



OUR HISTORY

Through the gospel of Jesus Christ, proclaimed, believed, lived and shared, we seek:

Lives transformed by God's power
The Renewal of Los Angeles for Christ.

We do want to see Los Angeles renewed for Christ and we see our presence in Downtown Los Angeles (DTLA) as God's call to see the people of Downtown and East Los Angeles transformed by His power.

On June 20, 2010, PCC held its first worship gathering in St. John's Cathedral. The DTLA location was selected to minister to the congregants who had been driving 25 miles or more to reach the Santa Monica worship site. DTLA is not only home to Los Angeles' financial core, but to one of the largest homeless populations in the world. PCC saw an opportunity to build community in an area of great need, both practically and spiritually.

And since 2010, the Eastside worship gathering has been home to a diverse and often transient population. With its close proximity to USC and one of the biggest business centers in the United States, grad students, doctors, lawyers, architects and artists have all worshiped side by side and found a way to serve the city. We have served Downtown Women's Center, Union Rescue Mission, PATH (People Assisting the Homeless), Zahn Emergency Housing and participated in PCC's annual Boxes of Love campaign (filling boxes with Thanksgiving meals and distributing to those in need). We've seen a number of churches establish sites in DTLA, only to close down after a few years and move elsewhere. By God's grace, we have been able to continue ministering in DTLA and hope to continue for the years to come.

In 2016, when PCC looked to plant a church in Pasadena, it was the Eastside that formed the core team and helped with the earliest worship gatherings. We eventually commissioned this core team and officially sent them out during a worship service. That church (The Way) has gone on to plant another Eastside church that currently meets in Alhambra.

REBUILDING AND REIMAGINING

The PCC Eastside community truly loves East Los Angeles. And although our membership has been significantly affected by the pandemic and the sudden departure of our senior pastor, the DNA and core identity of this Eastside expression of PCC remains intact.

After not meeting for nearly 15 months, we held our first worship gathering back in St. John's on June 27, 2021. Just over eleven years since its first ever worship service! This was possible due in large part to the passion and drive of a committed group.

One of our core members, Cheri Lawrence, leads Bridges, a ministry for international students at USC. She consistently brings new students, most of whom are seekers, into our worship space and we are starting to see God move in their lives! We had the great privilege of baptizing one of these students during our Easter celebration this past year. By meeting in DTLA, we are a refuge for USC students seeking the hope of the Gospel.

PLANS FOR THE FUTURE

To give ourselves the best possible chance at surviving and thriving as a church, and after much prayer and consideration, we are pivoting to view our PCC Eastside worship site as a future church plant. The church session and leadership has seen the potential for the Eastside and is whole-heartedly in support of blessing us in this next phase of ministry.

Seeing ourselves as a future church plant adds clarity, vision, and purpose to why the Eastside exists. I think that I speak for the Eastside when I say that for the longest time, we haven't known who we are as a congregation. Are we an overflow service? Are we the site that launches church plants? Who are we and does PCC care about the Eastside? We've all wondered or asked these questions at some point.

I am writing to tell you that PCC does care for the Eastside and wants us to succeed as an independent worship site. The Eastside is different from the Westside. We have different needs, a different demographic. There is a unique energy present amongst us when we gather. And for the first time since its inception, we are finally being given the permission to reimagine how we operate as an Eastside expression of the PCC family.

With all of that said, this is not a church plant in the traditional sense. We are not starting from scratch in an unknown area of town. We have been doing ministry for nearly 12 years in DTLA! This is an established worship site with PCC DNA made up of PCC members. And it will continue to be a part of the PCC family.

This shift in how we view the Eastside is coming after months of session meetings and with input from Interim Pastor Paul Hahn. The big picture vision is to see PCC become a church that plants and resources neighborhood churches and ministries that seek the welfare of their corner of Los Angeles. Viewing PCC Eastside as a church plant, as opposed to a worship site of a multi-site church, allows us to further contextualize the vision of “lives transformed” and craft it to fit the specific needs of our community.

We have first-hand experience of the challenges that face a multi-site church in Los Angeles. It’s difficult to staff a church with multiple worship sites. Building community and feeling a sense of belonging is hard too. Los Angeles is made up of neighborhoods and it makes sense that our church should align itself with a vision to reach neighborhoods.

For the first time in PCC history, we are being given permission to reimagine core features of PCC Eastside’s identity: worship, children’s ministry, volunteer ministry, and how we meet the needs of our neighbors.

Thinking long term, this pivot in how we view the Eastside will communicate to an incoming Senior Pastor that the Eastside has its own identity and purpose. It is not an overflow service or just another campus, but the hope is that it will function as its own independent worship site in the future.

The pastoral search team will be looking for someone who has a vision to lead PCC as an anchor church for a network of churches/church plants/ministries that seek the gospel flourishing in and transforming LA.

It is our strong hope that having the DTLA site in place, as the next church plant in queue, demonstrates to senior pastor candidates that our vision is moving forward, that it is far more than merely an idea. We believe that the Eastside site makes us a more attractive missional opportunity for those whom God may be calling to come and serve ministerially in this place.

A PATH FORWARD

So what does all of this mean?

Practically, things will continue on as they have for the past year. We will continue hearing sermons from Pastor Paul and there will be collaboration for Boxes of Love and other church-wide service efforts. We will still see a lot of the same worship team members, with plans to identify and develop an Eastside worship ministry. We will still work closely with RUF and Bridges at USC. For the time being, I am stepping into a site director role for the Eastside, overseeing our budget, care/mercy

ministry, strategic planning, children's ministry, and our volunteer teams. I will continue to be a point of contact for you.

As we move forward, I need to hear from you! If you are interested in getting more involved and/or would like to join the Eastside core team to help me, please connect with me. I need help and most importantly I need your input to guide and direct us in this new season. Specifically, I need help setting up a children's ministry, overseeing our set-up team, and strategic planning and partnering with HFLA on Eastside service initiatives. The current plan is to have this group meet bi-monthly, once for planning/business and once for prayer/discipleship.

Currently, we have about 35-50 people in attendance each week. One of our goals is to see that number rise to between 50 and 75 in the next year. This includes seeing a consistent attendance of new believers and seeking students. We also aim to launch a children's ministry in 2022 so that many of our young families can return to worshipping in person.

Financially, PCC Eastside is being funded by a church planting fund that has been raised independently from the PCC operating budget. Currently, we have enough funds to run for 15-18 months. With the help of Pastor Paul, I am reaching out to donors who want to partner with us and help create a financial runway for us.

I'll close with this. I have been attending PCC since 2010, when this Eastside worship gathering first started. As a new grad student at USC, brand new to Los Angeles, I experienced a new depth of loneliness that I can still recall acutely. There would be some weekends where I wouldn't speak, wouldn't see anyone until that Sunday evening service at St. John's. The Eastside worship gathering provided a space for me to show up and be known in a time of great need. I have watched that worship site grow from 50 to nearly 200 and then shrink back down to the point of nearly closing down all together. PCC Eastside has cared for and is home to so many of us. I am not sure what God has planned for the future of the Eastside, but I do know that God is calling us to seek the welfare of this corner of Los Angeles in whatever capacity we are able.

Thank you for your friendship and partnership in ministry. I am excited to see how God moves in our community in 2022.

In Christ,

Alex McKee
PCC Eastside Site Director