

## **What Does a Pentecost Offering Look Like?**

By Charlie Wallace, Minister for Congregational Relations, New Church Ministry

Have you ever wondered what your gift to the Pentecost Offering looks and sounds like? You would know if you could witness a morning of joy and praise like the one on March 22, 2009, at the Gathering Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Lexington, Kentucky, when a spirit-filled congregation celebrated the official launch of their new church.

That morning, Athens-Chilesburg Elementary School, the site of the new church, was teeming with activity. Directional signs led people to the cafeteria for worship. There were 74 people in attendance, with a few out-of-town folks there to support Pastor Don Vanzant, the new church planter, and his wife Nina. It was obvious that Don and his faith core team of about 10 persons had reached their target audience for their launch. Almost all of those in attendance were under 40 years of age. Many had not been a part of a church before or had been hurt or disenfranchised by church in a previous experience. These were the people that Don, Nina and the faith core team had in mind when they began to design a church in northeast Lexington that would welcome individuals to come to Christ just as they are.

Everything about the worship service reflected thoughtful and thorough planning, from music to worship structure. The talented praise band set the perfect tone and a sense of anticipation and welcome for this new faith community permeated the space. Pastor Don presented his first in a series of sermons on “The Facebook Jesus.” He used video clips to enliven the message as he spoke about who Jesus the Christ is. The welcoming table was set for all who want to experience the gospel and love of Jesus Christ, and all partook.

One of the morning’s high points came when Associate Regional Minister Linda Jones presented the new church with a check for \$7,500 from the Kentucky Region. This check came from the money raised in 2008 from the Pentecost Offering in the Kentucky Region, half of which stays in the region. The other half supports the New Church Ministry of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) with a witness that expands throughout the United States and Canada. With support from the Pentecost Offering, the New Church Ministry movement helps to recruit, train and coach New Church planters, with the goal of starting 1,000 new Disciples churches by the year 2020.

So, this is what your gift to the Pentecost Offering looks like. Through your generosity, the Offering comes alive in the joy and peace on the faces of worshipers in new churches, started by people who are called to Expand the Table and Extend the Witness to new places and new communities, so that others can experience God’s message of love, acceptance and inclusion.

If you want to see for yourself what the Gathering looks like, Pastor Don and the congregation welcome all to the expanding table at Athens-Chilesburg Elementary School every Sunday morning at 10:30 a.m.

To learn more about the New Church Ministry movement and the Pentecost, visit [www.newchurchministry.org](http://www.newchurchministry.org).