

# **New neighborhoods mean new opportunities for new churches**

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AMARILLO—Brad and Sarah Newman knew they felt called to plant a church.

The Newmans, who already were actively involved at [South Georgia Baptist Church](#) in Amarillo, had been part of starting a church plant in Denver.

They began looking at options all over the country, waiting for God to call them somewhere.

“We kind of thought we’d go far away,” Brad Newman explained. “But at that same time, the church we served at got a heart for church planting.”

South Georgia Baptist wanted to start a new church, and they had their eyes on a neighborhood in Amarillo. The Tradewind community was a booming area in suburban southeast Amarillo. Young families were flocking to the area, drawn by new affordable housing opportunities. Cut off by a small local airport, the community felt isolated from the rest of the city.

“The idea of this Tradewind community kind of looked us in the face. ... Here’s a place with tremendous growth and no church,” Newman said.

## **Tradewind Community Church started**

So in May 2018, South Georgia Baptist Church began planning the new [Tradewind Community Church](#), the first church in the area. Newman is founding pastor.



Kami Dindinger, a member of Tradewind Community Church, talks to a Tradewind resident at the church's summer kickoff event. (Photo courtesy of Tradewind Community Church)

The first challenge the new congregation faced was finding somewhere to meet. With no traditional church buildings available, organizers began looking at non-traditional options.

At an event in the community, Jonathan Dindinger, associate pastor at Tradewind Community Church, was seated next to the principal of Tradewind Elementary School. As they talked, she described her desire for the school to partner with a church that would provide activities and outreach.

When Dindinger told her about Tradewind Community Church, the principal offered the school auditorium as a meeting location. Children could meet for Sunday school in the library, and the church could set up a nursery in the hall. The church happily accepted.

# Preview services offered

Although Tradewind Community Church did not officially launch until this month, the church hosted preview services throughout the spring and summer.

At the first preview service on Easter Sunday, about 40 families from their sending church, South Georgia, were joined by 30 people from the Tradewind community.

Newman explained the twofold purpose for these previews. Obviously, church planters wanted to garner attention and excitement for the church before it even opened.

But they also wanted to make sure everything went smoothly. Making sure sound equipment works, Sunday schools have places to meet, and doors are unlocked and ready are all vital things that need to be worked out before a church can officially begin, he noted.

“When you have a church building, it’s all built-in, but we have to think of all this stuff,” Newman said.

Church starts like Tradewind Community Church do not always have everything readily available like a traditional church. Equipment for services must be unloaded and set up each week, and members have to ensure that everything is neatly cleaned up at the end of the day so that school can resume Monday morning.

Despite these technicalities, Newman is excited about the church and its future.

“Church planting is the most exciting thing I’ve ever been a part of in my entire life,” he said.

# Mary Hill Davis Offering provides support

The biggest focus for Newman and the other leaders of the church is simply getting to know the local community. The church has hosted a number of events to spread the word and build relationships, hosting an Easter festival, a summer kickoff and a movie night.

The Easter festival was Tradewind Community Church's first outreach event. Funds from the [Mary Hill Davis Offering for Texas Missions](#) enabled the church start to purchase Easter eggs, games and food for the community outreach event.

Hundreds of people attended, and it provided a great opportunity to minister to Tradewind Community Church's new neighbors, Newman noted.

"We try to be intentional," Newman said. "You're here to have fun, but we want you to hear about Jesus."

Approaches such as fun events and building personal relationships are essential to church planting, he noted. People are more likely to accept an invitation to church from someone they know and trust.

## Showing the love of Jesus

Newman and Dindinger felt it was important to relocate their families to the heart of the Tradewind neighborhood. They wanted to get to know the people they would be ministering to as friends and neighbors.

"Jesus loved people. He met them where they were, he knew their names. ... That's what we're trying to do," Newman said.

Tradewind Community Church is working hard to emulate the love of Jesus Christ. Members of the church's core group are building relationships, whether it is through volunteering at the elementary crosswalk or handing out free popcorn at a movie night. They know each hand they shake, each smile they show, has the potential to draw someone into the church and God's grace.

Newman acknowledges they hardly are experts when it comes to church planting. But with God guiding them, he is confident they will succeed. The Tradewind community needs a church in the heart of their community, somewhere they can grow and worship together.

"The reasoning is simple," Newman said. "Every place in our city should have an outpost of the gospel."