

Years in the works, Redeemer Church to open doors

After several years of “yes”, “no”, “maybe”, Redeemer Church is finally a “YES” in Winterset. And Pastor Jaysson Gurwell says he is glad to be staying.

The new fellowship will open officially to the public on Sept. 14 on the south side of the square in the building next to Ben Franklin, at 68 Court Ave.

Gurwell studied accounting at Iowa State University and worked for over ten years as a CPA before taking a part-time youth pastor position at Crossroads Evangelical Free Church in Earlham.

Four years ago, a long-time friend of Gurwell contacted him about a new mission – a new church plant in Altoona – and he needed Gurwell’s help. He decided to take the lead and take a leap of faith in that direction, with the plan to move his family closer Altoona.

He put his home on the real estate market and he and his family of six began the 50-mile one-way hike several times a week to help with the new church called High Pointe Church. However after two years, his house still hadn’t sold and he began to question his place and purpose at a church so far from home.

Then he began to pray.

A lot of other people began to pray as well.

He knew he wanted to plant his own church, but wasn’t sure of the location. Norwalk, Waukee and north Ankeny were all on his radar, but Winterset seemed to be the clear favorite.

A number of coinciding circumstanc-

es and due diligence made it clearly obvious that his place was here, in Winterset.

“Leah and I really felt the call to Winterset [because of] our love for the community,” says Gurwell. “These are the people we know and love and so to us to leave made no sense. Why not share the message of the gospel with the people we care about and love the most? That is why we are staying in Winterset to plant a church.”

Five out-of-town families made the commitment right along with him, moving their homes and children to Winterset just to help. Five families already living in Winterset also came along.

These 10 families formed the core group of members who have been praying for the embryonic fellowship for months and will, in just a few weeks, celebrate its official opening to the public.

Gurwell says, “We are a gospel-driven and Christ-centered church.”

Preaching, discipleship and biblical counseling will be the church’s mainstays.

“We are here to reach lost, hungry people. We don’t want to ‘steal sheep’, but reach those who aren’t part of any other church.”

With worship leaders Justin and Stephanie Schneider, worship will be a “spirit-filled” mix of contemporary and traditional styles. Jaysson describes Justin as one of the most talented musicians he knows.

“His play-

ing was from heaven. It just made us cry.”

The atmosphere is intentionally casual: jeans are encouraged. In fact, Gurwell admits that he wears jeans to preach.

“Well, nice jeans,” he added with a smile.

You can expect a warm, laid-back environment with coffee and light food before the worship begins. The service, which will begin at 10 a.m. should last just slightly over an hour in length. They have plans to add an evening service in the future.

Teens can look forward to a new hangout place following Friday night football.

Gurwell describes the Friday events as both creative and modern. Schneider, worship leader for Sunday worship will DJ music during the Friday night hangout, with a message of hope each night.

Coffee, an espresso bar, snacks and smoothies also will be available.

The fellowship will be meeting on the main floor. A nursery will be available for young children.

Services officially begin Sept. 14 at 10 a.m. A statement of faith is available at the church.

If you are looking, hungry or need some love, Redeemer Church may be just the fit you need.

—Amy Christensen

