

THE SPRINGFIELD CHURCH PLANTING PROJECT

Presbyterian Church in America

Overview

The Presbytery of Northern Illinois, with Grace Presbyterian Church of Peoria serving as the lead church, would like to plant a church in Springfield, Illinois. This new church will be built on a model of evangelism and disciple-making. Lord willing, it will precipitate a movement of the gospel and church planting throughout Illinois.

History

The City of Springfield is the seat of Sangamon County and the capital of Illinois. Founded in 1820 as Calhoun, Illinois, it took its current name in 1832. Abraham Lincoln moved to Springfield in 1837 and lived there until he became president in 1861. Springfield was chosen as the state capital in 1837, largely through the efforts of Lincoln and eight other members of the Illinois legislature (known as the "Long Nine" because they all stood over six feet tall).

The Springfield economy grew in the mid-19th century with the arrival of the railroad. Already an agricultural center, it became known for coal mining at the turn of the 20th century. The city is currently a wholesale and retail center for a rich farming area producing corn, soybeans, and livestock. It is the site of the Illinois State Fair, held annually since 1853. Companies in Springfield manufacture agricultural equipment, electric meters and electronic equipment, and building materials. Springfield is the national headquarters of several insurance companies. It is the seat of Springfield College in Illinois, Lincoln Land Community College, and a campus of the University of Illinois.



Springfield Metropolitan Area Demographics

Home to 213,574 people

- 83% White (non-Hispanic)
- 11% Black/African-American
- 2% Hispanic/Latino
- 2% Asian
- 2% Other

\$56,626 median household income

10% families below poverty level

69% white-collar workers

67% owner-occupied homes



Capitol Viewed from Main Street

State Government

The City of Springfield is home to the three branches of Illinois government. The executive branch is split into several elected offices, with the Governor as chief executive, and has numerous departments, agencies, boards and commissions. The legislative branch consists of the 59-member Senate and the 118-member House of Representatives—collectively known as the Illinois General Assembly. The judicial branch is comprised of the Illinois Supreme Court and lower courts. The state government employs 17,500 people within the City of Springfield.

Two groups have been informed of this initiative and are standing by to advise the church planter about ways to connect with those working in government. Ministry to State of the PCA's Mission to North America assists churches and presbyteries in ministering to their state governments. Civil Servant Ministries is an Illinois-based organization that has led Bible studies among lawmakers and judges in the Illinois Capitol since 2007.

Religion

The Springfield area is home to 254 churches or bodies of worship. Within these, there are 113,834 adherents, which include members, their children, and others who regularly attend services. There are 133 evangelical protestant churches with 45,055 adherents. Therefore, there are 99,740 people in the Springfield area (47%) not affiliated with any church and 168,519 people (79%) not affiliated with an evangelical protestant church.

Attractions

Springfield is dotted with sites associated with Abraham Lincoln. These include the Abraham Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum, the Lincoln Home National Historic Site, the Lincoln-Herndon Law Offices, and the Lincoln Tomb. Other popular attractions include the Dana-Thomas House designed by Frank Lloyd Wright, the Washington Park Botanical Gardens, and the Henson Robinson Zoo. For the history buff, significant sites include the Old State Capitol Historic Site, the Grand Army of the Republic Memorial Museum, and the Korean War National Museum.



Inside the Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum



Illinois House of Representatives

Church Planting Outlook

With nearly 100,000 people in the Springfield area not affiliated with any church, and nearly 170,000 people not affiliated with an evangelical protestant church, the fields of potential harvest are extensive. The opportunity is great to serve as God's agent to bring new Christians into his family, start a Christ-exalting church, positively impact the local community, and build a disciple-making and church-planting movement that will, Lord willing, lead to the salvation of many in the Springfield area and, via connections to the state capital, throughout Illinois. The Presbytery of Northern Illinois and Grace Presbyterian Church of Peoria stand by to provide prayer, financial, and logistical support of the new church.