve your pain is by helping others who are in pain." The Stoneciphers -- knowing that others like them had suffered the loss of children -- decided to create a memorial that would offer solace for the "unfixable."

It was then in January of 2010, Stonecipher contacted Pastor Keith to offer assistance with the construction of a new Life Community Church that would also include a special memorial chapel for bereaved parents who had lost children. After long and careful consideration, Stonecipher realized that having the memorial chapel (a place for grieving and healing) connected to a church (a life-giving, life affirming place) was the right combination. Harland and Shirley Stonecipher have agreed to contribute \$5 million toward the construction of the new Life Community Church and Memorial Chapel.

The financial contribution wasn't the only thing that was being offered. Harland Stonecipher had spent a lifetime honing his skills and developing experience as an entrepreneur. After reading literally hundreds of so-called "self help" books as a young man, Stonecipher realized the primary source for much of this information was from the Bible.

That began a lifelong quest to identify and utilize the embedded Biblical principles that lead to a more successful life in the "here-and-now." The outcome of this effort is Stonecipher's "Blueprint for Success."

Stonecipher plans to offer the "Blueprint for Success" as a special inspirational series at LCC and the program will feature presentations by Stonecipher and others who have successfully incorporated the blueprint into their lives.

Divine Guidance

The location that was selected for the LCC is in close proximity to the corporate headquarters of the company Stonecipher founded 40 years earlier. The 10-acre site is land contributed by the W.S. Kerr Family, The Chickasaw Nation and Pre-Paid Legal Services and it will include not only the church but the birthplace of Senator Robert S. Kerr and The Chickasaw Pavillion, a facility to be built by Life Community Church. Financial contributions and support is from the Robert S. and Grayce B. Kerr Foundation, Grayce B. Kerr Fund, Aubrey K. McClendon Family, Kay Kerr Adair and the Chickasaw Nation.

In December of 2010 Pastor Keith, Harland Stonecipher, and Hugh Sprague -- a building designer with the architectural firm Sprague & Associates -- stood on a high bluff overlooking the fields of Pontotoc County, Oklahoma. This was to be the site of the new Life Community Church and as they talked about the future of the project, they knew they had been guided to this place.

“Based on my research, I have not found anything quite like what we’re creating here in Ada,” Pastor Keith said. “There is a wonderful connection, a beautiful co-mingling between the church and the memorial chapel. The two become one in purpose while separate in identity,” he said.

Sprague, whose firm specializes in church architecture, having designed more than 40 churches over the past 15 years, said Sprague & Associates has never designed a church like Life Community Church.

“This church with its ‘Modern Gothic’ architecture will have features that no other church of this size would include,” Sprague said. “In terms of design, amenities and technological applications, there is nothing in our experience quite like what is envisioned for Life Community Church,” he said.

The church itself will include a brown stone exterior and 20,413 square feet of interior space, including an interior vault of 55 feet at its peak and a “double helix” spiral stair. The LCC will accommodate approximately 350 people with second floor office and class rooms and twin water fall balcony stairways connecting the two floors. The church will also include an advanced production facility that will permit broadcast applications for sermons, educational and inspirational programs.

Outside, there are plans for onsite memorial gardens, water features and a glass breezeway which will connect the church to the memorial chapel.

The 1,400 square-foot chapel has a white stone exterior and will feature a ribbed Gothic domed ceiling with a painted sky and cloud motif. Plans are underway to create a communications platform that will allow visitors to share information about loved ones onsite or from remote locations. The memorial chapel will be staffed by an administrator and the space will be accessible whether the church is open or not.

The ground breaking for Life Community Church was held on June 4, 2012 and the land is now being cleared. Sprague anticipates the construction project will be completed in December of 2014.

More information on Life Community Church and upcoming developments can be found at <http://www.life623.com>.

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9/13