

Country Church thrives in East Texas

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WOODVILLE—When Pastor Jordan Wilson reflects on all God has done in the three-and-a-half years since Tyler County Country Church began, he is in awe.

Standing in a 16,000-square-foot, two-story building in Woodville, Wilson can point to so many moments of God’s faithfulness and provision.



Tyler County Country Church—better known in Woodville as “TC3”—reaches about 300 people each week with the gospel. Jordan and Emily Wilson started Tyler County Country Church—known as TC3—after being approached by First Baptist Church in Woodville and six other churches. Those congregations saw the need for a new church in the area to bring the gospel to a segment of the population they could not reach successfully.

Initially, they tried launching a cowboy church—a western-heritage congregation. But they soon discovered the model did not quite work for the people they were trying to reach.

Just the right fit

Wilson learned about a new Country Church model through his work with Texas Baptists, and he found it was just the right fit.



Hunters and fishermen feel at home at TC3. “There are certain elements that make Country Churches successful, and we believe we can take those tools and use them within our context to reach people,” he said.

From playing country music to enjoying a relaxed dress code and atmosphere, the model has allowed visitors to feel right at home. It also embraces the outdoor Southern culture—a good fit for a large segment of the community who enjoy hunting and fishing.

Reaching the unchurched

From the beginning, Wilson believed TC3 would be a church that would reach people who were not already in church.

“We never aspired to reach people who were at other churches. We aspired to reach people who were at home on Sunday mornings,” he said.

“We are also a church for people who know they don’t have it all together. It’s OK to come to Country Church—to come home and be who you are. ... We embrace the grace God has given us through Jesus. No matter what they’ve experienced, they will not be judged. They are just going to be loved.”

The church has seen 50 professions of faith and baptisms. Starting out with

just a handful of members, the church now averages well over 300 attenders each Sunday, and leaders pray to fill every seat in the 450-seat worship center one day.

First impressions matter



The sounds of a bluegrass band welcome worshippers at TC3 in Woodville. As guests drive up to TC3, trucks line the parking area. A bluegrass band fills the air with soothing rhythms and harmonies. Walking into the lobby, six large whitetail deer mounts line the wall of the balcony, with a bison, elk and turkey at eye-level. A welcome center and “outpost” with church apparel also draws visitors.

For Wilson, first impressions make a difference, and each element was selected intentionally. Striving for excellence in everything they do also has been a primary motivator for the church leaders.

“It sets the stage for country people to feel at home and for God to move,” he said.

God blessed

When TC3 began, the congregation met on the county fair grounds, then moved outside when they outgrew the space. Later, the church moved to a school cafeteria for several months. One day, Wilson received a call that

changed everything—a donor wanted to give the church 30 acres of land to have as its own.

“God blessed us with this property of 30 acres, debt-free. There is no other explanation than it was God’s blessing,” Wilson recalled. “We purchased our own tent, and for two years, we met for church right here on the property.”

In October 2016, TC3 opened the doors on its new two-story facility, with six children’s classrooms and a spacious multi-purpose lobby.

“Anytime a blessing comes in life, there’s always a temptation to relax and stop moving forward,” Wilson said in a church report last year. “While that’s good for a season and maybe necessary, what’s happening at the Country Church over these last few years is only the beginning of what we believe God wants to do through this church.

“We pause for a moment and give thanks to the Lord and those who he’s used to make all of these great things possible up to this point, but we also continue to look forward to our future. It is our hope that God would use this church as an example of what could be and will be all throughout our region and to other rural parts of the country.”

Opportunity for multiplication

Although the congregation is only three years old, TC3 has a heart to start new churches.

“Other churches came together a few years ago to plant our church, and we feel called to do the same,” Wilson said.

With an average of 5,500 churches closing their doors in America each year, Wilson sees the need for new church models to reach the state and country for Christ. Through the success they have seen at TC3, he believes

many aspects of the Country Church could be duplicated to reach nearby communities similar to Woodville.

“It’s easy to see the glamorous side of church planting—and it is the most rewarding thing you will do in your whole life. But I want people to understand and know that it is some of the hardest work you will do as a minister,” Wilson said.

Wilson expressed gratitude for the support he has received through the Baptist General Convention of Texas church-starting staff. He encourages other individuals prayerfully considering planting churches to utilize the resources that have led to his church’s success.

“It means a lot to know that somebody is ready to come alongside, support and build you up and help you,” he said of the church-starting team. “It would be really easy to feel like you are an island on your own.

“But we’ve got a team of people who really come alongside us and supported us, through local churches, our association and our growth-review team. When we join together, we can accomplish great things—a lot bigger things than we can when we are separate.”

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