

GRACE FREE WILL BAPTIST CHURCH ~ ASHLAND, OHIO

TITUS 2: 11 FOR THE GRACE OF GOD THAT BRINGETH SALVATION HATH APPEARED TO ALL MEN.

"GIVING GRACE BECAUSE OF THE GRACE THAT HAS BEEN GIVEN!"



JULY ~ 2016

Greetings from Ashland, Ohio! I want to take this opportunity to thank the Lord for placing my family and I here to plant a Free Will Baptist Church for His glory. I would also like to take this opportunity to tell you all about our family and how we came to Ashland, Ohio. My name is Travis McKenzie, my wife, Melissa and I have been married for nearly 24 years. We have two children; Joel Matthew is 19 and Rachel Joy is 10. I thank the Lord for the fact that my entire family is saved and in full support of planting a church in Ashland! For the past few years I have had the growing desire to pastor once again. In the past I have pastored two churches for a total of 8 years and most recently I have just resigned as the Associate Pastor at Canaan Free Will Baptist Church in Creston, Ohio where I served in that capacity for 7 years under the leadership of Brother Jim McComas and Brother Mike Gladson, respectfully.

My desire is to build a church for the Lord that is based upon sound Biblical, expository preaching. My burden is to reach those with the Gospel who currently do not attend church or possibly have never attended church through various outreach ministries within the community, as this was a large part of my duties at Canaan FWB. I also want to build a church that has a heart for missions and faithfully follows the commission of Acts 1: 8.

This past winter, while on visitation I was driving down the road having a time of *"windshield prayer"*. I was asking the Lord that if He wanted me to Pastor why was it that every time a possible opportunity arose the answer in one way or another was always "No"? I then asked the Lord that if it wasn't His will for me to pastor again would He please remove this burden from my heart because it is more than I can bear! A few moments later I drove past a little church along the side of the road with a sign in the front yard that read *"Church and parking lot - \$79"* ~ I chuckled as I thought to myself, there's a good opportunity for someone to work! Immediately I felt the chastening hand of the Lord as He spoke these words to my heart. *"There are a lot of opportunities to work for me if you really want to!"* Instantly my heart was convicted and I changed my prayer to this ~ *"Lord, whatever work you have for me to do, please prepare my heart to do your will."* A few weeks later at the Ohio Men's retreat in January I walked past the bookstore table and saw a little book written by Roy Thomas entitled: *"Planting and growing a fundamental Church."* I picked it up and immediately began reading. I could hardly put it down until I had completed it. Also, during the Men's retreat Brother Roger Daniel of the Ohio Home mission board made a plea from the pulpit that if there were any ministers interested in becoming a church

planter in Ohio the mission board would like to speak to them. My heart was pricked at those words and again it seemed like the Lord was saying *"there are a lot of opportunities available for you to work for me if you truly want to."*

My wife and I had already decided that we needed to move to the Ashland area for our family and we had been looking at houses there. I also knew there were no Free Will Baptist churches in the area so I immediately began studying the demographics for Ashland using a website called www.city-data.com there I discovered that 56.3% of Ashland County's population claimed no church affiliation on their 2013 census. That is nearly 13,000 people who do not attend church within the city of Ashland alone, more than double the national average of people who claim no religious affiliation. This number does not even include the 1,500 students who reside on the campus of Ashland University. My heart immediately began praying for the people of this area.



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Shortly after this while in Ashland looking at a house I was sitting in a restaurant and watching the people as they came in and sat down to eat, my heart began to break for them and I wondered what was happening in their lives. Do they know Jesus? Has anyone ever shared the Gospel with them? Do they know about God's love

and grace? It was then that the Lord confirmed to me that one way or another we need a Free Will Baptist church in Ashland, Ohio!

This coming August we will begin our itinerary work for North American Ministries in an effort to raise financial support for

the GRACE Free Will Baptist Church in Ashland, Ohio. Would you please pray for and consider financially supporting this worthy cause? Ashland is the self-proclaimed "world headquarters of nice people", but the facts don't lie. Even "nice" people need GRACE!

If you feel that the Lord would have you support our work financially you can follow this link to our NAM page and begin making contributions to our account. www.fwbnam.com/Planting Also, if you feel you would like for us to come and share our vision for Grace Free Will Baptist with your church we would love to schedule services with you. Please feel free to contact us at (419)566-8487 or tmckenzie126@gmail.com

In His service,
Travis, Melissa, Joel and Rachel McKenzie

Prayer requests:

- Pray that God would put us where we can reach lost souls in the city of Ashland
- Pray that the Lord will help us with our itinerary work
- Pray that the Lord would help us secure an adequate meeting location

Immediate needs:

- Financial support for operating expenses