

Spanish-Speaking Church Plant Q and A

How did the idea of hosting a Spanish-speaking church plant begin?

In 2020, Christian Sebastia, one of the CRC (Christian Reformed Church) pastors in Houston, presented to other CRC pastors an idea of starting several Spanish-speaking churches in Houston that would use current CRC church buildings to assist in their formation. Christian Sebastia, himself a successful church planter, is from Venezuela and currently leads two Spanish-speaking churches in the Houston area.

Why is planting new churches important?

Many studies have reported that new church plants are much more effective in reaching unchurched people than churches that are over fifteen years old. With the population growth of Houston, including the growing number of unchurched people, church plants are very important in the sharing of the gospel in our city.

Are there other CRC churches in Houston who are using their buildings to assist church plants?

Yes. Peace Community Church in northwest Houston is offering its facility to help with a Spanish-speaking church plant. New Life Christian Reformed Church in Spring currently has two Spanish-speaking congregations that use its facility (one of which is led by Christian Sebastia).

Who would lead the Spanish-speaking church plant?

Christian Sebastia identified three church planting married couples who were interested in doing ministry in Houston. All three couples have a strong background in pastoring and planting churches. One couple is planting a church in Sugarland. The other two couples visited both Hope Church and Peace Community Church in October and November 2021. Wilmer and Helen Lopez would be the church planting couple for the Spanish-speaking church at Hope Church. They moved from Venezuelan to Houston last year. While pastoring in Venezuela, they recently led a church of several hundred members.

What would be the relationship between Hope Church a Spanish-speaking church plant?

The church plant would essentially be a distinct church congregation from Hope Church. Its pastor would eventually become a commissioned pastor in the CRC. A partnership team consisting of several CRC leaders, Pastor Greg, and several members of Hope Church would provide accountability for the church plant. At a very basic level, Hope Church would provide a space for the church plant to meet until it was able to obtain a building of its own. However, Hope Church and the church plant could become (and hopefully would become) more relationally connected than just one church offering its building space to another.

What would be the financial impact to Hope Church?

Hope Church's assistance to the church plant would largely be the use of building space (eventually, the church plant would most likely use our gym for worship). The largest initial sources of income for the church plant come from grant money from the CRC denomination and its mission arm, known as *Resonate*, as well as the church plants own financial offerings of its congregants.

What are some of the benefits of hosting a Spanish-speaking church plant in our building?

Here are a few: the opportunity to participate in the sharing of the gospel in the Clear Lake area; helping to build up the larger CRC community in Houston (and of course Clear Lake); possible shared ministry (this is all open to planning, but it could include combined children's ministry, sharing church fellowship, like occasional after-worship lunches, occasional combined worship, all up to the direction of the Holy Spirit)

What would the first year (or so) be like?

Typically, church plants do not begin a worship service in the first year or so of their meeting. It is common for church plants to start by holding Bible studies and engaging in the community in service. It can take several months before church plants begin having worship services in a church building. While the church plant would eventually hold worship services in our gym space (likely on Sunday mornings), that wouldn't happen for awhile.

How can I find out more information, ask questions, or give my feedback?

Obviously, these are just a few questions and responses about the possible church plant. After the worship service on Sunday, May 22, we will have a time for questions, answers, and conversation (in the sanctuary). Please come! Planning has been in process, but there has not been a final agreement made to this point. In addition, you can speak to Pastor Greg or any of our elders or deacons on the church council.