



IGNITE

CHURCH PLANTING

Bringing hope to Chicagoland by starting churches

2026 IGNITE NEWSLETTER | VOL. 1: PLANNING FORWARD

ACCELERATING JESUS' MISSION BY STARTING CHURCHES

Announcing Ignite's Assistant Executive Director: *Andy Hamilton*

Change is a reality that we all encounter. Times of transition in an organization are extremely important. I liken it to the handoff zone in a relay race. The success of a relay team is determined by what happens with the baton in the handoff zone. The only way a team finishes a race is by passing and holding on to the baton successfully. With this in mind, we want to announce that Andy Hamilton has been hired as the Assistant Executive Director for Ignite starting in January.

Passing the baton correctly is important. When Moses was told by God that it was time for him to die, he asked the Father, "May the Lord, the God who gives breath to all living things, appoint someone over this community to go out and come in before them, one who will lead them out and bring them in, so the Lord's people will not be like sheep without a shepherd."

Num. 27: 15-17



Thinking of a baton pass, this is something we have been preparing for at Ignite regarding my job as Executive Director. I have had the honor of being part of a great history of church planting in Chicagoland. Beginning with Carl Moorhouse and then Bob Sloniger, I am currently the third person to lead this organization.

Several years ago, I told our board that we needed to prepare for my retirement (I gave them the date Dec. 31, 2027). We developed a plan in 2024 and then began the process of working the plan by putting together a team to search for the next Executive Director for Ignite. This team consisted of leaders from around the country and current board members to get the best candidate possible for this position. It was determined that it would be best to find someone who knew the organization and the region as a first choice. In October, Andy Hamilton agreed to step into the half-time role of Assistant Executive Director during 2026, with the goal of becoming the next Executive Director in the fall of 2027.

During 2026, Andy will be working half-time with Ignite and half-time with Adventure Christian Church (the church he planted in Bradley, IL in 2003). With Ignite, he will be focused on working with Lance, meeting with key partners and people in the region, working with current plants and planters and learning the role of Executive Director. He and I will be planning together for the future growth of Ignite as we continue to start churches to bring the hope of Jesus to Chicagoland and beyond.

Please be praying for Andy and Elisha as they enter this new chapter of ministry and for him as he navigates both half-time roles. We look forward to seeing how God works through him to grow the Kingdom in 2026.

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**Interested in Church Planting? Contact Lance Hurley
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An Interview with Andy Hamilton

Tell us a little about yourself:

I grew up in the St. Louis area and after a short time at St Louis Christian College, I went to Johnson University in Tennessee where I met my wife, Elisha. We have been married for 24 years and have two sons, Ty who is a freshman at Olivet Nazarene University and Levi who is a junior in high school. Elisha and I moved to Illinois after graduating from Johnson to pursue graduate degrees at Lincoln Christian Seminary. I was hired as a church planter with the goal of starting Adventure Christian Church in Bradley, IL. Adventure was planted in 2003 and I have been the senior pastor since the beginning.



How have you been involved with Ignite through the years?

I began as a church planter, so was a part of the regular planter meetings (and have continued to attend these as a resource and encouragement to our current planters). Adventure has supported Ignite plants both financially and by serving as scaffolding help during the early stages. I have coached church planters, have served on the Board and as President of the Board. I have also been involved in both pre-assessment and assessment of potential church planters.

Why did you choose to become a church planter?

I love church planting because I know it is one of the best ways to reach the lost. I observed several leaders from the church I attended in St Louis leave to go start churches and was intrigued by what they were doing. Then I had the opportunity while at Johnson to be a part of a church planting team in Charlotte, NC which stirred the desire to do this myself. Moving to Illinois to study church planting at Lincoln, I was given the opportunity to start Adventure with Ignite. God was at work.

Why did you say “yes” to this opportunity with Ignite?

I believe this is the next step for me to take. Working with Ignite will open the door to be involved in a greater way to start new churches that will reach the unreached for Jesus.

What excites you about taking on this new role?

One of our core values is Possibilities and I am looking forward to exploring new ways of starting churches to reach different people groups and places in Chicagoland. The opportunities that come from living in a region like this excite me. I think about starting traditional church plants, helping churches parent new daughters and exploring ways of planting micro-churches by mobilizing everyday missionaries. The possibilities are unlimited and I look forward to being a part of this.

(There will be a video interview with Andy posted on our website, so make sure to look for it: www.ignitechurchplanting.com)

30 Days of Prayer

From January 2 – 31, we spent time each day praying for a variety of things as we prepare the ground ahead of our church planting efforts in Chicagoland. We prayed for all 10 of the counties in our region, we asked God to work in the city of Chicago and we prayed for workers for the harvest field of the diverse people groups that are present in this area. Several of our church planters presented stories of how they had seen God's hand around them and we prayed for several of our efforts ahead: Multipliers Pathway, Parent Church planting and upcoming church plants.

The theme of our 30 day campaign was “The Open Door” and we look forward to seeing the doors opened by our Father in 2026.

THE OPEN DOOR

