



Partner Letter Dec. 2023

The Gates Church and the O'Donalds

How are things going?

This picture is us at the back of the White House decorated for Christmas. The fall and the holidays have been a great time to reach out to the neighborhood and surrounding communities, and we have seen the Lord faithfully move through our efforts as we serve Him.

We have had a focus on mentoring middle and high school students, gathering weekly with lessons and games. We have started a weekly Good News Club in Armistead Gardens Elementary, the school near our church in Armistead Gardens.

In October we held three consecutive nights of Sunday night worship gatherings in a venue that we rented in an area called Essex. We averaged about thirty people per night, as a few people from the neighborhood joined us and several of our church folks came out to these gatherings. We had an outreach event on Halloween that we called The Holy Ghost Trail. At this event, we shared the gospel with and gave candy out to more than 100 people. It was also a positive experience because about a dozen new volunteers came out to help us pull off this event. We saw about 8 new church members through our new members' class.

Phoebe and Meryl went on a mission trip to South Asia. Our church gave out a couple dozen Thanksgiving dinners to needy families. As December and Christmas rolled around, we had another positive outreach gathering in Essex and saw good attendance in our gathering in Armistead Gardens. We had our annual grief recovery holiday ministry on December 3rd, and it went really well. A couple of people have been saved, and several were baptized, so we are praising the Lord about that!



What's next?

As we march into the new year, we are focused on continuing to grow our church to be healthy and self-sustaining with steady new members and salvations. Sunday morning attendance has been around fifty people, with new guests most weeks in the last few months. Please pray for Pastor Bill as he leads with Austin to focus on the church in Armistead Gardens.

We also want to keep expanding a mentoring ministry for students, in which we are seeking to raise up older students as mentors and bring positive gospel influence to young students' lives. Pray for Dustin, Noah, Rick, John and Phoebe as they go on a student retreat in January. Pray for a new leader, John, as he ministers to some students.

We are seeking to grow our Essex ministry into a missional outpost in 2024. Pray for us as we develop a strategy to gather people in the name of Jesus in Essex regularly with many new people coming to Christ.

How can we help?

After a great church family meeting in January we have decided to do a Valentine's Day outreach event. We did something similar last year, and our people are excited to do it again to reach people from their various spheres of life. We will rent a nice venue, bring a nice dinner, and preach the gospel. We need about \$1,000 to host 100 people for this event. We would love for you to consider helping. Also, this is a great time of year to consider preparing to do a mission trip with us in the months of April through October.

